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**RT AND RUSSIAN VIEWPOINT ON MAJOR GLOBAL  
EVENTS: PUBLIC DIPLOMACY, PROPAGANDA AND  
POST-TRUTH**

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Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of  
Philosophy

**CITY, UNIVERSITY OF LONDON**

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## Abstract

This thesis studies the relationship between the content of the Russian state-funded international broadcaster RT (formerly Russia Today) and the official Russian foreign policy expressed in the state documents and the speeches of the Russian president Vladimir Putin. Using the concepts of public diplomacy, propaganda and post-truth as a theoretical basis, the thesis explores the ways in which the channel works as a Russian public diplomacy agent, its relationship to the concept of propaganda and its role in the modern post-truth communication environment. This thesis employs three methods: a quantitative content analysis of 1522 news articles, a textual analysis of 166 articles, and a document analysis of 19 foreign policy documents. The sample includes RT website coverage in English and in Russian of two wars – in Ukraine and in Syria – between 2014 and 2017. The choice of war coverage takes into consideration the importance of wartime communication for governments in terms of both public diplomacy and propaganda, and Russia's different participation modes in the two conflicts studied (a direct one in Syria and a diplomatic and an unrecognized military one in Ukraine), which aims to put in context the way political communication works within a variety of environments in which modern conflicts occur.

In terms of public diplomacy this thesis demonstrates that RT is a crucial actor in the Russian public diplomacy as the themes within its content are aligned with the Russian foreign policy agenda. As a public diplomacy actor RT explains Russian policies and positions to its audiences. When it comes to propaganda the thesis demonstrates that the channel's coverage employs devices and tools universally accredited to propaganda and matches the main themes and messages of the Soviet propaganda. With post-truth, the study demonstrates RT's dual position as a partisan voice in the choir of partisan voices in the modern post-truth communication environment, and, on certain occasions, as a post-truth platform of its own.

The study's large sample, its quantitative element and the inclusion of the RT coverage in Russian (this study argues it is aimed at a global Russian-speaking audience rather than an audience inside Russia) means that this thesis provides an unprecedented look into the structure of RT conflict coverage, thus filling the gap in research literature on Russian public diplomacy and international broadcasting and RT as both a political and a media actor. With post-truth the thesis provides a comprehensive overview of the recent scholarship on the topic, produces a working definition that can be used in further research, and contributes to scholarly understanding of the ways in which traditional media actors, public diplomacy actors and Russian actors in particular contribute to and benefit from the new post-truth communication environment.

# Chapter 1. Introduction

## 1:1 Introduction

Russian state-funded international broadcaster RT (formerly Russia Today) describes itself on its About Us page<sup>1</sup> on its website as a channel that

Covers stories overlooked by the mainstream media, provides alternative perspectives on current affairs, and acquaints international audiences with a Russian viewpoint on major global events (RT n.d.).

It is this description that was the starting point of this thesis, which sets out to investigate whether RT's 'Russian viewpoint on major global events' reflects the views of the Russian state in the form of the Russian foreign policy agenda, and whether RT has agency in the way this Russian viewpoint is created. Further, it sets out to examine whether the 'alternative perspectives' carry out a post-truth function.

In regard to the first topic and the Russian viewpoint, the relationship between the Russian government and RT is a topic of many debates in the countries where the channel operates. Most come to a conclusion that as a media outlet RT is doing the bidding of the Russian government: the European parliament called it a propaganda outlet (European Parliament 2016), the French president Emmanuel Macron denounced it as 'lying propaganda' (Reuters 2017), the CIA, FBI and NSA wrote a joint report on the role the channel played in the Russian involvement in the 2016 US presidential election (Rutenberg 2017); in the UK the channel has been fined by the broadcast regulator Ofcom for its failure to preserve due impartiality rules (Ofcom 2019), and the channel's US service, RT America, was required to register as a foreign agent in accordance with the US Foreign Agents Registration Act (The United States Department of Justice 2017) – something no broadcaster funded by another

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<sup>1</sup> RT – About RT: <https://www.rt.com/about-us/>



country has had to do. Even journalists who themselves work for state-funded media in other countries often dismiss RT as propaganda (Wright et al 2020) and several of RT's own journalists publicly resigned over what they stated was a disagreement between their values as journalists and the way they were asked to cover certain events by the channel<sup>2</sup> (Greenslade 2008; Carroll 2014; Plunkett 2014).

RT defends itself from the criticism outlined above but doesn't argue that the way it covers events is not subjective, rather it says that the criticism of the channel is hypocritical as its coverage is similar in structure to the coverage by the mainstream media in Western countries and the difference is in the fact that it provides a platform to alternative views and ideas<sup>3</sup> that are excluded from the mainstream news coverage that has a pro-Western bias. In other words, RT claims that it is being persecuted for challenging the Western mainstream news narratives and providing an anti-hegemonic view of the world.

Despite the numerous heated discussions around this topic, academic studies of RT are limited, even though the channel is increasingly coming under more scholarly scrutiny. Some studies look at RT as either a political actor (Simons 2014, 2015; Rawnsley 2015; Kragh & Åsberg 2017; Dajani et al 2019) or a media one (Nyirubugara 2018; Kalugina 2018), others study its potential to persuade audiences (Miazhevich 2018) and separate aspects of its coverage (Yablokov 2015). The studies that do combine the political and journalistic roles focus on how RT covered particular events (Chatterje-Doody 2018; Kuznetsova 2018; Tolokonnikova & Budakova 2019; Ramsey & Robertshaw 2019). This dissertation's

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<sup>2</sup> In 2014, ostensibly prompted by the resignations (there were two that year – both prompted by RT's coverage of the events in Ukraine), RT started asking its journalists to sign non-disclosure agreements that ban them from talking about their work for the channel (Elsawah & Howard 2020).

<sup>3</sup> RT's argument against Ofcom's fine follows a similar logic as the channel claims that it is unfair that its fine is higher than cases where other broadcasters have been found guilty of hate speech and incitement to violence (RT 2019).

approach is thus unique because it looks at RT as both a media and a political actor and looks at a large sample that spans years of conflict coverage in Ukraine and in Syria between 2014 and 2017. In addition, this focus on journalism and communication as actors in political processes provides a unique insight into Russian foreign policy and public diplomacy and the actors within them, which means that the thesis is also making a contribution to the studies of International Relations and Russian foreign policy.

The channel's promise of alternative perspectives is connected to the concept of post-truth that pervades discussions of RT: the notion that it aims 'to create the impression that everyone is lying and that there are no unequivocal facts or truths' (Meister & Puglierin 2015). Indeed, discussions of the channel's post-truth strategies are far and wide (Chatterje-Doody 2017; Scholsberg 2017; Korneyev 2019; Rosulek 2019; Hutchings et al 2020), however no studies of the channel make a theoretical connection by analysing RT content in relation to scholarly understandings and definitions of post-truth. This dissertation will fill in this gap by looking at the ways in which scholars have argued about and understood post-truth, which did not originate as a scientific term, and by producing its own working definition of the concept, which will then be used to analyse the sample of RT coverage.

As both the political<sup>4</sup> and media<sup>5</sup> roles of RT are emphasized in the discussions briefly presented above, this dissertation will focus on the link between Russian foreign policy and RT news coverage: what can we learn about Russian international broadcasting and its link to the Russian foreign policy agenda by looking at how RT covers crucial global events? Further, what can we learn about the Russian foreign policy by looking at international

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<sup>4</sup> RT as a tool or an agent of Russian foreign policy.

<sup>5</sup> RT as a media outlet challenging the Western hegemony in news production.

broadcasting? These topics will be explored through an examination of RT news coverage using the concepts of public diplomacy, propaganda and post-truth and comparing the themes and messages of RT's coverage to those of the Russian foreign policy agenda, which will also be studied as a part of this thesis.

Thus, this thesis will answer two main research questions:

**RQ1. What is the 'Russian viewpoint' that RT is delivering to the world?**

- a. What are the characteristics of the messages that are contained within the 'Russian viewpoint'?
- b. How does the 'Russian viewpoint on global events' correspond to the country's foreign policy agenda?

**RQ2. How does RT use post-truth strategies in its news coverage?**

- a. What does post-truth mean in communication studies?
- b. How do post-truth strategies manifest themselves in RT content?
- c. What role does post-truth play in the channel's coverage in relation to the foreign policy agenda?

The sample of this study includes 19 Russian foreign policy documents, 1522 RT news articles studied through a quantitative content analysis, and 166 RT news articles studied through a qualitative textual analysis; it includes news coverage in both Russian and English in order to examine the themes, messages and strategies of RT when it is speaking to different audiences – this further increases this dissertation's contribution to knowledge on

RT specifically and Russian foreign media generally, as it is RT's English-language services that are the focus of most research on this topic.

The study's sample includes RT news coverage of the wars in Ukraine and in Syria, in which specific events were chosen for analysis. The choice of conflict coverage is supported by the fact that it is in war that a state's interests – declared and undeclared – become most obvious and easily observed. In other words, there is an inextricable link between propaganda and political communication and war (Taylor 2003: 5), and this study's sample reflects that. The choice of Ukraine and Syria in particular represents a selection of the ways in which the Russian government participates in modern conflicts – either by actual military involvement (in Syria) or diplomatic (and alleged military – but denied by the Russian government) involvement in Ukraine. Since one of public diplomacy's main aims is to communicate a government's policies to the audiences, looking at high interest events like wars and conflicts is instrumental for understanding how both governments and media understand and present them. The following section of the chapter briefly explains the context of both conflicts.

### **War in Ukraine**

The conflict in Ukraine started with a wave of protests between November 2013 and February 2014, which were sparked by the decision of the Ukrainian government, headed by the largely pro-Russian president Yanukovich, to suspend the signing of an association agreement with the EU in favour of closer ties with Russia and the Eurasian economic union; at later stages of the protests anti-corruption demands were also added to the list of issues (BBC 2014). The protests reached their peak in February 2014, when clashes between the riot police and the protesters in Kiev<sup>6</sup> left many dead; a list of identified deaths includes 130

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<sup>6</sup> This study recognises the reasons why the Ukrainian government and activists' campaign for the country's capital to be spelled as Kyiv in English – it is a more accurate transliteration from Ukrainian. However, RT

people, including 18 police officers (Krasnikov 2018). President Yanukovich disappeared from the country on 22 February after holding meetings with the representatives of the opposition; this prompted the parliament to vote to remove him from power, to install an interim government and to set the date for elections in May (BBC 2014). In late February the pro-Russian gunmen seized key buildings in the Crimean capital, Simferopol, and on 16 March Crimea's referendum on seceding from Ukraine and joining Russia was backed by 97% of the voters according to the organisers, but the vote was condemned by Western countries as illegal; regardless, on 18 March the Russian president Putin signed a bill to absorb Crimea into the Russian Federation (ibid.). In April, after the protesters in the Eastern Ukrainian towns of Donetsk and Luhansk occupied several government buildings and called for a referendum on independence, Ukraine's acting president announced the start of an "anti-terrorist operation" against the pro-Russian separatists in the region. Occasional fighting broke out between the pro-Russian insurgents and the Ukrainian forces, and on 11 May the pro-Russian separatists in Donetsk and Luhansk declared independence after two unrecognised referendums (ibid.). On 25 May, Petro Porohsenko was elected president of Ukraine. On 17 July, a Malaysia Airlines flight MH17 from Amsterdam was shot down near the village of Grabove in the insurgent-held territory in Eastern Ukraine, with the loss of 298 lives; an international investigation into the causes was launched (ibid.). In August, a Russian humanitarian convoy delivered aid to Eastern Ukraine, crossing the border into the country without the necessary permission from Ukraine; some days later Ukraine released a video showing a recording of several Russian paratroopers who were captured on the Ukrainian territory, the first public evidence of the direct Russian involvement in the fighting (ibid.). In September 2014, the insurgents and the Ukrainian government signed a truce in Minsk – the

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continues to use the Russian transliteration, Kiev. It was decided to use in this thesis the same spelling as RT for clarity as the use of two different spellings can be confusing to both read and write.

truce was broken in January 2015 with a major fight between the Ukrainian and the insurgent forces. Several more ceasefire agreements had been signed between the insurgents and the Ukrainian government between 2015 and 2017, and the situation was branded a ‘frozen conflict’<sup>7</sup>; however, major fighting broke out in late January 2017, described as the biggest and the deadliest campaign in the country since 2015. This study’s sample of the events in the war in Ukraine ends here as at this point the data collection was concluded.

### **War in Syria**

The war in Syria can be tracked from the 2011 protests that are seen as a part of the so-called Arab spring. Violent unrest spread over the country after Syrian security forces shot protesters in the city of Deraa in March 2011 (BBC 2019). Armed confrontation between the anti-regime protesters and the government troops continued over the next months while Syria was suspended from the Arab League and the international negotiations for peace included more and more countries (ibid.). In June 2014 the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (referred to as IS from here on in this thesis) militants declared "caliphate" on a territory stretching from Syria to Iraq (ibid.). However, this study’s look at the war in Syria starts with Russia’s involvement in September 2015 as Russia conducted the first airstrikes in the country on the request of the Syrian government. A controversy followed the start of the campaign as Russia declared its target was IS, but the West and the Syrian opposition groups argued that the campaign overwhelmingly targeted anti-Assad rebels (ibid.). Over the next few months of Russian involvement the Syrian troops advanced; in March 2016 Putin announced that Russia’s Syrian mission had been accomplished; later in the same month the Syrian government forces retook Palmyra from IS with Russian air assistance, and a major Russian orchestra was flown in to perform in the city in what was largely seen as a display of

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<sup>7</sup> Though the legal applicability of this term has been contested (see for example Grant 2019).

both soft and hard power by Russia (ibid.). In December 2016, the Syrian troops, backed by the Russian air power and the Iranian-sponsored militias, recaptured Aleppo, the country's largest city, which deprived the rebels of their last major urban stronghold. In early April 2017 more than 80 people were killed in a suspected chemical attack on the rebel-held town of Khan Sheikhoun in north-western Syria, the majority of countries and international organisations attributed the attack to the Syrian army while Russia supported Syria's declarations of innocence; as a response to the attack the United States launched 59 cruise missiles on the Shayrat Airbase, a Syrian airfield near the town of Shayrat, believed to be the base for the aircraft that carried out the chemical attack (ibid.). This event is the last event that this thesis looks at as at this point the data collection was concluded.

## **1:2 Structure of this thesis**

This dissertation consists of 9 chapters. **Chapter 1** introduces the research project by providing the brief context of research, the research questions, the methodology and the general framework.

**Chapter 2** presents the main conceptual framework of this study by examining the concepts of public diplomacy, propaganda and post-truth. It reviews the main definitions and understandings of the concepts of public diplomacy and propaganda and their components, reviews the relevant scholarly writing on post-truth and produces a working definition of the concept which will be used for the analysis in the thesis. It further reviews the main messages and tools of Soviet propaganda aimed at foreign audiences, and the main messages and understandings of public diplomacy in modern Russia.

**Chapter 3** provides the context on the environment in which RT operates by looking at the relationship between Russian media and politics and the ways in which Russian national media covered the wars in Ukraine and in Syria. The final sections of the chapter look at RT -

the channel's history and positioning in the global media sphere, as well as findings of the existing academic studies that focused on the channel.

**Chapter 4** reviews the methodology employed in this dissertation. It explains and justifies the research design, sampling and the quantitative and qualitative methods employed in the thesis. It lays out application of each particular method and presents the additional research questions.

**Chapter 5** presents and analyses the first findings of this thesis, the findings of the qualitative document analysis of 19 Russian foreign policy documents. The chapter explains and analyses what this thesis will call the Russian foreign policy agenda: a set of views that describe the Russian worldview in regard to the world, international politics and Russia's role in them.

**Chapter 6** presents and analyses the numerical and statistical data obtained through the quantitative content analysis. Findings are analysed in conjunction with the analysis presented in Document Analysis in Chapter 5 and the analytical concepts of public diplomacy and propaganda presented in Chapter 2.

**Chapter 7** presents the results of the qualitative textual analysis and analyses them with regard to the findings of the content analysis, the document analysis and the analytical concepts of propaganda, public diplomacy, and post-truth presented in Chapter 2.

**Chapter 8** unifies and discusses the results of all three research methods, discusses this study's theoretical contributions and concludes the thesis. First of all, this chapter turns to the second research question connected to post-truth and discusses the findings of the content and textual analyses in relation to the working definition of the concept presented in Chapter 2. Secondly, the chapter reviews and summarises the findings of both content and textual



analyses in relation to propaganda and its devices and techniques, and looks at RT in its role as an agent of Russian public diplomacy. Finally, it explains how this study contributed to existing literature and gives suggestions for future studies.

### **1:3 Conclusion**

Overall, this is a study of both Russian foreign policy and public diplomacy as an audience-facing incarnation of it, of Russian international media, of how it positions itself among global media and how it covers events that are of critical importance to the Russian government. This study examines the relationship between the official Russian foreign policy agenda and the Russian viewpoint of major global events that RT promises to deliver to its audiences. It is also a study of the post-truth communication environment and how it gets appropriated by political communication.

By studying a large sample of RT news coverage quantitatively the study will provide an unprecedented view into the structure of the news content published by RT in two different languages and over the period of almost four years and over two different conflicts. The data and insights obtained through this thesis will fill the gap in research literature regarding the channel as both a political and a media actor, Russian foreign media and international relations in general.

Then by qualitatively analysing the Russian foreign policy documents and the longer texts in RT coverage, the study will offer a thorough examination of the ways in which RT's Russian viewpoint relates to the official Russian foreign policy agenda, and whether the ways in which RT communicates with the audiences fit the label of propaganda.

Finally, by reviewing the current scholarly understandings of post-truth, the thesis will develop a definition that can be used in further analysis of political communication actors and their strategies. By also analysing RT's coverage from the point of view of post-truth, the study contributes to understanding the ways in which traditional media actors and public diplomacy actors in general as well as Russian actors in particular contribute to and benefit from the post-truth communication environment.

## Chapter 2. Literature review

### 2:1 Introduction

This thesis is interested in the relationship between media content and politics in general, and in particular between the content published by the Russian state-funded international broadcaster RT and the Russian foreign policy agenda. When academics write about RT they don't always agree on the choice of terminology. Some identify the channel as propaganda (Averginos 2009; Makhashvili 2017; Orrtung & Nelson 2019), others call it 'state-linked' (Ramsay & Robertshaw 2019), 'state-aligned' (Chatterje-Doody 2018; Chatterje-Doody & Tolz 2019), 'Kremlin-controlled' (Hansen 2015: 149), an agent of soft power and public diplomacy (Miazhevich 2014; Strukov 2014; Simons 2014, 2015; Yablokov 2015; Kuznetsova 2018; Kalugina 2018; Dajani et al 2019), as well as the 'tool of the information war' or the hybrid war (Krug 2017; Meister & Puglierin 2015). What is clear from these labels is that there is some sort of a relationship between RT and the Russian government, and the disagreements between the scholars mentioned above are about the nature and degree of this relationship and how it could be understood normatively.

The main conceptual frameworks of studying the close relationships between media and governments are those of propaganda and, when the case includes foreign audiences, public diplomacy. It is this chapter's goal to detail the conceptual background of this study, exploring the notions of public diplomacy and propaganda on which this thesis is built.

First, the chapter will look at the definitions and understandings of public diplomacy as a concept; then it will focus on propaganda, looking at definitions, understandings and the main devices and techniques. By reviewing and contextualising both concepts and their academic understandings the chapter will be able to analyse the RT conflict coverage in relation to both

terms in order to address on one hand the accusations of the channel being ‘Kremlin’s propaganda machine’ (Ioffe 2010; Dowling 2017; Schifrin 2017; Hutchings 2018; Coyle 2018; Warrick & Troianovski 2018; Ross 2018; Troianovski 2019), and on the other hand RT’s own explanation of their work and mission of providing the audiences with a Russian viewpoint on major global events (which, as the chapter will later show, is a classic public diplomacy goal).

As the second research question of this study brings in the concept of post-truth and focuses on the ways in which the content on RT engages in communication that can be classified as post-truth, this chapter also reviews the most relevant writing on post-truth: how it is understood and defined, and how the concept is used in research. As a result, this chapter provides a working definition of post-truth which will be used in this thesis to analyse and discuss the findings.

Finally, the last two sections of the chapter will present a look at the research that examined the concepts of public diplomacy and propaganda in Russia and the Soviet Union. First, a section will present an overview of the Soviet propaganda – including how the practice was understood in the USSR, and its main messages and tools. As Russia as a country is officially positioned as the successor of the Soviet Union, and many of the media professionals and officials have started their careers in the Soviet times, this look would be able to provide the essential context for the thesis. Importantly, the section will include works by post-Soviet scholars in order to balance any Cold War-informed views of the Soviet propaganda. The final section of the chapter will examine the existing academic studies that look at the Russian public diplomacy: it will provide a brief historical overview of the development of the public diplomacy practice in modern Russia and put in context both the foreign policy

documents which will be studied in Chapter 5, and RT's own positioning and content, studied in Chapters 6 and 7. As post-truth is a new concept, it remains relatively unstudied, which is why this chapter does not provide an overview of how the concept is applied to Russia – instead section 2:4 of this chapter briefly explains how the concept is relevant to the topic of this thesis.

## **2:2 Public diplomacy**

### ***2:2:1 History of the concept***

Public diplomacy started developing as a yet unnamed concept as diplomacy fell under media and public scrutiny in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and became more important as Cold War meant that countries needed to gain support not just in the political but also in the public spheres (Gilboa 2008). As a modern concept, public diplomacy grows out of the Cold War era opposition of the USA and the USSR (Snow 2014: 67). Some explain the shift towards public diplomacy by the expansion of the communication technology and greater public participation in politics and foreign affairs (Signitzer & Coombs 1992: 139). Another widely held view states that the reason the new terminology was timely in 1956 was because there was a need for an alternative for the word 'propaganda', a fresh turn of phrase liberated from the negative connotations (Snow 2014; Cull 2006). The term itself was first used in 1965 by Edmund Gullion, dean of the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University (Cull 2006).

There are two main ways to look at the way public diplomacy was both practiced and researched over its 50-year history. One of them focuses on the research tied tightly to the US foreign policies and international relations, dividing the timeline into two waves of both public diplomacy practice and research: during the Cold War (1948-1991), when the

governments played the central role in driving public diplomacy<sup>8</sup>, and after the September 11 attacks in the USA, when it became clear that the opinions of foreign publics don't only matter to diplomats in terms of simple popularity but can also have serious domestic consequences (Zaharna 2015; Nye 2008). Even though this USA-centric timeline is used by many researchers to this day, it is often criticised as one-sided for the exclusive focus on the US experiences during various points in history (Gilboa 2008).

The second way to look at the development of public diplomacy is through the prism of the technological and communicational progress. The revolution in communication technologies meant the expansion of the international news networks and the internet, both of which made it easier to disseminate information, and, crucially for public diplomacy, to reach international audiences without the constraints of traditional diplomacy and foreign governments, which now allowed countries "to reach directly into the hearts and minds of foreign audiences" (Gilboa 2008, Yli-Kaitala 2014).

It is also important to consider the increasing importance of reputation and image in international relations. Snow (2012) calls this development the Age of Persuasion, when image and information wars become worthy of state attention in the same way as wars fought with weapons: "Events don't just happen as points in history but instantly emerge as competing narratives where truth is not as important as believability". The mention of competing narratives is particularly important to this study – as the next chapter will show, providing alternative narratives of events to those broadcast by the mainstream media is one of RT's self-described goals, and the discussion of competing narratives is the central one in

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<sup>8</sup> The role of the governments in public diplomacy decreased since the early 1990s as new person-to-person and public-to-public dimensions grew more prominent with the rise of global citizen activism and global media (Snow 2014: 68).

the scholarly discussions of post-truth. Plavsak (2008: 115) argues that in this environment, diplomacy has not only learned to work with the media but also how to manipulate it and manage it according to the country's needs as politicians and diplomats spend as much time on air defending the governments' policies as they do actually working on them. Gilboa (2008), in his turn, criticises the studies of public diplomacy that in this media- and communication-driven environment still fail to employ the theories of relations between the media, the government and the public, such as the CNN effect (see Robinson 2002: 25), and the theories of agenda-setting (see McCombs 2005: 550) and priming (see Arendt 2013: 348).

### ***2:2:2 Definitions, models, actors***

Defining public diplomacy is also increasingly difficult as the concept is often used interchangeably with adjacent terms that are connected to similar issues and questions from different perspectives, apart from propaganda these concepts include nation branding, soft power and PR (Simons 2014, Gilboa 2008). Many researchers presented definitions of public diplomacy over the years, and a brief summary of the first academic definition of public diplomacy in history, coined by Edmund Guillon, explains that public diplomacy 'deals with the influence of public attitudes on the formation and execution of foreign policies' and includes 'the cultivation by governments of public opinion in other countries; [...] the reporting of foreign affairs and its impact on policy' (Cull 2006). The most commonly operated modern definition argues that public diplomacy is:

A type of communication that happens between a government and a foreign audience and deals with the influence of public attitudes on the formation and execution of foreign policies and cultivation by governments of public opinion in other countries (Jowett and O'Donnell 2012: 287).

Other researchers' definitions provide additional layers and components. For example, Signitzer & Coombs (1992) introduced into the definition the actors of public diplomacy, who could be connected to the state, or could be private, including media and NGOs (Jowett and O'Donnell 2012); Snow (2014: 72) distinguished between three layers of public diplomacy (monologic, dialogic and collaborative: from government broadcasts to joint projects with the publics); Zaharna (2015: 109) argued that public diplomacy is strategic communication, linking it even further to foreign policy strategy; Plavsak (2008: 113) specified that public diplomacy attempts to strengthen "the efficiency and effectiveness of one's foreign policy by means of a systematic multi-fold communication". It is these multiple links between public diplomacy and foreign policy which inform this dissertation's decision to look at RT coverage with reference to the Russian foreign policy agenda. However, it is not just the governments that can be the source of public diplomacy - media, NGOs and corporations can be actors as well states (Yli-Kaitala 2014). As RT is a state-funded non-profit, this specification is particularly interesting. Finally, it is important to understand that definitions of public diplomacy will be different for every country depending on its goals and objectives in the sphere of foreign policy, and that practitioners and researchers must keep an open mind when discussing traditions of public diplomacy and understand that the UK and US traditions are not the only possible ones (Snow 2014: 72).

Talking about media and public diplomacy, international broadcasting operations such as RT are seen as crucial in promoting a country's interests among global audiences: they help to deliver messages about the country, increase trust and confidence in an international actor, and allow news events to be tailored to specific goals of a country to create news messages that reinforce the agenda and help build links with foreign audiences (Yablokov 2015: 303), although some researchers express doubt about the true impact that media can have as public



diplomacy actors because of their one-way, monologic broadcast model (Snow 2014: 74). In discussion about the Russian public diplomacy, it is important to note that only RT is studied in this thesis but there are many other public diplomacy channels in Russia, including digital ones that might be more fitting to the discussion of multi-channel interactive public diplomacy. Therefore, this study is not aiming to evaluate Russian public diplomacy in general but rather study just one outlet that has been connected to it<sup>9</sup>.

While the main objective of public diplomacy is obvious from the definitions - to improve the public's opinions for the benefit of the country, sub-objectives of the practice include "information exchange, the reduction of prejudices and cliches, the creation of sympathy for their own foreign policy and model of society, self-portrayal, and image-building" (Signitzer & Coombs 1992: 139), and the ability to 'resist political pressure and cultural expansion of foreign countries and ensure the preservation of the national uniqueness' (Bokeriya and Diyeva 2015: 81).

### **2:2:3 Public diplomacy and other concepts**

#### *Soft power*

Soft power is a concept first introduced by Joseph Nye Jr in 1990 but the term was defined and further developed 14 years later in 2004 in the book *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, where Nye (2004: 5) describes soft power as is one's ability to influence the behaviour of others to get the outcomes one wants, and further places it in the political context in contrast to 'hard power' which uses military and economic means instead of attraction and values. He explains that soft power can come through the means of attractive national values, ideas and policies as well as pop culture, entertainment and education, and

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<sup>9</sup> Chapter 3 on Russian media and RT presents an argument for looking at RT as a public diplomacy channel.

also argues that it's policies of the state and not just a good soft power strategy that define the efficiency (ibid.).

Soft power is a concept that is used in conjunction with public diplomacy very often. Nye (2008: 94) explains the connection by saying that public diplomacy is one of the main tools of soft power. Soft power resources are the assets that produce attraction to the country, and public diplomacy is an instrument that governments use 'to mobilize these resources, to communicate with and attract the publics of other countries, rather than merely their governments' (ibid.: 95). Rawnsley (2015: 273) also writes that public diplomacy is a tool of soft power, and that the success of a country's soft power policies depends on the communication through the public diplomacy channels that can make sure that the ideas, values, policies and behaviour are reaching the target foreign audiences without obstacles.

International broadcasting, Nye (2008: 95) notes, can only be efficient if the policies that it promotes are already attractive - and that the best broadcasting or 'promoting' strategy cannot help in the absence of existing attraction and soft power. This idea was later developed further by Nye (2013) in an article in the *Foreign Policy* magazine, where he argued that Russia doesn't 'get' that the concept of soft power that ultimately depends on attractive policies, and that the country is trying to 'spin' unpopular policies into becoming soft power, a strategy that is doomed to fail because soft power has to originate from 'good' policies and a civil society, not the state itself. Similar views were expressed by Edward R Murrow several decades earlier, who also said that good policies are crucial for a successful public diplomacy strategy: "American traditions and the American ethic require us to be truthful, but the most important reason is that truth is the best propaganda and lies are the worst. To be persuasive, we must be believable; to be believable we must be credible; to be credible we must be

truthful” (in Cull 2008a: 189). This view, however, was criticised by several other scholars and diplomacy experts. For example, Konstanin Kosachev, former head of the Russian public diplomacy organisation Rossotrudnichestvo, argues that this attitude to Russia’s soft power strategy is patronising as it denies the country an opportunity to define its own policies (in Makinen 2016: 111). Simons (2014) also defends the use of the concept of soft power in relation to Russia and argues that the country understands the concept in a way that is different from Nye's initial definition but still applies.

### *Strategic Narratives*

Strategic narratives are defined by Miskimmon et al (2015: 341) as a way for political actors to shape a ‘shared meaning of the past, present and future of international politics’ in order to influence the behaviour of audiences and actors. In other words, states or actors aim to narrate the world and international affairs in order to get others to ‘experience the world’ (ibid.) on their terms, and the practice is akin to storytelling in the name of national and international politics (Pamment 2014b). In this sense, the concept is closely related to both soft power and public diplomacy as it is also concerned with sharing a state’s understanding of events with others in order to influence audiences and garner support. Strategic narratives are increasingly discussed in the context of the modern communication environment where more and more actors participate in formation, projection and contestation of narratives (Roselle et al 2014), which is connected to the way this thesis examines and defines the concept of post-truth later in this chapter.

Strategic narratives exist at three levels: International System Narratives that explain how the world works, National Narratives that construct the story of a state or a nation, and Issue Narratives, which argue for certain policies and initiatives (Miskimmon et al 2014). This

levelled understanding is similar to the way this thesis looks at the Russian foreign policy agenda in Chapter 4 as it examines how Russia sees the world and international politics (including any issues, events and situations in it), and how Russia sees its own place and role in the world. In addition, the concept of strategic narratives is central to many of the studies of Russian foreign policy, public diplomacy and RT that are reviewed and referred to later in this thesis (see for example Khaldarova & Pantti 2016; Miskimmon & O'Loughlin 2017; Szostek 2018; Hinck et al 2018; Dajani et al 2019).

### *PR*

Public relations (PR) is defined as a 'strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their publics' (in Smith 2014: 9).

Signitzer and Coombs (1992: 137) introduce a definition of international public relations by Wilcox et al that inches closer to the definition of public diplomacy as it describes international PR as "the planned and organized effort of a company, institution or government to establish a mutually beneficial relationship with the publics of other nations".

Thus, both PR and public diplomacy deal in communication between an organisation (or a government) and the public with the means to promote ideas or establish relationships.

Because of the overlap between two concepts there are studies where researchers use the phrase 'public relations' when describing the public diplomacy activities of countries, sometimes using phrases like 'state PR' (see Koschwitz in Signitzer & Coombs 1992; Feklyunina 2008).

### *Place/Nation branding*

Place branding and nation branding are adjacent concepts in the sphere of PR, marketing and public diplomacy. Some researchers (see Volcic & Andrejevic 2011; Varga 2013) make a

distinction between place branding and nation branding, specifying that place branding refers to promoting a certain country or place as a tourist destination as opposed to nation branding, which has more to do with culture, economics, and politics. However, others (see Gilboa 2008; Van Ham 2012; Jordan 2014; Vasylenko 2015) use the concepts as synonyms, using place branding as a concept referring to the political promotion of countries as well, and in conjunction with the concepts of soft power and public diplomacy. Both concepts emerged in the late 1990s and early 2000s as ‘nation states found themselves competing for economic and political capital in the global marketplace’ (Volcic & Andrejevic 2011: 588). This way, similar to soft power and public diplomacy, nation branding is yet another concept that is connected to the idea of the new world order where soft power and attraction is seen as important as hard power, if not more (Browning & Ferraz De Oliveira 2017: 484). The overlap between these concepts and public diplomacy is also emphasised by the fact that both are part of the constructivist paradigm since they build on the understanding that territorial or political actors have considerable agency in shaping their place and role in international politics and use social power by uploading new norms and values and pushing for new rules and standards (Van Ham 2012).

Interestingly, Volcic & Andrejevic (2011) list RT as an example of the Russian nation branding efforts, and overall their examples of nation branding efforts include “state-sponsored branding campaigns, sub-contracted to private consultants and designed to serve multiple purposes including, but not limited to, the attraction of foreign investment, tourism, and the pursuit of public diplomacy” (ibid.: 601).

### **2:3 Propaganda**

As defining propaganda has been often closely tied with the world politics, this overview of the definitions will consider the historical context in which they were conceived. This section

does not mean to present a full overview the history of the term and everything that has ever been said about it but rather it aims to put in context the accusations of RT being ‘Putin’s propaganda’ and the mouthpiece of the Kremlin. The following section briefly looks at types of propaganda and attributes and tools of the process. Then a separate section is dedicated to understanding the relationship between the concepts of propaganda and public diplomacy.

### ***2:3:1 Definitions***

Countless researchers defined propaganda over time. Even though the popularisation of the term is often associated with the early 20th century and the two world wars, the term’s roots are much deeper (Jowett and O’Donnell 2015: 2). However, since this study looks at the media and diplomacy situation in modern Russia, it is mainly interested in the definitions and characteristics of propaganda that are concerned with the modern political understanding of the term, so mainly scholarly writing from the 20th and 21st century will be reviewed.

A common theme in the definitions of propaganda is the dissemination or promoting of particular ideas (Jowett and O’Donnell 2015: 2). However, many definitions portray propaganda as a process that is unethical, harmful and includes unfair tactics such as manipulation. For example, a definition that focuses on the communication process and its purpose defines propaganda as ‘the deliberate, systematic attempt to shape perceptions, manipulate cognitions, and direct behavior to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist’ (Jowett and O’Donnell 2015: 7), or a ‘careful and predetermined plan of prefabricated symbol manipulation to an audience in order to fulfil an objective’ (Jowett and O’Donnell in O’Shaughnessy 2004: 18). Major propaganda scholar Jacques Ellul (in Marlin 2013: 349) defines propaganda as “a means of gaining power thanks to the support of the psychologically manipulated groups or masses, or for using this power with support of

the masses”. Harold Laswell’s (1995: 13) definition of propaganda also uses the theme of manipulation as it describes it as a technique “of influencing human action by manipulation of representations”. O’Shaughnessy (2004: 18) even insists that non-manipulative propaganda is an oxymoron.

A more neutral definition was given by a Cold War researcher Shawn J. Parry-Giles who studied the propaganda production of the Truman and Eisenhower Cold War operations and defined propaganda as “strategically devised messages that are disseminated to masses of people by an institution for the purpose of generating action benefitting its source” (in Jowett and O’Donnell 2015: 6). Interestingly, researchers who study propaganda production in their own countries, like Parry-Giles above, tend to present definitions that define the process in a more neutral way than those who study propaganda in other countries, especially in ‘enemy’ countries in the Cold War context. The same holds true for post-Soviet researchers, for example, Vasilyeva (2014: 1), who directly links propaganda to public relations, saying propaganda is a predecessor of PR. Further, Bokeriya and Diyeva (2015: 85) define propaganda as the “dissemination and affirmation in the public consciousness of ideologically based systems of views and notions that form a worldview of a person or a society’. Russian researchers Livshin and Orlov write about propaganda as a type of communication calling to action, but in a way devoid of negative connotations:

Unlike other types of communication that are connected with the desire to inform, to express own opinion or to gain respect, the basis of propaganda is an organised will, desire to persuade others or to call them to action (Livshin & Orlov 2007: 25).

Propaganda scholar Edward Bernays (2005: 37) also argued against the negative interpretations of the word and wrote that propaganda is ubiquitous and our entire experiences as humans in the modern world is shaped by it. In *Propaganda*, first published in

1928, he stated that propaganda is not good or bad (this depends upon the merit of the cause urged) but is instead simply a process; while calling the harmful kind of propaganda the 'new propaganda' (ibid: 48). In line with this is a different definition by Laswell (1995: 18), where he identifies the main task of the propagandist: "intensify attitudes favourable to their purposes, to reverse obstructive attitudes, to win over the indifferent or at least to prevent them from being antagonistic". Some definitions of propaganda further connect it to foreign policy and bring it close to the definitions of public diplomacy, for example one that defines it as the "process organized and carried out by officials... as part of the normal conduct of foreign policy" (Carr in Barghoorn 1964: 9).

Finally, Hazan (1976: 13) argues that since there is no agreement on what exactly propaganda is in theoretical terms, there can be no agreement on whether certain communication or activity can even be called propaganda. And O'Shaughnessy (2004: 36) in an attempt to define the concept analyses the most popular definitions by propaganda scholars - the chapter dedicated to just this task takes up 24 book pages – but he concludes that there can be no final closure in the debate on the meaning and definition of propaganda. Further, Harb (2011: 5) writes that no one could claim to give a final definition of propaganda as throughout history people have seen and defined it in very different ways. Thus, there are still a lot debates and disagreements on the ways to define, describe and therefore identify propaganda.

Additionally, the ways in which scholars and professionals understand the term seems to be dependent on political views and affiliations, or, as Harb (ibid.: 19) puts it, on 'whether you (or the group you represent) are the one who benefits from the propaganda'. This is especially visible when looking at the majority of the definitions of propaganda given during Cold War. All this makes the task of analysing RT content in relation to foreign policy and to the concepts of propaganda and public diplomacy more difficult and more relevant.



### ***2:3:2 Devices and techniques of propaganda***

Jowett and O'Donnell (2015: 20) identify two forms of propaganda: white propaganda that comes from a correctly identified source and carries an accurate message, and black propaganda that conceals the source or is wrongly credited, that aims to spread lies, fabrications and deceptions. A more complex classification comes from Ellul (1968: 62) who divides propaganda into categories of political propaganda (organised by a political group or actors), sociological propaganda (one where instead of one group spreading an ideology to another, the existing political, sociological and economic factors allow the ideology to penetrate the masses), agitation propaganda (one that gets people to act) and integration propaganda (one that gives cohesion to a group rather than stirring up divisions). He also specifies sub-groups of vertical propaganda (one that is directed by the few people at the top), horizontal propaganda (where groups leaders interact with the masses on an equal level), rational propaganda (one that appeals to facts and figures) and irrational propaganda (one that appeals to myths and emotions) (ibid.: 80). Picking up on one of Ellul's categories, O'Shaughnessy (2004: 16) states that propaganda is viewed as primarily emotional and not rational persuasion; he further identifies an 'essential trinity' of propaganda tools as rhetoric, myth and symbolism (ibid.: 65). Further developing this idea of myth as a tool of propaganda, Vasilyeva (2014: 1) argues that it is actually the main goal of political propaganda to create and sustain a certain political mythology<sup>10</sup> where myths are part of the official narratives and discourses.

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<sup>10</sup> When talking about myths in propaganda it is important to note that 'myth' in this context is often understood as described by Eliade (1995: 7) "not as a 'fairytale', 'fiction', 'fantasy' but the way it was understood in primitive societies, where myth meant a real, authentic, important and sacral event that is used as an example to follow".

When talking of propaganda as a form of communication, Jowett and O'Donnell (2015: 50) identify five characteristics of propaganda: concealed purpose, concealed identity, control of information flow and the management of public opinion. And while noting that the full list of propaganda techniques would be endless, they present the following brief list of the main ones that could be used to evaluate a propagandist message:

- creating resonance (most effective messages repeat peoples' existing beliefs);
- referring to a credible source and using opinion leaders;
- exploiting people's conforming tendencies and group norms;
- holding a monopoly of communication sources;
- employing visual symbols of power;
- verbal symbolisation (through use of language associated with authority figures etc);
- appealing to emotions (ibid: 323).

Another prominent classification of propaganda devices comes from the Institute for Propaganda Analysis (IPA), which was founded in the US in 1937. This list of devices includes name-calling (attaching negative labels), glittering generalities (appeals to popular emotional, mostly positive notions), transfer (transferring qualities from an established actor), testimonial (having a respected person endorse an idea or a person), plain folks (conveying an idea that someone is 'one of the people'), card stacking (selective omission), and band wagon (peer pressure) (Conway et al 2007; Koa 2018).

### ***2:3:3 Public diplomacy or propaganda?***

The relationship between the concepts of public diplomacy and propaganda has been discussed in research but no real distinction criteria have been determined. Because of this

Saari (2014) writes that there is no conceptual difference between the two terms: “The difference is likely to lie in the eye of the beholder: propaganda is associated with one-sided and exaggerated attempts to influence audiences, whereas public diplomacy is usually understood in more neutral terms”. Cull (2013: 131) notes that public diplomacy is a term that was quite literally introduced instead of propaganda as Edmund Gullion, hailed as the reinventor of the term public diplomacy, was aware of the negative connotation that the word propaganda had, especially in 1965, when there was a strong need for a new name for an existing state activity. Russian diplomacy researcher Alexey Dolinsky described Gullion’s introduction and definition of the term public diplomacy as very vague and general precisely because the new term was meant to replace the concept of propaganda and

Needed to describe the existing practices of communicating with foreign audiences but on the other hand it also needed to establish a distance between the activity of the US and their allies and similar activities by the communist camp countries (Dolinsky 2011: 275).

However, there are scholars who take the opposing view. Snow (2012) makes an argument for separating the two concepts: she notes that even though public diplomacy is a term that was simply invented in propaganda’s stead, it is understood to be ‘far less manipulative than propaganda’. Propaganda, Snow (ibid.) continues, is “source-based, cause-oriented, emotion-laden content that utilizes mass persuasion media to cultivate the mass mind in service to the source’s goals”. However, she notes that the war on terror can be seen as an act of propaganda by some and a public diplomacy campaign by others (ibid.). Further, L’Etang (2009: 75) argues that public diplomacy should not include propaganda techniques but does not explain the criteria that is used to define one or the other. In this case it is possible to suggest that the unspoken difference is what Saari described above - propaganda is one-sided and harmful, and public diplomacy is a natural activity of a country. As was noted in an

earlier section of this chapter, there are disagreements on the definition of the word propaganda and therefore identifying any activity as propaganda, therefore this difficulty of definitions becomes the central issue in this discussion as well. When there is no definite and agreed upon way of describing one practice, comparing it to other similar practices is next to impossible.

One could suggest that the nature of the disagreements between scholars relayed above is connected to how they define propaganda. Those who believe that there is no negative connotation in the word propaganda are also less likely to see stark differences between propaganda and public diplomacy - for them, public diplomacy is essentially another word for propaganda. And those who see propaganda as unethical and harmful see public diplomacy as a concept that describes a more fair and balanced activity of the same nature. This thesis does not take a normative position in relation to this disagreement, while recognising the similarities and the differences between the two terms, as well as the political interpretations of them. The need to include both concepts in the analysis of the data in this thesis is explained by the fact that the two existing terms, propaganda and public diplomacy, and the perceived differences between them mean that historically the research and theory surrounding them developed in different directions – while the studies of propaganda often discuss the characteristics of the content of communication (like the persuasion tools and techniques), the studies of public diplomacy often focus on the strategy, actors, and the process. This way, utilising both concepts will allow this thesis to combine and explore these two areas of research in relation to RT, its work, positioning and its publications.

## **2:4 Post-truth**

The second research question of this study deals with the concept of post-truth and the role

that it plays in the studied RT coverage. This section of the chapter will examine how the concept of post-truth is understood by scholars, thus answering the first sub-question of the second research question: RQ2-a. What does post-truth mean in communication studies?

This thesis' initial interest in analysing RT coverage with reference to post-truth as a concept was borne out of the conversations around the channel's relationship with truth. On one hand, a report by the German Council on Foreign Relations states that:

The main goal of Russian foreign media<sup>11</sup> was originally to provide the international dissemination of the Russian worldview as an alternative to the Western perspective offered by CNN and the BBC. This function has changed; by popularizing conspiracy theories and defaming the West, Russian foreign media now aim to create the impression that everyone is lying and that there are no unequivocal facts or truths (Meister & Puglierin 2015).

This view that Russian media conveys the idea that there is no truth is seen as post-modernist by Fedchenko (2016: 146), who compares this position to that of the Soviet propaganda, which was highly ideological and conveyed a specific view of the world through the communist lens, while Russian media provide 'many clashing narratives in order to confuse different audiences with different messages.' Roloff & Dunay (2018: 23) further add that this way Russia 'profits from a divided set of views in the West', and Oates (2014) argues that the inclusion of multiple narratives of the same event comes as a result of the new media ecology, where statements from the challenging actors cannot be ignored and instead have to be shaped to fit Russia's strategic narratives. Another exploration of the multiple truths in RT comes in a study that looked at the channel's coverage of the poisoning of the former Russian

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<sup>11</sup> Of which RT is undoubtedly the most prominent one.

spy Sergei Skripal and his daughter in Salisbury, UK, in 2018, which found that RT published '138 separate – and often contradictory – narratives explaining the incident and its aftermath' (Ramsay & Robertshaw 2019).

RT's editor-in-chief Margarita Simonyan in an interview argued that RT, instead, reveals the truth for its many audiences abroad, supposedly by providing a different version of the world events from the ones shown by the Western media, which places RT's activity in the sphere of media pluralism:

If you read American blogs or comments on our YouTube channel, you'll see that 90% of the people say that thanks to us they found out the truth. Strangely there are many different truths in journalism. What you see depends on where you stand (Afisha Daily 2011).

These discussions show that the topics of truth and post-truth in RT – and Russian public diplomacy in general – are relevant new areas of inquiry that are still largely unstudied because of the novelty of the concept in use. It is this study's aim to add to the growing scholarly knowledge on this topic.

#### ***2:4:1 Definitions and components of post-truth***

In order to understand post-truth academically, we need to distinguish it from several adjacent concepts, such as fake news, propaganda, manipulation, rhetoric, lies, distortion, disinformation, misinformation and spin – while close in meaning, these words refer to different phenomena or different aspects of the same phenomena. While post-truth is sometimes used as an umbrella term for these and other concepts (Hutchings 2017; Buffachi

2020) it is important to separate them in academic discussions. This thesis focuses specifically on post-truth in its modern understanding outlined below.

The first definition of post-truth appeared in the Oxford Dictionaries as it was announced Word of the Year in 2016 and defined as a concept “relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief”<sup>12</sup> (Oxford Dictionaries 2016). Many other definitions of post-truth, particularly non-academic ones emerging in non-fiction follow the logic of the Oxford Dictionaries definition in creating an opposition between appeals to facts and emotions (see for example Ball 2017; D’Ancona 2017; Davis 2017); and some scholars who use the concept of post-truth in research refer directly to the Oxford Dictionaries definition (see Cheng & Lee 2019, Frangonikolopoulos & Poulakidakos 2017). However, the applicability of the definition in communication research is contested: one of the main concerns relates to the way the definition introduces objective facts and appeals to emotion as polar opposites, which, as scholars point out, is seen as problematic in contemporary media studies; others further ask whether emotions have ever not been important in shaping public opinion, begging the question whether the defined phenomenon is even new at all (Crilley 2018; Banis 2018; Braun 2019). Firstly, it must be acknowledged that the Oxford Dictionaries definition was not written to be used by media and politics scholars, who have now started coming up with their own understandings, which will be reviewed below. Secondly, while neither deceitful information in media nor partisan and government influence over it are new phenomena (in fact we can argue that they are as old as media itself), what is different about post-truth are the conditions, speed and scale at which partisan and/or misleading information

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<sup>12</sup> Post-truth/Definition of post-truth in English by Oxford Dictionaries:  
<https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/post-truth>

is produced and disseminated – it is these speed, scale and conditions that make post-truth a phenomenon worthy of a separate discussion (Hutchings 2017; Beckett 2017; Frangonikolopoulos & Poulakidakos 2017; Lewandowski et al 2017; Nerone 2017; Hannan 2018; Waisbord 2018; Bunce 2019; Kalpokas 2019).

These conditions, speed, and scale are dependent mainly on two major changes that took place in the sphere of politics and communication in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> and in the 21<sup>st</sup> century: the technological progress and the political and societal changes and developments since the end of the Cold War (Frangonikolopoulos & Poulakidakos 2017; Lewandowski et al 2017; Beckett 2017; Hutchings 2017; Hannan 2018; Waisbord 2018; Kalpokas 2019; Bunce 2019). In the discussion of the technological progress, several aspects in relation to communication and media are crucial: the personalisation of news consumption (Hutchings 2017) in combination with the algorithmic content selection (Kalpokas 2019a); the democratisation of the process of news production and dissemination that challenges the gate-keeping role of the media (Waisbord 2018; Kalpokas 2019); and the creation of spaces and platforms for the ‘communities of belief’ (Kalpokas 2019a). These aspects of the technological progress have resulted in an epistemic democracy<sup>13</sup> which allows multiple partisan communities to come together and promote their own epistemic truths (Waisbord 2018: 1870). When it comes to the political and societal changes, some scholars focus on the loss of the mainstream political and ideological consensus after the end of the Cold War and the end of the information scarcity environment shaped not only by the technological developments in media and communication but also by the removal of some market barriers and censorship practices (Waisbord 2018; Lewandowski et al 2017).

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<sup>13</sup> Waisbord (2018: 1870) explains epistemic democracy by the fluid boundaries of knowledge that are being moved by counter-epistemic communities anchored by common allegiances (political, ideological, religious, socio-demographical and others), as contesting forms of knowledge compete for the attention of the publics and legitimacy and power.



This way truth becomes fragmented and post-truth emerges because the way we decide what is true is by having a common frame of reference (knowledge, facts, convictions and beliefs). Thus, the main discussion around the issue of post-truth communication environment focuses on the polarisation of views, which, combined with the technological progress, allowed for the creation and multiplication of spaces for partisan communities. Rather than appealing to emotions instead of objective facts (which can happen outside of a post-truth environment), post-truth deals with a ‘plurality of facts due to the plurality of sources’ (Pocheptsov 2017: 211).

Despite the attempts by scholars to develop lists of traits and devices of post-truth communication (see for example Lewandowski et al 2017, Kalpokas 2019), the framing of the issue of post-truth around the content of communication is misleading as it is the dominant media and the new logic of the public discourse that are at the centre of discussions around post-truth, not the content of these media (Hannan 2018: 215). However, it is useful to briefly refer to some of the traits the authors list: the use of narratives<sup>14</sup> over statements of facts (Frangonikolopoulos & Poulakidakos 2017; Kalpokas 2019), appeals to emotion and affect (Frangonikolopoulos & Poulakidakos 2017; Watts 2018; Kalpokas 2019; Clark 2018; Duncombe 2019; Durnova 2019; De Michelis 2020), and the denial of the mainstream expertise combined with an extensive use of the ‘alternative experts’ who support the partisan ideas transmitted in the content (Lewandowski, Ecker & Cook 2017; Braun 2019; Ramsay 2019; Durnova 2019;). Clark (2018) and Kalpokas (2019) also point out the prevalence of repeated assertions rather than factual rebuttals of the challenges and disputes. In essence

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<sup>14</sup> Kalpokas (2019: 16) argues that narratives supply an explanation on how the world works and are strengthened by confirmation bias and belief echoes. In media terms this trend can be understood as placing news stories within existing media narratives.

these traits are similar to the propaganda tools and techniques discussed in the previous section of this chapter, which shows that, removed from the conversation about the new communication environment resulting from the technological and societal changes, the discussion of post-truth amounts to the discussion of propaganda. However, while propaganda has one producer and an organised dissemination practice, post-truth is an environment that is the result of a clash of multiple producers on the new diverse information scene. While the focus on the new logic of public communication instead of the content establishes the biggest difference between post-truth and propaganda, some might suggest that certain propaganda traditions employ techniques that are close to post-truth by spreading disinformation and rumours – known as smoke screens or flak (Knekht 2014; Frangonikolopoulos & Poulakidakos 2017; Suiter 2017; Gatov 2018); it is important to understand that post-truth is primarily associated not with deception, lies, misinformed audiences, and the lack of correct information but instead with an abundance of information and a ‘destabilisation of truth-telling narratives grounded in facticity and reason’, like the ones spread by journalism (Waisbord 2018: 1872), with the confrontation with ‘certain hegemonic types of truth making’ (Neimark et al 2019: 614). Thus, discussions of post-truth in media are connected to discussions of the relationship between the media content and reality that have existed in media and journalism research for a while (Shoemaker & Reese 1996; Zassoursky 2004; Knekht 2014; Hansen 2015; Kablukov 2015; Dubrovskaya & Kozhemyakin 2017; Sumskaia & Sumskoi 2018); they ask: does the media reflect reality, and, if it does, whose reality does it reflect? In a post-truth environment, the number of reflected realities<sup>15</sup> grows as multiple partisan truths find reflection in a new digital environment as traditional media loses some of its truth-establishing monopoly powers.

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<sup>15</sup> ‘Realities’ in this context can be understood as alternative epistemologies or partisan truths (see for example Lewandowsky et al 2017).

Based on the scholarly writing presented above, this chapter offers its own working definition of post-truth, which is understood as a complex communication environment where the audiences are offered multiple ‘partisan truths’ as actors on new media, social media, and in traditional media compete to work in a climate of political and social polarisation.

## **2:5 Soviet propaganda**

This part of the chapter will focus on the history and theory of propaganda in the USSR. As the previous section of the chapter demonstrated, there is no agreement among scholars on whether propaganda and public diplomacy can be used as interchangeable concepts even though they are often used to describe similar activities. To add to this debate further this section of the chapter will demonstrate that in the USSR the word ‘propaganda’ did not have a negative connotation and was used to describe a state’s essential activity, similar to how public diplomacy is thought of today. Some studies even use the phrase ‘Soviet public diplomacy’ to refer to the Soviet propaganda, so at this point the study will not make a distinction between the two concepts as in reference to the Soviet Union they are often used to indicate similar activities of government-directed communication with foreign and domestic audiences.

The focus of this section will be on the external (or foreign) propaganda arm of the Soviet Union<sup>16</sup>. Many researchers (for example see Hazan 1976) note that the Soviet foreign propaganda was also present in unexpected activities like, for example, ballet, classical music, and sport, which are generally not considered related to propaganda, but this section

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<sup>16</sup> The country had two arms of propaganda, an internal (domestic) one aimed at its own citizens, and an external (foreign) one aimed at the publics abroad, only one of them corresponds to this study’s topic of public diplomacy.

will focus on the media and communications sub-branch of the foreign propaganda in the USSR. This is to ensure that any comparisons or analysis of the studied RT content with the theoretical framework established in this chapter are relevant.

It is also important to remember that the studies carried out and published by the Western researchers during the Cold War might be biased due to the nature of the relationship between the USSR and the West at the time. In order to avoid a one-sided view, this chapter will present Western studies of the Soviet propaganda efforts side by side with the studies by post-Soviet and Russian researchers, challenging and contrasting the claims made by both sides.

Looking at the ways in which propaganda was understood, conceptualised and employed in the USSR is of particular interest to this study as modern Russia is seen as the main 'heir' of the Soviet Union in many aspects including political and international relations traditions and tools. Some scholars claim that the public diplomacy and strategic communication practices in modern Russia are tied to the similar Soviet activities (Abrams 2016: 8). Additionally, Soviet Union is seen universally as one of the main producers of propaganda in the 20th century, which makes it pertinent to focus on the country's propaganda output not only because of the relevance to the study of RT but also because it makes up a significant part of the propaganda studies in the 20th century. Thus, understanding how propaganda was understood, what it looked like and what it was telling its audiences in the Soviet Union helps us understand the heritage and the political perceptions of the activity that were inherited by modern Russia, as well as the messages, means and techniques that have become over the years a part of the public consciousness in Russia and other post-Soviet countries, as well as the tools and means of propaganda developed in the 20th century in general.

## **2:5:1 Definitions of propaganda in the Soviet Union**

The most important aspect of understanding the role of propaganda in the USSR is understanding that the connotations of the word were starkly different in the Soviet Union compared to the Western countries - in the Soviet Union the word 'propaganda' did not carry any negative meanings (Clews 1964: 4). Where most Western definitions include the ideas of lying, manipulating and concealing intentions on the part of the disseminator of propaganda, the standard Soviet dictionary describes propaganda in neutral terms as an essential feature of the system: "Propaganda is the interpretation of idea, teachings, political opinions and knowledge, component parts of the work of the communist and workers' parties in the ideological training of the party masses and the toilers" (ibid.). This way propaganda in the Soviet state was meant to "influence the public consciousness with the goal of forming a specific world view and had the status of a consistent government policy" (Bokeriya and Diyeva 2015: 83) and to "'explain' Soviet socialism to both domestic and international audiences" (Magnusdottir 2019: 4). This connection of propaganda to a 'consistent government policy' again emphasises the similarities between the concepts of propaganda and public diplomacy, where communication with foreign audiences is embedded into a diplomacy plan. Further, we can see that the word was devoid of negative meanings, and the process of propagating ideas was seen as a natural foreign policy activity for the state and the Party, similar to how public diplomacy is seen today as an essential part of the foreign policy activity of a state.

Further link between Soviet propaganda and foreign policy has been explored by Vasiliy Gatov (2018), a former Russian journalist and a media researcher at the Annenberg School of Communication at the University of South California, who connects the more problematic

aspects of the Soviet propaganda tradition, such as ‘fakes’ and disinformation, to the foreign policy and notes that the Soviet disinformation activities were often linked to the specific foreign policy goals, for example there were many fake stories planted by Soviet propaganda that referred to the issue of the placement of American weapons and military bases in Europe, or targeted specific foreign politicians or parties whose goals contradicted those of USSR, or who were hostile to USSR. At the same time, Gatov notes, some fakes were planted without a specific goal and served to simply keep ‘fuelling the anti-Americanism in the Third World countries’ (ibid.). The ideas of disinformation, ‘fakes’, or manipulation of information are never mentioned directly in the official Soviet definitions or discussions of propaganda, however, we will see later in this chapter that they were widely employed.

Some post-Soviet researchers describe the Soviet foreign propaganda as a tool of Soviet diplomacy, thus bringing it close to the notion of public diplomacy: “heavily influenced by internal Soviet politics and political events” propaganda was geared for “achieving certain goals in its relationship with other countries or international organisations” by ‘sending information [...] to audiences abroad’ (Yeryomin 2013: 142). Others approach defining Soviet propaganda by looking at it as a tool of soft power which is used by the government ‘to resist foreign political pressures and cultural expansion, [...] to form a positive image of the state and strengthen the country’s international position’ (Bokeriya & Diyeva 2015: 81). As a function of propaganda in this regard Bokeriya and Diyeva (ibid: 87) point out the process of the explanation of policy documents to the population through the use of media, showcasing the ways the society can reach positive social and political change and pointing out the solutions to the issues facing the society. While their definition of soft power differs slightly from the classic definitions by the Western scholars discussed earlier in this chapter, Bokeriya and Diyeva are not only placing Soviet propaganda in the realm of public

diplomacy (and specifically framing it as a tool of soft power) and saying that it was used to uphold the Soviet national interests; they are also looking at the Soviet propaganda experience as an activity elevated to an official level of state business which had a dedicated budget and control organisations (ibid: 87). The idea of using international communication, whether it is called propaganda, public diplomacy or soft power, as a tool of upholding national interests on the international arena can be seen reflected in the description of RT given on the channel's About RT page on their website, which states that RT 'acquaints international audiences with a Russian viewpoint on major global events' (RT n.d.).

Connecting to this description from a different angle, researchers say that Soviet propaganda, for example in the form of publications in the official Pravda newspaper, were also seen abroad as an official point of view of the Soviet state, and in the situation where international relations and contacts between the USSR and other countries were limited, Pravda took on a role of an actor who worked not only for the internal Soviet audiences as a newspaper but also for the international audiences as a public diplomacy organisation (Antyukhova 2018: 6). Whether RT's publications are actually seen abroad as Russia's official position has not yet been studied, however, RT's self-description<sup>17</sup> makes it clear that it aspires to a reputation similar to the one of Pravda in the Soviet times.

When talking about Soviet and post-Soviet definitions of propaganda it is also important to note that some Russian and post-Soviet researchers of Soviet propaganda often distinguish between the concepts of propaganda and manipulation of public opinion, specifying that they understand manipulation of public opinion stands as introduction of information that seems objective but contains a concealed message; affecting societal pressure points that arouse fears, anxieties and hate; reaching concealed goals that depend on the public support (Livshin

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<sup>17</sup> RT "acquaints international audiences with a Russian viewpoint on major global events" (RT, n.d.)

& Orlov 2007: 14). Manipulation of public opinion and propaganda in its original Soviet understanding do share some traits, like the presence of a mass audience that the activity is targeted at, but propaganda is meant to broadcast the goals of communication publicly, and not to conceal them (ibid.). Complicating the division is the fact that manipulation is also understood by other researchers as one of the tools of propaganda; however, the goal of propaganda overall is much wider than that of manipulation of public opinion – it is to mobilise public opinion in support of the goals and values purporting to the national interest (ibid.). Adding further nuance to the concept Livshin and Orlov (ibid: 25) also distinguish totalitarian propaganda as a separate type of propaganda, with examples of Soviet propaganda, propaganda in Nazi Germany and Catholic church propaganda during the Counter-Reformation period. They describe totalitarian propaganda as the form of propaganda where state actors and state supporters monopolise the media and the use of public information for supporting the main ideology (ibid.). The notion of totalitarian propaganda includes self-censorship, bans, and taboos, and while propaganda in a society where pluralist media exist serves to persuade, establish support and mobilise the audiences, totalitarian propaganda contains a threat of violence for those who do not follow the propaganda line (ibid: 26). In other words, instead of a being a tool in a battle for public support, this kind of propaganda is a monologue broadcast from the regime to its subjects (ibid).

Bringing the Soviet definition of propaganda closer to the modern definitions of public diplomacy is the definition from Secretary's Handbook For Primary Party Organisations, published in Moscow in 1960, which describes propaganda as “the main means of linking the Party with the masses, the well-tried method of persuading the workers, explaining to them the policies of the Party” (in Clews 1964: 14). Bokeriya and Diyeva (2015: 83), however,



add, that the goal of the Soviet propaganda efforts was not only to explain the policies of the state to the audiences but also to “form a specific new type of world perception” among the audiences, one that was based on the Soviet’s proclaimed mission of building a socialist society. This elaboration introduces ideology (as world perception) as one of the aspects that unites many of the definitions of the Soviet propaganda, where it is present explicitly or implicitly through the connection of propaganda to the Soviet state. Moreover, propaganda in the Soviet context is defined simultaneously as an activity of spreading ideology and also as a tool of ideology (Ryabov 2012). The next section of the chapter will explore this relationship further.

### **2:5:2 Ideology and goals of the Soviet propaganda**

In the Soviet Union, all propaganda was tied to the communist ideology of the country, which played a key role in all the messages sent out by the propaganda outlets and was even seen as a priority over the informational value of the messages (Yeryomin 2013: 144). Staff working in various propaganda branches, including the media, were often called ‘ideology workers’ (Magnusdottir 2019: 12). In terms of media and communication this meant that the audiences not only received political news but also a clear assessment and evaluation of these news from a Soviet ideological point of view (Astashkin 2011: 22). Political censorship existed in foreign propaganda, and in both cases (in internal and external propaganda) the censorship was carried out before publishing or broadcasting, a practice that was established during the war but then remained a part of the Soviet system even after the war ended (Yeryomin 2013: 147).

Researchers note that propaganda was central to the USSR even coming into existence, as the revolution and creation of a new state was the result of years of propaganda by party activists

(Lasswell 1951: 67; Barghoorn 1964: 3). The importance of propaganda for building the new Marxist state and paving the way to the victory of communism was highlighted by Vladimir Lenin, who always emphasised political communication in his writing; propaganda as a Party activity was first discussed in a major way by Lenin in his 1902 pamphlet *What Is To Be Done* where he differentiated between the roles of a propagandist and an agitator: a propagandist, according to Lenin, must present many ideas, so many that they will only be understood by comparatively few people; an agitator, on the other hand, must present a single idea to the masses and arouse their feelings over this single idea (Clews 1964: 14; Chogandaryan 2013: 181). After Stalin's death in 1953, the difference between propaganda and agitation started to blur, the two activities blended into one, and the Party explained this as one of the achievements of communism - what used to be previously only available to a selected group of people is now targeting the masses (Hazan 1976: 33). However, this study will keep in mind Lenin's distinction between propaganda and agitation and further explore it in the textual analysis.

Because of the importance of ideology and also because of the way the propaganda was organised in terms of its relationship with different government branches, Soviet propaganda is seen a sub-branch of politics rather than social sciences (Benn 1985: 113). Moreover, Leonid Ilichev, the head of the Party's Department of Propaganda and Agitation in 1958-1961, who is known as one of the main ideologues of Soviet domestic and foreign propaganda, has announced at a Party meeting in 1960 that propaganda and building of communism in the USSR was no longer an internal Soviet affair but rather a "competition of the two social systems" existing in the world at the time (in Barghoorn 1964: 6). As the Cold War unfolded, foreign propaganda became not just a tool of promotion but a tool of survival

for the USSR, as both sides of the Cold War employed propaganda informed by their respective ideologies (Kolesnikova 2011: 30).

Barghoorn (1964: 6) underlines two themes that were important in the Soviet approach to propaganda: first is that survival and success of communism in the world as a movement is largely dependent on propaganda. The second theme is that Soviet propaganda is a political-ideological mission that sees its ultimate goal in three stages: overthrowing capitalism, establishing socialism, and, eventually, building communism (Barghoorn 1964: 7). This way, similar to the way the concept of public diplomacy links countries' internal policies with foreign policy activities, Soviet propaganda was also seen as an extension of not only the state's global interests but also internal ones. Similarly, Lasswell (1951: 65) describes the strategy of Soviet propaganda as inconsistent in the messages but united by the strategic aim to "maximize the power at home".

Finally, it is important to note that the prioritisation of ideology over information in Soviet propaganda meant that the messages and techniques of propaganda established in the audience's consciousness rather simplified and stereotypical views of the world both inside and outside of the USSR (Yeryomin 2013: 147). The next section of the chapter looks at these messages and techniques in more detail.

### **2:5:3 Messages, tools and techniques of Soviet propaganda**

This section of the chapter reviews the most prominent messages, tools and techniques discovered predominantly in the Soviet foreign propaganda, although in many cases they reflect the messages and techniques of the internal propaganda aimed at Soviet citizens,

which will also be discussed in this chapter in cases where it is relevant to the understanding of the overall messages and tools.

### *The Past*

Since ideology played a crucial role in the Soviet propaganda<sup>18</sup>, propaganda overall needed to produce a version of the past viewed through the lens of the socialist ideology. The phenomenon was named retrospective propaganda by Ulyanova (2015), who looks in particular at how Soviet propaganda reframed recent historical events when people who have witnessed or participated in them were still alive<sup>19</sup>. Engaging in the ‘politics of memory’, the Soviet government focused on certain aspects and occurrences in historical events and ignored and suppressed the others, actualising events from the past through the politics of the present and thus producing a new ‘collective memory’ (ibid: 42). Zemlyansky (2016: 108) adds that studies of history in the Soviet times have been tightly linked with political studies and worked, essentially, at the service of propaganda. When it comes to the Second World War (the Great Patriotic War), the propaganda efforts were engaged in mythologising the historical events in the collective memory, filtering out the negative aspects of the Soviet participation in the war that contradicted the main myth of war as an ‘epic battle between good and evil’, which was in turn creating an ‘us’ vs ‘them’ narrative that didn’t allow comparisons between the Stalin and the Hitler regimes (Tleuzh 2011). This way Soviet propaganda has turned the Great Patriotic War into a propaganda narrative where it was a symbol of the strength and heroism of the Soviet people and the Soviet state, of the wisdom of the Soviet authorities (ibid.). As a symbol it has become more important for the Soviet propaganda than the October revolution, and has outlived the USSR and continues to exist as

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<sup>18</sup> Or indeed, as some researchers see this relationship, Soviet propaganda was a part and a tool of the Soviet ideology.

<sup>19</sup> For example the Soviet propaganda’s reframing of the First World War as an ‘imperialist war’ in 1924.

a symbol in political and media narratives and in the collective memory in the post-Soviet countries today (ibid.).

When it comes to the use of the history of the other, mainly Western, countries in Soviet propaganda, Shigareva (2019: 77) points out the main narrative of the “flimsy roots of the Western version of the ‘free world’”, which focused on the events and persons in history that are understood negatively: “the crusades, colonialism, Machiavellianism, kaisers and Hitler” (ibid.). These reminders of the darker times in the Western history can be seen as an example of the polar opposite approaches to handling the Russian and Soviet histories where negative aspects, for example, as Tleuzh (2011) noted, the Molotov Ribbentrop pact, were not mentioned.

Overall, the use of history served two main purposes in the Soviet propaganda efforts: the ideological one, which worked to reframe history with ideological and political goals in mind, and the more practical one which increased credibility of both the Soviet authority and of the propagandist’s voice (as references to history are seen as scientific and accurate) (Shigareva 2019: 77). In relation to presenting the Western countries’ histories, the use of history in propaganda also highlighted the advantages of the communist system over the capitalist one (ibid.) Finally, all studies that focus on the use of own history as a Soviet propaganda tool present examples of how Russian history has been used as a propaganda tool, with only two examples of historical events or persons from other Soviet countries used in a similar way (in Zemlyansky 2016: 109). This way we need to specify that when we talk about the use of the Soviet history in Soviet propaganda, most of the history in question comes from Russia.

### *The Future*

Also stemming from the Soviet propaganda's relationship with ideology, and serving as a logical continuation of the idea of incorporating history and the past into propaganda is the idea of the future as a propaganda tool. This relationship with the past, present and the future in relation to propaganda has been described as 'attempts to establish ownership over time' (Shigareva 2019: 76). In relation to the use of the future the concept of 'bright future'<sup>20</sup> was essential for the Soviet ideology and propaganda (Vasilyeva 2014: 2), it offered a hopeful, utopian dream as a part of the propaganda (Zheltikova 2018; Fokin 2017; Uhl 2011). It is now understood as a tool that was necessary for the Party's objective of mobilising the population towards the Party's political, economic and ideological goals and guaranteed a high level of narrative control (Volodina & Alekhin 2015: 179).

Like the past was used to inspire audiences in the present, the idea of the bright future was also intrinsically connected in the Soviet propaganda to the portrayal of the issues and problems of the present (social, political and economic) that needed to be solved in order to achieve the promised future, which was portrayed as almost within reach, and as something that every citizen can contribute to (Volodina and Alekhin 2015: 180). The political obstacles on the path to the bright future are closely aligned with the ideology and the political propaganda and include as the main idea the concept of the Enemy that stands in the way of communist progress (ibid.). This way future signifies the point in time where the 'Enemy' (discussed in more detail in the following section of this chapter) has been defeated and communism has taken over.

### *The Enemy*

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<sup>20</sup> In Russian: светлое будущее

One of the main discursive tools of Soviet propaganda was the use of the image of the enemy (see Astashkin 2011, Kolesnikova 2011, Fedosov 2017, Magomedov & Chogandaryan 2013, Kostylev 2012, Weiss 2008, Fedosov 2013), which was employed extensively in both internal and external propaganda. The extent of the use of the image of the enemy in Soviet propaganda has been such that scholars suggest that it has become one of the key phenomena of the Soviet reality and an intrinsic part of the public consciousness, and that it is still an active tool of the Russian foreign policy and international relations activities (Magomedov & Chogandaryan 2013: 121).

Scholars define the image of the enemy in relation to ideology, where the ‘enemy’ becomes a stereotype as an ‘ideological expression of the social antagonism, a dynamic symbol of the forces hostile to the citizen and the state, a tool of the ruling elite’ (Fateyev in Magomedov & Chogandaryan 2013: 121). The use of image of the enemy as a tool projects the anxieties and fears of people, society, or the authorities onto a different entity to further solidify the ‘us’ in the face of the issue that needs to be solved (Magomedov & Chogandaryan 2013: 122). There are scholars who point out the similarities between the ‘Us’ and ‘Enemy’ in the Soviet propaganda practice and the Self and Other as sociological, anthropological and philosophical concepts (see Magnusdottir 2019, Vasilyeva 2014, Magomedov and Chogandaryan 2013) but most of the post-Soviet researchers who discuss the dichotomy of Us and Enemy and/or Self and Other in the Soviet propaganda do not bring in the works of foreign researchers who developed the concept (like Jacques Lacan, Claude Levi Strauss, Michel Foucault and Edward Said) but use the concept loosely, employing binaries such as Us and Them/Others, Own and Strange/Foreign. These concepts are based on the same distinctions and logic as the conceptualisation of Self and Other but focus on the black and white, ‘good versus evil’ narratives (Vasilyeva 2014: 2). For example, a study of the Soviet

news agency TASS found the recurring scenarios talking of the east-west, and especially Soviet-American opposition to follow a typical ‘good guys versus bad guys’ trope (Kruglak in Barghoorn 1964: 49).

At the same time, it is important to understand that this division in the Soviet discourse draws the line that separates Us and Enemy not along the state borders, nationalities, ethnicities, gender or any other way that is used to define the distinction between Self and Other in traditional scholarly work on the topics but by belonging to the same social class across all geographical borders (Brunova 2011: 27). This way, the ‘Americans’ were not an ‘enemy’ category in Soviet propaganda as the distinction was always made between the regular Americans, the struggling classes living under multiple oppressions of capitalism and racism (part of ‘Self’), and the ‘American elites’ as the source of the oppression (‘Other’). The same logic applied to other countries: the head of the Soviet Propaganda and Agitation Department during the WWII, Georgy Alexandrov has published an article<sup>21</sup> where he emphasised that German people and the Third Reich authorities were seen by the Soviets as two independent groups: “Soviet people have never equated the people of Germany with the criminal ruling fascist clique” (in Vasiliyeva 2010: 42). Researchers have pointed out this nuanced division as rather unusual for propaganda in general, comparing it for example with the American propaganda throughout the Cold War, where the enemy image often focused on “the Russians” and ‘the Soviets’ as a monolithic group (Magnusdottir 2019: 18). This narrative separation of the capitalist Western enemy that is used as a symbol of hostile Otherness and a tool in defining the Self is going to be useful in the analysis of the RT content as even the channel’s self-description introduces such a division by defining the channel as a ‘top non-

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<sup>21</sup> The article itself was meant to reach German people as a part of propaganda and promote the image of USSR in the country as the Red Army was slowly advancing towards Berlin and the Soviet government was increasingly aware of the spread of the anti-Soviet sentiments from its Western allies who did not want to see Soviet influence in Germany (Vasiliyeva 2010: 43)



Anglo-Saxon' media (see RT n.d; RT 2015). This way we can expect to see other instances in which this division is implemented.

It is also important to mention that the role of the 'enemy' in the Soviet propaganda communications was filled by different groups throughout history. Between 1944 and 1947 the propaganda projects the 'enemy' as Nazis (referred to in Russian by the phrase 'German-fascist occupants<sup>22</sup>') (Grigoryeva 2008: 92). Then with the backdrop of the Cold War the role of the enemy has shifted to what Astashkin (2011: 22) calls the 'Anglo-American bloc', or the 'West'<sup>23</sup> which, he specifies, was a flexible concept that was used to mean any countries or groups of countries that are hostile to the USSR or any other socialist countries. This way the ever-shifting idea of the 'West' becomes a 'constant reference point in all spheres and aspects' of the Soviet propaganda (Fedosov 2013: 106). However, these two distinct enemy groups - the Nazis and the West - were often presented as being like-minded, and the former allies that fought Hitler with the USSR were presented as 'heirs of Hitler's ideas on conquering Europe and the USSR' (Astashkin 2011: 22), to the point where a comparison of the 'German-fascist occupants' with the 'Anglo-American imperialists' was a trope recommended by the propaganda organisations for use in all propaganda branches (Astashkin 2011: 23). Fedosov (2017) coined the term 'fascisation' of the enemy, referring to the use of theme of fascism in propaganda after the end of the Second World War in description of enemies that were not historically connected to Nazism<sup>24</sup>.

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<sup>22</sup> In Russian: немецко-фашистские оккупанты

<sup>23</sup> Post-Soviet researchers who study Soviet propaganda often focus on the image of the West as a whole instead of separating the narratives in search of portrayal of individual countries (Grigoryeva 2008: 93). At the same time it is worth noting that of all the countries USA is used more often than other countries to fill the role of the 'enemy', although after the creation of the European Common Market Western Europe sometimes replaced America (Barghoorn 1964: 50), and this focus, as with the rest of Soviet propaganda, was ideologically driven (Magnusdottir 2019: 11).

<sup>24</sup> This can be observed in detail in visual propaganda, where Western leaders are portrayed with Nazi symbols, such as swastikas, doing Nazi salutes - particularly interesting is the example of using Nazi symbols to describe Charles De Gaulle as Europe's 'next führer', which is especially striking considering De Gaulle's history as the leader of the French Resistance (Fedosov 2017: 165).

A detailed study of the representations of Self and Enemy<sup>25</sup> in Soviet propaganda discovered that the Self is defined in the text almost 4 times less often than the Enemy, and that the words used to define the Self are stylistically neutral, while definitions of the Enemy include pejorative words, invectives and words with negative connotations<sup>26</sup> (Brunova 2011: 28). Addressing the fact that the Self is defined a lot less often than the Enemy, the study has concluded that some values of the Self are considered authentic and universally understood to the point of not requiring definitions, while occurrences and realities of the Enemy of the Other need to be evaluated for the audiences within the text, as the ideological function of propaganda prescribes (Brunova 2011: 28). A prominent phenomenon in Soviet propaganda's construction of Self and Enemy narratives is called double nomination, or instances where similar phenomena are described using different words depending on whether they refer to Self or Other, for example Revolution (Self) - Coup/Putsch (Other), Intelligence/Reconnaissance (Self) - Spying (Other), Ally (Self) - Puppet/ Henchman (Other), Army (Self) - Militarists (Other) (Brunova 2011: 29). The study concludes that double nominations work like metaphors, but unlike the use of metaphors in fiction, where they are used to show the author's or character's view of the world, such metaphors in propaganda are used to create a default view of the world and serve the cognitive function of identifying Self and Others (ibid.). This is topical to this thesis in more than one way, as one could argue that the disagreements on whether propaganda and public diplomacy are synonymous concepts can be seen as an issue of double nomination.

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<sup>25</sup> In the case of this study Self included words like Soviet, socialist, anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist; Other included words like capitalism, imperialism, American, anti-Soviet, anticommunist.

<sup>26</sup> Further looking at how the image of the enemy was constructed, for example by descriptions that dehumanised the enemy, either by comparing them to or describing them as connected to animals, reptiles or insects (Kostylev 2012: 89) or by using 'scientific' language (language referring to medicine and biology), which was previously used in descriptions of marginalised audiences and in Nazi propaganda during the Third Reich, with words referring to pests, vermin and illnesses (Weiss 2008: 16 - 18). It has been suggested that the use of such language refers to ancient archetypes of threat and danger (Brunova 2011: 30).

### *The Soviet struggle for peace*

Connected to the message of the 'bright future' is the idea that this future peace can only be reached by the struggle against the 'Enemy', which is presented as a hostile, aggressive and destructive force, an unstable 'opponent of the world peace' (Barghoorn 2008). The need for this struggle for peace and against the 'Enemy' justifies any Soviet foreign military involvements and, further, the 'Enemy's' hostility is emphasised while the USSR is portrayed as ready for cooperation and dialogue with the West, which remains inflexible and obstructionist (ibid.).

Apart from the propaganda through media publications these ideas were presented through the "exploitation of diplomatic negotiations and conferences to attract attention to the Soviet 'peaceful outlook'" (for example when the Soviet press purposefully followed a more optimistic line than the Western media, which makes the USSR look more peace-oriented) (Barghoorn 1964: 214), and selective reporting on diplomatic news (for example ignoring the release of a Soviet informant in the US but widely covering the release and return of an American pilot from the Soviet prison as a sign of the Soviet benevolence) (Barghoorn 1964: 213). On the international scale the message of the struggle for peace also involves support for national liberation and revolutionary movements (Barghoorn 2008), which will be studied as a part of the next section.

### *Using polarising issues against the enemy*

Frustrations and doubts in the foreign audiences are often named as some of the prime targets for the Soviet propaganda (Nagorski 1971: 131). It is argued that the Soviet propagandists sought out and used polarising political, social and other issues in the Western countries to

include them in USSR's propaganda narratives. In order to do this propaganda organs worked together with the Soviet intelligence, which, for example, monitored the media in foreign countries in search for 'hot topics' that have polarising potential that could be utilised 'to profit the USSR' (Gatov 2018). Similarly, Soviet propaganda also used nationalist and freedom movements abroad to advance the anti-Western cause (Barghoorn 1964: 60) as the Western countries' colonies became crucial players in the Soviet propaganda's portrayal of the state of international politics (Fedosov 2013: 108). In fact, in their efforts to gain support from the widest groups and mobilise them against the West, Soviet propagandists framed the USSR simultaneously as the champion of traditional values and ancient folk cultures and as an anti-traditionalist revolutionary progressive force (Barghoorn 1964: 226). Since the coverage analysed in this thesis is coverage of conflicts abroad, this tool might become useful in analysing the reporting of politics in other countries that will be included in the sample.

### *Implication*

Contradicting the peaceful message but also co-existing with the 'struggle for peace' idea is the frequently used propaganda technique that has been described by Barghoorn (1964: 211) as 'propaganda by implication' that consists of messages that serve as "menacing reminders of the [Soviet] nuclear power and delivery capabilities". This technique is often brought up in conjunction with modern Russia's frequent and widely televised military parades, air shows and television packages dedicated to new weapons production.

### *Disinformation and manipulation of information*

Soviet propaganda frequently employed devices that involve a degree of lying, for example when quoting, often out of context, of the Western 'bourgeois' press in support of the Soviet policies (Barghoorn 1964: 225). Distortion and forgery (of documents and evidence) were

also used in reporting, and character assassination was a frequent tool in discrediting (ibid: 236). When it came to reporting the news, no distinction was made between news and opinion - in fact opinion columns and articles got the same treatment as news items (ibid.). Already noted in the Ideology section of this chapter is the fact that the Soviet ideology and the Soviet view on the international events came embedded in the news content. The fact that opinion and commentary was served embedded in news reporting can be seen as manipulative by some media researchers, but it is also argued that in other non-Western countries this practice is more normalised and is not seen as manipulatory. However, regardless of the classification of this practice, as something practiced in the USSR it will bring an important argument into the discussion of RT which has been accused of presenting biased information and has been fined in the UK by the broadcasting regulator Ofcom for the failure 'to preserve due impartiality' (Ofcom 2019).

### *Irony*

Irony is another tool of Soviet propaganda that scholars point out, saying it is often expressed in text with the use of quotation marks when referring to everyday concepts and objects which are not a quote and don't need to be in quotation marks for any other reason; for example, Kostylev (2012: 91) suggests, the phrase 'public opinion', which was used in a text he analysed where the author alleged that public opinion in bourgeois countries does not exist and is only a result of the manipulation of the public opinion, therefore in this situation quotation marks point out an 'incriminating inconsistency between the declared state of affairs and the reality'. This tool can be seen as connected to Brunova's (2011) study, discussed earlier, which looked at the way double nominations were used in Soviet propaganda, where one phenomenon or event in Soviet propaganda can be referred to using words with different connotations depending on the Soviet ideological view. With regards to

this we can assume that the irony through the use of quotation marks is employed to replace the use of double nomination in cases where there isn't an appropriate brief phrase with a negative connotation, so the phrase with the positive or neutral connotation.

#### **2:4:4 Propaganda organisation in USSR**

From the inception of the Soviet power, media played a crucial role in the system of propaganda as they conveyed the Party politics to the masses (Chogandaryan 2013: 182). For example, radio was called an 'ideological weapon', and journalists were referred to as the 'officers of the ideological front' (ibid.). The structure of the Soviet foreign propaganda was developed in the 1930s in the situation where the Soviet state, after years of being unrecognised by other countries has finally started being recognised by more and more countries and entered the sphere of international diplomacy (Yeryomin 2013: 142).

The system of departments and organisations that worked on propaganda and agitation in USSR has always been centralised and strictly aligned. The first such organisation was Department of Agitation and Propaganda (often referred to as Agitprop), set up in 1920 (Hazan 1976: 35). Over the years, Agitprop's structure changed several times as it was frequently renamed, divided into sub-departments, and then merged again into one. It, however, still controlled all propaganda activity, including the media, where the Department appointed Party members to key editorial and management positions. However, it merely planned, organised and directed the propaganda activities, and did not conduct propaganda itself - these tasks were assigned to the news agency TASS, the Committees on the Press, Radio Broadcasting and Television, and other organisations. The print media, headed by the main Pravda newspaper, was seen as the crucial element in informing political beliefs in the Soviet Union, while outside of the country the publications in Pravda were seen as the

expression of the official Soviet point of view on the most relevant issues in the world, which meant that in a situation of limited international relations between the USSR and other countries, Pravda took on a role of a public diplomacy outlet that worked to inform not only the internal Soviet but also the external international audiences (Antyukhova 2018: 6).

Further this section will look specifically at the propaganda system that worked for the foreign (external) markets.

### *TASS*

TASS was the news agency of the USSR, created in 1925 as several other information agencies, mostly created during the revolution, became inadequate for the needs of a newly established state. TASS had foreign correspondents in other countries, working under the foreign news department as well as an international branch called ‘News for foreign subscribers’ (Yeryomin 2013: 145). TASS quickly became the main news agency in the country and it held exclusive rights to distribute information about the USSR abroad, which made it an executive branch of the Soviet foreign affairs propaganda system (ibid.).

### *APN (Agentstvo Pechati Novosti)*

News agency that was formally an independent public organisation with no ties to the state, founded in 1961. Founded by the Soviet ‘public’<sup>27</sup> organisations like the Union of Journalists, Union of Writers and the National Union for the Dissemination of Political and Scientific Knowledge, but in reality, APN was said to be the hiring force for the KGB (Committee of State Security), and one of the main tools of USSR’s foreign propaganda,

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<sup>27</sup> It is important to keep in mind that the organisations that were officially public in the Soviet Union were still, directly or indirectly, controlled by the Party.

whose aim was (in the words of one of its magazines' mottos) "to spread the truth about USSR in all the continents" (quoted in Hazan 1976: 49).

### *Soviet publications in foreign languages*

Over 15 magazines and newspapers in world languages were published by the Soviet Union (most of them as a part of the APN organisation) in other countries in local languages, including ones in the USA, the UK, the countries in Western, Central and Eastern Europe, as well as Africa, Japan and Middle East. There were also six foreign language publications distributed in Moscow for foreigners living there, and several big magazine operations that were simultaneously published in several languages (eg. the magazine titled Soviet Union was published in 19 languages, Soviet Woman in 11, Sputnik in 5 etc).

This way we can see that the foreign propaganda branch in USSR was highly centralised and controlled by the Party. It will further inform our understanding of how foreign propaganda was produced and disseminated. The next section of this chapter looks at the research focused on modern Russian public diplomacy.

## **2:6 Russian public diplomacy**

Russian public diplomacy has been studied in an extensive but fragmented way - and this section of the chapter will be an overview of the discoveries of the existing studies. It will first look at Russian public diplomacy in general terms, and at the model, tools, characteristics and issues.

### **2:6:1 Model and characteristics**



The historical premise for the development of public diplomacy after the fall of the Soviet Union can be identified in the later 1990s as the negative perceptions of Russia abroad started to be seen as a serious security threat for the country (Feklyunina 2008: 605), and the problem went from the level of general discussions to the level of foreign policy making in 2000 as the newly developed Foreign Policy Concept and Information Security Doctrine declared projecting a favourable view of Russia abroad as one of the main foreign policy goals of the country (ibid.).

The dominant model of the Russian Public diplomacy is the 'one to many' model of international broadcasting that was the hallmark of the Cold War era - after the collapse of the USSR, the government turned to international broadcasting as a public diplomacy tool only in the early 2000s (Simons 2014) as RT was launched in 2005. This one-way communication model is often seen as the reason for the lack of success of Russian public diplomacy (Simons 2015).

The Russian government has three goals for their soft power and public diplomacy activity<sup>28</sup>, which are all quite similar to the Soviet propaganda goals discussed earlier: to promote Russian culture, language and education system, to counter the foreign media's 'negative depiction of the country's policies and the Russian way of life', and to create a group of 'Russia's friends' around the world (Simons 2014). A major distinction between the Soviet and modern Russian public diplomacy models, noted by several researchers, is that while the Soviet propaganda and soft power were ideologically driven, the modern Russian state does not rest on an ideological platform, which leads some researchers, like Simons (2014) and

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<sup>28</sup> These will also be discussed more generally as a part of the analysis of the Russian foreign policy agenda in the Document Analysis chapter.

Saari (2014), to say that ideology has been replaced with the pragmatic approach in the modern Russian public diplomacy, while others, like Yablokov (2015) argue that country's public diplomacy (as well as foreign policy) currently exist in an ideological vacuum. At the same time, several researchers (see Jurgens 2011, Simons 2015, Filimonov 2010) argue that Russia is now in the process of developing a new 'role' for itself and that its public diplomacy will not be effective until that role is conceptualised in an attractive way for the public, and clearly communicated to it. Continuing the discussion of ideology Simons (2014) notes that the reasons for developing a soft power and public diplomacy strategy for Russia are not ideological but rather pragmatic – “the need to communicate 'objective information' about Russia”.

It is also important to note that while the understanding of public diplomacy as a concept among Russian researchers is most often similar to the understanding of English-speaking researchers<sup>29</sup>, what researchers include in the concept's scope can sometimes be far away from the traditional Western definition of the term. For example, Kuldysheva (2018) looks at the Russian interference in the 2016 US presidential elections as a form of public diplomacy.

## **2:6:2 Tools and issues**

Russia's main public diplomacy tools have been identified in various studies (Feklyunina 2008, Simons 2014, Saari 2014, Wilson 2012, 2015) as the following organisations that all have direct or indirect ties to the government: Rosstrudnichestvo agency, Russian International Affairs Council, The Alexander Gorchakov Public Diplomacy Foundation, the Valdai Club, Russki Mir (Russian World<sup>30</sup>), the Institute for Democracy and Cooperation,

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<sup>29</sup> For example, Vasylenko (2015: 48) describes public diplomacy as ‘a country explaining its policies to the world’; Dolinsky (2011: 275) defines it as a ‘system of communications with foreign audiences’.

<sup>30</sup> Alternatively, ‘Russki Mir’ can also be translated as ‘Russian peace’ as the word ‘mir’ is a homonym meaning both ‘world’ and ‘peace’. This is likely a

information/media channels like RT, RIA Novosti, and the Voice of Russia, and the use of lobby firm Ketchum - these agencies and organisations were studied by Feklyunina (2008) in her analysis of the Russian public diplomacy efforts, the images of the country that it is trying to project and how it is actually seen in the West. The studies of Russian public diplomacy carried out between 2008 and 2014 (Feklyunina 2008, Averginos 2009, Cwiek-Karpowicz 2012 and others) have largely argued that Russian public diplomacy efforts have not been successful as the image of Russia hasn't improved. Some of these scholars take an extreme view: for example, Averginos (2009) says that Kremlin's media strategy is so ineffective it doesn't offer a compelling national brand identity and only supports and further spreads anti-Russian prejudices in the West. Simons (2014) argues that so far, the quest for soft power in the former Soviet countries has been unsuccessful because it was based on the wrong assumption that the 'weaker' countries are naturally drawn towards the more powerful states (in this case Russia).

Russian public diplomacy is also often accused of 'narrowcasting' instead of broadcasting – seeking to influence certain carefully selected key groups abroad, specifically the Russian minorities and Russian-speakers in the post-Soviet space (Saari 2014). Saari (ibid.) notes that Russian public diplomacy aims the communication at the pro-Russian political parties and the Russian diaspora abroad, as well as other political forces on the right and left – which is a tactic of the Soviet propaganda: “Russian policies aim simply to increase Russian influence and decrease the power of other players”. At the same time as a strategy ‘narrowcasting’ was defended by Joseph Nye, who sees it as an essential tool in addressing particular groups, especially over the internet (Nye 2008: 104).

The main reason for what is largely seen as the failure of the Russian public diplomacy that is expressed by many researchers is best summed up by Makinen (2016), who argues that at fault is the strategy in which the domestic and foreign policies do not correspond to the 'image' that the country tries to project through its public diplomacy, and that the perception of the country is still riddled with stereotypes that are difficult to fight with communicational one-sided type of public diplomacy like international broadcasting. This way in order to be successful, Russia's public diplomacy has to be linked to policies and they need to have a consistent and clear 'projection' - in other words, public diplomacy cannot be effective when it is trying to 'sell' bad policies (Simons 2014; Seib 2009). This argument echoes Nye's (2013) view of the Russian soft power expressed in his 2013 Foreign Policy article, where he argued that Russia tries to 'spin' its unpopular existing policies instead of developing new ones. However, this view on the direct links and correlation between policies and public diplomacy and soft power is unpopular in Russia: for example, Erast Galumov, professor at the Russian Diplomatic Academy, argues that Russia's image can be improved without any significant changes in the country since 'image is not reality, but only the reflection of reality that can be made positive' (in Feklyunina 2008: 606). Further exploring the issue of contradiction in public diplomacy messages is Szostek's study of the Russian nation branding practices (in Browning & Ferraz De Oliveira 2017: 490) where she argues that the nation brand messages that Russia promoted were contradicting each other<sup>31</sup>, which decreased their overall efficiency. Looking at public diplomacy and policy from another side is Marchukov (2014: 101), who writes that Russia's public diplomacy activity is sometimes disconnected from the foreign policy documentation that sets out the public diplomacy agenda. The policy

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<sup>31</sup> In particular Szostek (in Browning & Ferraz De Oliveira 2017: 490) refers to Russia's efforts to reaffirm a role as a great power under a diplomatic/geopolitical logic, and its efforts to present itself as a normal cosmopolitan state ripe for capitalist investment

documents point out the importance of the audiences in post-Soviet CIS<sup>32</sup> countries as an essential mission of the Russian public diplomacy, however, Marchukov (ibid.) points at the lack of activity targeting these audiences.

Soviet heritage overall presents a major issue for the Russian public diplomacy – and I can be seen as both positive and negative. Some aspects - for example the closer links with the former Soviet republics and their majorly Russian-speaking populations, could be seen as an advantage and an existing foundation for building a relationship with the audiences of the newly independent countries. And indeed, as the next segments and the chapter exploring the Russian foreign policy documentation will show, relationships with CIS countries, Russian speakers and Russian diasporas abroad have been a priority for Russian foreign policy and public diplomacy for a while now. Makinen (2016: 106) also argues that public diplomacy in Russia is addressed not exclusively to the Western and other foreign audiences but also the almost ‘domestic’ Russian-speaking audiences made up of citizens of CIS republics residing in Russia or those who have Russian citizenship, and Russian citizens and Russian speakers living abroad, so-called ‘compatriots in the CIS’. However, these existing links could also be seen an obstacle in situations where public diplomacy and traditional diplomacy are inattentive and, aided by careless policies, lead to accusations of colonialism and imperialism.

Building relationships with countries that were formerly on the other side of the Cold War, at which Soviet external propaganda was aimed, like the USA and Western Europe, could also be a difficult task for public diplomacy, as the historical competitive tendencies could be

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<sup>32</sup> CIS - Commonwealth of the Independent states, an organisation consisting originally of 10 post-Soviet countries.

difficult to overcome in a country that sets out on a journey of proving its status of an equal power in world politics. Other research takes an even more definitive stance on this issue, saying that the efforts to overcome the Cold War climate have been compromised by Russia's 'Us vs Them' mentality that is a relic of the Soviet era (Averginos 2009). Averginos (ibid.) further argues that the Russian government is not quick enough to explain its actions and policies which ultimately works against them and damages the country's public diplomacy potential. For example, analysing the governments' communications on the 2006 Ukraine gas crisis and the 2008 war with Georgia, Averginos (ibid.) writes that the Russian government's lack of communication and explanation of their policies and actions worked against the country as the Ukraine's and Georgia's versions of events – which were regularly communicated to the international audiences through press conferences for foreign journalists – were accepted as the truth.

### **2:6:3 Self-images and messages**

What does Russian public diplomacy say about Russia as a country? This question has been studied by several researchers who identified these messages as self-images, projected images, perceived images, or perceptions (Feklyunina 2008, Makinen 2016), while others also focused on the messages that the Russian public diplomacy communicated about the world in general (Simons 2014, 2015; Saari 2014; Rawnsley 2015; Makinen 2016; Yablokov 2015 etc). This section reviews some of the main images and messages described by scholars.

One of the main self-images of the Russian public diplomacy is that of Russia as a great power. It is rooted in history and emphasises Russia's essential place in global politics; the right to this great power status is demonstrated and confirmed through the country's participation in solving international conflicts (Feklyunina 2008: 612-613). As a part of this

self-image Russia is presented as an independent<sup>33</sup> centre of power in the world that is increasingly unipolar and US-centric; in this situation Russia strives for a fairer multipolar world (ibid). This connects to another image, described by Simons (2014), where Russia is seen as a constructive force for good in the international affairs, a positive actor that can constructively contribute to the global processes. A further development of the Great Power idea comes in emphasising the economic importance of Russia in the world, the self-image of *Russia as an energy superpower*, where natural resources of the country come to play the central role (ibid: 616). This economic importance has a political undertone as Russia's resource export becomes increasingly politicised and since Feklyunina's study was conducted in 2008, each gas crisis between Russia and Ukraine have come to be seen as political ones.

A crucial message of the Russian public diplomacy is that Russia is '*not an empire*': it does not have imperial ambitions in the CIS or the near abroad but, importantly, that it does have legitimate strategic interests (ibid.: 618). At the same time Russia is presented *as a bigger entity than its geographical borders*: 'it transcends borders to include Russian citizens abroad, Russian-speakers and those identifying with Russia(n culture)', towards whom Russia claims to have a responsibility (Makinen 2016: 104). Despite the contradiction between the anti-imperial message and the need to invent and take care of the communities abroad that identify with Russia, this message comes with an emphasis on *Russia not being the same as the Soviet Union* (ibid.: 111), but rather the 'leader' of the former Soviet republics, who should 'orbit' around Russia as the strongest country (Simons 2015). This is one of the ways in which Russian history, and Soviet history, are used as a way to signify the importance of the country, its historical great power status<sup>34</sup> (Feklyunina 2008: 621).

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<sup>33</sup> 'Sovereign' (in Russian: суверенный) is a word that is often used.

<sup>34</sup> Feklyunina (2008) notes that the Soviet heritage in this instance is presented as positive, although clearly the 'Russia as not the same as Soviet Union' image shows that the negative aspects of the Soviet heritage are well understood in Russia – that it just chooses not to highlight or even discuss them.

Makinen (2016: 105) argues that another idea sent out by Russia is that of its unique position in terms of both geopolitics and the philosophical positioning of the country in the world that signifies that Russia is moving towards a Eurasianist identity “*as a part of the non-West, and a vanguard of conservative or 'traditional' values*”. In this opposition with the West, Russia is presented as a non-coloniser, non-intervener, non-imperialist, as a country that respects equality, sovereignty, uniqueness of all peoples, and traditional values (Makinen 2016: 116). Thus, Russia presents itself as a patron of Slavs, Orthodox and a conductor of European civilisation in Eurasia, and as an ideological alternative to the Western countries (Simons 2015). The historical nature of this positioning is particularly interesting – Simons (ibid.) notes that the USSR positioned itself in the same manner, but while in the Soviet times the communist ideology was the central piece of this positioning as it appealed to the niche and fringe audiences (leftists and national liberation movements), now Russia has turned towards a Eurasianist identity as a new central focus.

The final self-image describes *Russia as a global 'underdog'* in opposition to the powerful but misguided USA (Yablokov 2015). There are variations inside this idea – sometimes the US is framed as an enemy, and sometimes as a competitor (ibid.), and as one of the examples Simons (2015) brings up the case of Edward Snowden taking refuge in Russia, which helped the country to firmly position itself as an alternative to the West.

One of the general conclusions regarding the messages of the Russian public diplomacy is that they are often contradictory to each other: Russia as not USSR and as ‘not an empire’ clashes with the ideas of Russia being ‘bigger than its borders’; Russia as a great power clashes with the idea of Russia as a global underdog. These self-images are contradictory



because they are often aimed at different audiences – however, in the modern globalised communication sphere audiences are much less isolated and often overlap (Averginos 2009; Simons 2015). In addition, many of these images are constructed with the West cast as the ultimate Other (Levi-Strauss 1986): either as the ideal Other to emulate, or the model to reject (Yablokov 2015: 302; Smith 2016: 126). Since the fall of the USSR, the perceptions of Russia in the West became a sensitive topic that was constantly brought up in the context of the country’s unresolved identity crisis - Feklyunina argues, following Levi-Strauss’ conceptualisation, that perceptions held by international actors who are playing the role of Others significantly contribute to the construction of the Self-identity (Feklyunina 2008: 608). Perceived disrespect from the Other (the West) can lead to negative self-perception, which is why public diplomacy, or state PR as Feklyunina refers to it, is an extremely important part of the Russian foreign policy as the country is hypersensitive to any criticism from the Western countries (ibid.: 608-612). In this opposition between Russia and the West, the post-Soviet countries are in an ambivalent position between the Russian Self and the Western Other, where the people are presented as those who share, understand and support Russia’s values and interests and are therefore identified as a part of the Russian Self, and the ‘ruling elites’ as Others<sup>35</sup> (Makinen 2016: 111). This logic is of particular interest to this study as it reflects one of the main lines of the horizontal separation between ‘Us’ and ‘Them’ in the Soviet propaganda, discussed earlier in this chapter.

For all the contradictions between these messages and images it must be noted that some of the works reviewed above were conducted at different points in the recent history of Russia, which means that the country’s positioning changed between some of them. However, the

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<sup>35</sup> Makinen (2016) argues that the reason the ‘elites’ become Others in post-Soviet countries is because as independent post-Soviet governments they are manifestations of the ultimate other – the West, Eu and NATO that these countries have entered into relationships with after the fall of USSR.

fact that these different ideas were discovered expressed in a rather tight timeframe of just over a decade and under what is largely seen as an unchanged leadership<sup>36</sup> in the country calls for a more detailed investigation into the messages that are being sent out by the Russian public diplomacy into both the post-Soviet space and the West, which is what this study is doing by looking at both the Russian-language and the English language content of RT, and by looking at the ‘near abroad’ conflict in Ukraine and at the global conflict in Syria.

Another important point to note is that in analysing these projected images and ideas, the studies mentioned above as well as this thesis, study the public diplomacy output first of all, and don’t make a claim towards about the foreign audiences’ perceptions of Russia. It is also important to note that even though these studies looked at the messages that Russia is projecting onto the world with its public diplomacy efforts, many of them look at it through different theoretical frameworks from this study, and most look at public diplomacy tools other than RT or look at several public diplomacy tools of which RT is only one of the case studies. This together with the fact that most of these studies were carried out several years ago and on different (prevalently non-conflict media coverage or even other, non-media public diplomacy channels) means that the messages might not be applicable to modern Russia and to RT’s content in particular, and that a new study needs to be carried out to fill the research gap - this is what this thesis aims to do.

## **2:7 Conclusion**

This chapter looked at the conceptual framework for this study, outlining the concepts that will be utilised throughout this research project. Thus, it explained how this study

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<sup>36</sup> Of president (and for some time prime minister) Putin, and president (and for some time prime minister) Medvedev, and under the general umbrella of United Russia as a ruling party.

understands public diplomacy and propaganda, what it views as techniques and devices of persuasion attributed to propaganda in general, and Soviet propaganda in particular. It also reviewed the most recent scholarly writing on the topic of post-ruth and produced a working definition that will be used for analysis in this thesis.

One of the central issues that this chapter has posed is the relationship between the concepts of public diplomacy and propaganda - as the chapter has demonstrated, the academic debate on this issue has not come to a conclusion or an agreement. This presents difficulties for this study as it analyses RT content in relation to these concepts in order to conceptualise the relationship between the website content of the channel and foreign policy. However, the chapter has also demonstrated that political views and each researcher's position and distance from propaganda (whether it is done by their country or the country's opponent in international relations, or whether they are 'benefitting' from it) affects how they understand propaganda as either a negative or a neutral phenomenon. This in turn affects how they view the relationship between the concepts of propaganda and public diplomacy: those who see propaganda as a neutral phenomenon tend to see the terms as interchangeable, and those who see propaganda as a negative phenomenon tend to define public diplomacy as a more acceptable, ethical, and transparent version of the activity. From this we can conclude that the labelling of RT as either propaganda or public diplomacy by both researchers and media professionals is ultimately also a political choice of words that depends on their positions, opinions, worldview and other factors. Recognising this complexity, it is important to make clear that this thesis' use of either term to describe RT content aims to be removed from normative understandings of the differences between the terms, and instead intends to explore the relationship between the content and its 'Russian viewpoint of major global events' and the foreign policy of Russia. In other words, this dissertation takes a view that propaganda

and public diplomacy can be used as synonyms when talking of a state's activity, while maintaining that the way that the scholarship on propaganda and public diplomacy developed over the ages means that including both terms in the analysis ultimately benefits the quality of the discussion.

The look at post-truth argued the relevance of the concept to the topic of this study, examined how the concept is understood by scholars and provided the necessary context for the analysis and discussion in this thesis. The working definition summarised the existing scholarship on this topic and suggested a way to instrumentalise it.

A look at the Soviet propaganda and the modern Russian public diplomacy provides the much-needed contextual background for the study as most modern studies of public diplomacy are case studies of either Western countries like the USA, or other foreign countries like China whose political, economic and international circumstances are different from those of Russia. The overview of the messages of the Soviet propaganda presents a picture of how Soviet propaganda saw the world and the place that the USSR occupied in it, and the overview of the messages of the modern Russian public diplomacy presents how Russia views its place in the world in the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This way this study of RT content will be placed in both the historic Soviet and the modern Russian contexts and the study will be able to contribute to updating knowledge on the modern Russian international communication, public diplomacy and foreign policy. As this thesis focuses on a Russian international broadcaster, the following chapter will provide a context in which it operates.

## Chapter 3. Russian media, politics, and RT.

*“When Russia is at war, we, of course, are on Russia’s side”*

*Margarita Simonyan, editor-in-chief of RT,*

*in an interview in Kommersant in 2012.*

### 3:1 Introduction

In April 2014 Vladimir Putin awarded 300 Russian journalists with the prestigious Order of Service to the Fatherland medal for their ‘objective coverage’ of the events of the Crimean crisis in March 2014 (Luhn 2014). Among the awarded executives, editors, anchors, and reporters of Russia’s main television channels was Margarita Simonyan, editor-in-chief of RT, the channel at the centre of this thesis and numerous accusations of being a propaganda mouthpiece (see for example Casey 2015; Schiffrin 2017; Coyle 2018; Warrick & Troianovski 2018). Owner of the independent TV channel Dozhd, which takes a more critical stance on the Kremlin policies and had not received any awards from Putin that day, said in an interview to the Guardian that those awarded were ‘the heroes of the information war between western and Russian media over Ukraine’ (Luhn 2014). Indeed, many understood that the award signified ‘the Kremlin’s approval of Russian media outlets that have told a dramatically different version of the Ukraine crisis than that shown by western media’ (ibid.) – however, according to an annual survey by the Russian independent sociological survey company Levada Centre (2015) in April 2014 70% of Russians surveyed said that the Russian media coverage of Ukraine and Crimea was ‘objective’ or ‘mostly objective’. So, what was the picture of the conflicts that Russian media painted? And looking at the issue from a more general perspective, how is journalism seen in Russia, and what kind of a relationship does it have with the Russian government?

When looking at news content through the political lens such as public diplomacy and propaganda it is important to consider the contexts in which a media outlet exists. This is why

the first section of this chapter looks at the context in which RT exists: that of Russian media, the relationship between media and politics, and the way military conflicts are reported in this environment. This will situate the thesis and its study of RT within the existing scholarly thinking on the topic and provide the much-needed context for understanding how media work in Russia. Looking at this relationship between the media and the government is especially important since this study looks at RT through the prism of public diplomacy and propaganda and analyses news content in relation to foreign policy agenda, therefore analysing the content that comes as a consequence to the relationship between media and the government, one that is especially topical because of the way the channel is discussed in the industry as a ‘propaganda machine’ (see for example Ioffe 2010; Schifrin 2017;; Coyle 2018; Troianovski 2019). And since media coverage of conflicts can form and affect public opinion which in turn affects the public’s view of the government and its actions in the conflict, conflict coverage is an essential area for studying government influence on media (see for example Cohen 1963; McCombs 2005; McCombs 2014). It will also put in context the focus of this thesis, which is looking at coverage of the conflicts in Syria and Ukraine.

The second part of the chapter zooms in on RT, first recounting the channel’s history and positioning in the global media sphere, and then looking at the existing academic works and scholarly debates regarding the channel.

### **3:2 Russian media**

This section of the chapter looks at the academic studies focusing on Russian media and journalism and particularly its intersection with politics. To be able to grasp such a wide-reaching subject several limitations had to be implemented: first of all, this part of the chapter will only look at the studies focusing on Russian journalism and media after the dissolution

of the Soviet Union, with a special focus on the 21st century. While a look at the Soviet propaganda provided by the previous chapter sets out the propaganda legacy for both the Russian media and the Russian government, this section is not meant to look at historical aspects of journalism in Russia - this limitation is set to keep the focus within the scope of this thesis' research area.

The first part of this section looks at the relationship between the Russian government and the Russian media. It is important to understand the climate and context in which RT operates; together with the look at the Russian foreign policy agenda in Chapter 5 it paints the picture of the environment in which RT produces the content studied in this thesis. The focus will be on studies that looked at broadcast media, as RT is a broadcast channel, so best context for the discussion of RT will be provided by looking at studies of Russian TV<sup>37</sup>. Moreover, TV remains the main source of information for Russians as almost the entire population depends on it for news (Mickiewicz 2008; Teper 2016); even in 2019 72% of people<sup>38</sup> say that they get their news from TV channels (Levada Centre 2019). In addition, researchers point out that print media in Russia has been surpassed by television in the political influence market as early as mid-1990s (Zassoursky 2004: 68).

The second limitation relates to the second part of this section, which is introduced to further narrow down the field by looking at the studies of how Russian media covered the conflicts in Ukraine and Syria. This will allow us to place in context this study's examination of how these conflicts are covered in RT. In this the chapter 'Russian media' means the domestic

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<sup>37</sup> While the sample of this thesis, as Chapter 4 will explain, is RT website content, it is still understood that website content of broadcast channels is adapted from broadcast material and therefore is produced in the same environment outlined in this chapter.

<sup>38</sup> Notably the amount of people getting their news from TV was higher in the period that is studied in the sample of this study: in 2014 it was 90% of people (Levada Centre 2014).

(national) media that are produced in Russian, for the Russian internal market, though of course most of its content is available online for Russian speakers all over the world, which is an intersection of the audience that is also a target audience of RT's Russian language service. An overview of the studies that focus on the conflict coverage on RT is available in the final section of this chapter.

### **3:2:1 Russian media and Russian government**

The relationship between Russian media and politics in the 21st century can be seen as a result of a state of an almost permanent political and cultural transition that the country has been going through since the early 19th century. This unique mixture of political history and culture justifies the introduction of a Russian media model using the main determinants of Hallin and Mancini's (2004) *Comparing Media Systems*, where as a significant part of describing this model Vartanova (2011) looks at the relationship between the media and the state in Russia, specifically focusing her exploration on the economic issues at the centre of the relationship and explaining that historically Russian media never experienced the economic constraints of the free market media as the role of the economic regulator has been played by the state, which in turn "secured the paternalistic foundations in journalism" (ibid: 122). These unique historical and economic circumstances meant that as the Soviet Union dissolved the operation of the media in Russia and other post-Soviet countries was re-oriented to simulate the Western media models, however, without the proper historical, cultural, and political foundations that allow and support the functioning of the free press (see Zassoursky 1999; Jakubowicz 2001; Dolgova 2018;). When talking about the cultural foundations Vartanova (2011: 121) specifies that a particularly important role is played by the informal practices such as behaviour and self-imposed codes of practice which come into conflict with the formalised norms and produce 'conflicting, contradictory, and inefficient outcomes.'



These widespread informal practices should be seen as a manifestation of the larger societal context where the society is ‘trapped in its own dependence on unwritten rules, the non-transparency of the rules of the game’ (Ledeneva 2006: 194). While informality in media and journalism in Russia hasn’t been studied extensively, scholars point out that informal practices in the sphere of journalism are used by the Russian authorities in order to influence or exert control over the media (Bondarik 2018), and in practical terms could mean adhering to unwritten rules of coverage of certain topics, and include self-censorship, adherence to certain angles and narratives of coverage and other practices (Sosnovskaya 2019). These informal practices are the result of transfer of some elements of the Soviet media system, in particular its propaganda functionality, into the new Russian media system where they were joined by the more negative aspects of the Western media systems, such as the dependency of media and journalism on business (Dolgova 2018: 66). Additionally, the introduction of the Western system ignored ‘the complexity and dissimilarities of the post-Soviet society, which did not permit the media system to duplicate or efficiently reconstruct the Western experience’ (Vartanova 2011: 121).

As a result of the sum of these issues media in Russia are highly politicised, and broadcast media in particular hold only limited independence from the political elite and appear as a part of the problem in the process of political transformation, rather than a part of the solution (Jakubowicz 2001: 76). Further researchers argue that Russian broadcast media have become even more politicised since 2012 (the start of Putin’s third term after mass protests in the country), and ideological messaging has increased even in the entertainment media formats (Tolz & Teper 2018: 11). Traces of the communist system can be identified in paternal and didactic approaches and tendencies of journalism, which means that the media follow ‘a logic which places them on the side of power’ (Jakubowicz 2001). Vartanova (2011: 134) and Pasti

(2005: 185) come to similar conclusions as they argue that media in Russia are perceived as a part of the power structure and since early 2000s they have been used by the state as a tool of maintaining its power.

At the same time in studying the relationship between media and politics in Russia it is important to note not only the power that the state holds over journalism but also the relationship between the two actors. Even in the state-aligned media outlets the journalists and producers do not simply disseminate the official discourse but participate in its co-production (Tolz and Teper 2018). Unlike in the Soviet system, the power in Russia is not centralised, and media are affected by a variety of political, financial and other factors (Gatov 2018). Russian media and journalism play a significant role in the political processes of modern Russia, shaping the public perceptions, the political agenda and affecting all kinds of political actors: this way media in Russia should be seen as both the objects and the subjects of political pressure (Balynskaya 2008). Thus, one of the unique attributes of the Russian media system is ‘the paradoxical coexistence of media independence and a low level of freedom of speech’, where media independence<sup>39</sup> is understood as a decentralised media system where newsrooms are technically autonomous from political control, but where the state holds a decisive role despite the media existing within a market economy<sup>40</sup> (Vartanova 2011: 139). This complex situation needs to be considered when analysing RT content from the public diplomacy and propaganda perspective.

When it comes to the news agenda, Russian media are not only highly politicised but also centralised, with a crucial influence of the political elites on the formation of the agenda on

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<sup>39</sup> Vartanova talks about formal independence here, of course.

<sup>40</sup> Vartanova calls this model ‘statist commercialised’ (2011: 142).

the federal TV channels (Sumskaya & Sumskoi 2018: 586). Further, the messages and the meanings of the agenda are coded predominantly in the verbal texts of the TV channel content, while the visual element carries the task of additional emotional coding (ibid: 593). This informs this study's choice of the textual content of RT as the medium to examine in order to extract and analyse the themes and messages served to the audiences as a part of the 'Russian viewpoint on global events.'

As was explained in the introduction to this section of the chapter, the broadcast focus of this section is explained by the overwhelming popularity and significance of TV as a news source (see Levada Centre 2019). Studies have also pointed out that TV has more potential of political persuasion than other forms of media in Russia, and therefore the 'absence of independent TV may not be fully compensated by the other media' (Eniklopov et al 2011: 3283). Notably the TV market in Russia is under state control, either direct or indirect, while pluralism is still present in other forms of media (Hutchings & Szostek 2015; Hansen 2015; Hinck et al 2018; Kazun & Kazun 2019), which is why pro-government narratives, state influence, and evidence of domestic propaganda in Russian media and particularly on TV have been subjects of so many scholarly enquiries. For example, Shiryayeva and Amirov (2016) offer several findings on the ways that the state propaganda manifests itself in the content of state-owned media, including through the deliberate selection of pro-government experts and presenting information 'from the point of view of the politicians, government, government organisations' (ibid: 46) without giving airtime to regular people's viewpoints or questioning how certain policies might affect Russian citizens. Even in covering complex and problematic topics that can be seen as 'negative', for example the lack of income growth for the majority of Russians over several years, the reports focus instead on the 'small positives', for example that some professional sectors will actually get a salary raise (ibid.). Such

‘positive framing’ was also emphasised by Vartanova (2009) who noted the ‘renaissance of the past authoritarian practices of political control over media content, [...] over their agenda setting practices and creation of ‘positive’ framing’’. Similar trends have also been pointed out by Snegovaya (2015: 3) who lists 3 distinctive features of the propaganda in Russian media as selectivity and strategic uncertainty in the censorship regime<sup>41</sup>, the use of propaganda tools to reshape rather than completely control the media narrative<sup>42</sup>, and an emphasis on legal and economic methods of suppression or of co-opting of the independent voices<sup>43</sup>. However, it is also important to point out that while there is compelling evidence of ‘heavy-handed news direction from the presidential administration’ in the Russian news programming, it remains impossible to definitely say whether framing of the events directly follows a script from the Kremlin because, as Oates (2014) argues, the understood norm in the state-run TV is that ‘journalists work in the service of political or commercial factions’. Reference to the ‘understood norm’ refers back to the informal practices, discussed earlier in this chapter, that include self-censorship and other unspoken rules and behaviours. However, regardless of whether Russian media follow a ‘script’ from the government, co-produce the narratives as semi-independent actors, or follow unwritten rules of the profession, ‘Russia presents a compelling case study for using media content as a proxy for state narrative’ (Oates 2014), which is how this study approaches this topic.

As a final note in this section of the chapter, it is important to specify that the latest developments in Russian media have not yet been studied sufficiently. These developments

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<sup>41</sup> Examples include using high-profile cases against oppositional activists and journalists in order to deter others from doing similar work; adopting laws with vague wording which can be used to punish journalists

<sup>42</sup> Snegovaya includes RT as an example for this point, specifying that the channel’s self-positioning as a source for ‘alternative viewpoints’ as a way of reshaping the public narratives.

<sup>43</sup> These include a variety of measures from introducing new ownership and new editors to suppressing channels of distribution (cutting off cable channels, banning websites etc).

mostly stem from the technological progress in the digital sphere<sup>44</sup> and the introduction of the new laws and legal amendments that affect the work of media and journalists<sup>45</sup> and their relationship with the government. The effects that these developments have on Russian media currently present a research gap.

### **3:2:2 Conflict coverage in Russian media**

This section of the chapter explores how Russian media cover conflicts which will add to our understanding of the context in which RT operated and covered the wars in Ukraine and Syria. This chapter will focus on research that looked at the coverage of the wars in Ukraine and in Syria, as they are studied in this thesis and therefore such research will be the most relevant to consider in further analysis. This overview will inform the analysis in this thesis as we will be able to see how the studied RT coverage compares to that of the Russian national media, whether there are shared themes and messages, patterns, trends, and tools - this can become particularly enlightening in looking at what RT offers to their Russian-speaking and English-speaking audiences.

Researchers point out several important characteristics of the Russian domestic media coverage of the war in Ukraine. First of all, they identify the linguistic nominations that present a ‘deformed’ reality of the conflict in a way that is consistent with the Russian foreign policy agenda. For example, the changes in the Ukrainian government following the Euromaidan protests are called a ‘coup d’etat’ (Fedchenko 2016: 159; Osipian 2015: 119),

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<sup>44</sup> Specifically, activist journalism, new sourcing practices and norms in political journalism, the growing number of anonymised channels on social media platforms whose output resembles media output but is not transparent in how it is produced, and establishment of Russian-language and Russian-owned media that address Russian audiences from abroad.

<sup>45</sup> These include laws on foreign media ownership, foreign agents, ‘undesirable’ organisations, law on the ‘sovereign’ internet, the ‘blogger’ law, law on protection of children from harmful information, the Yarovaya law, Lugovoi law, widening of the responsibilities of the internet watchdog Roskomnadzor, including their new power to ban websites without court rulings, the ‘fake news’ laws, the law on the ‘right to be forgotten’ and others.

and the insurgents in Eastern Ukraine are most often referred to as ‘supporters of the federalisation’<sup>46</sup> (Kablukov 2015) or ‘militiamen’<sup>47</sup> (Horbyk 2015; Gaufman 2015), and not ‘separatists’, which creates a positive image of the insurgents<sup>48</sup> (Kablukov 2015: 43). Such nominations carry emotional meanings that add to the ideological messages: for example, compare with the way the Ukrainian army is referred to in terms that underline its brutality and chaotic inhumanity as ‘militants’, ‘boyeviki’ (‘criminal insurgents; illegal fighters’) or ‘karateli’ (‘punishers’, another word laden with negative WWII associations, particularly in Ukraine) (Horbyk 2015: 507; Gaufman 2015: 172). In addition, when words that are ideologically unsuitable, for example ‘separatists’ or ‘terrorists’ referring to the insurgents, need to be reported (for example if present in the speeches of politicians), they are placed in quotation marks to distance the channel’s voice from the expressed value judgement, while words like ‘punishers’ in reference to the Ukrainian army are not presented in such a way (Kablukov 2015: 46). In this context it is important to relate such euphemistic language to the double nominations practice of the Soviet propaganda, discussed in Chapter 2, where different ideologically-laden words were used to refer to the same phenomena depending on the Soviet ideological stance (for example some events were defined by the Soviet propaganda as ‘revolution’ while others were labelled ‘coup d’etat’) (see Brunova 2011). Such clear parallels between the tools of the Soviet propaganda and the tools of conflict

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<sup>46</sup> In Russian: *сторонники федерализации*

<sup>47</sup> In Russian *ополченцы*, a term that ‘refers to more or less voluntary civilian irregulars fighting for a benign civic cause’ (Horbyk 2015: 507). Further Gaufman (2015: 151) notes that the chain of associations for the term links up not only to the Great Patriotic War and the popular resistance to fascism, but also further back in history to the militia led by Minin and Pozharskii during the seventeenth-century Time of Troubles, thus serving to create a positive image associated primarily with the notion of defending one’s homeland from foreign invaders.

<sup>48</sup> The author further specifies that while according to Russian dictionaries the word ‘separatist’ has a neutral tone, the political and ideological specificities of modern Russia render it as having a negative tone due to associations with the Chechen wars, where separatists were the ‘enemy’, and the fact that calls to separatism are criminalised in Russia (Kablukov 2015: 43). He further refers to the independence referendum that the insurgents in Eastern Ukraine organised as an argument that ‘separatist’ is a technically correct term to refer to the insurgents because the people in question were indeed campaigning for independence and not federalisation of the region as a part of Ukraine.

coverage in modern domestic Russian media point out a legacy of tools and practices and further justify analysing Russian media within the propaganda framework. This thesis will direct its focus to analysing the ways in which these tools are present in international broadcasting as this presents a knowledge gap which will be discussed later in this chapter.

When it comes to the roles of Other, or 'enemy' in the Russian media, the focus has shifted in 2014 from the USA or more generally the West to Ukraine, and descriptions of the Self and Other groups have come to include war rhetoric (Chepkina & Avtokhutdinova 2015: 115). Further on this topic Pasitselska (2017) points out that division in general is one of the main strategies of the Russian media coverage of the Ukrainian crisis, which painted division lines between the Maidan protesters and the supporters of the Yanukovich government, and between 'Russia' and 'the West' - all presented within as an 'us vs them' confrontation rhetoric. For example, this manifests itself in the language as words used to describe Ukraine and the West are evaluative and emotionally laden while Russia and the Eastern Ukrainian insurgents are described in neutral terms (Horbyk 2015: 507), which again reflects the findings of Brunova's (2011) study that discovered that the 'Us' group was described rarely and in neutral terms in Soviet propaganda and the 'Enemy' group was described often and in negative words. Finally, a crucial point identified by researchers in terms of the Russian participation in the conflict in Ukraine is that while Russian officials denied any Russian participation in the war in Ukraine, the analysis of the coverage of the conflict exposes a very clear delineation between the 'our' and 'their' sides of the conflict, and Russian media firmly positioned themselves as pro-separatist by describing the Eastern Ukrainian insurgents as a part of 'Self' group (Kablukov 2015: 43; Fedor 2015: 1).

However, despite the shifting of the Other role to Ukraine, anti-Western narratives in Russian media coverage of the conflict in Ukraine remained strong as they attributed “various negative characteristics to the USA and EU states via an interrelated set of plotlines that explained current developments with reference to ‘historical’ patterns” (Hutchings & Szostek 2015). Fedchenko (2016: 159), for example, points out the narrative of decline, decay and disintegration in the EU, the US and the West in general. Such narratives have several political goals, from diminishing the ‘credibility of western criticism of Russia’ to ‘legitimising Russian behaviour in the eyes of the public’ and ‘defending Russia’s self-identity as a European great power’ (Hutchings & Szostek 2015). The way these negative narratives of the West are relevant to the coverage of the conflict in Ukraine is particularly interesting as Khaldarova (2019: 4) explains that Othering in political conflicts is typically built on emphasising differences between the ‘us’ and ‘them’, whether it is based on differences in appearance, religion, language or ideological views. However, in the case of Russia and Ukraine these differences are minimal as the countries mostly share a cultural, religious, ethnic and historical background<sup>49</sup>. However, after the Euromaidan protests, in which the pro-EU Ukrainians took to the streets to protest the delaying of the association agreement between Ukraine and the EU in favour of maintaining closer ties with Russia, Ukraine’s Otherness has emerged in connection to its association with the West’s ‘corrupting influence’ (ibid: 5). Horbyk, however, argues that association with the West only emphasised the existing attitudes, arguing that Ukrainians have always been presented as Others by the Russian media, and points out that a study of the pre-Euromaidan portrayal of Ukraine and India in Russian and British press found that Russian media use more orientalist frames in their reporting of Ukraine than British media do in their reporting of India; in addition, he

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<sup>49</sup> Moreover, for years in the Soviet practice these similarities were used to portray Russian and Ukrainians as ‘brothers’, or fraternal nations, where Russia was a ‘big brother’ watching over ‘little brothers’ (other Soviet countries) in a Soviet ‘strict family model’ (Khaldarova 2019: 3)



emphasised that while the stereotyping of India in the British press was borne out of cultural stereotyping, Russia's stereotyping of Ukraine 'had more to do with politics and economy, which suggested its orientalism was much more at the service of the state' (2015: 506).

Connected to the how Ukraine was covered in its capacity as Russia's Other is the coverage of the Ukrainian government as either a puppet-government controlled by the West, or as a failing state as a result of the coup d'état, where the new government cannot control the country as it descends into war and fascism (Fedchenko 2016: 159; Osipian 2015: 112).

Knekht (2014: 121) points out that Ukrainian politics are presented in a reductive carnivalised way where main political figures get assigned 'humorous labels'<sup>50</sup> which are akin to roles in a comedy or sitcom and used like stereotypes, limiting all further coverage of these actors to their assigned roles. This use of labels can also be seen as a name-calling propaganda device (see Conway et al 2007; Koa 2018).

References to history and parallels between historical and current events were identified as another trait of the coverage of the war in Ukraine, with World War II analogies being the most important (Horbyk 2015: 509) and used to delineate the 'us' and 'them' by "repeatedly describing the supporters of the anti-government demonstrations in Kiev and all pro-Western forces in Ukraine as 'fascists' and 'neo-Nazis'", therefore implicitly portraying "the adversaries of these groups as 'ours'" (Teper 2016: 386). The 'Ukrainian nazi/fascist' trope was found in the coverage of the Euromaidan protests, of the Crimea annexation, and of the post-Euromaidan politics in Ukraine, and the continued conflict in the east of the country (Khaldarova 2019: 15; Patiselska 2017: 606; Horbyk 2015: 508; Sazonov & Kopõtin 2016: 69; Fedchenko 2016: 159), where associations with WWII and Nazi Germany portrayed

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<sup>50</sup> For example, President Poroshenko is 'candy magnate' or 'chocolate king' because of his confectionary business, Kyiv mayor Vitaly Klichko is 'boxer' because of his previous sports career, etc.

Ukrainians as a ‘threatening Other’ as the image of Nazis is recognisable, threatening, and emotionally touching for the Russian and post-Soviet audiences (Khaldarova 2019: 5). The state-run TV channel Perviy Kanal had a reference to fascism in practically every report on the Euromaidan protests (Gaufman 2015: 150), and as the protests escalated, they were covered increasingly as a clash between forces of good and evil, as a “noble struggle against the ‘fascist’ Western-sponsored Ukrainian nationalists intent on carrying out a ‘genocide’ of Russians in Ukraine” (ibid: 142). It is important that such references should be seen within the context of the contemporary Russian historiography, education, and mass culture, where WWII is extremely ideologized and has the potential to inspire an emotional response, build tension and inspire nationalistic feelings (Horbyk 2015: 509; Roman et al 2017: 373). The context of this response lies in the collective memory of WWII, which is distinctly different in Russia compared to Europe and North America in its lack of emphasis on the Holocaust and association first and foremost ‘with the immense suffering of the Soviet population, especially the civilian population in the occupied territories’, and specifically the ‘atrocities perpetrated against Soviet women and children’ (Gaufman 2015: 147). It is because of this that fascism as a frame of reference is an extremely powerful tool for constructing ‘a sense of existential threat’ at home (ibid: 144). Finally, the geopolitical significance of the role that the USSR played in WWII is an important component of Russia’s national identity as a “great power” and a “liberator of Europe” (Zhurzhenko 2007).

References to the Cold War feature as another prominent historical parallel which portrays the geopolitical opposition of “‘Russia as a stronghold of stability’ versus ‘USA, desirous for world domination’” (Pasitselska 2017: 606). References to the Soviet history were prominent in the coverage of the annexation of Crimea, which was “described as ‘reunification’ of

Russia and Crimea or Crimea's 'return' to Russia, implying a return to the previously existing, natural state of affairs", with references to historical injustice<sup>51</sup>(Teper 2016: 383).

As well as history, geopolitics is pointed out as another important frame for the coverage of the conflict in Ukraine. Thus, Euromaidan is presented as 'a global U.S.- and EU-led conspiracy against Russia' rather than a grassroots Ukrainian protest movement (Horbyk 2015: 507). This is achieved by foregrounding the 'radical Ukrainian elements and foreign actors', and 'backgrounding the indigenous agency, liberal, and progressive forces' (ibid.), and sometimes by claiming that the war in Ukraine is 'actually conducted by the US, NATO or private contractors' (Fedchenko 2016: 159). It is also noted that ideologically this geopolitical framing appeals to both ends of the political spectrum as it manages to combine the 'Western neoconservative obsession with geopolitics and the leftist deprecation of the United States' thus widening the emotional reach over different audiences (ibid.).

Emergence of a nationalist discourse centred on identifying Ukrainian citizens as ethnically Russian or with reference to the Russian language (Russian-speakers) is also pointed out by the researchers in relation to the coverage of the conflict in Ukraine (Teper 2016). Osipian (2015: 110) argues that the crucial role of the Russian national identity in the coverage of what is essentially foreign news is explained by the fact that it was instrumental for internal politics inside Russia, where the goal was to discredit popular unrest as a political tool. Thus, he states, all negative coverage of the protesters and the political actors associated with them works not only to support the Russian foreign policy goals and preserve the Russian influence in the post-Soviet region but also to discredit the idea of protests inside Russia

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<sup>51</sup> Referring to the events of 1954 when Crimea was transferred within USSR from Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic to Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic.

‘convincing Russians that the protesters represented a pernicious alien force’ (ibid: 111). Curiously despite the fact that Russia and Russians are included heavily in the narratives of the conflict in Ukraine as victims, the conflict is also portrayed as an internal struggle, which serves a purpose of distancing Russia from the conflict (Fedchenko 2016: 159) and legitimising separatists (and legitimising any Russian support of them) as they are presented as the Ukrainian Russian speakers’ only protectors in Ukraine (Pakhomenko & Tryma 2016: 52).

Russian media coverage of the shooting down of the Malaysian airlines flight MH17 is one of the most researched topics of the conflict in Ukraine. When it comes to the domestic coverage, Russian media confidently accused Ukraine of downing the plane (Oates 2014; Sazonov & Kopõtin 2016; Toal & O’Loughlin 2018). Such accusations were made by direct claims through the use of experts, who voiced a ‘variety of reasons and versions, and references to prior similar events’, and by presenting information that indirectly inferred that Ukraine was to be blamed, for example by saying that Ukrainian army is badly trained and unprofessional, by claiming that the real target could have been the plane carrying Putin, or by saying that the downing is a premeditated provocation because Ukraine needs to discredit the rebels by blaming the downing of the plane on them (Toal & O’Loughlin 2018). The extent of these accusations came down to even blaming specific soldiers of the Ukrainian army, who were named in the coverage in a Russian tabloid called *Komsomolskaya Pravda* (Sazonov & Kopõtin 2016: 70). At the same time the names of the separatist territories (Donetsk People’s Republic, DPR, and Lugansk people’s Republic, LPR), which were heavily used in the coverage of the other events in the conflict, disappear from the coverage as the accident is repeatedly described as having happened ‘on Ukrainian territory’, despite the crash taking place on the territory controlled by the DPR insurgents (Oates 2014). The

use of history parallels takes an interesting form as news reports bring up both similar events in terms of details (civilian planes downed by mistake, including a Russian plane downed by the Ukrainian army in 2001), or in terms of perceived geopolitical meaning as one reporter compares the unfolding of the crisis surrounding MH17 with ‘Colin Powell’s ‘white powder tube’ forgery at the United Nations justifying US intervention in Iraq, the Gulf of Tonkin incident, the effort to blame Cuba for attacking a passenger airline, even the late-nineteenth-century blaming of an explosion on the US ship *Maine* on the Spanish: all are examples of US provocations to launch wars’ (Toal & O’Loughlin 2018; see also Oates 2014). This is taken to the level of conspiracy theories as, for example, one reporter ponders the question of who really benefits from the crash of MH17, with the possible answers ranging from the Ukrainian president Poroshenko, looking for any pretext to say that the insurgents are terrorists, to the US, who could be using this as a pretext to invade Ukraine (ibid.). Thus, we can see that despite a new set of extreme circumstances, the pre-existing negative narratives about Ukraine and the West, in particular the US, are still crucial to the way any event in the conflict was covered in the domestic media in Russia.

Apart from the conspiracy theories the coverage also offered the audiences multiple versions of how the event unfolded, many of which were not supported by evidence (Oates 2014; Sazonov & Kopõtin 2016; Khaldarova and Pantti 2016; Toal & O’Loughlin 2018). Toal & O’Loughlin (2018) discuss how one of the most popular news programmes in Russia, *Vremya on Perviy Kanal*, showed an animation that depicted MH17 being tracked and attacked by two Ukrainian missiles, which, by the account of any investigator of this event, did not happen. However, the viewers of the programme were in fact visually shown Ukrainian missiles destroying MH17, even if in the form of an animation. The emergence of phenomena such as this is seen by some researchers as an example of ‘flak’ per Herman &

Chomsky's (2002) propaganda filters, which means the purpose of these multiple versions of the same event is seen as 'broadcasting a barrage of counter-claims while trying to discredit the evidence of the pro-Russia militia's military capability on the ground in Ukraine' (Oates 2014). This understanding of these alternative versions of events as flak can be crucial for fleshing out the difference between the Soviet propaganda efforts<sup>52</sup> and the construction of the pro-government narratives in modern Russia where information flows more freely and shapes the way these narratives are constructed. In addition, Chapter 2 has identified a link between the concepts of flak and post-truth, which might appear similarly to the audiences but originate from different situations – one of the orchestrated propaganda effort for flak and one of the chaotic communication environment and the abundance of information in relation to post-truth. Thus, while the modern post-truth communication environment affects the way propaganda and public diplomacy tools may be perceived, it is important to consider the larger picture of communication in drawing conclusions about the nature of communication by certain actors – this is why this study introduces a large research sample that spans 3 years of content.

Overall, the researchers conclude that coverage of the war in Ukraine in Russian media was highly ideologically biased, combined anti-Ukrainian and anti-Western narratives and relied heavily on historical categories and parallels. In relation to the journalistic standards, the disregard for accuracy and balance is highlighted (Fedor 2015: 3) as the conflict is presented in a one-sided way with no alternative narratives (Samoilenko et al 2017). While the word propaganda often gets used in relation to Russian media without any explanation of why the term is applicable, Gatov (2018) explains that when he refers to the practice of the Russian

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<sup>52</sup> Where information flows were controlled and information challenging the official Soviet version of events was simply not broadcast at all (Oates 2014).

media during the Ukrainian crisis in 2014 as ‘military propaganda’ he bases his word selection on his knowledge of the fact that ‘special representatives’ of the government worked in Russian state-owned media and consulted the newsrooms on the ongoing news coverage until the autumn of 2014<sup>53</sup>. This puts in context the fact that Russian media coverage of this conflict is studied by most researchers, particularly in America and Europe but also in Russia, within the framework of propaganda and information wars, and that Russian media in these studies are looked at more often as participants of the conflict rather than independent actors (see Pasitselska 2017). In relation to policy, Gaufman (2015: 143) views such media coverage as a case of securitization or ‘an attempt to depict a given phenomenon as an existential threat, thereby enabling the legitimization of extraordinary measures ostensibly aimed at combating this threat’, which in the context of this conflict can mean legitimising Russian support for the insurgents in Eastern Ukraine and annexation of Crimea, all of which had direct negative effects, mainly economic, on regular Russians as several round of sanctions were announced by the EU, USA and other Western countries.

Research of the way Russian media covered events in the Syrian conflict has shown some general similarities with the way that Russian media covered the Ukrainian conflict by adopting the state’s official view of events in their coverage by following the official discourse (Budak 2018). However, research shows that at the very start of the conflict in Syria (before the Russian involvement) the coverage was similar to that of Western media<sup>54</sup> where the socio-economic issues were recognised as reasons for the uprising, which was presented as non-violent and an ‘extension of the Arab Spring whereby the people, angered

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<sup>53</sup> Gatov, who is now a media scholar, worked in 2011-2013 at RIA-Novosti, Russian state-owned news agency that was central in founding RT, his insider knowledge of Russian media comes from his work experience.

<sup>54</sup> Overall research of Russian media coverage of the war in Syria often features a comparative element where it is contrasted with that of foreign, mostly Western media (see Brown 2014; Brown 2015; Kochergina 2016; Martynenko 2016; Budayev & Tikhonov 2016; Batasheva 2017; Kalugina 2018; Kouteiba 2018; Nyirubugara 2018; Yesionov 2018).

by a lack of opportunity and empowered by technology and social media, had risen up to challenge a corrupt, undemocratic regime' (Brown 2014; see also Strovsky & Schleifer 2019; Kouteiba 2018). The shift in this narrative, however, happened rather fast as the media quickly began to underline the illiberal violent component in the opposition, which could be observed from nominations: people involved in the uprising quickly became 'militants' and 'rebels' (before eventually becoming 'terrorists' closer to the time of Russian involvement in 2015), and protests became 'clashes', implying violence on both sides (Brown 2014: 51). Similarly, religious extremism and Islamism became the focus of the coverage of the opposition, and some Russian media made a connection with Russian internal politics as they highlighted that 'Damascus, unlike Western governments, assisted Russia in its struggle with Islamic insurgents during the second Chechen war' (Brown 2014: 52). This shift in nominations is especially interesting to observe in relation to the Euromaidan protests in Ukraine, where protesters were also described in terms that referred to violence but the anti-government pro-Russian insurgents in Eastern Ukraine were not. However, despite the relatively lax approach to covering the unrest in Syria before the Russian involvement Brown (ibid: 49) still identifies a significant stylistic difference, where Russian coverage was more reserved in style and didn't describe in literary florid terms the magnitude of people's suffering in the way that Western coverage did and gave less prominence to the reports of regime violence even in the periods when the coverage was not overwhelmingly pro-Assad. When covering losses, for example, Russian media made a point in reporting not only the civilian deaths but also those of police and military personnel, which Brown (2014: 53) noted happened rarely in Western media.

Reporting of the chemical attack in Ghouta in 2013 is of especial interest for this thesis as one of the events it studies is the chemical attack in Khan Sheikhoun, therefore looking at the



way a similar event was covered before Russian involvement can inform the analysis. In addition, the coverage of the event is interesting for this thesis in its geopolitical similarity to the downing of MH17, where an ally of Russia, or an actor supported by Russia, was implicated in a serious crime. In the Ghouta attack Russian coverage was built on distrust of the Western media and the Western governments as the reporting was initially dismissive that the attack had happened at all, alleging the images and reports are fabricated, drawing close attention and scrutiny to those media outlets that reported the attack: “Qatar’s al-Jazeera, Saudi Arabia’s al-Arabiya, and Britain’s Sky News, all ‘media that have actively supported the opponents of the Syrian president’” (Brown 2015: 237). After it was established that the attack did happen, however, Russian media displayed a level of certainty that the rebels were to blame for the attack (Brown 2015; Kouteiba 2018). The structure of this argument, analysed by Brown (2015) is similar to the line of argument used by the Russian media when they argued that it was the Ukrainian army who shot down MH17: they appeal to similar events in the past and ask who would benefit from the attack (saying it is not the regime but the rebels who would benefit from the Western outrage and the subsequent involvement in the war, the same way that Russian media argued that the shooting down of MH17 benefitted the Ukrainian government and didn’t benefit the insurgents). Brown (2014: 57) puts this coverage in context, saying that Russian media had been convinced for a long time that the intentions of the US in the region were to meddle and remove an anti-Western leader, therefore the angle of the coverage of the chemical attack in Ghouta fit into the narrative as a puzzle piece as it was argued that the attacks were staged by the Syrian opposition in order to get the US involved in the conflict, and clear parallels were drawn with the invasion of Iraq, the same parallel that was invoked in the coverage of the downing of MH17.

Whatever criticism of the regime and sympathy for the opposition protesters was present in the Russian media coverage at the beginning of the conflict in Syria disappeared completely

well before Russia became directly involved in the war (Kouteiba 2018; Strovsky & Schleifer 2019). When Russian air force was announced to come and support the Syrian army in September 2015, the coverage of the conflict in Russian media already presented Assad as the only guarantor of stability in Syria, and his government as an ‘innocent victim of aggression’ (Strovsky & Schleifer 2019: 13). More parallels were drawn with Russia’s internal affairs as the brutality of the Syrian Army was justified and legitimised as it was presented as a reflection of ‘Russia’s own experience of fighting Islamic insurgency in Chechnya: all-out use of force against Islamic militants is seen as effective and necessary’ (Titov 2015). The opposition was portrayed in a demonising way as human rights violations and brutality were emphasised in all discussions (Mescheryakov 2016: 80), mirroring the way that the Ukrainian army was described as brutal and compared to Nazis. The descriptions of the opposition often mention the fact that they are well-armed, ‘uncompromising’ (Brown 2014: 53), dependent on their ‘foreign masters’ (Strovsky & Schleifer 2019: 19), and their inhumanity underlined by animal metaphors (Budayev & Tikhonov 2016: 44). Moreover, there was no coverage of the opposition as a political force, only as a violent militia (Strovsky & Schleifer 2019: 13), which reflects the coverage of the Euromaidan protesters, who were also portrayed as a Western-backed source of violence, with their anti-corruption and pro-European slogans downplayed. Criticism of the US and the West in general remains a universal reference point, with widespread mentions of Iraq and Libya as well as the accusation that the US created IS by producing a ‘power vacuum in the region’ (Titov 2015). One of the main messages is that Western involvement in Syria only brings chaos and destruction, which is done through appealing to the emotions of the audience and not by discussing facts of the campaigns, so it remains impossible ‘for the audiences to find out about the actual contribution of the West to the situation in Syria from this kind of reporting’ (Yesionov 2018: 56). Even smaller scale local events like the attack on the aid convoy in

Syria were interpreted with reference to geopolitics as they were interpreted as the West's constant attempts to undermine Russia in Syria (Batasheva 2017). Researchers point out that a fair share of the conflict coverage focused not on war reporting from Syria but on 'keeping an eye on the West' style of reporting where Western media were criticised for 'disinformation' about the state of events in Syria and for relying on the information from the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, who were described by the Russian media as uneducated, biased and unfit as experts (Brown 2014; Aliyeva 2015). In reporting the Western government's criticism, it is only the basic accusations and attacks that got covered while the actual nature and facts of what Russia was blamed of was omitted (Batasheva 2017: 84). At the same time Russia and Russian position were clearly communicated even before Russia was directly involved in the war: Moscow was portrayed not as an ally of Damascus but as an impartial peacemaker with no particular allegiances except for the international law and the legal order and national sovereignty, a highly principled actor not motivated by selfish national interests (Brown 2014: 56).

Mescheryakov (2016: 79) notes that compared to other conflicts in the recent Russian history, for example the conflict in Ukraine and the Russian war with Georgia in 2008, access of journalists to the Syrian conflict was restricted and Russian Defence ministry's press office has de facto become an exclusive source of information for most Russian media<sup>55</sup>. Most information in the reports is credited to the official government agencies in Russia and Syria, or the Syrian state-owned information agency SANA (Kouteiba 2018: 128). As Strovsky & Schleifer (2019: 18) put it: 'press never doubted the fairness of what Syrian and Russian politicians said, nor did it provide its audience with other points of view on this issue'. In line with this the details of the coverage that Mescheryakov (2016: 79) highlights resemble

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<sup>55</sup> Although Mescheryakov here doesn't discuss Russian news agencies that had own correspondents in Syria, most of them can hardly be seen as independent as they accompanied the Syrian Army on several occasions, for example in the retaking of Palmyra, and worked in close contact with the Russian army.

Defence Ministry press release material that hasn't been edited much as it focused on the newest weapons and technologies used by the Russian army, their new uniforms and living quarters in Syria and so on, though he identifies it as 'flak' (ibid: 87).

In terms of journalism Kouteiba (2018: 130) argues that Russian media coverage of the conflict was highly politicised and showed the conflict the way the government wanted the audiences to see it. However even though all the media messages were fully aligned with political statements coming from the Kremlin', Strovsky & Schleifer (2019: 11) argue that Russian media weren't just acting as propaganda loudspeakers, repeating whatever they were told to say but instead sought to 'creatively interpret events with respect to the interests of the audience', this way considering both the politics and the commercial side of their own operations. In terms of policy Russian involvement in the Syrian war was constantly legitimised through this media coverage as the legality of the Russian army deployment was emphasised through highlighting that Bashar Assad had asked the Russian government for support (Mescheryakov 2016: 79; Hinck et al 2018: 30). The announcement of the withdrawal of the Russian forces from Syria was thus covered as a demonstration of Russia's honest intentions in the region, as a thoughtful decision and a sign of the success of the operation, a victory for Russian diplomacy and military and a confirmation that Russia is an important global power (Marinovich 2017:163).

Discussions of the coverage of the Syrian conflict have also invoked discussions of the media-produced reality (Budak 2018), which echoes Kablukov's (2015:45) analysis of the 'deformed' media reality of the Ukrainian conflict, where media construct a reality aligned with the state policies and interests. Considering the discussions of media reality and post-truth in Chapter 2, the realities of the wars in Syria and Ukraine presented by RT can be seen as Russia's 'partisan truths.' Whether these 'partisan truths' constitute the 'Russian viewpoint

on major global events' that RT promises to deliver is one of the questions this thesis aims to answer.

In this section of the chapter, we have seen that the researchers argue that the Russian media coverage of the wars in Ukraine and in Syria was politically biased and aligned with the Russian interests and foreign policy agenda. Various anti-western narratives united the coverage of Ukraine and Syria, and the negative portrayal of other groups (for example the Ukrainian government, the Euromaidan protesters and the Syrian opposition groups) were always tied into the groups' connections to or associations with the West, regardless of whether these connections existed in real life. In addition, coverage of events where Russian-supported actors were implicated (as this chapter has shown on the example of the downing of MH17 and the chemical attack in Ghouta in 2013) has been interpreted by the researchers as flak, denialism and conspiracy theories. These findings will be used to inform the analysis of the RT coverage of the wars in Ukraine and in Syria in this thesis.

### **3:3 RT**

At the centre of this thesis is RT, the Russian multilingual international broadcaster that was featured in a November 2016 European Parliament resolution that declared it a propaganda outlet that the European states need to counteract (European Parliament 2016). The resolution argued that the channel was 'part of a larger subversive campaign to weaken EU cooperation and sovereignty' and stressed that 'Russia is exploiting the absence of a legal international framework in areas such as cybersecurity and the lack of accountability in media regulation and is turning any ambiguity in these matters in its favour' (ibid.). Similar line of argument - that RT is a propaganda operation disguised as a media that exploits the Western respect for free speech - has been expressed by the New York Times reporter Jim Rutenberg (2017) who

argued that ‘Russia has built the most effective propaganda operation of the 21st century so far, one that thrives in the feverish political climates that have descended on many Western publics’ and that RT is harder for the West to combat than hackers and criminals because it operates ‘on the stated terms of Western liberal democracy; they count themselves as news organisations, protected by the First Amendment and the libertarian ethos of the internet’. The same argument persists among some researchers as Fedchenko (2016: 145) states that “the Kremlin has systematically learnt to use the principles of liberal democracies against them”.

A report prepared by the CIA, the FBI and the NSA titled “Assessing Russian Activities and Intentions in Recent U.S. Elections” describes an ‘influence campaign in 2016 aimed at the U.S. presidential election’, with nearly half of its pages devoted to “Russia’s state-run propaganda machine”, RT (Rutenberg 2017). In November 2017 RT America was told to register as a foreign agent in accordance with the US Foreign Agents Registration Act (The United States Department of Justice 2017), as an ‘agent of a foreign principal who [...] engages in political activities on behalf of a foreign principal, acts as a foreign principal’s public relations counsel, publicity agent, information-service employee, or political consultant (The United States Department of Justice, n.d.). This description is more fitting for a PR firm or a political lobbying agency, and indeed most foreign-funded media, for example BBC, Deutsche Welle, and Al Jazeera, have not been obliged to register as foreign agents in the US (CPJ 2017), demonstrating again that RT is not seen as one of these media organisations.

This section of the chapter aims to put these events, accusations and statements in context by looking first the history of RT, the way that the channel is positioned on the global media and political market, mainly by studying its mission statement, interviews with the editor-in-chief

Margarita Simonyan and scholarly work that looked at RT as a media actor in world politics. This will help put in context this study's analysis of the channel's themes and messages, and understand what role they play for the channel's information policy and how they connect to the Russian foreign policy agenda. The final section of this chapter will review the existing studies of the channel's content, which will also provide context for the analysis of the conflict coverage in this thesis.

## **2.1 History and global positioning**

TV channel RT was founded as Russia Today in 2005 by the Russian state-owned media conglomerate RIA-Novosti (now called MIA Rossiya Segodnya). Despite being founded by a state-owned media organisation, RT is not owned by the Russian government as it is an 'autonomous non-profit organisation that is publicly financed from the budget of the Russian Federation' (RT n.d.). RT's budget has been increasing since its foundation but nearly doubled in 2013 when it went from RUB6.483 bn in years 2011-2012 (Lenta.Ru 2010) to 11.2bn in 2013 (Lenta.Ru 2012). In 2016, RT's budget was RUB17bn (RT n.d.), and in 2020 RUB27.4bn (RBC 2020).

The channel's structure currently comprises 6 broadcast channels (3 in English: RT International, RT America, RT UK; as well as RT Arabic, RT Spanish, and RTDoc, the English-language documentary channel) and websites in English, Russian, Spanish, Arabic, French and German. As a transnational broadcasting company, the editorial management of RT is officially de-centralised even though doubts have been expressed about the editorial freedom that teams in each country enjoy (Strukov 2014: 242). Kuznetsova (2018: 101)

found that Western journalists who worked for RT in the early period of the channel say that there was no direct editorial control from Moscow.

The name of the channel was changed from Russia Today to RT in 2009 - as some researchers argued in order to have a more neutral sounding name without the country identification in the title (Rodgers 2015: 47), or, as others claimed to signal a change in focus of the channel from the Russia-centred news to the world news from an alternative perspective (Kuznetsova 2018). The channel's editor-in-chief, Margarita Simonyan, explains that the reason for the name change was a mix of both of these: she notes that when RT was first launched as Russia Today it focused on broadcasting news about Russia to foreign audiences<sup>56</sup>, before realising that there was little demand for such news (Afisha Daily 2011). That's when the current focus of the channel as an 'alternative to the mainstream media' has emerged, Simonyan explained in an interview to the Russian business daily Kommersant (2012). By the mainstream media she means international media coming from the West as she regularly compares RT to CNN and BBC, thus, the narrative of Western hegemony in global news production has become central to RT's self-identification. It is reflected in the channel's motto, 'Question more', which, ironically, was developed by a UK-based branch of an American advertising firm, McCann Erickson (RT 2010; Rutenberg 2017). The channel's mission statement is the source of one the research questions of this study as it introduces the idea of the 'Russian viewpoint on global events':

'RT creates news with an edge for viewers who Question More. RT covers stories overlooked by the mainstream media, provides alternative perspectives on current

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<sup>56</sup> Russian media executive and politician Mikhail Lesin, who used to be an adviser to Vladimir Putin and was among the people who started RT, said in 2001 that that "the network's mission was to reverse the global view of Russians as bears that roam the streets and growl' (Rutenberg 2017).



affairs, and acquaints international audiences with a Russian viewpoint on major global events' (RT n.d.).

The alternative angle, Simonyan maintains, is rooted in presenting the Russian viewpoint on global events because 'the stories you tell will always depend on where you stand in the world', and the example she gives indicates that this viewpoint is also meant to be more humanitarian and oriented on justice:

"When CNN and BBC report on a crash of a NATO drone in Libya, that's their main story of the day, but what we see is that on the same day in Libya 13 civilians died, all members of the same family, six of them children' (Kommersant 2012).

Along the same lines the former MSNBC veteran host Ed Schultz, who moved to work for RT America in 2016 has explained that "the network allows him to cover news that may not otherwise 'get the proper attention that we think it deserves'" (Rutenberg 2017). Thus, RT's reasoning for their approach to news - covering stories from a Russian point of view, stories that Western media wouldn't cover, is 'guided by the normative ideal of pluralism of opinions and the strive to provide an anti-hegemonic take on the world affairs' (Kuznetsova 2018: 103). RT's audience, therefore, Simonyan explains, are people 'who are tired of the mainstream' and 'understand that all of the truth cannot be fit into a single concept of the world pushed by the same old Anglo-Saxon media' (Kommersant 2012). Kuznetsova (2018: 105) connects this approach to audiences with that of Soviet propaganda, which also targeted people outside of the mainstream. When RT is blamed of providing biased coverage, Simonyan outright rejects the idea that Western media are objective in their reporting: "Objectivity does not exist. CNN goes into a great hysterical fit when 20 American soldiers are killed, may they rest in peace. But the fact that at the same time 2000 civilians were killed

is never even mentioned. So what objectivity are we talking about?' (Kommersant 2012).

Rutenberg (2017) compares this position with the Fox News founder Roger Ailes:

'if you thought Fox looked conservative, he would say, maybe it's because you were liberal. In Russia's case, it's: If RT looks biased, it's because you live in a bubble of Western arrogance and hypocrisy. You're the one who's biased'.

Curiously, Simonyan's age when she became editor-in-chief at just 25 can be seen as a signal about the kind of channel that Russia Today was going to be. Not only was she one of the youngest editors-in-chief in the world when she took the reins of Russia Today, but also, born in 1980, she was only 11 years old when the Soviet Union collapsed, so unlike the majority of the politicians, diplomats, media executives and editors in Russia who have experience working in the Soviet system of politics, diplomacy and propaganda, Simonyan would not even have many memories or first-hand experiences of it. In addition, the bio of RT's managing director Alexey Nikolov, who is 62, on RT's 'Management' section of their About Us page specifies that in the Soviet times he worked as a sports reporter, a job "which was largely devoid of political interference" (RT, n.d.1). Thus, we can see that as a channel RT distances itself from the Soviet Union and the propaganda tradition.

However, while maintaining this idea of pluralism in media Simonyan has also stated multiple times that that the approach of being a source of alternative news is a pragmatic choice for the channel - a strategy to attract audiences: "Why would people watch us when we have smaller studios and cheaper cameras? Only if we show them something that CNN will never show" (Kommersant 2012). She then added that the mission to gain an audience is guided less by the commercial motives of advertising revenue and more by the need to build

a trustworthy platform that can be used when necessary to promote Russia and Russian views:

“It’s important to have a channel that the audience gets used to, that the audience likes. And then, when you need to, you show them what you need to show them. In a way not having an international broadcasting operation is the same as not having a Ministry of Defence - when we’re not at war it doesn’t seem that necessary. But when we are at war, it’s critical. And you can’t create an army a week before the war starts’ (Afisha Daily 2011).

While such comparisons with the Ministry of Defence can be seen as arguments for inclusion of RT on the foreign agents lists in the US and the European Parliament’s propaganda resolution, Simonyan argues that everyone is doing it by saying there are no international broadcasters who are doing anything other than promoting the values of the country from which they broadcast (Afisha Daily 2011). But, she argues, good broadcasters are transparent about this, like RT – as an example refers to the BBC World Service License that states that ‘the World Service supports a range of BBC activity but contributes primarily to the BBC’s fifth Public Purpose to reflect the United Kingdom, its culture and values to the world’ (BBC n.d.), and to Al Jazeera who ‘put Qatar on the world map’ (Afisha Daily 2011). RT has a similar goal: “To show what Russia is doing, to explain why it does that, what it thinks about world events, and why it thinks the way it does’ (Simonyan in Afisha Daily 2011). As Kuznetsova (2018: 104) puts it:

a good 24-hour news network, in RT’s understanding, should not try to present a balanced reporting based on the logic of objectivity but should rather be transparent on their political views.

This understanding follows the formula of public diplomacy - explaining the country's position to foreign audiences - and indeed Simonyan has also said that she sees RT as a soft power tool, as she specified that it is not surprising that Russia lost so many information wars considering 'we only started working on getting this right in 2005', referring to the year RT was founded (Kommersant 2012).

Vladimir Putin has also spoken out about the purpose and the Russian viewpoint angle of RT during his visit to the channel's headquarters in Moscow in 2013, saying that

'Of course, it [RT] is funded by the government, and, in way, can't not reflect the position of the official Russian authorities on the events at home and abroad. But we never wanted this channel - RT - to engage in apologetics of Russian politics - internal or foreign' (Putin 2013a).

Notably he uses first person plural pronouns to talk about RT's mission and success, as if he as a president of the country and RT as a TV channel share goals and aspirations:

'When we thought up this enterprise in 2005, we were guided by the need for a new strong player on the global information scene. One that will not only cover objectively the events in our country, in Russia, but also would try [...] to break the monopoly of the Anglo-Saxon media in the sphere of the global information flow. And I think we are succeeding' (Putin 2013a).

Thus, global positioning of RT is a complex topic as RT management appeals to the global practice of international broadcasting in order to represent the views and values of the country while simultaneously positioning the channel as a source of alternative views and narratives ignored by the mainstream media. At the same time, RT's editor-in-chief revealed the alternative approach of the channel is guided by pragmatic needs to gain an audience to which the channel can explain the actions of Russia if and when is necessary, thus combining

the normative ideals of pluralism of opinions with a pragmatic model of media and public diplomacy.

## **2.2 RT content and its interpretations**

This section will provide a look into the academic studies concerning RT, focusing on the channel's content and the researchers' interpretations of it. It aims to contextualise this study's look into the conflict coverage on RT and to set out a background to how other studies understand the channel, its content and its mission.

One of the biggest questions that researchers look to answer about RT is to do with its association with propaganda and the Russian government. The breadth of views here can be seen from the way that researchers choose to describe RT: some call it 'state-controlled' (Makhashvili 2017), 'state-linked' (Ramsay & Robertshaw 2019), 'state-aligned' (Chatterje-Doody 2018; Chatterje-Doody & Tolz 2019), or 'Kremlin-controlled' (Hansen 2015: 149), others call it 'propaganda' (Makhashvili 2017; Orrtung & Nelson 2019), and a soft power tool and public diplomacy outlet (Miazhevich 2014; Strukov 2014; Yablokov 2015; Kuznetsova 2018; Kalugina 2018; Dajani et al 2019), as well as a 'tool of the information war' (Krug 2017) and 'hybrid warfare' (Meister & Puglierin 2015). Despite these labels and the numerous accusations from politicians detailed in the introduction to this section of the chapter, some researchers reject the idea of RT as a purely propagandistic Kremlin mouthpiece (Hutchings & Szostek 2015; Kuznetsova 2018; Chatterje-Doody & Tolz 2019; Dajani et al 2019), and argue that in Russia media such as RT, even though 'editorially aligned with the government's priorities', don't just broadcast the official discourse of the state but also play a crucial role in its construction (Chatterje-Doody & Tolz 2019: 336). For example utilising the concept of strategic narratives to analyse the RT Arabic coverage

Dajani et al (2019: 3) argue that the narratives they observed did not follow a pre-determined agenda but instead shifted and attempted to seize the discourse ‘as a way of negotiating its role in an ongoing political process’ (ibid: 5), thus suggesting that while the generalised, ‘main’ strategic narratives may persist over time, smaller scale narratives are set to be modified by the changing circumstances in which they exist. Kuznetsova (2018: 188) argues that because of this dependency of discursive practice on the volatility of the contextual environment, looking at international broadcasting content is an efficient way to expand our understanding of how different states communicate foreign policy.

Studies that looked at the way the conflict in Ukraine has been covered by RT showed that while the overall message was similar to those in the domestic Russian coverage explored earlier in this chapter<sup>57</sup>, the details of the coverage are different. First of all, RT uses ‘notions which acquired currency’ in the global media market, for example in referring to the Euromaidan protests using the word ‘Euromaidan’, which has not been detected in the Russian domestic coverage (Miazhevich 2014: 187). Further Miazhevich (ibid: 189) looks at the shift in narratives in the coverage of the protests that is similar to the trend observed in the Russian domestic media coverage of the start of the conflict in Syria, where non-violent element was covered first but simmered down as the narratives of violence and radicalism took centre stage. In even more mirroring of the way Russian domestic media covered Syria, RT ‘tended to report on the casualties among the police rather than the protesters [...] and downplay (if mention) the facts of police brutality’ (ibid.), and often concentrated the coverage on the geopolitical aspect of the crisis and paid less attention to regular people

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<sup>57</sup> Messages of RT coverage of Ukraine that are similar to the coverage of domestic Russian media include emphasising the nationalist element of the protest, foregrounding of the violence and creating Nazi and fascist parallels, downplaying views that are critical of Russia, or omitting their details and context, highlighting the ‘Western involvement’ narrative and downplaying of the agency of Ukrainians (Miazhevich 2014), appealing to the international law and ‘us vs them’ structures (Kuznetsova 2018)

affected by it (Kuznetsova 2018: 192). These parallels further highlight the necessity to study conflict coverage across events in order to identify potentially universal patterns and trends.

Studies that looked at the way the conflict in Syria has been covered by RT have also identified major similarities with the domestic media coverage in Russia<sup>58</sup>. In addition, Nyirubugara (2018: 1977) highlights ethical issues of the coverage of the conflict, pointing to the heavy use of child images, which are not consistently blurred in ‘circumstances where it would be regarded as necessary by journalism ethics’, which the author explains by the need to appeal to emotions of the audience by showing a child, while a blurred face in these circumstances will be less powerful. Jensen (2018: 272) looks at the way RT covered the Khan Sheikhoun chemical attack and highlights the proliferation of conspiracy theories and anti-White Helmets narratives and the fact that the coverage did not feature any testimonies of the survivors, in particular “no reports about Abdul Hamid Youssef, the Syrian father who lost his twin babies and 20 members of his family’. Considering the Simonyan quote where she accuses the mainstream media of ignoring civilian suffering in Libya, presented in the previous section of this chapter, this shows that RT has either abandoned their principles for political reasons or that the principles are only apply in specific circumstances, as Kuznetsova (2018: 191) also argues that humanitarian coverage made up a very small portion of RT’s coverage in her sample, which makes RT not that different from the mainstream media that it claims to oppose.

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<sup>58</sup> In particular messages of RT coverage of Syria that are similar to the coverage of domestic Russian media include extremely negative coverage of all opposition as violent, aggressive, weak or morally questionable (Jensen 2018; Dajani et al 2019; Jensen 2018), anti-Western narratives (Gabdulakhov 2016; Kuznetsova 2018), portrayal of Russia as a peacekeeper with an emphasis on the aggressive US policies and legality of Russia’s presence in Syria (Kuznetsova 2018; Dajani et al 2019; Orttung & Nelson 2019), portrayal of the Syrian army, government and their allies as the ‘sole legitimate forces on the ground’ (Nyirubugara 2018), and the use of emotional stimuli to express the legal and moral justifications for Russian intervention (Chatterje-Doody & Crilley 2019).

Many studies of RT set it apart from the other international broadcasters by arguing that CNN, BBC and outlets like Radio Liberty and Radio Free Europe provide objective coverage to overseas audiences, while RT is looking to promote pro-Russian narratives (see for example Orttung & Nelson 2019: 77). While statements like these are not usually supported by reflections on what objectivity means in media - which, again, recalls a Simonyan quote presented earlier in this chapter where she argues that 'objectivity does not exist' (Kommersant 2012), the most substantiated argument against this position comes from Kuznetsova (2018), who compared the CNN and RT coverage of the Crimean referendum and the start of the Russian military involvement in Syria and found that the metaphorical formula used to describe the events was the same on both channels: in the Syrian coverage RT portrays Russia as a peacekeeper against the aggressive US, while in the Crimean coverage CNN portrays the US as a peacekeeper against the aggressive Russia (ibid: 193). These discursive similarities, she argues, counter the arguments that Russia 'promotes a distinctive ideology that is based on opposing the West's ethical norms' and instead shows that both RT and CNN were 'mainly preoccupied with justifying [*their countries*'] actions in global politics' (ibid: 153; 191). Further both channels appeal to the liberal norms of democracy and international law in their coverage, in other words, despite the anti-Western narratives on RT, the channel doesn't dispute democracy as a principle, instead the channel seeks to promote a different interpretation of political actions within the 'existing normative boundaries of democracy and human rights' in a way that is similar to CNN (ibid: 199). Another study that compared RT and CNN coverage of Syria came to a similar conclusion that both channels attempt to 'exercise some sort of institutional power over the recipients to form their public knowledge' and defend and impose their respective ideologies using positive-self representation and negative-other presentation (Ali & Omar 2016: 137).



While arguing against oversimplifying our understanding of RT and its activity as simply a propaganda transmitter, it is important to consider the Soviet roots of some of RT's tools and practices. Kuznetsova (2018: 98) traces the restructuring of the Soviet foreign propaganda outlets over the years from Sovinformburo until it was finally turned into RIA-Novosti, which then launched RT in 2005; she further explores this connection between RT and Soviet propaganda from the point of view of countering political narratives and argues that RT and its alternative stance developed out of a 'distinct Soviet tradition of counter-propaganda', which was based in the notion of American hegemony and cultural imperialism (ibid: 113; 116). In RT, this notion has transformed into a belief that 'Anglo-Saxon media never tell the truth' and the need to challenge the Western legitimacy over international affairs (Yablokov 2015: 305; Kuznetsova 2018: 114). Kuznetsova (ibid.) brings up an example from her interview with a programme editor at RT, who admitted that in organising talk shows editors and producers would seek out guest speakers who will 'explicitly show their anti- Western positions' and/or will be 'somewhat supportive of Russian foreign policy'. But how does this overwhelmingly negative reporting on the Western countries by a foreign-owned TV channel deliver these narratives without alienating its target audiences in these countries? Chatterje-Doody (2018) argues that this happens because the criticism is not presented as coming from the outsiders but rather from segments within the Western societies, which get divided into 'us' and 'them' groups, and RT appears as a neutral observer, a witness to the moral conflict between the 'us' group neglected by the powerful 'them' group. Simons (2014) adds that the familiarity of RT's format to the Western audiences in terms of its appearance as a 24-hour news channel means its messages are received with 'less resistance'<sup>59</sup>.

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<sup>59</sup> Relating to this point Ramsey (2019: 46) adds that RT coverage 'adheres to almost none of the supposed social and political functions that journalism is supposed to play, while simultaneously closely following the format and aesthetics of the genre'.

Even though this study focuses on the content of RT and not its perception by the audiences due to the many limitations of time and scope, it is still important to briefly consider here the audiences as they are crucial for the success of any media and public diplomacy operation. The question of RT's audiences, particularly who they are and how they perceive RT's content, remains mostly unanswered by researchers, even though there are studies that imply that the audiences are aware of the channel's backing from the Russian state and because of this approach its output critically (Chatterje-Doodly 2018). However, Kuznetsova (2018: 99) reviews a Cold War era perception study where the audiences' views on certain issues have changed after they were exposed to Soviet propaganda, even when the audiences were aware that they were looking at propaganda. So even when people knew they were watching propaganda they were still affected by it, mainly 'by the degree of opinion differences that were broadcast on local American media, compared to those promoted by Radio Moscow' (ibid.) – thus, the fact that people know that RT is funded by Russia and approach its broadcasts critically does not mean that they are not affected by the opinions they are presented with. And finally, we also have to consider the fate of all texts online as they get repurposed by other journalists and websites, in which they may reach a larger audience. Ramsay and Robershaw's (2019) study of RT and Sputnik discovered that RT and Sputnik articles often get repurposed by Western media, in particular UK tabloids, often without attribution, which allows the pro-Russian narratives to pierce through RT's reputational issues and reach wider audiences. These media effects need to be considered by researchers making arguments that discount RT content on the basis of it not reaching large enough audiences and changing enough opinions (see for example Mickiewicz 2017).

This way while these studies show that on the general level the RT coverage and messages are comparable to those on domestic Russian media, it is important to consider the more

detailed level, where there are differences. And while RT is seen by most researchers as performing a legitimising function (Kuznetsova 2018; Dajani et al 2019), and presenting information that is aligned with the interests of the Russian state (Chatterje-Doody 2018), it is important to consider the effects of the current media climate, global political circumstances, and the post-Soviet political reality in Russia when assessing RT content.

Despite the fact that many studies looked at RT from the point of view of foreign policy agenda, none traced the content across several events across the years, the way this study is looking at the coverage of both the Ukrainian and the Syrian conflicts, while also looking at RT output in different languages and contrasting it with the foreign policy agenda. Further Ramsey (2019: 50) argues that on an article-by-article basis no media regulator would be able to fault the online content of RT and it is only by looking at the channel's coverage at a larger scale that the channel's strategies become apparent - this explains this study's wide sample that starts in February 2014 and ends in April 2017 and includes two large scale military conflicts<sup>60</sup>. Thus, this study plans to bridge a knowledge gap in the understanding of RT as it develops a look at RT and foreign policy across audiences (Russian- and English-speaking) and events in order to distinguish trends and patterns.

### **3:4 Conclusion**

This chapter provided the necessary context to this thesis' study of RT by looking at Russian media and the relationship between the media and politics, where media are seen as a part of the power structure and a politicised institute. However, it underlined the need to think about Russian media not resorting to terms of Soviet propaganda but understanding the complexity

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<sup>60</sup> In addition, while Ofcom can scrutinise the TV content of RT it does not control online content, and especially content in Russian, which is why they were included in this study's sample.

of the modern media and political environment in the country, as well as the complexities of the modern technology and communication sphere. In relation to the technology and the modern communication environment the chapter pointed out the ways in which the concept of post-truth, discussed earlier in Chapter 2, relates to some issues identified by researchers of Russian media and RT.

Further this chapter reviewed the ways in which Russian domestic media covered the conflicts in Ukraine and in Syria by siding with the Russian government and promoting pro-Russian, anti-Western and anti-American narratives. In the discussion of the history and the complex global positioning of RT, it contextualised the research questions of this dissertation in regard to the meanings of the phrase ‘Russian viewpoint on global events’ and its discussion of public diplomacy. In reviewing research that focused on RT content this chapter pointed out the similarities and inconsistencies in the ways that the channel covered some of the events in the conflicts, and other trends and patterns that will inform the analysis of this dissertation’s sample.

The disagreements among researchers, in particular when it comes to understanding the role of RT in Russian foreign policy and understanding RT as an international broadcaster, emphasise again the topicality of this study and the need for a scientific methodological look at the channel, which will contribute to both the scholarly debates and the public debates surrounding the channel.

## Chapter 4. Methodology

### 4:1 Introduction

While the previous chapters examined the key concepts that this study is built on and set out the context of the Soviet propaganda legacy, public diplomacy, and media in Russia, this chapter's aim is to describe the research methods that will be utilised in this thesis, justify their relevance in answering the research questions, and explain how they will be applied.

The focus of this study is media content and state foreign policy documentation, through which we will be investigating RT's promise of providing a Russian viewpoint on global events, attempting to understand what it means for the news coverage of conflicts that involve Russia, and how it compares to the Russian foreign policy agenda. All of the studies of RT reviewed in the previous chapter also placed content at the centre of their inquiries - whether it was broadcast, website, or social media content. Only one of those studies, a doctoral thesis by Elizaveta Kuznetsova (2018), included qualitative interviews with RT journalists as a method, albeit only as a supplementary, not main, method of research. Of the interviews that Kuznetsova (*ibid.*) presents one is with a current (at the time) programme editor at RT and one with a former RT reporter, and, finally, one other interview is redacted from the published version of the study, most probably at the interviewee's request for anonymity. The only other published study that is based on interviews with RT journalists was published by Elswah & Howard (2020), who note that they reached out to 240 journalists who worked for RT in various roles, only 23 agreed to be interviewed, and 21 of them had already left RT at the time of the interview<sup>61</sup>. There are no other studies to date that relied on interview data with RT employees - from this we can judge how difficult it is to source

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<sup>61</sup> And interviewing former employees can be seen as a limitation in itself.

interviews with journalists and editors who work at RT. At the inception of this study there were also plans to supplement the analysis of the articles and the foreign policy documentation with interviews with RT editors and reporters. I was intending to ask them questions rooted in the findings of my content and textual analyses - in particular about specific angles of coverage, use of experts and specific recurring phrases, angles and topics in the coverage, which would have helped to situate and supplement the findings. However, after several informal, off-the-record conversations with several reporters and an editor who used to work and still work for RT services in different languages it became clear that it would not be possible to do interviews with them at the depth and level of detail that would contribute to this thesis because of the non-disclosure agreements (NDAs) that all employees sign when they come to work for the channel. In my individual discussions with each reporter and editor I explained what my research was about and what kind of questions I was likely to ask if we were to schedule an interview, and they told me about the limitations that were put on them by the NDAs and indicated that they would not be able to answer most of my questions apart from the more general ones. As Elswah and Howard (2020) note, the NDAs signed by RT reporters are legally binding internationally and could be used to prosecute the journalists even when they no longer work at RT. It became clear that the information that the journalists would feel safe to give me would not contribute any insight or detail to this research, and that taking part in this study, even on anonymous conditions, would put them at risk. Because of that it was decided that interviews would not be conducted as a supplementary method for this thesis.

Researchers ostensibly face similar issues when investigating RT audiences. On one hand, it's difficult to track the popularity of the channel. In the UK, the Broadcaster Audience Research Board (BARB) consistently defines the channel's share of the market at less than

0.05%<sup>62</sup> (BARB n.d.). The viewing figures shared by RT (RT 2014; RT 2018) are higher but come from surveys that the channel commissioned from the major commercial audience analytics companies like Ipsos and Nielsen, and the methodology, context and detailed results of these surveys are not publicly available beyond the numbers that make it to the channel's press releases (Kovalev 2015; Van Zuylen-Wood 2017; Zavadski 2017). Some researchers and investigative journalists suggested that the numbers RT routinely shares as its actual viewers are simply the potential 'reach' of the channel through all the providers that carry it (Kovalev 2015; Van Zuylen-Wood 2017). But crucially, TV viewing figures only account for a part of the audience of the channel, as RT's presence on social media platforms is often highlighted by the channel's editor-in-chief and by the other media in Russia (see for example Khovanskaya 2013). Whether social media metrics can be used as accurate representations of anyone's audience is a debated point as various platforms measure engagements (such as likes and video views) and audience (through followers and subscriptions) using different methodologies, and inflation through purchased engagements and audience is not uncommon (Kovalev 2015). This is one of the reasons why this study's research questions were deliberately focused on content rather than perception. The findings of this thesis can be supplemented and contextualised by a recently published study that was one of the first scholarly works to look at the audience perception of RT (see Carter & Carter 2021).

However, content as an object of research presents more than enough information to analyse in order to answer this study's research questions, and it was the main focus of this study

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<sup>62</sup> BARB releases weekly reports that specify the average daily and weekly reach of the channels and their share of the audience in the country. A random selection of the reports during the timeline of the sample studied in this thesis define RT's reach as 0.01% in April 2015, 0.04% in October 2015, and 0.03% in February 2016. The channel's audience share for 2014 is marked as \*, which means 'the figures are small but note zero' (BARB n.d.)

from the beginning. The interest in studying media content comes from its assumed function of describing reality, briefly discussed previously in this thesis' examination of post-truth in Chapter 2, with researchers asking, "If content does not perfectly describe reality, then what does it describe?" (Shoemaker & Reese 1996: 34). Many studies of media address this question, looking at the process of selection of events that media cover, the framing of issues, representation, use of stereotypes, labels and emphasis, as well as other phenomena. Further Shoemaker & Reese (1996: 24) talk about content as the most obvious part of communication research and argue that that it is of interest to researchers in its own right, and also 'as an indicator of many underlying forces', for example which kinds of audiences the content is designed to appeal to, or the cultural, organisational, and political settings in which it was produced. Thus, while this study is not looking to make inferences about the process of production at RT, or the way that RT content is received by the audiences, it considers how the Russian foreign policy agenda is reflected and interpreted in RT content, how articles aimed at different audiences adapt or don't adapt their agenda, what is presented as a part of the 'Russian viewpoint on global events', and, finally, how these findings could be understood in a modern post-truth communication environment.

This chapter is designed to first explain and justify the design of this study and then to explain how each of the methods has been applied in practice. But first, the next section reminds the reader the research questions at the centre of this thesis.

## **4:2 Research questions**

### **1. What is the 'Russian viewpoint' that RT is delivering to the world?**

- a. What are the characteristics of the messages that are contained within the 'Russian



viewpoint'?

b. How does the 'Russian viewpoint on global events' correspond to the country's foreign policy agenda?

## **2. How does RT use post-truth strategies in its news coverage?**

a. What does post-truth mean in communication studies?

b. How do post-truth strategies manifest themselves in RT content?

c. What role does post-truth play in the channel's coverage in relation to the foreign policy agenda?

### **4:3 Study design and methods**

There are two main research questions in this study, both exploratory in their nature. The components of the questions, however, call for a mixed research methods approach. The aim of this section of the chapter is to explain and justify the combination of the research methods chosen.

The main research methods of this study will be quantitative content analysis and qualitative textual analysis - they will be used to look at the selected RT content. The look at the Russian foreign policy agenda calls for a third method of document analysis that will extract meanings from the official policy documents that will be later compared and analysed in conjunction with the data obtained through the content and textual analyses. This will help this thesis answer RQ1. In order to answer RQ2 this thesis will analyse the findings of content, textual and document analyses in relation to the literature that defines, analyses and discusses the concept of post-truth and the working definition of post-truth developed in Chapter 2.

#### **4:3:1 Mixed method approach**

When talking about the differences between quantitative and qualitative research Brennen (2013: 3) notes that in social sciences quantitative research strives to be systematic, precise and accurate as it tries to determine validity, reliability, objectivity and truth through isolating specific elements and using numbers and numerical correlations to analyse the relationship between the variables. Qualitative research, on the other hand, is interpretive, aiming to showcase a variety of meanings, truths and in-depth understandings (ibid: 4). Research methodology scholars argue that using only quantitative or qualitative research methods of research may be insufficient because of the inherent weaknesses of each approach - for example quantitative research does not investigate hidden meanings or different perspectives and interpretations and qualitative research does not allow generalisation and is criticised as too tied to a particular researcher's interpretation (Creswell 2015: 15). This way mixed method research design which involves collection and integration through analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data (ibid: 2) allows the researcher to analyse both latent and manifest content (Macnamara 2005: 4). In an analysis of media such combination of methods is crucial for the full understanding of the 'meanings and possible impacts of media texts' (ibid: 6), thus this study employs a mix of quantitative and qualitative research methods when it looks at RT content. The mixed method design also specifies the order in which different methods are applied. This study will employ an explanatory sequential design, in which quantitative methods are used first, and qualitative methods are applied after to help provide a deeper look on the phenomena and explain the data (Creswell 2015: 6). This means that the quantitative content analysis is carried out first and is then followed by the textual analysis.

Russian foreign policy documents will only be studied through the qualitative method of document analysis as it is not the main data set in this inquiry and the level of depth added by statistical findings is not required to answer the research questions.

#### **4:3:2 Document analysis**

Document analysis is a research methodology for ‘rigorously and systematically analysing the contents of written documents’ (Wach & Ward 2013: 1) that “have not been produced at the request of social researcher” (Bryman 2016: 546). There is a separation inside the document analysis between personal documents, such as diaries and letters, and official documents, and further distinction between official documents deriving from the state, which include policy documentation and other official government and state texts, and official documents deriving from the private sources, such as companies and various private and non-governmental organisations (Bryman 2016: 552). This study will deal with the former category of official state documents, as the goal is to study Russia’s foreign policy agenda through the official state policy documents. Such form of document analysis is used often in political science research to facilitate impartial and consistent analysis of written policies (Wach & Ward 2013: 1), and countries’ official documentation are studied to discover how the country formulates and presents its policies. For example, Jakstaite (2014) looks at U.S. foreign policy documentation in order to see how the country defines its relationship with Russia. In analysing policy documents researchers (see Wach & Ward 2013) have pointed out an issue where the analysis of policies is affected by the researcher’s knowledge of the practice, or how the policies relayed in the documents are implemented in the real world. While this can indeed pose an issue for researchers in the sphere of politics and

policymaking, this study is not focused on the efficiency but on the messages and themes<sup>63</sup> of the Russian foreign policy agenda - and how they are articulated in these documents and in RT content.

When studying documents, it is important to articulate the distinction between analysing documents as sources and as topics and objects, where in the former case the researcher studies how the documents reflect and describe the real world and the actions and the interests of political actors, and in the latter case the concern is with the nature of the documents themselves as social products (Karppinen & Moe 2011). In traditional policy analysis, which will be employed in this thesis in Chapter 5, the documents are considered as sources with the assumption ‘that documents somehow reflect the interests or actions of their authors’ and thus by analysing and interpreting them we uncover political interests, forces and determinants (ibid.).

The fact that most definitions of document analysis refer to the study of content of the documents brings to mind associations with content analysis. Prior (2008: 125) and Altheide et al (2008: 148) emphasise this, saying that this method actually emerged from content analysis. But unlike quantitative content analysis, qualitative document analysis focuses more on the thematic emphasis and trends rather than frequencies and statistics (Altheide et al 2008: 128). And unlike qualitative content analysis, where a researcher often studies a predetermined sample of texts in order to extract meaning and interpret the texts, in document analysis the researcher is invited to immerse themselves in the subject matter examining not only the initial body of documents but also bringing in additional relevant documents and

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<sup>63</sup> Document analysis is approached as a broad method in this thesis and therefore it looks for messages and themes. This is done in order for the findings of this method to be suitable for analysis in conjunction with the findings of the textual analysis, which takes a broad approach to RT content. This approach is further explained in section 4.3.4 of this chapter.

examples (ibid: 127) – as a method document analysis ‘follows a recursive and reflexive movement between concept development, sampling, data collection, data coding, data analysis, and interpretation’, where the aim is to be systematic but not rigid (ibid: 128). Like in other qualitative methods the key categories in document analysis are meaning and emphasis, which are often captured through themes, frames and discourses (Altheide & Schneider 2013: 12) and are introduced in the beginning of the study to guide the research process but additional categories and variables are allowed and expected to emerge from the texts (Altheide 2008: 128). Bowen (2009: 28) adds that researchers engaging in document analysis review and incorporate prior literature as a part of their study, which is what this study does in Chapter 5 as it combines relating the process and findings of the document analysis with discussing it in relation to the findings of previous studies that looked at the Russian foreign policy agenda.

As the main advantage of document analysis some researchers (see for example Bryman 2016: 546) suggest that since the documents at the centre of the study were not produced at the request of the researcher, they are non-reactive, which discounts the reactive effect as a limitation on data validity and makes the documents more ‘objective and authentic’. This is a much-debated point, and for example in the context of policy research Karppinen & Moe (2011) argue that we need to consider the documents’ authors and the purpose for which the documents were created: ‘to review and interpret other documents, to inform detached observers, or even intentionally convey a policy problem and possible solutions in a certain light for the public?’. Atkinson and Coffey (2011: 89) add that documents should be seen as a separate ‘level’ of reality, which means that they are examined in the context of both their authorship and readership - what they are supposed to accomplish and who they are written for, as well as their intertextuality. Thus, we need to acknowledge the original purpose of the

document, who it was produced by, for whom, and in what contexts (Bowen 2009: 33), as well as noticing not only the information that it contains but also the gaps - the information that is missing (Rapley 2007: 12).

Finally, Bowen (2009: 30) also underlines the value of document analysis as a way of methodological and data triangulation, as information extracted from the documents can suggest questions or areas of interest that the study focuses its attention on, ‘demonstrating how one method can complement another in an interactive way’. This is certainly how document analysis works in this dissertation, as it is employed first in the study to formulate the Russian foreign policy agenda, which is then tracked through the RT news content, which studied through the content and textual analyses.

#### **4:3:3 Quantitative content analysis**

Quantitative content analysis is often described as one of the most popular methods in mass media and communication research (Shoemaker & Reese 1996: 29; Berger 2016: 271). It is defined as a “research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use” (Krippendorff 2013: 24), and as the “research methodology that utilizes a set of procedures to make valid inferences from text” (Weber 1985: 9), and as the ‘primary message-centred methodology’ (Neuendorf 2002: 9). Weber (1985: 9) further explains that the inferences can be about the sender and the audience of the message, as well as the message itself. Going into more detail, Riffe et al (2005: 25) define content analysis as

[...] the systematic and replicable examination of symbols of communication, which have been assigned numeric values according to valid measurement rules and the analysis of the relationships involving those values using statistical methods, to

describe the communication, draw inferences about its meanings, or infer from the communication to its context, both of production and consumption.

Content analysis is based on the main practice of assigning categories to parts of text, where words and phrases assigned to one category are presumed to have similar meaning (Weber 1985: 12). This is the ordering process of content analysis, in which we single out the features that we think are important (Shoemaker & Reese 1996: 28) in order to identify and count the occurrence of specified characteristics or dimensions of texts, and, through this, to be able to say something about the messages, images, representations of such texts and their wider social significance (Hansen & Machin 2013: 89). It is essential that the classification procedure is transparent and consistent as this would ensure the validity of the measurement, which has been emphasised in several of the definitions presented above.

Among the advantages of content analysis is that it is systematic and rigorous, easily compatible with other methods, including qualitative (Hansen et al 1998: 91), that it yields data that can be quantified, can deal with current events and topics of present-day interest, that it is flexible and unobtrusive (Berger 2016: 279), and that it is well suited for revealing trends and patterns in large quantities of communication (Hansen and Machin 2013: 85). Thus, content analysis is an appropriate method in this study's quest to identify the trends and patterns in a large sample of RT's news coverage of conflicts. The use is further justified because of this method's compatibility with qualitative methods (textual analysis in the case of this study), which will ensure that this study reveals trends and patterns and elaborates on deeper meanings and contexts of the articles published by RT. Content analysis will be instrumental in answering the first sub-question of RQ1 in this project:

1a. What are the characteristics of the messages that are contained within the 'Russian viewpoint'?

As a further justification of the use of this method in this study researchers point out that historically content analysis has been used successfully in propaganda analysis (Hansen et al 1998; Macnamara 2005). For example, during World War II content analysis was employed in efforts to extract information from propaganda - this process informed both the development of content analysis procedures after the war and the development of propaganda studies (Krippendorff 2013: 15). Since this study relies on propaganda as a theoretical framework and keeping in mind the close relationship between propaganda and public diplomacy, employing content analysis for this study is a logical decision that links the research topic to the research methodology.

Even stepping away from the notion of propaganda, Weber notes that an important use of content analysis is “the generation of culture indicators that point to the state of beliefs, values, ideologies, or other culture systems” (1985: 10). This way, Weber argues that culture indicator research can determine the concerns of a single society, institution and other organisations and groups (ibid.). Since this study is focused on the connection between the country’s foreign policy and media content that is produced by a media channel financed by the state, content analysis as a research method allows us to address the concerns of the Russian society, or, arguably, the institution that officially represents it (the Russian government), their ‘state of beliefs, values and ideologies’ - or, as this study’s research question puts it in RT’s own words - ‘the Russian viewpoint on major global events’.



In order to interpret any given texts and make sense of them, it is important to view the messages in the context “of the lives of the diverse people presumed to use those messages” (Krippendorff 2013: 17). This way in the analysis and the discussion of the data gathered through this research method this study will always consider the political, economic, historical, cultural and international contexts in which RT content exists for both the Russian-speaking and the English-speaking audiences.

When talking about limitations of this method, Riffe et al (2005) point out that communication content should be viewed not simply on its own but considered in relation to the consequences that the exposure to it might have as well as the processes that lead to its production (Riffe et al 2005: 10). Because of this, larger studies involving content analysis of media usually build their theories on this effect (consequences to exposure) and cause (processes that lead to content’s production) concept (Riffe et al 2005: 13). However, as this study is looking at the correlation between the country’s public diplomacy and the media content it is limited in time and scale in terms of assessing both effect and cause of RT content. Thus content, its characteristics and relationship with foreign policy and the concept of post-truth are central to this research project.

Another point of criticism of content analysis is that it, as a quantitative method, is limited in exploring the deeper meaning of occurrences of characteristics in content, and that in counting of individual units and their frequency of occurrence, “content analysis fails to capture the way in which meaning arises from the complex interaction of symbols in text” (Hansen & Machin 2013: 90). In media content analysis, where frequency of occurrence of certain units is often central to studies, it is important to remember that texts ‘may contain many other forms of emphasis besides sheer repetition’ (Shoemaker & Reese 1996: 29). This

is why additional qualitative research will be undertaken in this study, which will be detailed in the following sections of this chapter.

#### **4:3:4 Textual analysis**

Qualitative textual analysis is a method of data analysis that examines how texts ‘operate, the manner in which they are constructed, the ways in which meanings are produced, and the nature of those meanings’ (Lockyer 2008: 865). As opposed to quantitative content analysis, which looks at manifest content and quantifiable categories, textual analysis ‘allows the researcher to discern latent meaning, implicit patterns, assumptions and omissions of a text’ (Fursich 2009: 240). All texts have their own narrative structures and persuasive qualities that are ‘designed to convey a preferred meaning’ (Lockyer 2008: 865). It is that meaning and the ways in which it is conveyed in the text that this method studies by looking at various codes, conventions and structures of the text, drawing on the linguistic, literary-critical, rhetorical and semiotic interpretive strategies (Fursich 2009: 241). Questions asked during textual analysis refer to both inside (meanings and structures of the text) and outside (context) of the text, asking who created the text, what were the authors' intentions, who is the intended audience, what topic or issue is being addressed and how it is being addressed, what is the central theme or claim made in the text, what evidence or explanation supports this theme or claim and how, and how the text studied relates to other texts in the same genre or format (Lockyer 2008: 865). It is important to remember that textual analysis ‘does not attempt to identify the “correct” interpretation of a text but is used to identify what interpretations are possible and likely’ (Lockyer 2008: 865). Because of this it is important to consider the wider context in which the texts exist - in this study such context is provided by looking at the Russian foreign policy documents, as well as analysing the news content in Russian and

English language with regards to the Russian-speaking and international English-speaking audiences.

The advantages of textual analysis include the fact that it can provide a rich and detailed analysis of the text's meanings, themes, structure, narratives, and discourses that would have remained unidentified in other types of analyses, especially the quantitative content analysis that this study undertakes. In this thesis this method focuses particularly on themes and messages of RT content. This focus and this particular method were selected in order to be able to broadly look at RT's articles as journalistic products, to look not only at what is being said, but also what part of the text it is being said in (including headlines and pull quotes, which hold particular weight in journalistic publishing), and how the content is attributed to various actors (for example, experts and other sources). This allows the thesis to see how journalistic elements of the text are used in to deliver a public diplomacy message.

Thus, textual analysis in this thesis supplements the numerical and statistical data supplied by the quantitative content analysis with a deeper look at the texts studied. The disadvantages (or limitations) discussed most often in relation to textual analysis refer to the validity of the approach, where critics question whether a specific reading of the text 'echoes the perspective of the researcher and that the specific approaches used to analyse texts are as ideological as the texts themselves' (Lockyer 2008: 865, also see Priest 1996: 191). McKee argues that there's no single correct interpretation of any text (McKee 2003: 63), and multiple methodology researchers highlight that all readings of a text are socially situated and that researchers using textual analysis should critically reflect on their own perspectives (Lockyer 2008: 865). In this study this limitation is also addressed by the inclusion of the quantitative method of content analysis, which is based in quantifiable data and provides less space for

personal perspective interpretation, and the addition of the document analysis, which creates a political context in which the studied texts exist.

Another point of criticism is that textual analysis focuses on the text and sidelines the producers and readers of the texts (see Lockyer 2008: 866, Philo 2007: 194), or, in the context of media and journalism, that textual analysis focuses on the journalistic text without considering the process of production and audience perception as parts of the analysis. While it would have been interesting and useful for this study to look at the process of production and audience perceptions, it is practically difficult because of the historical nature of some of the texts studied that date back to early 2014, and also falls outside of the scope of this thesis. Discussing this limitation further and in relation to media and journalistic texts in particular, Fursich (2009: 238) notes that media texts are uniquely placed between producers' intentions and audience interpretations, 'a distinctive discursive moment between encoding and decoding that justifies special scholarly engagement'. Thus, the narrative character of media content and its 'potential as a site of ideological negotiation and its impact as mediated 'reality'' necessities interpretation in its own right' (ibid.). This argument is especially important for this study because it looks at RT content in the context of how it constructs global events according to a Russian viewpoint (the mediated 'reality'), and how these constructed messages relate to the country's foreign policy. Further on this topic Oates (2014) argues that while studies of political communication often use agenda setting and framing theories, a look at the narratives 'gives an opportunity to make a closer link between media content and state intentions.' This way media content can and should be evaluated in its own right 'as a creative moment in the circuit of culture often beyond the intentions of the actual producers', and that it does not require to be 'authenticated in specific audience readings' (Fursich 2009: 244). Furthermore, certain narrative features of the media content,

such as use of myths and archetypes can only be identified when the texts are the focus of the study, not the production or perception, therefore the narrative role of the media can only be seen in a study of the text that is independent from the producers' intentions or the audience's perceptions (Fursich 2009: 245).

In this study, textual analysis will be used to help answer the same research question as the quantitative content analysis, as the findings of the two methods will work together. By combining content analysis with textual analysis this study will ensure that it studies both manifest and latent content as a way of understanding meanings of text (Macnamara 2005: 4). Thus, textual analysis will also be answering the sub-questions of RQ1 (What is the 'Russian viewpoint' that RT is delivering to the world?):

- a. What are the characteristics of the messages that are contained within the 'Russian viewpoint'?
- c. How does the 'Russian viewpoint on global events' correspond to the country's foreign policy agenda?

#### **4:4 Application of the methods**

##### **Sampling**

Russian international TV channel RT is the case study for this research project; website content will be used for analysis in this project. This is because while RT remains a cable Freeview channel in English in most of the countries of its coverage, coverage in Russian at the time of the events studied in the sample was only available online. At the same time, RT has always emphasised its online presence and audience reach, and, as discussed earlier, experts have expressed doubts about the reliability of the TV audience figures presented by the channel itself, while independent figures are not available (Kovalev 2015). For this reason, and to ensure symmetry, website content will be analysed for the channel's

publications in both languages - on rt.com for the international English version, and russian.rt.com for the Russian version. News coverage will be studied as opposed to opinion pieces because news pieces are attached to events in reality, and therefore any channel's own interpretations are easier to identify, while in opinion pieces the ownership of messages is less straightforward, and in fact many media specify that opinions expressed are those of the author and not the editorial team<sup>64</sup>. In addition, there is no symmetry between the Russian and English versions of the websites in terms of opinion pieces as some appear in both languages with a translation and some only remain on one of the websites, which will complicate the reasoning behind the sampling process. While in both of the cases presented above an argument about editorial decisions and gatekeeping can be made, these are not the topics of this thesis. Since news coverage will be analysed, the study needs to specify what sections of the website this news coverage will be taken from. The structure of the Russian and English language websites is generally similar, with separate sections dedicated to news items. On the international English-language website this is "News", and on the Russian website news are located in the 'News' and 'World' sections.

In the news coverage of RT, two major military conflicts were chosen - in Ukraine and in Syria. Since it is impossible to analyse all of RT's news coverage of these conflicts, key events had to be selected for this study – they are discussed in the next section of this chapter and in more detail in Annex 1. The rationale behind the choice of the wars in Ukraine and in Syria is connected to public diplomacy and the fact that Russia as a country is closely associated with both conflicts - whether it is the country's military forces' actual involvement in Syria, or the diplomatic involvement and the alleged military involvement (denied by the

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<sup>64</sup> RT specifies at the end of each opinion piece that "The statements, views and opinions expressed in this column are solely those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of RT" (see for example Clark 2020).

Russian government) in Ukraine. But as the review of the studies that focused on the domestic Russian media coverage of the conflict in Ukraine has shown, Russian media presented Russia as a side in the war, even as the Russian government officials insisted Russia is a non-participant. Since one of public diplomacy's main aims is to explain the government's policies to the audiences, choosing high pressure, high interest and high stakes situations like military events is instrumental to conducting a study on public diplomacy in the media. In addition, as the review of the Russian foreign policy documents will show, the two conflicts are also in the regions that are described as 'significant' for Russia - because of the 'near abroad' status of Ukraine, and the international conflict dimension of the war in Syria.

#### **4:4:1 Timeline of events**

This study will construct its sample based on a timeline of events of both of the conflicts. For the quantitative content analysis the sample will consist of all the news articles published in the timeframe of each event, and for the textual analysis only the longer texts will be selected. The selection criteria is discussed below.

As Hansen and Machin (2013: 95) point out, due to the nature of media coverage, related coverage before and after the event should also be looked at. For events that were unpredictable and unplanned, for example an accident or a terrorist attack, sample includes the day(s) of the actual event plus three days after to include follow-up and aftermath coverage. For events that were scheduled or planned, for example a referendum or an election, the sample includes three days before and three days after the event to include the coverage of the build-up to the event as well as that of the aftermath or the follow up. Military events like battles and clashes between the sides of the conflict will be treated

similarly to scheduled events in terms of sampling before and after the dates of the events as it is expected that such battles and clashes are going to happen as a part of a military conflict, since battles also usually have build-up events, it's logical to look at the coverage as well. For events that were happening over a longer period of time, like lengthy protests or military battles that spanned several months, a shorter key period that includes some of the most important occurrences is selected and studied in the sample.

### **Conflict in Ukraine**

As the conflict in Ukraine this study refers to the period including the culmination of the Euromaidan protests in the capital of Ukraine, Kiev, the annexation of Crimea, and the war in Eastern in Ukraine. To construct the selection of events in this conflict this thesis used the BBC timeline of the Ukrainian crisis<sup>65</sup> and BBC reporting on the subsequent annexation of Crimea and military clashes in eastern Ukraine, and the information was cross-referenced with other major news websites and news agencies in Russian and in English. Seven key events between February 2014 and February 2017 were chosen. The overall selection including the build-up and aftermath coverage for Ukrainian events timeline consists of 67 days. The full list of events selected is available in Annex 1.

### **Conflict in Syria**

To construct the selection of events in the conflict in Syria the BBC timeline of the Syrian war<sup>66</sup> and BBC reporting on the military operations have been used. Nine key events between September 2015 and April 2017 were chosen. The decision to include more events than in the Ukrainian conflict timeline was made after it became clear that there was less coverage of

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<sup>65</sup> Ukraine crisis: Timeline - BBC News: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-26248275>

<sup>66</sup> Syria profile - Timeline - BBC News: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-14703995>



this conflict than of the conflict in Ukraine, so extra events were added in order to increase the number of articles. While this difference in coverage of the two conflicts is interesting in itself and will be analysed in the study, a comparable sample size between the two wars needed to be achieved. The overall selection including the build-up and aftermath coverage for the Syrian events timeline consists of 61 days. Since this study is looking at Russian public diplomacy, a decision was made to start the timeline with the start of the Russian campaign in Syria. A brief overview of the way Russian media covered the Syrian war before Russia got directly involved in the conflict in 2015 is available in Chapter 3. The full list of events selected is available in Annex 1.

#### **4:4:2 Quantitative content analysis**

##### **Sampling**

The articles will be identified manually through RT website search for keywords relating to each event (for example 'Donetsk airport', 'Crimea') and limited by the time span of each event detailed in the timeline earlier in this chapter. The results will be double-checked through Google advanced search to ensure no articles are left out by the RT website search mechanism. Then articles will be extracted from the website using a Google Chrome browser extension called Save Page As Docx that allows to export and save the entire page as a .docx file.

All news articles published on the topic within the period specified in the timeline will be studied - but a minimum word limit of 100 words was set for every article for content analysis in order to eliminate the shortest texts (most often news agency copy) which are unlikely to carry additional meanings of the Russian viewpoint on global events that this study aims to explore. The sample for content analysis consists of 1522 news articles.

## **Conducting the analysis**

Two separate coding schedules have been developed for the two war timelines in this thesis. There are 16 questions in the coding schedule<sup>67</sup> for the war in Ukraine and 17 questions in the coding schedule for the war in Syria. The two schedules are built on the same principle and the categories of inquiry are the same - the reason for the different number of questions is that there are more sides in the war in Syria, and an additional question has been introduced to account for descriptions of all of them.

Several questions in both coding schedules refer to the descriptions of countries and actors within these countries. It can be argued that the approach to content analysis taken in these questions can be described as a qualitative statistical analysis since the units of analysis are based on and imply a qualitative interpretation and grouping of the units of analysis.

However, this thesis argues that these questions combine quantitative and qualitative aspects – on one hand, they require the coders to locate and analyse the relationship between words in order to identify and record the adjectives and participles and to group certain adjectives and participles together (for example, words like violent and brutal in relation to protests were grouped as they carry a similar description), but on the other hand, this happens in a systematic way and it counts the frequency of appearance of the words and their synonyms, which is why these questions are appropriate in a quantitative content analysis coding schedule.

Human coding was carried out as opposed to computer coding in order to make sure nuances are accounted for in both languages of the sample. As Macnamara (2005: 7) argues, computer

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<sup>67</sup> Coding schedules and manuals for this method are available in Annex 2.

coding is inaccurate as it can make mistakes and does not account for nuances in the language. The latter reason is especially important in this thesis since half of the sample is in Russian and computer coding is particularly unreliable as most software like NVivo can only be operated for the very basic word-search functions in the Russian language. Thus, to ensure an accurate, reliable, consistent and detail-oriented content analysis the entire sample was coded manually, and the data was then entered into SPSS for analysis.

### **Reliability**

In content analysis reliability means the “agreement among coders about categorizing content” (Riffe et al 2005: 94), or intercoder agreement, which is directly connected to reproducibility, a quality that content analysis academics describe as one of the most important interpretations of reliability (Krippendorff, 2004: 215; Wesley 2014: 143). There are several ways to check the reliability of the coding schedule, including Scott’s pi; Cohen’s kappa; Spearman’s rho; Pearson’s correlation coefficient; Krippendorff’s alpha; Lin’s concordance correlation coefficient, and per cent agreement (Neuendorf 2002; Lombard et al 2002). This study will be calculating the intercoder agreement in percentage. Also called the simple agreement, it is the “percentage of all coding decisions made by pairs of coders on which the coders agree” (Lombard et al 2002: 590). There are weaknesses to this method of calculating the agreement, most notably that it cannot account for any agreement that occurs by chance and can only record agreement and disagreement and doesn’t account for answers that are ‘close’ (Lombard et al 2002: 590-591). However, since the coding schedules for this study include only nominal level variables, the latter weakness doesn’t apply. Plus, the percentage agreement is widely known as a way of calculating agreement that is simple, intuitive, easy to understand and calculate, and able accommodate for any number of coders (Lombard et al 2002: 590), so the decision has been made to employ it in this study.

Thus, to ensure the reliability of the coding schedule used in the content analysis an intercoder reliability test was run on both samples. For the first run of the test, 8 coders (4 for the Russian sample and 4 for the English sample) were asked to code the texts according to the supplied coding schedule and manual. For the Russian-speakers coding the Russian texts the coding schedule and the manual were translated into Russian by the author. The coders conducted blind coding, meaning they weren't able to see other the coders' results. As there are two separate coding schedules (one for the Ukrainian and one for Syrian timeline), each coder had to do them both. A reliability sub-sample is recommended when the sample is too large for test coders (Macnamara 2005: 10), therefore two representative samples were chosen from each timeline: U3 (Battle for the Donetsk airport), which consisted of 24 texts for the Russian coders and 15 texts for the English coders and S2 (Televised meeting between Putin and Russian defence officials), which consisted of 37 texts for the Russian coders and 42 texts for the English coders. This way, 61 text was coded by the Russian pilot coders and 57 texts were coded by the English pilot coders, 118 texts were coded overall. Each of 8 coders created a Microsoft Excel table to log their answers and two random coders' answers were selected within each language group to compare and work out the percentage of the intercoder agreement.

For the first three questions on the coding schedules for both Ukraine and Syria samples the agreement percentage was 100%, or almost 100% (98.7%, 99.2%). The results for the rest of the questions will be detailed below separately for the Ukrainian and Syrian coding schedules since some of the question numbers don't correspond between the schedules. The presented percentages are average percentages for both languages as the difference between them was within 1% - 1.5%. While the acceptable standards of intercoder agreement vary depending on

disciplines, 80% agreement is cited most often as an acceptable level of agreement (Wesley 2009: 19), therefore this is the agreement that was set as a minimum target in this testing.

#### *Ukraine coding schedule*

#### **Q4.**

The result for this question, which asked what the main topic of the text is, was 55%. The subsequent analysis of the answers and discussion with the selected coders showed that there was an issue with the answers: many of them overlapped resulting in confusion. For example, a text that talks about Russian politicians commenting on new clashes in Eastern Ukraine was coded by Coder 1 as answer option 13 - Speech or claim by other Russian government official, while Coder 2 selected answer options 6 - Ongoing military fighting and 7 - Internal affairs of Ukraine. To fix this issue the number of answers was reduced to exclude answer options 12 to 22, which focused on the angle of the text (who commented on something) rather than facts (what happened that they were commenting on). This amendment is not taking away from the coding schedule overall as the questions that focus on the actors (questions 11, 12, 13) would still allow the study to address and analyse the main actors that are quoted and mentioned in the text.

#### **Q5 - Q9.**

Questions five to nine all address the descriptions and definitions of the countries that are present in the studied texts. The agreement percentage results for these questions were, respectively: 68%, 64%, 66%, 63%, 65%. As the discussion with the coders has shown, this was because they considered different words and phrases to be descriptions and definitions. To address this issue, the question was changed from “What words and phrases are used to describe and define X?” to “What words are used to describe X?”, this way eliminating the debate of what counts as description as the question and the description of it in the manual

are now formulated to only include adjectives and descriptive words that relate directly to the country as answers.

#### **Q10.**

Question 10 addresses the news sources used in the article, and the intercoder agreement for this question was 64%. The discussion with the coders has shown that there were several issues. First, questions 1 - News Agencies and 3 - Other media were confusing as sometimes the coders were not sure if some outlets, for example Russia's RIA Novosti, should be considered a news agency or another media. For this purpose, the two questions were merged. Second, there was confusion in regard to what sources qualify as 'military' as opposed to government officials (especially if the source in question was a representative of, for example, a Ministry of Defence). These two answers were also merged. Finally, press release was eliminated as an answer as many coders pointed out that it refers more to the form in which the source comes in, not the actual source, therefore required other answers in all circumstances (eg. a source that is a press release from the Ministry of Defence will now only be coded as Ministry of Defence, not as a press release).

#### **Q11 - Q12.**

These questions focused on the Russian and Ukrainian actors that are either quoted or mentioned in the texts, and the intercoder agreement for them was 55% and 58% respectively. The discussion with the coders has shown that this was due to the complicated answer requirements which caused mistakes to be made (marking the quoted and mentioned actors as Q and M plus the number) and insufficient explanation in the manual (for example whether actors who are both quoted and mentioned needed to be marked with both letters). To make these questions easier to answer, each was separated into two questions that separately addressed the quoted and mentioned actors, and an explanation was added that if

someone is both mentioned and quoted only the quoted instance needs to be coded as it should be assumed that a quoted actor will also be mentioned in the text.

### **Q13.**

This question focuses on the quoted and mentioned foreign actors. The intercoder agreement for this question was just 52%. The discussion with the coders has shown that, apart from the issues already highlighted above in the explanation of the result for the questions 11 and 12, which also applied to this question, it was also unclear to the coders whether countries and organisations that are mentioned in the article should also be counted as actors. The coding manual was amended to include more detailed instructions that only people are considered actors.

### **Q14.**

This question addressed the text's evaluation of Russia and the intercoder agreement for it was just 27%. After extensive discussions with the coders, it was agreed that the answers to the question, despite the extensive explanation and systemising in the coding manual, remain a largely subjective choice and should not be a part of this content analysis. Some of the aspects of this question can, to an extent, be addressed in question 8, which focuses on the descriptions of Russia as a country, and the other aspects will be addressed later in the qualitative part of this study.

### *Syria coding schedule*

In the Syria coding schedule, many of the issues were similar to the Ukraine coding schedule. However, since the Syria coding schedule has a different number of questions, they will still be detailed here briefly.

### **Q4.**

The result for this question, which asked what the main topic of the text is, was 52%. The discussion with the coders has revealed the same issues as with the Ukrainian coding schedule, which had too many overlapping answer options. To fix this answer options 16 to 24 were eliminated.

### **Q5 - Q11.**

These questions focused on the descriptions and definitions of the countries, countries' activities, and IS. The intercoder agreement percentages for the questions were, in order: 69%, 67%, 68%, 57%, 55%, 69%, 68%. For the questions that got over 60% agreement the issue was the same as with the Ukrainian events coding schedule: the questions left too much freedom for the coder to decide on what counts as a definition or description. The questions were changed in the similar way to the Ukrainian coding schedule, from "What words and phrases are used to describe and define X?" to "What words are used to describe X?". For the questions 8-9 that got 57% and 55% intercoder agreement an additional issue was identified: while question 8 asked 'What words and phrases are used to describe and define Russia?', question 9 asked 'What words and phrases are used to describe and define Russian forces in Syria?'. There was confusion among the coders about how to separate descriptions of Russia and Russian forces, particularly when descriptions of the military didn't always specify if they're talking about Russian military in Syria or in general. Because of this question 9 was eliminated and descriptions of Russian forces were suggested to be coded in question 8. Since the described noun is coded together with the description, it is still possible to distinguish between different aspects of the descriptions.

### **Q12.**

Question 12, which addresses the sources used in the article, had the intercoder agreement of 65%, and was similar to the same question in the Ukrainian coding schedule (question 10).

The same changes were applied to the answers.



### **Q13-Q15.**

These questions focused on the Russian, Syrian and foreign actors that are either quoted or mentioned in the text, and the intercoder agreement for them was 57%, 56% and 58% respectively. In the discussion the coders reported the same issues as with the Ukrainian coding schedule, and similar amendments were made.

### **Q16.**

Question 16 focused on the text's evaluation of Russia, and the intercoder agreement is similarly low to the Ukrainian coding schedule at just 30%. This question was also eliminated from the coding schedule.

### **Second inter-coder reliability test**

A second run of testing was then carried out on the amended coding schedule with the same group of coders. This time the coders were offered a selection of 10 articles randomly selected to include at least one text from each of the timeline events for both samples (the number of texts each person coded was 20). Then in the same way as with the first round of testing, two random coders' results were selected within each language group for comparison.

Question 1, 2 and 3 had an almost 100% agreement result. The rest of the questions will be detailed below separately for the Ukraine and Syria coding schedules.

#### *Ukraine coding schedule*

### **Q4.**

This question had an inter-coder agreement result of 80.2%. After a second discussion with the coders, it was revealed that there are still too many answer options and since they overlap and the coders are allowed to choose all answers that they believe apply, which

lowers the inter-coder agreement, as all answers have to match to be counted. For example, Coder 1 aimed to select as many answers as applied to the text (basically selecting all topics that are covered in the text), while Coder 2 tried to select one or two main topics of the text. This issue was addressed by introducing a new rule to the question that instructs the coders to select a maximum of 2 answer options that apply the most. This explanation was also added to the manual. Another issue that was flagged up by the coders was that the same event could be understood in different ways which would result in them selecting different answer options. As an example, we looked at an article that talks a Russian diplomat who commented on the relationship between Ukraine and the EU; Coder 1 coded it as ‘International affairs not involving Russia’ and Coder 2 coded it as “Affairs of Russia with another country’, going by the logic that a diplomat commenting on the issue was involving Russia in the relations, while the other coder assumed that commenting does not mean participating. Similar comments were made on the answer options that specify victory or defeat by various forces, as any victory by one side is a defeat by the other. For these reasons, the amount of answer options was further reduced to exclude country specifications. The new set of answer options is as follows:

Military confrontation / clashes / warfare

International relations / diplomacy

Internal affairs of a country - please specify name

Humanitarian issues

Accident

Other - please provide details.

### **Q5 - Q9.**

Questions five to nine all address the descriptions of countries that are present in the studied texts. The intercoder agreement results for these questions were, in order: 86%, 87%, 86%,

87%, 89%. Where the agreement percentages are lower it was discovered that the coders made mistakes and, in several instances, coded entire phrases as descriptions, which was allowed in the first version of this coding schedule in the first run of the testing.

#### **Q10.**

Question 10 addresses the news sources used in the article, and the intercoder agreement for this question was 86%. As the discussion with the coders and the analysis of their answers have shown, this was also because of insufficient instructions in the manual because actors were on several occasions confused with sources. For example, in a news article that reports on the words of Angela Merkel as reported by newspaper Süddeutsche Zeitung only the newspaper is the source, while Angela Merkel is an actor to be coded in other questions. Appropriate instructions have been added to the manual to address this issue.

#### **Q11 - Q16.**

Questions 11 to 16 in the new coding schedule all focus on the actors, now with separate questions for the quoted and mentioned actors for Russia, Ukraine and other countries, and the results for them were, in order: 90%, 91%, 93%, 93%, 92%, 91%. Analysis of the answers and discussion with coders has shown that in some cases there were mistakes, for example when a coder hasn't noticed a quote and marked an actor as only mentioned.

#### *Syria coding schedule*

In general, the results for the Syrian coding schedule were very similar to the ones from the Ukrainian coding schedule. All the amendments to the coding schedule detailed above were also applied to the coding schedule for Syria. Listed below are the percentage agreement results for all questions.

Q4 - 80%

Q5 - 87%

Q6 - 86%

Q7 - 87%

Q8 - 89%

Q9 - 85%

Q10 - 88%

Q11 - 90%

Q12 - 85%

Q13 - 94%

Q14 - 93%

Q15 - 95%

Q16 - 95%

Q17 - 96%

#### **4:4:3 Textual analysis**

##### **Sampling**

The texts studied in the textual analysis were selected from the initial larger sample that was studied through the content analysis. The decision was made to select the longer articles as they provide more detail and context. Following the discovery in the content analysis of the fact that texts in the English language sample are longer than the texts in the Russian language sample, the following minimum length was decided: in the Russian sample only texts over 599 words were selected for the textual analysis, and in the English sample texts over 750 words were selected for the textual analysis. This way the sample includes texts that are long in their own samples. Overall, the sample for the textual analysis includes 166 articles, totalling 10.8% of the quantitative content analysis sample of 1522 texts.

Considering this selection process, in the end this textual analysis studies in the Ukrainian

timeline 29 texts in Russian and 48 texts in English, and in the Syrian timeline 45 texts in Russian and 45 texts in English. There are less texts in Russian in the Ukrainian timeline due to the fact that the Russian articles RT published in 2014 tended to be the shortest of the entire sample.

### **Conducting the analysis**

The process of the analysis was built on the coding schedule of the quantitative content analysis, which looked at the length of texts, topics, descriptions of countries and military action, sources and quoted and mentioned actors from different countries. The following questions were developed as additional research questions for the purposes of this research method and were used in the process of coding:

1. How does RT present the Ukrainian government?
2. How does RT present the insurgents in Eastern Ukraine?
3. How does RT present Ukrainian people and Ukraine as a country?
4. How does RT present the conflict in Ukraine?
5. How does RT present the Syrian government?
6. How does RT present the Syrian opposition groups?
7. How does RT present Syrian people and Syria as a country?
8. How does RT present the conflict in Syria?
9. How does RT present IS?
10. How does RT present Russia and the Russian government?
11. How does RT present other countries and their governments?
12. How does RT use actors and quotes in the coverage?
13. How does RT use sources in the coverage?

All 166 texts were coded manually with the help of the Nvivo software, which has limited usability in the Russian language and therefore could not be relied on as a primary mechanism. As the texts were coded emerging themes and messages were coded under each of the additional questions, they are as follows:

1. How does RT present the Ukrainian government?
  - Yanukovich as legitimate power
  - The lack of independence of the new Ukrainian government
  - Ukraine as a failed state
  - Ukrainian nationalists
  - Ukrainian government untrustworthy
  - Ukrainian army as siloviki
2. How does RT present the insurgents in Eastern Ukraine?
  - Insurgents as rebels and militia
  - Politics over violence (insurgents as government)
3. How does RT present Ukrainian people and Ukraine as a country?
  - Euromaidan protesters as violent
  - Ukraine as a divided country
4. How does RT present the conflict in Ukraine?
  - Euromaidan protests as a violent coup d'état
  - Crimea like Kosovo
  - Kiev as aggressor, insurgents as defenders
  - MH17 crash – the many versions
5. How does RT present the Syrian government?
  - Syrian government under threat from the West
  - Syrian government and army as humane

6. How does RT present the Syrian opposition groups?
  - Violence over politics
  - Connection with the West
7. How does RT present Syrian people and Syria as a country?
  - Dismissal of White Helmets
  - Syrian people support Assad
8. How does RT present the conflict in Syria?
  - Anti-terrorist operation
  - Proxy war
  - Chemical attack in Khan Sheikhoun – the many versions
9. How does RT present IS?
  - US helping IS
10. How does RT present Russia and the Russian government?
  - Russian power
  - Russia successful in Syria
  - Russia as an important force in world politics
  - Russia and first-person plural
  - Russia in Syria to save the world
11. How does RT present other countries and their governments?
  - The West as an actor
  - The West as a manipulating force
  - The West as an emotional actor
  - The West has no moral ground to criticise Russia
  - Western media as mainstream media

12. How does RT use actors and quotes in the coverage?

- Repetitiveness in the presentation of quotes
- Presenting statements from quotes without quotation marks
- Presenting statements critical of Russia

13. How does RT use sources in the coverage?

- Presenting the world through the Russian eyes
- Experts.

#### **4:4:4 Document analysis**

##### **Sampling**

Altheide & Schneider (2013) highlight the importance of setting the selection criteria for the documents that will be analysed as a part of document analysis. In this thesis the aim of the document analysis is to study the Russian foreign policy agenda thus the main selection criterion is the documents' relevancy to the topic of foreign policy of either the entire document or a section of it. The documents studied in this thesis are in the public domain - all were officially published by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or the Kremlin and collected from the official websites<sup>68</sup>.

Documents that have more than one draft or edition are particularly useful to track changes in policy or thinking on a chosen topic (Bowen 2009: 30), so where there was more than one edition of the document published and signed into action over the course of the timeline of this study (2014 - 2017) all versions of the document were studied. Thus the list of documents includes 19 documents: Doctrine of Information Security (2 editions, 2000 and 2016), Military Doctrine (2 editions, 2010 and 2014), Foreign Policy Concept (2 editions,

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<sup>68</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs website section on official documentation relating to foreign policy ([https://www.mid.ru/foreign\\_policy/official\\_documents](https://www.mid.ru/foreign_policy/official_documents)) and Kremlin website sections on acts and orders (<http://kremlin.ru/acts/assignments/orders>) and events (contains speeches and transcripts of meetings: <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts>).



2013 and 2016), Concept of the state policies of the Russian Federation in the sphere of international development support (2014), State programme of the Russian Federation “Foreign policy activity” (2014), Main directions of the policies of Russian Federation in the sphere of cultural-humanitarian cooperation (2010), Order of the president of Russian Federation On National Security Strategy Until Year 2020 (2009), Order of the president of Russian Federation On National Security Strategy of Russian Federation (2015), Plan of Operation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation until 2018 (2013), Order of the president of Russian Federation On Measures of Realisation of the foreign policy course of the Russian Federation (2012). The review of the method earlier in this chapter specified that the process of document analysis is a flowing iterative process of reading, analysing, and sampling, and as the analysis process started it became clear that the sample of the documents needs to be supplemented by the inclusion of the Address of the President of the Russian Federation to the Federal Assembly (2013, 2014, 2014a, 2015, 2016). While addresses of the president to the Federal Assembly are not traditional state documents but transcripts of speeches, they were included in this sample because they are seen as important in outlining the foreign policy priorities for the upcoming year. For example, the official website of the president of Russia states: “Traditionally the president outlines the main direction of the foreign policy in annual addresses to the Federal Assembly” ([Kremlin.ru](http://Kremlin.ru), n.d.).

### **Conducting the analysis**

The process of document analysis combines elements of qualitative content analysis and thematic analysis (Bowen 2009: 32), so the method includes skimming, reading and interpreting the texts of the documents. As document analysis is often undertaken to investigate a specific problem, topic or concept, categories and items are listed ahead to guide

both the data collection and the analysis (Altheide & Schneider 2013). This was done in this study as the following list of questions was compiled:

- How is state of the world and international politics described in the Russian official foreign policy documentation, including any descriptions of issues in international relations, descriptions of other countries, their governments, policies, and people?
- How is Russia (including the government, its policies, and the people) described in Russian official foreign policy documentation?

In addition, a simultaneous review of existing literature on the topic was undertaken and incorporated in Chapter 5 alongside the findings for a deeper, more detailed analysis.

While, as a qualitative method, document analysis lacks the statistical validity tests that can be used to show the reliability and validity of the method's application, there are other measures the researcher can undertake to make a strong argument (Rich et al 2018). Wesley (2014: 144) argues that a document analysis must prove the authenticity (an accurate reading of the document), portability or transferability (a way of applying knowledge on particular topic to the more general questions about politics and communication), and precision (a level of transparency about the process of research that will allow the readers to judge the accuracy of the findings). However, Morse et al (2002: 14) argue against this approach or replacing the standards of reliability and validity because the criteria discussed by Wesley (2014: 144) above refer not to the research process, where they act as a self-correcting mechanism to ensure the quality of research, but to the overall 'significance, relevance, impact, and utility of completed research' (Morse et al 2002: 14). Instead, they argue, that if the principles of qualitative inquiry are followed, the researcher 'moves back and and forth between design and implementation to ensure congruence among question formulation, literature,

recruitment, data collection strategies, and analysis' (ibid: 17). Further disagreeing with Wesley is Altheide (2008: 149), who argues that qualitative document analysis is not primarily oriented to make widespread generalisations as theoretical sampling is employed in the selection of the documents, however, he argues for this selection tactic as 'most important cultural and symbolic meanings for audiences and decision makers are not likely to be the most frequently occurring' therefore they will be missed in random sampling. Thus, the process of inquiry should be well documented in order to provide an opportunity for the readers to judge the authenticity of the qualitative research; it is suggested that the researcher not only presents the findings but also describes their process in detail, thus presenting an 'audit trail' for how they reached their conclusions through a long process which involves many difficult and potentially subjective decisions (Wesley 2014: 152). Such descriptions of the process will be provided in Chapter 5.

#### **4:5 Ethical and language considerations**

Since the materials studied in the content analysis, the textual analysis, and the document analysis come from open sources and are widely available to the public through RT's websites or websites for the Russian government and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, there are no ethical concerns in using them in this study.

Where texts are originally in Russian, whether the foreign policy documents or the RT articles, they were coded and analysed by the author of this thesis, who is a native Russian speaker. All the examples, quotes and excerpts from these documents are presented in the text of this thesis in the author's translation into English, with the original Russian version provided in the footnotes.

## **4:6 Conclusion**

This chapter described and justified the study design of this thesis, the method that thesis employs, it explained the sampling strategy and the application of the methods. It presented a brief outline of the timeline of events selected for study, while the full list is available in Annex 1. The chapter also detailed the process of the intercoder reliability testing that was undertaken to make sure the coding schedule of the content analysis was comprehensive. Full coding schedules and manuals are available in Annex 2 of this thesis.

The next chapter embarks on the first research method of this thesis – the document analysis.

## Chapter 5. Document Analysis

### 5:1 Introduction

The relationship between RT and the Russian government is the most important topic of discussion for many politicians, journalists, and researchers. The main points of these debates have been relayed in Chapter 3 on Russian media and RT, which described a complex relationship between the Russian media and the state and discussed how RT's global positioning as a source of alternative perspectives and the Russian viewpoint on global events has been assessed by the academics. It has also pointed out the disagreements among researchers when it comes to understanding the role of RT in Russian foreign policy. As a part of answering the question about the relationship between RT content and the Russian foreign policy agenda, this chapter will focus on what exactly the main themes and messages of the Russian foreign policy agenda are. There is still a lot of misunderstanding of the Russian foreign policy - both in the sense of misinterpretation by journalists and officials on one side and in the sense of difficulty of finding a common ground for dialogue in international relations. Writing just over a week before the Crimean referendum, BBC's Steve Rosenberg said:

Analysing Russia, working out what Moscow is thinking and planning can be difficult. You have to put yourself inside President Putin's mind. So what is Vladimir Putin thinking right now about Ukraine? What motivates his foreign policy moves? What is his objective? (Rosenberg 2014).

On a diplomacy level, American officials have stated that the Russian and American views of international politics are 'fundamentally at odds with each other' (Reevell 2015). Before Putin and the US secretary of state Rex Tillerson met in 2017 The Guardian noted that 'the question is not so much whether Tillerson can reach an agreement on Syria, but whether he can start any sort of dialogue at all' (Luhn 2017). Scholars agree with this assessment as they

describe an ‘apparent failure, if not refusal, in regard to the mutual comprehension of Russian and Western worldviews’ (Bacon 2015: 17). It is the purpose of this chapter to explain and analyse the Russian worldview in regard to international politics and Russia’s role in them. This will be done through the document analysis of the official Russian foreign policy documents issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Kremlin with the purpose of studying the main themes and messages of the Russian foreign policy agenda, the way Russia sees the world and its own place and role in it, a set of views that can be seen as the Russian viewpoint of the world. This way together with the content analysis findings in the next chapter, and the textual analysis in the chapter after that, this chapter will work to answer the second sub-question of RQ1, which is as follows:

- b. How does the ‘Russian viewpoint on global events’ correspond to Russia’s foreign policy agenda?

For the purposes of the analysis of the documents, the following questions are being asked in this chapter:

- How is state of the world and international politics described in Russian official foreign policy documentation, including any descriptions of issues in international relations, particular situations and events, as well as descriptions of other countries, their governments, policies, and people?
- How is Russia, including the government, its policies, the people, and the country’s place in international relations described in Russian official foreign policy documentation?

As Andrei Tsygankov (2014: 19), a Russian-born researcher studying Russian foreign policy and international relations at the San Francisco State University argues, studying foreign policy remains a challenge for scholars as there are many ways of studying foreign policy

discourses and narratives, their origins, expressions, and influence over state policy. This thesis does not aim to describe the whole range of foreign policy views in Russia. The main discussions of RT and foreign policy focus on the accusations of propaganda, or the channel doing the Russian foreign policy bidding in the form of international broadcasting. Therefore, to investigate this relationship we need to look at the official foreign policy agenda, which will be studied through official documents and Putin's Federal Assembly addresses. While looking at RT's content in relation to the variety of foreign policy views that exist in Russia is interesting, it is out of scope of this thesis.

As noted in the Methodology chapter, this document analysis does not seek to evaluate the policies and their application in reality. Bacon (2015: 18) makes a similar argument when he conducts an analysis of public political narratives in Russia, instead explaining that the aim is to understand what political actors have to say about themselves in order to understand the motivations behind their actions. In this dissertation, what Russia has to say about the world and international politics, itself and its own role in the international politics will be seen as the main themes and messages of foreign policy agenda, which will be analysed with reference to the main themes and messages of RT content later in the thesis.

As the sampling strategy in Chapter 4 Methodology has discussed, 19 documents were analysed in this chapter. Initially the analysis started with studying the documents listed as 'fundamental documentation' on Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs website<sup>69</sup>. All documents that are relevant to the timeframe and topic of the study were examined - this includes the documents that discuss foreign policy and have been in effect between February

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<sup>69</sup> Available here: МИД России - Основополагающие документы:  
[http://www.mid.ru/foreign\\_policy/official\\_documents](http://www.mid.ru/foreign_policy/official_documents)

2014 and April 2017. As the relevant literature on the topic of foreign policy (see for example Bacon 2015; Laruelle 2015; Teper 2016; Laruelle 2016; Cheskin & Kachuyevski 2019) and the Kremlin website had suggested, annual addresses of the Russian president Vladimir Putin to the Federal Assembly are seen by the Kremlin ([kremlin.ru](http://kremlin.ru), n.d.) and the academics as foreign policy statements, therefore they were added to the sample of this study. As the Federal Assembly addresses happen in the end of the calendar year, relevant speeches for this study include those from years 2013, 2014, 2015, and 2016. An additional speech was also added: known as ‘the Crimea address’ it happened in March 2014 as the president formally submitted to the Federal Assembly and the State Duma the request to “to consider a Constitutional Law on the creation of two new constituent entities within the Russian Federation: the Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, and to ratify the treaty on admitting to the Russian Federation Crimea and Sevastopol” (Putin 2014a). Even though it could be argued that this particular address was more geared towards a Russian internal audience, the addition of it to the sample of this thesis is justified by the fact that it was narratively focused on international relations and discussed the addition of the territory of a foreign country into the territory of Russia – undoubtedly a matter of international significance.

## **5:2 The world and international politics**

*What is clear is that Russia has been calling most of the shots. [...] It is a sign of a changing global landscape that at every step, both the UN and western powers were sidelined.*

(The Guardian 2017)



This section of the chapter explains and analyses how the official Russian foreign policy documents present and explain the state of the world and international politics to the readers of the documents, and to the wider audiences in the cases of the president's addresses to Federal Assembly, which are usually widely televised and reported on as major political events. The descriptions of the world that involve Russia as the main subject will be analysed in the next section that analyses how Russia as a country is presented in these documents.

The question that this section of the chapter is trying to answer is:

- How is state of the world and international politics described in Russian official foreign policy documentation, including any descriptions of issues in international relations, descriptions of other countries, their governments, policies, and people?

This way the chapter poses a similar question to the one in the coding schedule of the quantitative content analysis, which looks at the descriptions of other countries in RT's coverage, but in the case of this chapter it is looking for these descriptions and their context qualitatively and in the official state documents instead. Thus, this chapter will determine the view of the Russian foreign policy agenda on world politics, international relations and participants of international relations. A comparison between the two sets of themes and messages - in RT coverage and in the foreign policy documents - will be able to illustrate the relationship between RT's 'Russian viewpoint on major global event' and the foreign policy agenda. The comparison will be further extended in the textual analysis, which takes a qualitative look on some of the coverage studied as a part of the content analysis.

One of the main ideas that is threaded through almost all the documents that contain descriptions of the world and international politics is that the world is changing, particularly

that the structure of the world is taking the shape of a multipolar, or a polycentric, system. This idea appears in the 2009 Order of the president of Russian Federation On National Security Strategy Until Year 2020 (President of Russia 2009), the 2015 Order of the president of Russian Federation On National Security Strategy of Russian Federation (President of Russia 2015), the 2010 Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2010), the 2013 Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2013), and the 2016 Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2016). The two words - multipolar<sup>70</sup> and polycentric<sup>71</sup> - are used interchangeably to describe the situation where several centres of power emerge in the world in place of the two polars of power (the US and the USSR), which was then replaced by one polar (the US) after the collapse of the USSR, when Russia was deemed to have lost most of its power. The idea of multipolarity is presented as a positive development as it ‘decentralises the global system’ (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2013) and means that the world’s ‘power and development potential is dispersing’ (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2016a) to the new centres of influence, or that the world is becoming fairer in the sense of power distribution between different regions and countries. In this multipolar world Russia is one of the new centres of power, however the country’s important role in foreign relations is historical, either in the form of the Russian Empire or the Soviet Union, Russia has always been the biggest force to consider in the region (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2013). With the fall of the Soviet Union and the political and socio-economic crisis that ensued, this role has been reduced or even lost for the first time in centuries of history. In this sense Russia occupying a position of power again can be seen as a return to the historical role of the country that was lost.

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<sup>70</sup> In Russian: многополярность

<sup>71</sup> In Russian: полицентричность

However, at the same time as explaining that multipolarity is making the world a fairer, more decentralised place, a large portion of the discussion of it is dedicated to the issues and threats associated with this process. The main idea is that the emergence of this new multipolar system has a complicating effect on international relations (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2016a) as it leads to instability on both global and regional levels (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2013; President of Russia 2015). Crucially, these issues are not caused by the emergence of multipolarity itself, but rather by the reaction of Western countries - former centres of power - to the decrease of their power (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2013, Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2016a). The West, it is explained, is clinging on to the power that it is losing, thus causing conflicts: 'The Western governments' ambition to preserve their old positions, paired with the emergence of new players on the world stage is linked to a growing instability in international relations' (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2013, Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2016a). This way, one of the main trends in global relations according to the Russian government is the fight for dominance between the old and new centres of power, with the old centres of power clinging on to their decreasing might to the detriment of the world's stability.

One particular way that the West is resisting the emergence of multipolarity is by 'overthrowing legitimate political regimes and provoking conflicts inside other countries' (President of Russia 2015). First of all, the quote describes governments of countries as legitimate, thus legitimising them without overtly taking their side, and classifies the actions of the West as illegitimate. The use of the word 'legitimate'<sup>72</sup> instead of 'legal'<sup>73</sup> is of particular interest: as Kuhrt (2017: 42) notes 'legitimacy can be viewed as comprising moral

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<sup>72</sup> In Russian: легитимных

<sup>73</sup> In Russian: законный, легальный

and political standards as well as legal ones, making it an inherently flexible and malleable tool for policymakers'. Voskoboyev (2008) adds that legality is historically associated with existing laws and legal regulation, while legitimacy is associated with tradition, 'divine rights', and natural law. Kuhrt (2017: 42) adds that the danger in using this term is that it includes in its scope the idea of moral approval, not legality by law, and therefore illegal actions could be seen as legitimate. Thus, the use of this word, which we will see several times in examples in this chapter brings a dimension of morality and tradition into the evaluation of international politics.

This Western meddling causes harm to both the target countries and the world in general, as the following quote explains with the example of Syria and the countries in the Middle East:

We have seen attempts to impose on other countries the so-called more progressive models of development, which has resulted in regression, barbarianism and blood. We can see this scenario in Syria and several Middle Eastern countries (Putin 2013).

In particular, the existence of IS is actually directly attributed to these actions of the West (President of Russia 2015), which emphasises the harmful effect of the West's (illegitimate) activities and connects the rather vague idea of the West (though often taken to mean USA) directly to terrorism. The connection between Western interference and the conflict in Syria was reiterated by Putin in the 2015 address to the Federal Assembly, which took place just a few months after the launch of the Russian military campaign in Syria: 'Syria has turned into a zone of chaos and anarchy that presents danger to the whole world. And we know why that happened, we know who needed to depose the unsuitable regimes, impose their own rules' (Putin 2015). Considering that we can see the idea of Western interference established in other documents and Putin's previous speeches, the hint was likely decoded by the audiences

as another reference to the West's attempts to cling on to the power it is losing in the establishing multipolar world. A similar phrase was used to describe the Russian view of the foreign relations surrounding another conflict studied in this thesis, in Ukraine: 'Our American friends are directly or indirectly influencing our relationship with our neighbours' (Putin 2014). Bacon (2015: 29) notes Putin's semi-ironic use of 'friends', 'colleagues' and 'partners' in describing the West while portraying it as a source of threat and harm to Russia and the world; however, it could also be seen as an expression of Russian peaceful approach to international relations, as well as an expression of equality. As a specific manifestation of the West's resistance to multipolarity the documents mention the 'Russia containment' strategy, which refers to the US Cold War foreign policy strategy that had a goal of preventing the spread of communism and Soviet influence in the world. In the modern Russian documents, the containment policies are described as 'applying political, economic, military and informational pressure on Russia' as a reaction to 'Russia conducting independent internal and foreign relations', which 'causes opposition from the United States and their allies, who are striving to keep dominating international affairs' (President of Russia 2015). Further Putin (2014) extends his understanding of Russia containment beyond the Soviet history, pointing out that it is a systematic anti-Russian policy: 'The policy of Russia containment hasn't been invented yesterday, it has been carried out against our country for decades if not centuries, it has been implemented every time someone decides that Russia has grown too strong, too independent'. In particular it is seen as an obstacle to implementing actions in relation to Russian state interests abroad, particularly a closer integration with the CIS<sup>74</sup> countries, where Western resistance and interference is 'creating pockets of tension' (President of Russia 2015). Overall, we can see that in the discussions of

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<sup>74</sup> Commonwealth of the Independent States, a political, economic and cultural cooperation organisation that at its inception included most of the former Soviet republics.

multipolarity and international relations Russian national interests (like retaining its newfound power in the international relations and having influence over CIS countries) are presented together with the basic interests of the world in general (lack of conflicts, instability, and terrorism) to the point of conflation, where Russia protecting its national interests is also logically protecting the world.

The way that Russia containment is explained with a mention of information pressure as well as political, economic and military ones is also important. This topic of the power of information and communications in international relations is threaded through many other documents in the sample (see Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2000; 2010; 2010a; 2013; 2013a; 2014; 2014b; 2016, 2016a; President of Russia 2009; 2012; 2015; Putin 2013; 2016), often in similar wording: the 2010 Military Doctrine says that ‘In modern conflicts information confrontation is used to achieve political goals without the use of military power and to form a positive reaction to the use of military power’ (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2010), the 2013 and 2016 Foreign Policy Concepts state that ‘Informational factors have become important factors of influencing the world politics alongside military power’ (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2013, 2016a). As the discussion of definitions of soft power in the Literature Review chapter of this thesis has shown, ‘achieving political goals without the use of military power’ is a common turn of phrase used in defining soft power, therefore the documents point out the importance of soft power in modern international relations. Indeed, the foreign policy documents also directly refer to soft power, emphasising its increasingly important role in international politics as a ‘complex toolkit used for solving foreign policy tasks, relying on the capabilities of the civil society, informational, humanitarian and other alternative forms of diplomacy’ (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2013), and the growing importance of internal politics in the international ones (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2016a). Hutchings & Szostek

(2015) place this in context, explaining that “Russian leadership views mass communication as a crucial arena of global politics, in which rival powers work to undermine each other and further their own interests at others’ expense”. This topic of information and power is of particular importance for this thesis as it helps us understand not only the Russian foreign policy agenda but also where RT’s mission fits in the country’s foreign policy thinking. In relation to the new centres of power emerging as the result of multipolarity, the 2014 Military Doctrine states that the situation within the sphere of information is similar: influence is getting redistributed to the new centres of power (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2014), thus RT might be seen as an information and influence tool in the new centre of power. It is not just the influence, but also the risks, including military threats, that shift to the sphere of information (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2014). The 2013 Foreign Policy Concept explains that the increase of global competition can lead to ‘destructive and illegal use of soft power with the goals of pressuring sovereign states, interference in their internal affairs, destabilisation of the situation in the country, manipulation of the public opinion and conscience’ (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2013, also see President of Russia 2015). The main message is that Russia needs to get better at using information means such as media to explain its positions and policies to the world and defend itself against misinformation and propaganda. Many of the phrases referring to these points are strikingly similar to RT’s own About Us page, which is discussed in the Introduction to this thesis and states that RT acquaints international audiences with a Russian viewpoint on major global events. For example, in the 2000 Doctrine of Information Security:

Russia’s interests in the sphere of information are providing sufficient information accompaniment to the policies of the Russian government, delivering to the international audience reliable information on the Russian state policies and

official position on the main events of Russian and international life (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2000).

A newer 2016 version of the Doctrine of Information Security also has an almost identical sentence, which also refers to national interests:

Delivering to the Russian and international audience reliable information on Russia's state policies and the country's position on the main world events is a matter of national interest' (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2016).

Finally, the 2016 Foreign Policy Concept argues that delivering the Russian viewpoint is a matter of human rights - and not just for Russians but for everyone:

Russia is fighting for the rights of every human to access objective information on the events in the world, and different points of view of those events (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2016a).

The phrasing and the use of the word 'accompaniment'<sup>75</sup> in the first quote is particularly interesting and deserves further explanation. In Russian there are three distinct meanings to the word: accompanying in the sense of following along (eg. 'Diplomats are accompanied by a journalist' - meaning that the diplomats and the journalist are doing separate work, but the work of diplomats is being covered by the journalist), accompanying in the sense of creating something together (eg. 'The singing was accompanied by a flute' - meaning that the creation of an end product like a piece of music depends on the process of accompaniment) and accompanying in the sense of being a part of something bigger (eg. "The documents are accompanied by a cover letter' - meaning that a cover letter is also part of the documents). This way it is difficult to pin down the exact meaning placed by the authors of the documents behind 'sufficient information accompaniment to the policies of the Russian government' - whether it is meant that the media are covering the events as independent actors (first

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<sup>75</sup> In Russian: сопровождение



meaning), as co-creators of the resulting informational product (second meaning), or as a cog in a bigger machine of Russian public diplomacy (third meaning). While the second and third meanings deal with ideas that have more to do with political communication and PR rather than independent journalism, the idea that Russian media have a larger mission in the world is not that outrageous for Russia. Russian journalist and head of Rossiya Segodnya, the news agency that replaced RIA-Novosti (which in its time was the founding structure of RT), has spoken out on the topic, noting that it is a crucial mission of the restructured news agency to ‘restore the fair opinions on Russia as an important country in the world that has kind intentions’ (Vesti 2013). Further Kuznetsova (2018) talks about Russian journalists openly comparing the current media environment to a battleground: ‘for example, one of the former APN and RIA Novosti editors points to the “necessity of constructing a positive image of our country. Otherwise we will not be able to win the information war”’ (Kuznetsova 2018: 112).

The shortcomings in information strategy are also seen as threats to the country, highlighted in the 2014 Military doctrine, as well as the 2000 and 2016 Doctrines of Information Security and the 2009 National Security Strategy. Both 2000 and 2014 Doctrines of Information Security are dedicated to the issue of information, but the threats that they talk about are different, which is logical because 14 years has passed between the publication of the two documents. The issues that are discussed in the 2000 Doctrine of Information Security are mostly focusing on the shortcomings in the development of the Russian media: the process of squeezing the Russian media out of the internal Russian and international media markets, the increasing dependence of the Russian spiritual, economic and political lives on the Western information infrastructures, monopolisation of the media market by either Russian or international media organisations, low effectiveness of media support of the state policies, manipulation of information and spread of disinformation about Russian foreign policy, the

blocking of the Russian state media from reaching the Russian and international audiences, and other states' development of information war campaigns against Russia (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2000). It could be argued that most of the issues listed in this document focus on internal issues of the media market and media policy in Russia and only the last three threats concern the actions of foreign media, foreign media markets, foreign governments and their policies. In the 2016 Doctrine of Information Security the focus is completely different. Among the threats discussed none address shortcomings or issues within the Russian media market and instead all of the threats come from outside of the country: other countries using information to reach geopolitical, terrorist and extremist goals; other countries using information to apply psychological pressure aimed at destabilising the political and social situation inside Russia; increase of the foreign media publications containing a biased view of the Russian state policies; discrimination of the Russian media and journalists abroad; information being used to blur the lines of the traditional Russian spiritual values (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2016). The 2009 National Security Strategy also mentions that the use of information to improve the image of the country through public diplomacy is a question of national defence (President of Russia 2009). Thus, by the end of the first decade of the 21st century foreign policy documents located all media and information-related threats outside of Russia, switching the focus from any internal issues to the external ones, where information becomes a part of the foreign policy agenda, and ability to project and control information a matter of national security (Hutchings and Szostek 2015). This outward turn coincided with the two conflicts that are studied in this thesis. Therefore, RT is not only a tool of information but also a tool of defence, which resonates with the words of RT's editor-in-chief Margarita Simonyan presented in Chapter 3, where she compares the channel to a Ministry of Defence. Finally, in Putin's 2014 Address to the Federal Assembly he makes a passionate speech for widening the reach of Russian media:

‘We will fight for the diversity of the world. We will bring to the people abroad the truth, so that people will see the authentic, not false image of Russia. And we will do this even in the conditions where governments of other countries are trying to erect a new Iron curtain around Russia’ (Putin 2014).

The statement equals the presence of Russian media on the international market to the presence of diversity in the world, equals the messages of the Russian media with the ‘truth’, and repeats the idea that Russia is not fairly represented in the world and that there is an external threat of other countries - whether it is a metaphorical ‘Iron curtain’ (in the sense of disinformation and anti-Russian propaganda often mentioned in other documents), or a political one in terms of sanctions.

When we speak of power shifts due to multipolarity we have to consider that the global competition moves from the physical dimension of weapons to the ideological and metaphysical dimension of information and values, often referred to as the ‘civilisational dimension’ in the documents (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2013, Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2016a, President of Russia 2009, President of Russia 2015). This competition of values is described as the process where, as the importance of ‘civilisational identity’ rises, and Western governments’ ambition to impose their values on others in order to preserve their old positions leads to instability in international relations (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2013; 2016a). Therefore, in the Russian view RT’s existence and the significant budget spending on it are not only justified but necessary in the world where the West is resisting Russia’s growing power, Russian interests are not accounted for, and Russia containment strategy is still going strong after the end of the Cold War.

Terrorism is identified as one of the main threats to the world and to Russia in the 2016 Foreign Policy Concept, and the emergence of terrorism is blamed on the combination of globalisation and the developmental issues that the globalisation exposed in certain countries, as well as the negative reactions of societies on the 'values, ideologies and political modernisation recipes that are imposed from the outside' (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2016a). As we have seen with the explanation of the origin of IS, this again connects to the idea of the Western countries imposing their own views on other countries as a way of resisting the transition of world politics to multipolarity. In addition, the threat of terrorism is one of the main ideas in the discussion of the Russian military involvement in Syria in Putin's 2015 address to the Federal Assembly, which took place several months after the campaign was officially announced. A large portion of the address was dedicated to explaining and justifying the involvement, which is presented as a fight against terrorism, as the campaign is repeatedly referred to as 'anti-terrorist' throughout the document in various contexts, and in sentences directly explaining the involvement: 'Russian troops in Syria are fighting international terrorism' (Putin 2015). This argument is extended to present terrorism as a threat to the Russian citizens as Putin contextualises the discussion of Russian 'anti-terrorist' campaign in Syria with the examples of terrorist attacks in Russia since the early 1990s. Therefore, Russian involvement in Syria is not just anti-terrorist as a principle but also for the benefit and safety of the Russian citizens, which Putin argues with emotion:

'In Syria among the militants there are many immigrants from Russia and CIS. And if they get stronger and win in Syria, they will come back to sow fear and hatred, to kill, bomb and torture people. We have to get stop them in their tracks while they are still far away. This is why we have taken the decision on the military operation, based on the request from the legitimate Syrian authorities. In

Syria our armed forces are fighting, above all, for Russia, for the safety of our citizens' (Putin 2015).

Simons (2020) explores the ways in which lobby and governments justified to the public policies that are not in national or public interest - including military campaigns abroad - and found that the main requisite was creating a sense of immediate security threat to the public. Similarly, Russian military involvement in Syria is justified as an internal security issue, and no political or geopolitical reasons of supporting Bashar Assad are directly mentioned.

However, we also see the word 'legitimate' used again, used to describe the government of Syria, which brings in a dimension of moral recognition and legitimation. The moral dimension of Russian involvement is also developed independently of the Syrian government as Putin (2015) notes: 'Russia has for a long time been on the frontline of fighting terrorism. This is a fight for freedom, truth, justice, people's lives and the future of our civilisation'. It portrays the conflict and Russia's involvement in it as a 'life or death' scenario, where the country is compelled to take a stand in order to protect itself and the world. This idea of responsibility is further dramatized as it is compared to fighting Nazi Germany in World War II:

'The history lessons are obvious - in the 20th century the initial unwillingness to fight Nazis has been paid for with millions of lives. Every civilised country has to participate in the fight with terrorism' (Putin 2015).

This parallel is particularly interesting as the 'unwillingness to fight Nazis' seems to be a rather vague reference that could be applied to either the United States, as the country maintained a formal neutrality until the attack on Pearl Harbour in 1941, or indeed the USSR, as it also only joined the fight against Nazi Germany in 1941, albeit six months earlier than the US. However, considering the way that WWII, or rather the Great Patriotic War, is

discussed in current Russian politics, and in Putin's speeches in particular<sup>76</sup>, where the non-aggression pact between USSR and Nazi Germany is rarely discussed (Tleuzh 2011: 35), it is fair to propose that most audiences inside Russia will see this phrase as a reference to the United States. Further, when viewed in the context of the conflict in Syria, in which the US policies are viewed as having led to the creation of IS, this reference to WWII history and the US has even more weight as they imply a history repeating itself scenario.

On the level of descriptions similar to those that the content analysis coding schedule looks for in RT content, the documents describe Euromaidan protests in Ukraine as an 'armed coup, violence, and murder', a 'coup d'etat' and a 'power grab', president Yanukovich is described as 'an absolutely legitimate, internationally recognised head of state', the Ukrainian government elected in 2014-2015 is described as the 'Kiev authorities' instead of the Ukrainian authorities, and the conflict in Eastern Ukraine is described as 'internal' (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2016a) and explained as 'attempts to oppress the people who disagreed with the coup' (Putin 2014, 2014a). Further, Russian campaign in Syria is described as 'anti-terrorist', Syria is described as a 'zone of chaos and anarchy and source of threat to the entire world', and the Syrian government is described as 'legal and legitimate' (Putin 2015). These descriptions will be useful in analysing the descriptions found in RT content.

As a final part of the discussion about the state of the world and international politics this section will discuss how the situation with Crimea - the referendum and the following acceptance of the region into Russia - were presented in the documents. The international impact of this event is hard to overestimate - the referendum and its results remain

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<sup>76</sup> See, for example, Ershov's (2018) analysis where he finds that Putin singles out the Russian/Soviet nation as the victors and 'the nation that routed Nazism' (ibid: 19).

unrecognised by the majority of countries in the world<sup>77</sup>, the UN has declared the referendum invalid and Russia's acceptance of the region as a federal subject an annexation (UN 2014), which brought on a variety of sanctions (European council n.d.). The referendum and the following process of acceptance of the region into Russia are also a part of the sample in the Ukrainian crisis timeline for the content and textual analyses. Therefore, understanding the official Russian view of Crimea as an international issue is crucial for analysing RT's articles on this topic. The main source on this issue is Putin's special Federal Assembly address known as the Crimea speech that took place after the referendum in March 2014, and right before the Federal Assembly voting procedure on accepting the regions<sup>78</sup> as Russian federal subjects. Therefore, in a way, the president's Crimea address can be seen as a pitch on why the parliament should vote to accept the region into Russia. As the parliament voted to accept Crimea, this can also be seen as the accepted official Russian view on the Crimean issue. The first idea that emerges throughout the speech is the legality of the referendum, which, as discussed above, relates to the main point of criticism of the referendum today. In his speech Putin (2014) addresses this issue directly three times, saying the referendum was legal, honest, and legitimate: in the beginning<sup>79</sup>, middle of the speech<sup>80</sup>, and in the end, where he concludes:

There was a referendum in Crimea, where the people have clearly spoken of their will to join Russia. Then there was a decision of the legitimate Crimean

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<sup>77</sup> It is easier to list the countries that have recognised Crimea as a part of Russia rather than vice-versa. As of June 2020, six years after the referendum, the following 8 countries have recognised Crimea as a part of Russia: Afghanistan, Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, Nicaragua, North Korea, Sudan, Venezuela and Zimbabwe. In addition, the breakaway states of Abkhazia, Artsakh, South Ossetia and Transnistria have also recognised Crimea as a part of Russia, though it needs to be noted that these states are not internationally recognised themselves.

<sup>78</sup> Crimea and the city of Simferopol were accepted as separate federal subjects, hence plural 'regions'.

<sup>79</sup> 'Crimean referendum has been carried out in full accord with democratic procedures and international law' (Putin 2014).

<sup>80</sup> 'The Crimean referendum was honest, and people have demonstrated their will - they want to be with Russia' (Putin 2014)

parliament on their independence and the historical reconnection of Crimea and Sevastopol with Russia has happened (ibid.).

We again see that the pro-Russian Crimean parliament is described as ‘legitimate’ instead of ‘legal’, which brings in a moral dimension to the description, and emphasises Russia’s approval of the parliament. The fact that Putin describes the reconnection as ‘historical’ will be discussed in more detail later in the chapter.

Another discussion of legality comes in the shape of the discussion of the transfer of Crimea from Russian SFSR to Ukrainian SSR in the Soviet times, which Putin (2014) states in the speech was not legal: ‘it was done with obvious violations of the constitution of the time’ and, further adding an emotional dimension to the discussion of legality: ‘When, after the fall of the USSR, Crimea ended up in a different country, Russia has felt that it wasn’t just robbed but burglarised’. This way, according to the Russian view, the Crimean referendum was legal and organised by a legitimate (morally approved) government body and is also fortified by the idea that it is reversing the historical act that was illegal and unconstitutional in the first place, rectifying a historical injustice that left Russia feeling ‘burglarised’.

The second idea that emerges from the president’s Crimea speech is that of history. It expands on why he called the reconnection with Crimea ‘historical’ and connects modern international politics to history:

In Crimea everything is soaked in our shared history and pride [...] Crimea has always been and is an integral part of Russia, Crimea is historical Russian land and Sevastopol is a Russian city. The modern south-eastern Ukraine occupies territories which have been historically known as the south of Russia (Putin 2014).



By referencing the Russian historical legacy in Crimea, particularly the Russian military legacy (which is implied by the reference to the Sevastopol as it is a military port), Putin is invoking the historical memory and great power status (Laruelle 2015: 94). In relation to RT's use of history Chatterje-Doody & Tolz (2019: 13) note the instrumentalization of the past can be observed as 'multiple conflicting and constantly shifting interpretations of historical events are co-opted by state-affiliated actors' in order to influence the audiences beliefs 'in ways that legitimise the existing government under Putin', therefore discussions of history in coverage refer 'less to the past than the present' as a tool of a 'responsive strategy of legitimacy ideological messaging' (ibid: 5).

Taking the argument of historical significance even further Putin (2014) makes an argument that appeals to religion as well as history: 'It was here that our common culture, values and civilisation that unites the people of Russia, Belarus and Ukraine has been predefined [...] Crimea for Russia has the significance comparable to the Temple Mount in Jerusalem for those who follow Islam or Judaism'. Thus, the idea of spirituality is brought into the argument, and the mention of civilisation, which has been discussed earlier in this chapter as one of the dimensions in which the West is interfering in other countries affairs. Bacon (2015: 23) notes that the notion of civilisational distinctiveness is tied to Orthodox Christianity, and Crimea is further identified as the cradle of this civilisation, thus emphasising the importance, connection and shared history that the region has with Russia. Suslov (2014: 589) calls this the 'sacralization of Crimea' as the region is pronounced the "most sacred shrine of the 'Russian civilization'", which he considers a legitimization narrative. Wilson (2016a: 633) also notes that the angle at which Putin presented history required a 'spin' of sorts, as he notes that after his baptism, Vladimir went back to Kiev, and the Russian history of Crimea is significantly shorter than the Crimean Tatar one.

The third idea that emerges from the Crimea speech is that of national identity and discrimination. ‘Today out of 2 million 2 thousand people who make up the population of Crimea almost 1.5 million are Russians, and 350 thousand are Ukrainians who predominantly define Russian language as their native tongue,’ Putin (2014) says in the Crimea speech. When referring to Russians and Russian-speakers abroad the documents often use the word ‘compatriots’ (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2013, 2016a). The word ‘compatriots’<sup>81</sup> in modern Russian political science has been defined as individuals who have ancestry in the Russian Federation, The Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic, USSR, the Russian Republic and the Russian state before the revolution, who speak Russian, identify themselves with Russia, who feel loyalty towards Russia and have spiritual and cultural ties with the ancestral homeland (Batanova, 2008). This way, the word ‘compatriot’ can include citizens of other countries. Cheskin & Kachuyevski (2019: 1) describe this phenomenon as externally located kinsfolk, “groups of individuals located outside of a nominally national ‘kin-state’, and over whom the state in question lays claim to various forms of symbolic and/or legal jurisdiction”, and note that in the recent years Russia has directed substantial resources towards kin-state activities<sup>82</sup>. Looking at the wider message of prescribing a Russian identity to Crimeans, we can note two particular effects: first of all, it strips Crimeans of their possible other identities, such as Ukrainian, Crimean, Crimean Tatar, or any other, - and highlights the Russian identity the most important one. While ethnic Ukrainians are mentioned once as a part of the Crimean population, it is stressed that they are a minor part of the overall population of the region, and their relation to Russia (through language) is emphasised. At the same time when Russians are an ethnic minority it is presented as a problem:

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<sup>81</sup> In Russian: соотечественник

<sup>82</sup> In addition, the CIS region is proclaimed as a region of priority in terms of Russian national interests and developing cooperation in several documents (President of Russia 2012, Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2016a).

Millions of Russians went to sleep in one country and woke up separated by borders, immediately becoming ethnic minorities in former Soviet republics, Russian people has become one of the most, if not the most, divided nation in the world (Putin 2014).

He further contextualises the victim status of Russians in connection to the Euromaidan protests and the new government in Ukraine, who he claims are anti-Russian:

The main force behind the coup in Ukraine were nationalists, russophobes, antisemites, who have taken the power through violence, murder, terror and pogroms. [...] Current Ukrainian authorities are ideological heirs of Bandera, a Hitler henchman during the WWII. [...] Russian-speaking Crimea was under the threat of repressions and punitive operations, and the people of Crimea have come to Russia to ask for help protecting their rights and very lives' (Putin 2014).

There are several points of note in this quote. First of all, the classification of the Euromaidan protests, known in Ukraine as 'the revolution of dignity', as a coup is an example of double nominations, widely used in the Soviet propaganda, discussed earlier in this thesis. In double nominations an event that is ideologically unacceptable is named a 'coup', while ideologically acceptable 'coups' are called revolutions or protests, therefore we can understand the Russian view of Euromaidan in the very beginning of the very first sentence in this quote. Second, we can see that the anti-Ukrainian message is rooted in the association with nationalism. While producing an image of threat associated with Hitler and Nazism is a common propaganda device in many countries, it has a particular history and weight in the case of Russo-Ukrainian relations. Riabchuk (2016) traces the origins back to pre-Soviet times in imperial Russia, where Ukrainian nationalism was presented as a negative Other because of its ambitions of Ukrainian independence. In the Soviet times the terms 'fascist'

and ‘Nazi’ in relation to Ukraine and Ukrainians were misused<sup>83</sup> to the extent that they have become ‘detached from scholarly understanding and openly manipulated for political purposes’ (Kuzio 2016: 87). Putin’s use of the word ‘pogrom’, which has distinct associations with antisemitism further emphasises the message of Ukrainian nationalism as a threat, as does the reference to Stepan Bandera, the head of the Ukrainian nationalists who were fighting against the Soviet Union before and during WWII. He is a controversial figure, seen both as a fighter for Ukraine’s independence and as a Nazi collaborationist. In the discussion of his figure in the Crimean speech, we can see that his role is reduced only to Nazi collaborationism. When the Ukrainian authorities are connected to him a transfer of qualities happens - if Bandera was a Nazi, so are the Ukrainian authorities. While this study will not focus on whether the link between the Ukrainian government and Bandera exists, the reducing of his complex historical role to a single activity and the transfer of qualities are commonly used propaganda techniques, with a tradition in Soviet propaganda communication. It is also crucial to note that these references should be understood in the context of the importance of WWII references in Russia, discussed in more detail in Chapters 2 and 3. Overall this is how the ‘imagined diaspora’ (Cheskin & Kachuyevski 2019: 7), made out of the externally located kinsfolk of Russians and Russian-speakers in Ukraine, is presented as being under threat of persecution from the Ukrainian authorities who are the ‘heirs of Bandera’. On the topic of extending the Russianness to include those who are not ethnically Russian Laruelle (2015) explains the inclusion of Russian speakers in this as not driven by the desire to present them as ethnically Russian but to blur the established borders of Russian identities and lay claim to ‘compatriots abroad’ even when they are not Russian in the ethnic sense (see also Cheskin & Kachuyevski 2019: 8). Simultaneously Ukraine is

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<sup>83</sup> Kuzio (2015: 162) notes that the terms were often used to describe Ukrainians who did as much as speak Ukrainian or wear Ukrainian symbols.

identified as a ‘fraternal’ nation to Russia in several documents, including the 2014 Address to the Federal Assembly<sup>84</sup>, and the 2014 Crimea speech<sup>85</sup>, which Ershov (2018: 18) explains as legitimization by ‘quasi-biological relatedness’, and Miazhevich (2014: 188) connects to Russia’s ‘post-imperial aspirations.’ Despite the different natures of these two ways of describing Ukraine, both tie the country’s identity to that of Russia and eliminate from the conversation the possibilities of understanding Ukrainian-ness on its own, in a way that is not tied to Russia.

The fourth idea that emerges from Putin’s Crimea speech is that the revolution in Ukraine has been orchestrated from the outside and the authorities, who are nationalist, are guided by actors from outside of the country, in particular by the West: ‘They [*the Ukrainian authorities – authors note*] attempted to build an ethnically pure Ukrainian state, but the foreign curators of these ‘politicians’ have straightened them out’ (Putin 2014). Further in this context Putin (ibid.) describes Euromaidan protesters as a ‘well-prepared and armed army of militants’, who were doing the West’s bidding in the country. This idea connects to the previously discussed view of the West struggling against emerging multipolarity. In fact, the Crimean speech directly refers to it:

‘This situation around Ukraine is like a mirror for the global events of the last couple of decades. After the bipolar system has collapsed, there is no more stability in the world. Our Western colleagues, headed by the US, prefer not to use international law to inform their foreign policy, but the law of the strong<sup>86</sup>.

They have come to believe in their own chosen-ness and uniqueness, in the fact

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<sup>84</sup> ‘Russia has not only supported Ukraine and other fraternal nations of the former USSR in their aspirations for independence but was also a catalyst in those events in the 1990s’ (Putin 2014).

<sup>85</sup> ‘Relations with the fraternal Ukrainian nation will always be the priority for us’ (Putin 2014).

<sup>86</sup> The ‘law of the strong’ is a phrase in Russian (in Russian: право сильного) that means that whoever holds the power can make up laws to suit their own needs. We will see how Russia positions itself as the opposite of this, as obeying of international laws in the next section of this chapter.

that only they are allowed to decide the fates of the world, that they are always right. [...] This happened in Yugoslavia in 1999, in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya' (Putin 2014).

The Western support for the 2014 Ukrainian revolution is further presented as the reason for the conflict in Eastern Ukraine and the political issues between Russia and Ukraine (Putin 2014; President of Russia 2015). Further, this support is presented as actions 'against Ukraine, and against Russia, and against integration in the Eurasian territory', which means that issues in international relations for Russia are again presented as issues for the whole world (Putin 2014). The Ukraine-EU association agreement, the delay of which kickstarted the Euromaidan protests, is presented as something that Russia should have been consulted on, even though it was not a part of the agreement: 'no one engaged in dialogue with Russia, no one recognised that we have deep, historically formed infrastructure' (Putin 2014). This way, the West participating in any role in Ukrainian politics is seen as actions against Russia, which denies any agency and authority to Ukraine as a country that chooses its foreign policy, and Ukrainians as political actors that make their own decisions, reducing them to chess pieces in 'big country politics' as Russia resists the US struggle for power in a multipolar world. Thus, Ukraine as a country is reduced to a sphere of influence instead of being seen as an independent actor in global politics.

The fifth and final idea that emerges from the Crimea speech is that the referendum and consequent acceptance of the region into Russia are not being treated fairly by the world. In other words, this idea refers to a new form of the double standards that are applied by the West, mentioned earlier in this section. In a new appeal to historic evidence, Putin presents several cases in support of Crimea joining Russia. First, he argues that the Crimean

referendum and its declaration of independence from Ukraine are built on the same legal basis as Ukraine declaring independence from the USSR in the 1990s, with reference to the UN charter which discusses the nations' right to self-determination: 'So Ukrainians have used their right to self-determination and Crimeans are not allowed to do it, why?' (Putin 2014). As a second case Putin presents the separation of Kosovo from Serbia<sup>87</sup>, which, he notes was also orchestrated by the West: 'Why is it that something that is allowed for Kosovar Albanians is not allowed for Russians, Ukrainians and Crimean Tatars?' (ibid.). Finally, Putin makes two appeals to the people of US and Germany, equating the Crimean referendum to the American Declaration of Independence, referring to self-determination and people's will for freedom, and, in the case of Germany, to the reunification of East and West Germany, referring again to the Russian-ness of Crimeans, therefore presenting Crimea joining Russia as a declaration of independence from Ukraine, a historical reunification instead of annexation and division, and justifying it as something that fixes a historical injustice. Interestingly, the separation of Kosovo and self-determination in general are not only used as a positive, legitimate example (like in the quote above), but also as an example that should be avoided, not emulated. In the Federal Assembly Address in the same year several months later Putin says 'We remember the Western support for separatism in Russia. There were no doubts that they will be happy to play the Yugoslavia scenario of decay and dismemberment on us' (Putin 2014). Malinova (2014) also notes that before Crimean referendum Russia criticised the Kosovo case, but in March 2014 has started to view it as a precedent. Both speeches with mentions of Kosovo and Yugoslavia were made by Putin in the same year. This means that the Russian view of the world is not a consistent set of views

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<sup>87</sup> Kuhrt (2017: 40) argues that the Kosovo case serves the purpose of strengthening the legality argument in the case of Crimea.

but rather a flexible series of ideas changing depending on the particular circumstances and the argument that needs to be made.

As we will see from the discussion of the documents below and from the content and textual analyses, the crisis in Ukraine is explained by Russia with reference to the Western ‘meddling’, therefore the appeals to history, civilisational bonds, values and religion should also be seen in the context of multipolarity and Russia’s claim to be one of the world’s new centres of power. There is no agency of Ukraine or Crimea in these arguments, as there is no evidence in the documents that this discussion considers the existence of independent opinions and views in Ukraine that are not a part of the ‘Russia vs the West’ understanding of the world. Further, we see that the level of arguments presented as to why Crimea should be accepted into Russia range from the written law (historical legality) and the moral law and right-ness (legitimacy) to history, historical justice and spirituality (or the ‘civilisational’ argument), to the need for protection of Crimeans from the threats of the nationalist Ukrainian government puppeteered by the West, though many of these arguments can also be boiled down to the concept of multipolarity and the issues associated with it in the world politics. Notably, there are no speeches or documents on Syria that are similar in detail to Putin’s Crimea speech. On the day of the first Russian airstrikes in Syria the only document on the Kremlin website referring to the event is a news article entitled ‘A request to use Russian Armed Forces abroad has been submitted to the Federation Council<sup>88</sup>’ - the body of the text consists of 1 sentence and doesn’t even mention Syria. There is no ‘Syria speech’ that similarly outlines the Russian view on Syria, therefore analysis in this chapter has been constrained to the mentions of Syria in Federal Assembly addresses. At the same time, the

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<sup>88</sup> [kremlin.ru](http://kremlin.ru): В Совет Федерации внесено предложение об использовании Вооружённых Сил за пределами территории России: <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/50399>.



lack of such speeches is also a point of analysis in itself, from which we can judge the sheer importance of Ukraine and Crimea for the Russian foreign policy agenda, and that the war in Syria stands lower on the list of international priorities for the country.

To conclude, the general Russian view of the world paints a picture where the world is changing in such a way that power gets redistributed to new countries and ‘centres of influence’, which leads the historical West to struggle with the decrease of its power and attempt to retain it by interfering in other countries’ internal affairs and causing conflicts. The wars in Syria and Ukraine are examples of such conflicts, both started by the West. Information plays an ever-growing role in the world, comparable to military power, but often gets misused by countries who want to interfere in other countries’ internal affairs.

### **5:3 Russia in the world**

This section of the chapter looks at the way that the Russian official foreign policy documents describe Russia, its role and position in world politics: Russia according to the Russian foreign policy agenda. The content and textual analyses in this thesis are also looking for the ways in which Russia is portrayed in RT content, so contrasting and comparing the two sets of findings in the end will allow us to analyse the relationship between the foreign policy agenda and RT content.

The way Russia is described in foreign policy documents is tightly knit with the way the world and international relations are described in them. In particular, the concept of multipolarity, crucial to describing the Russian view of international relations, is also central to understanding the way in which the documents present and describe Russia and its role in the world by underlining the country’s role in the newly forming multipolar polycentric

global system as one of the newly emerged centres of influence (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2000; President of Russia 2009). The 'newly emerged' part of this status has to be understood in the context of Russian post-Soviet history as after the fall of the Soviet Union Russia's positions were weakened by the political and economic crises as the country transitioned into new political and economic systems:

Russia has overcome the consequences of the systemic political and socio-economic crisis of the end of the 20th century and has restored its abilities to defend its national interests as the key subject of the developing multipolar international relations (President of Russia 2009).

This return to power has to be seen in reference to the great power<sup>89</sup> status, a concept<sup>90</sup> that is often discussed in reference to Russian foreign policy in the 21st century (see for example Tsygankov 2005; Neumann 2008; Mankoff 2012; Smith 2014). Further, 'defending the national interests' is presented as the main advantage of this status. As has been discussed earlier, much of the crisis in Ukraine is discussed in the documents with reference to Russia's national interests in the region, which are being disregarded by the West, and the Russian involvement in the war in Syria has been presented within the national security/terrorism paradigm. This is where we can see how the ideas of power and multipolarity inform foreign policy agenda.

As there is resistance in the world to the emerging multipolarity, there is also resistance to Russia's growing strength and influence (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2000). The Russia containment policy, which, as discussed previously, is understood as various pressures on Russia, is used to explain almost all accusations that are presented to Russia in the sphere of

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<sup>89</sup> In Russia: великодержавность

<sup>90</sup> Volgy et al (2011: 10) provide three main criteria of great power-ness: visibility and importance of the country in major international politics issues and conflicts, involvement in international politics, and internal recognition of the great power status.

international politics, from the Crimean sanctions - 'If these events didn't happen, they would find some other excuse to attempt to contain the growing capabilities of Russia' (Putin 2014)

- to other accusations such as propaganda or military aggression:

'Everyone knows that in the last years we have encountered many attempts of pressure. Every single accusation was used - from the myth of Russian aggression to Russian propaganda, meddling in other countries' elections and even bullying of our sportspeople' (Putin 2016).

Thus, again we see Russia as the victim of pressure, bullying and other types of aggression.

But unlike the ways that external kinsfolk of Russians in Crimea and Ukraine were portrayed as being under attack and in need of protection, Russia as a state is presented as an entity that can stand up for itself: 'We will not allow infringement on our interests, and we will decide our own destiny without anyone's tips' (Putin 2016). In this we can see the two crucial facets of Russian-ness - the state, strong despite the pressure (in fact, the pressure is used as an extra proof of Russia's growing capabilities), and people who belong to the 'Russian' group - either by ethnicity, language or another association, who are also pressured and discriminated against - but protected by Russia the country.

The second crucial thread in presentation of Russia in the foreign policy documents is the juxtaposition of the country to the West, often represented by the USA. For example, when it is noted that the position as a centre of influence does not mean that Russia will assume the role of the 'world's policeman', Putin (2013) specifies that Russian understanding of great power does not include 'a claim for regional or world hegemony', and the country does not interfere with anyone's internal affairs, doesn't attack other countries' interests or impose patronage on them (ibid.). Keeping in mind the previous section's findings on the ways in which the Western countries are presented as interfering in other countries' affairs, it is fair to

say that most audience will decode this as a juxtaposition of Russia and the West. Thus, Russia is presented as a better, fairer superpower than the US, one that respects international law, independence and sovereignty and does not have plans to interfere in other countries' affairs, better for the world peace and stability. Researchers have long been focusing on the idea of the West as Russia's historical significant Other (see Neumann 1996), and in the period studied in this thesis it is definitely the case, as comparisons with the West are introduced in different topics of foreign policy discussion, and the West becomes an important external factor in the Russian identity. For example, 'traditional values' are mentioned as a part of the Russian positioning of country as an antipode to the West. In Russia the phrase is widely understood to encompass various traditionally conservative values, from conservative family politics and opposition to LGBTQ+ rights to increased influence of the Orthodox church on politics and society. Considering the extensive use of the word civilisational in the documents regarding Russia we can see that these views and values are presented as something historical and ingrained into the country's DNA. The 2013 Address to the Federal Assembly positions these values as one of the reasons Russia is becoming a centre of influence in the world as similar values in the West are being "destroyed 'from the top'" (Putin 2013). As another example, the theme of emotions in international relations also emerges from the documents, particularly stressing that Russian policies are not being affected by emotions ('They won't get a nervous, hysterical, dangerous reaction from us' (Putin 2015), while policies of the Western countries are guided by 'hysterical Cold War rhetoric' (Putin 2014). The sanctions that the US placed on Russia as a result of the Crimea annexation are described as the 'US' nervous reaction to Russia's position in regard to the coup in Ukraine' (Putin 2014). At the same time, it is pointed out that cooperation between the US and Russia is in the interest of the entire world (Putin 2016).

This places Russia and US on scales which show them as equally important actors in international politics<sup>91</sup>, further adding to the idea of Russia's growing power and influence.

The emphasis on Russia's respect for international law and human rights and the principle of non-intervention is another thread, like the multipolarity, that binds the documents together.

The 2016 Foreign Policy concept states that 'Russia maintains an independent foreign policy strategy, informed by the country's national interests and an unconditional respect for the international law' and that 'Russian foreign policy is based on mutual respect, non-intervention, equality; it is aimed at creating a stable system of international relations'

(Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2016a). Kuhrt (2017: 39) notes that this 'normative dimension of Russian power has acquired increasing importance' over the past decade as Russia

consistently promotes itself as the guardian of international law. The 2012 Order of the

President of Russian Federation on Measures of Realisation of the Foreign Policy Course of the Russian Federation also mentions conducting active work on defending human rights

(President of Russia 2012). Even the verbs used to describe Russia's actions in this document are telling: Russia 'observes', 'supports', 'builds', 'works to strengthen', 'defends', and

'respects'. However, another type of verbs also appears in the 2016 edition of the Concept, that appear more confrontational - in them Russia 'resists': it resists 'certain countries'

attempts to revise the widely accepted principles of international law and attempts to interpret the law in order to fit own interests' and 'other countries' attempts of interfering with other

countries' internal affairs with the goals of unconstitutional regime changes, including by supporting non-state actors' (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2016a). The subtle message of how

even here Russia is different from the US gets is pointed out in a more direct way as well:

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<sup>91</sup> Further Russia is described as 'the balancing factor in world politics and the progress of the world's civilisation' (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2013).

‘Russia does not recognise the US applying their laws and principles extraterritorially, and does not accept any attempts to apply military, political, economic, or other pressures on other countries’ (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2016a). The value that Russia brings into international politics, at the same time, is not limited to the political and military power but also includes its position as a country that consistently defends what it believes in:

‘As the world development becomes more controversial and dynamic, Russia’s role is growing as not only one of the key warrantors of the world and regional stability but also as a state that systematically defends its values and approaches’ (Putin 2013)

The use of the word ‘systematically’ again refers us to compare Russia with the West, which, as discussed earlier, employs double standards in international relations.

To conclude this section, this chapter argues that the ways in which the Russian foreign policy documents describe Russia and its role in international affairs is rooted in three ideas - multipolarity and Russia’s return to the great power status, which means it is now able to defend its national interests; juxtaposition with the West as the country’s significant Other; and the idea of Russia as an upholder of international law and order.

#### **5:4 Conclusion**

This chapter looked at the Russian foreign policy documents in order to point out the main themes and messages of the country’s foreign policy agenda on the topics of the world and international politics, actors of international affairs and Russia in the world. We found that one of the main ideas in the contemporary Russian foreign policy is the idea of the multipolar system of the world where new centres of power emerge as the power of the old centres, namely the West, declines. This is a meta-idea of the documents, present in almost all other

topics of discussion, from Western interference to the importance of information and soft power in the new multipolar world order.

Some of the ideas expressed about the world - for example the portrayals of Russia and the West, and their juxtaposition, where Russia is presented as fair, peaceful and respectful of the law and other countries' independence, and the West as meddling and destabilising - have roots in the Soviet propaganda messages (Antyukhova 2018: 8). As Chapter 3 has reviewed the studies that made multiple connections between the Soviet propaganda tools and the coverage in the modern Russian media, we can see that there is continuity between the Soviet and Russian traditions of viewing the world, and even if the ideological component has disappeared, the structure of the main messages and the roles that international actors occupy remains the same.

A large part of this chapter was dedicated to explaining and analysing the Russian view of the Crimea crisis. As coverage of this event is studied in the content and textual analyses, these findings will be of particular use as they are detailed, and we will be able to study the way RT's Russian viewpoint on global events corresponds to the official Russian view in the documents. As there is a separate document, the Crimea speech, dedicated to just one of the many events of the crisis and war in Ukraine, it is glaringly obvious that the documents contain little discussion of the war in Syria and the Russian involvement in it. As has been briefly discussed earlier in the chapter, this by itself is a point of analysis as it indicates that as an event Crimea in particular and Ukraine in general seem to occupy a more prominent place in the Russian foreign policy thinking. This is logical as the documents also specify that CIS countries are of particular importance to Russia. In addition, Allison (2013a: 801) discusses the reasons and history of the modern relationship between Syria and Russia with regards to the Soviet history and argues that the close association between Syria and the

USSR was based on strategic interdependence rather than ideology, and that the modern relationship between the countries is based on the “Russian reluctance to break with a long-term ‘political base’ in the Middle East maintained through ties to Assad’s security elite” (ibid: 803). Thus, we can compare this pragmatic relationship with Syria with the relationship between Russia, Ukraine and Crimea, discussed by Putin with emotion and references to history, religion and ‘brotherhood’ of the Russian and the Ukrainian people. The involvement in Syria was also discussed with emotion - but only when Putin came to discuss the threats that the terrorists in Syria pose for Russians. We can expect to see this misbalance between the contextual importance of these two conflicts to be reflected in the coverage studied further in this thesis. In fact, we have already seen it, in the sampling discussion in Chapter 4, where we had to add more events to the timeline of the war in Syria, and even with more events there are still less articles published on them than on the war in Ukraine. The ways in which this misbalance will be reflected in the coverage is important for understanding the role that RT content plays in the Russian foreign policy agenda, how it is adapted and interpreted by the channel.

Finally, as has been mentioned in Chapter 4, this thesis is not concerned with how the themes and messages of the Russian foreign policy agenda connect to reality. In other words, it doesn’t matter if Russia actually plays the roles that the documents say it plays in the world - because the analysis in this thesis is focused on the media content and the ways in which it communicates the official foreign policy agenda. Thus, this chapter has provided the necessary base for the analysis - it outlined the official Russian viewpoint on global events, and the following chapters will be studying the ‘Russian viewpoint’ provided by RT. The next chapter in this thesis looks quantitatively at the biggest sample in this dissertation through content analysis. Together with Chapter 7 on textual analysis, it will provide the



findings which will then be analysed together with the findings of this chapter in order to answer RQ1.

## Chapter 6. Quantitative Content Analysis

### 6:1 Introduction

This chapter presents the quantitative content analysis of 1522 news articles in Russian and in English published on the Russian- and English-language websites of RT in the time limits specified by the 16 events in the timeline, detailed in Annex 1. The numerical data in this chapter is presented in the form of frequencies and percentages. The first part of the chapter looks at article distribution between events. The second part of the chapter will combine the presentation, analysis and discussion of the data, which will first look at the questions that examine the length of articles, topics, sources, and actors in the texts, and will then look at the description data that had to undergo additional grouping and coding after collection. The first two questions of both coding schedules - that address the event code and identifying number assigned to every text - will be omitted as they were introduced for the purposes of identifying and grouping news articles belonging to the same events in the statistical analysis software SPSS. For certain questions the tables will show percentages that add up to over 100% - this is because some questions in the coding schedule allowed more than one answer. In these cases, frequencies and percentages will be supplemented by the addition in the results of 'percent of cases', which is the percent a particular response recorded among all texts in the sample.

Results of the analysis for the English and Russian-language articles will be presented alongside each other in each event. Russian words in the text and tables are translated by the author, with the original Russian words and phrases provided in the footnotes. For questions in the coding schedule that dealt with the descriptions of countries the tables will show how

the descriptions (adjectives in English and adjectives and participles<sup>92</sup> in Russian) were grouped. The grouping of adjectives was necessary because of the large number of descriptions in the text and was done according to the meaning of the words (synonyms and words close in meaning were grouped together).

Because of the large amount of data gathered, this chapter will include tables that show general data for all events for each coding schedule question. Tables reflecting event-specific data (for example, distribution of sources for just one event) are included where they are relevant and mentioned in the discussion. The full list of event-specific tables is included in Annex 3 of this thesis because of word limits.

Content analysis contained in this chapter aims to answer the first research question of this study (What is the 'Russian viewpoint' that RT is delivering to the world?) by answering the two sub-questions:

- a. What are the characteristics of the messages that are contained within the 'Russian viewpoint'?
- b. How does the 'Russian viewpoint on global events' correspond to the country's foreign policy agenda?

As discussed earlier in this thesis, this study is interested in whether and how the Russian foreign policy agenda is expressed in the RT content. Thus, the analysis in this chapter will engage with the conceptual frameworks of public diplomacy and propaganda, discussed in Chapter 2, the concepts and studies on Russian journalism and RT, discussed in Chapter 3,

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<sup>92</sup> As Annex 2 explains, participles were chosen to be included because they function as adjectives in the Russian language and therefore act as descriptions in sentences.

and the main concepts and ideas expressed in the Russian foreign policy agenda, as found in the document analysis in Chapter 5.

## 6:2 Article distribution between events

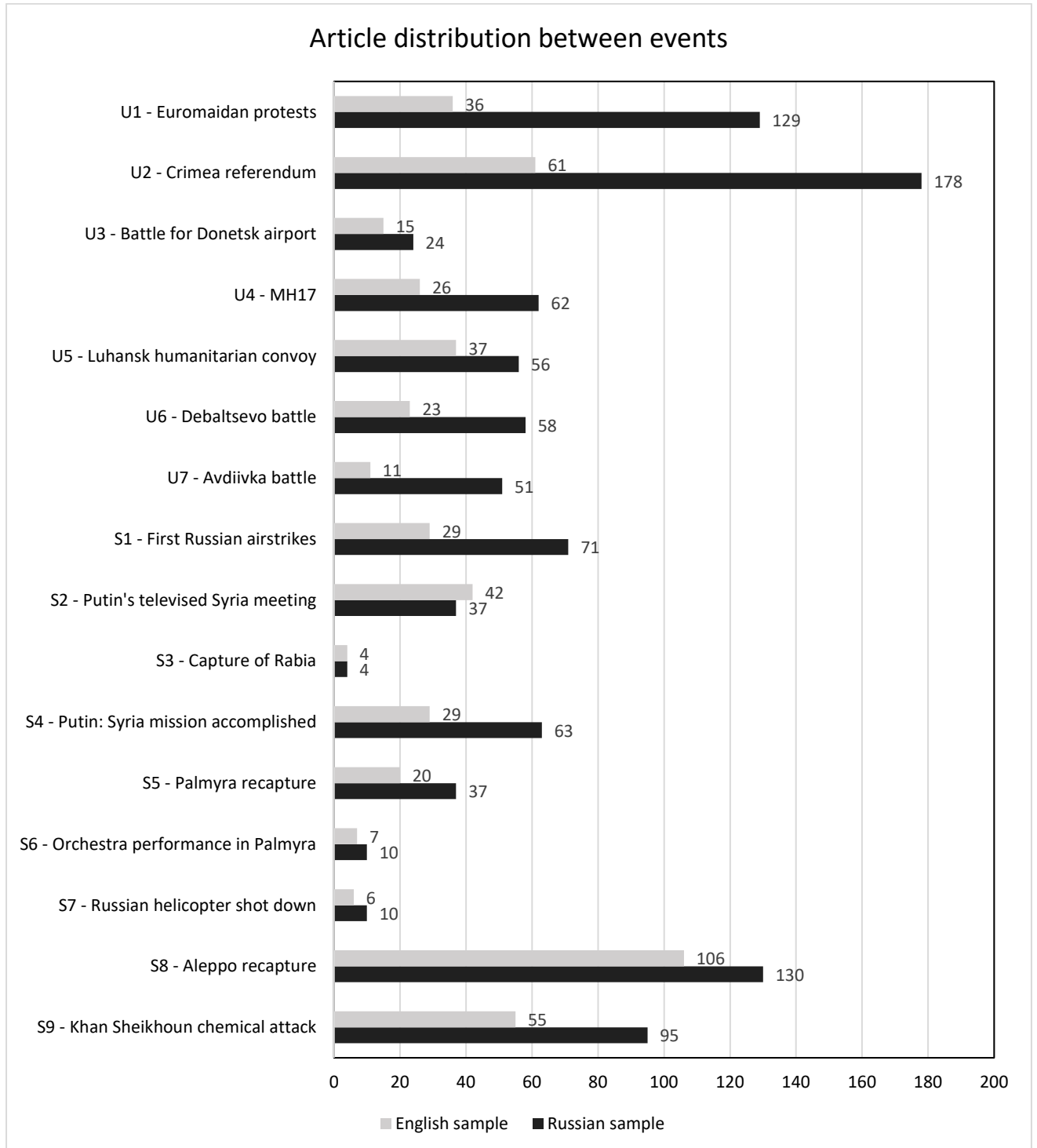


Figure 1. Article distribution between events in both samples. Numbers in this figure reflect the number of articles published in each event in both languages.

Figure 1 shows that some events selected for study in this thesis have attracted more coverage than others, and that there were more texts published in Russian than in English in all events but one (S2 – Putin’s televised Syria meeting with military officials). Looking at the events that attracted the most coverage in both languages we can note the coverage of the last days of the Euromaidan protests and the referendum on Crimean independence and joining of Russia, as well as the recapturing of Aleppo and the chemical attack on Khan Sheikhoun. The event with the most coverage in Russian is the Crimean referendum, and the event with the most coverage in English is the recapturing of Aleppo. Importantly, both these events were universally presented as success by Russia under the criticism of the Western officials.

What can we draw from the number of texts published for each event? Most notably, amount of coverage is seen as reflective of the importance of the event. Thus, we can assume that the Euromaidan protests and the Crimean referendum were seen as crucial for RT to cover, especially in Russian, and that the recapturing of Aleppo and the Crimean referendum were seen as crucial for RT to cover in English. However, these assumptions will of course depend on and be contextualised by other characteristics and qualities of the text which will be discussed further in this chapter and in the next chapter on textual analysis. Related to the perceived importance of coverage of certain events, the following section on the length of articles explores not only how much the events were covered in each language but also in how much detail.

## **6:3 Findings and discussion**

### **Length of articles**

Looking at the length of news articles allows us to judge the coverage on two criteria: the importance of the topic for the media outlet and the amount of contextual detail offered to the reader. Traditionally with print and broadcast media, the length of articles can be used to judge the importance of certain topics of coverage in a literal way – with a limited amount of space on a page or time in a news programme, editors give more space and time to the topics that they deem more newsworthy and important to their audiences. While in online media the space is, naturally, less of an issue, it is important to remember that the principles of journalistic news writing for online media are not too different from writing for traditional platforms, for example that online articles still follow the rules of the ‘inverted pyramid’, where the most important information is relayed first, and contextual and background detail and comments are placed in the end (Keraghosian 1998). Thus, longer articles offer more details and context of the covered events, and more newsworthy and important topics receive more coverage both in terms of the size of individual articles and the number of articles published.

The data shows that in both the Ukrainian and the Syrian event timelines articles in the English sample tended to be longer than the articles in the Russian one.

#### **Length of texts in all content studied**

<b>Length of texts</b>	<b>Ukraine</b> N=767		<b>Syria</b> N=755	
	<b>English sample</b> N=209 (frequency), %	<b>Russian sample</b> N=558 (frequency), %	<b>English sample</b> N=298 (frequency), %	<b>Russian sample</b> N=457 (frequency), %
100 – 300 words	(15) 7.1%	(347) 62.2%	(41) 13.8%	(319) 69.8%
301 – 600 words	(104) 49.8%	(185) 33.2%	(178) 59.7%	(93) 20.4%
601 words and more	(90) 43.1%	(26) 4.6%	(79) 26.5%	(45) 9.8%

*Table 1. Length of texts in all content studied. This table shows the percentages of the text lengths in English and Russian samples in both timelines. Frequency in this table means the number of news articles.*

Judging solely on the length of text we could have concluded that almost all events are covered in more detail in English and that they are considered more important for the English-speaking audience than for the Russian-speaking one. However, it is also important to consider the number of texts published in each language - as was demonstrated earlier, more texts were published in Russian than in English: in the Ukrainian timeline overall, there are 558 texts published in Russian and 209 texts published in English, and in the Syrian timeline there are 457 texts published in Russian and 298 texts published in English, and this principle of distribution also applies to all but one event (event S2 - Putin's televised Syria meeting with military officials, discussed previously). Overall, there have been 1015 texts published in Russian 507 texts published in English over the two event timelines. This contradicts the idea that RT considers the events as less important to cover for its Russian readers - they have published almost twice as many articles in Russian than they did in English. However, clearly, even though there are more articles published in Russian, they are overwhelmingly shorter and therefore would contain less context, details, and commentary of events. There are several possible reasons for these disparities in length of individual articles and the number of articles published in each language. First of all, different audiences have different background knowledge, for example the Russian speaking audiences are likely to need less context on the events in Ukraine, which is a country that is culturally close to Russia, shares a significant part of history with Russia, and news from Ukraine get widely reported by Russian media, which means that Russian audiences are more likely to know the names of the Ukrainian politicians and other public figures and be more aware of the relevant historical detail and other aspects of life in the country, while international English-speaking readers will most likely require additional information in reports on Ukraine. Further, as has been discussed earlier in this thesis, RT's Russian-language service is aimed not only at

Russians but Russian speakers in the whole world, of which Ukrainians make up a big portion, and clearly Ukrainians will require less context on the political events in their own country than the global English-speaking audience. Secondly, we also have to consider the potential editorial factors that could be shaping the coverage. Many of the shortest articles in Russian are credited to the news agencies and other media outlets as we will see later in the Sources section of this chapter. We will also see that articles in Russian are also more likely to refer to just one source in the article, and when they do refer to just one source it is most often other media (the implications of this for the content of the news articles will be discussed in the Sources section). This reliance on the agencies and other media as sources could be due to the small size of the editorial team responsible for the Russian website, or because it is an editorial standard to reuse information reported by other media. In English similar short news agency-credited pieces do not appear, and the staff effort appears to have been instead directed at producing longer pieces, which could be due to different editorial standards (longer pieces favoured over shorter pieces) or because the editorial team is larger and there is capacity to produce longer pieces that require more work. Thirdly, when we talk about the shorter agency-credited articles, we might also consider that in the Russian coverage the news agencies and other media that are used are Russian as well, as will be shown later in the chapter in the Sources section. Thus, by reusing agency and other media reporting, RT in Russian republishes the ‘Russian viewpoints on major global events’ as reported by the Russian media: as discussed earlier<sup>93</sup>, reporting in Russian media tends to be pro-government with few alternative perspectives, and this is especially true for reporting on the topic of the conflicts in Ukraine and in Syria (Fedor 2015; Gaufman 2015; Pasitselska 2017; Samoilenko et al 2017; Mescheryakov 2016; Kouteiba 2018; Budak 2018; Yesionov 2018; Strovsky & Schleifer 2019). The role that Russian media as sources play in the RT

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<sup>93</sup> See Chapter 3 on Russian media, politics, and RT.



coverage in English is smaller, as will be shown later in this chapter, and international media and news agencies are used more often. This way by including the international media reporting, which might not always align with the Russian viewpoint on major global events, RT in English would be able to reinterpret the themes and messages or balance them with the channel's own reporting in the longer articles. Overall, it is likely that all three factors (the need to provide context, editorial standards and circumstances, and themes and messages within the content) play a role in shaping the coverage from this statistical side of text length and number of texts that are published.

Considering the number of articles in each sample and the average text lengths we can suggest that the overall amount of information presented to the audiences might be comparable between the English and the Russian samples. However, what would be different here is the type of information that is presented: shortest articles, more prevalent in the Russian sample, are likely to be brief news reports, and while there is possibility that they contain a 'Russian viewpoint' on major global events, it will be reflected in the word choice<sup>94</sup> rather than the extended context<sup>95</sup>, which will not be included for space reasons. Medium-sized (up to 600 words) and long articles (601 words and over) are likely to include more information that will help audiences make sense of the events that are being reported. This might be done through an analysis of the covered event and any related events, context and angle, by relaying the reasons and potential consequences of the event that is being reported, including points of view of experts and specialists on the topic, as well as quotes from those directly and indirectly involved. Thus, longer texts offer more opportunities for the 'Russian viewpoint' on major global events to be included in contextual and analytical parts of news

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<sup>94</sup> As detailed in the chapter on propaganda, word choice can indeed be important for the messages within the text. For example, the same event can be called a 'coup' or a 'revolution', and the same group of people can be described as 'thugs' or 'rebels.'

<sup>95</sup> For example, additional opinions from experts and other relevant actors.

articles. This means that the audiences of the Russian language service of RT are more likely to be presented with messages of the Russian viewpoint through the choice of words and angles, while readers of the English language website will be presented with the Russian viewpoint in a variety of forms including context and analysis.

Finally, we should also consider the spread of the medium and longer texts in the samples, where prevalence of long texts could mean that the event and topic are seen as worthy of more extensive coverage, especially in the Russian sample where there aren't many long articles in the first place (see Figure 2 and Figure 3 below). This means that during certain events Russian-speaking audiences of RT were presented with the Russian viewpoint on major global events in a variety of forms, similar to the English-speaking audiences. While we should also consider any potential newsroom-related reasons<sup>96</sup> for these changes, it is also likely that these events were seen by RT as more important for audiences to understand in a way that aligns with the Russian viewpoints. RT in Russian published the most mid-length articles when reporting on the humanitarian convoy that Russia sent to Ukraine, the battles in both timelines, and the Crimean referendum. At the same time, in the English sample the share of short and long articles remained consistent throughout the events in the timeline.

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<sup>96</sup> Where decision to publish shorter or longer pieces during certain events could be dependent on individual choices of editors in charge of the output at various points in time, as well as staffing and changing standards.

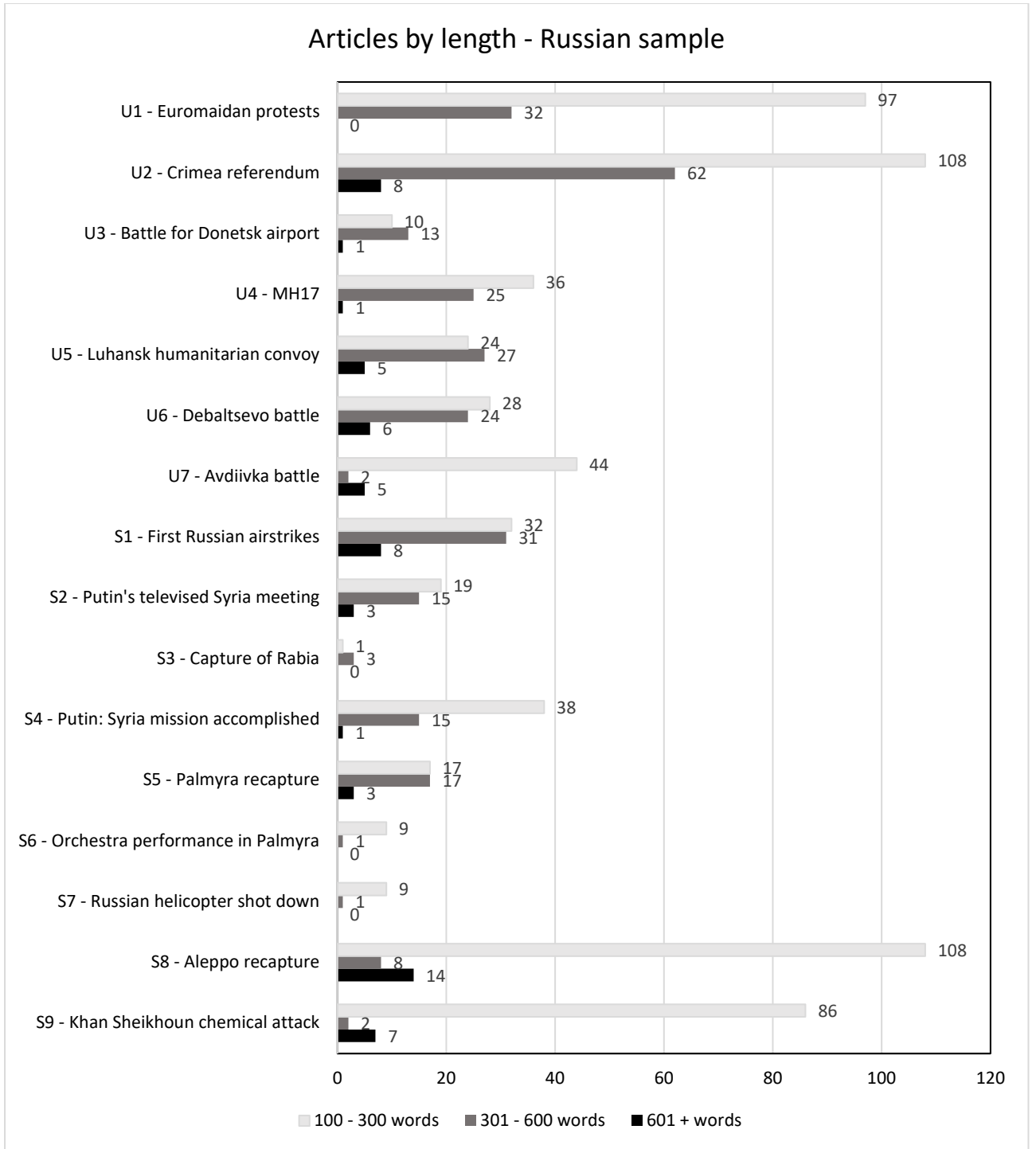


Figure 2. Articles by length in the Russian sample. The numbers indicate the number of articles of each length published for each event.

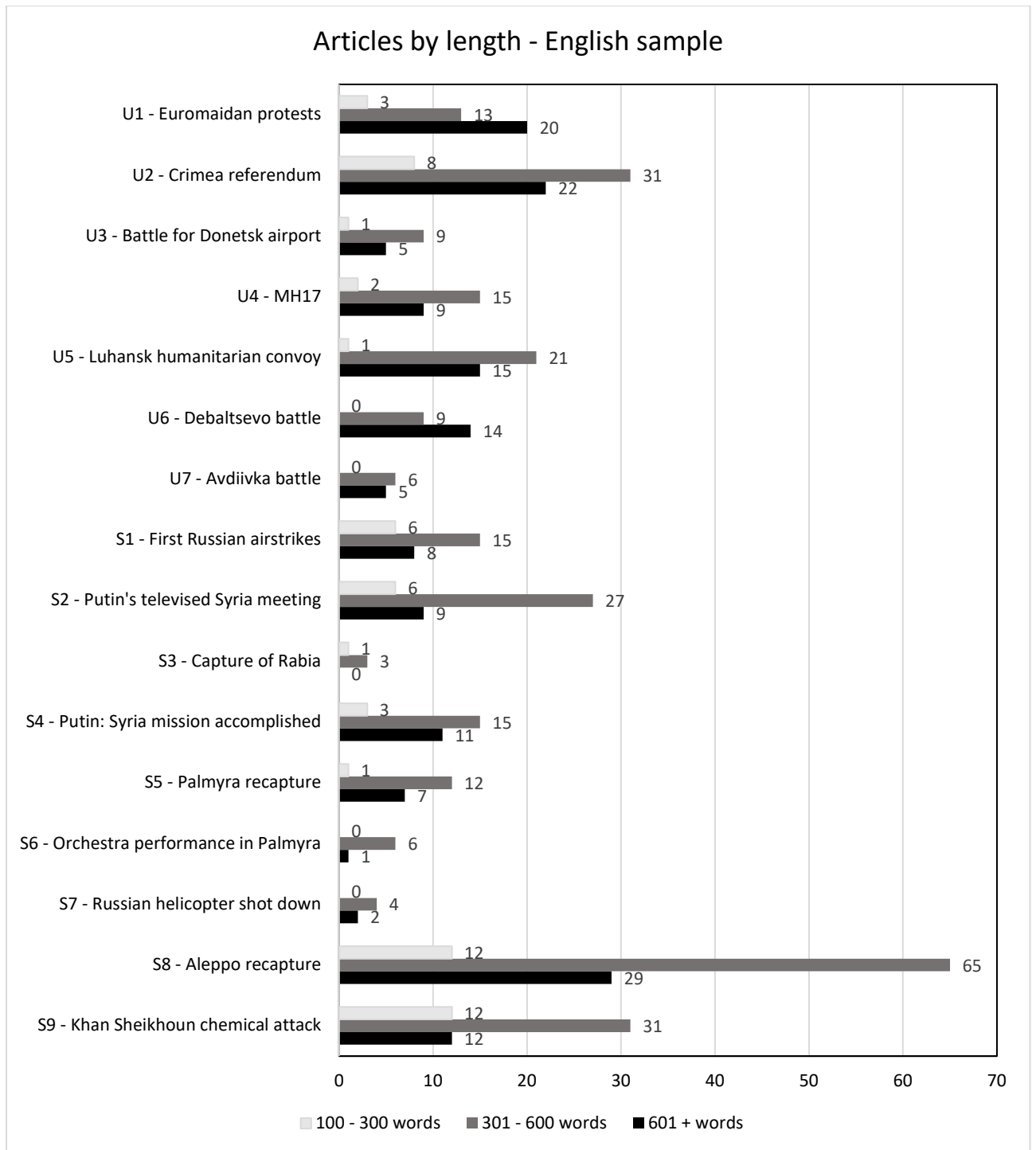


Figure 3. Articles by length in the English sample The numbers indicate the number of articles of each length published for each event.

## Topics

Looking at the topics that dominated the news coverage of the studied events will allow us to judge the angles of the news articles, because the same event could be covered as an issue of

international affairs or a country's internal politics; or, for example, a conflict could be seen from the point of view of military confrontation or as a humanitarian crisis.

### Topics in all content studied

Topics	Ukraine N=767		Syria N=755	
	English sample N=209 T=263 (frequency), %, [% of cases]	Russian sample N=558 T=693 (frequency), %, [% of cases]	English sample N=298 T=395 (frequency), %, [% of cases]	Russian sample N=457 T=571 (frequency), %, [% of cases]
Military confrontation	(55) 20.9% [26.3%]	(122) 17.6% [21.9%]	(122) 30.9% [40.9%]	(126) 22.1% [27.6%]
International relations, diplomacy	(92) 35% [44%]	(246) 35.5% [44.2%]	(160) 40.5% [53.7%]	(315) 55.2% [68.9%]
Internal affairs	(45) 17.1% [21.5%]	(114) 16.5% [20.5%]	(28) 7.1% [9.4%]	(32) 5.6% [7%]
Humanitarian issues	(24) 9.1% [11.5%]	(76) 11% [13.6%]	(64) 16.2% [21.5%]	(74) 13% [16.2%]
Accident	(28) 10.6% [13.4%]	(63) 9.1% [11.3%]	(5) 1.3% [1.7%]	(3) 0.5% [0.7%]
Other	(19) 7.2% [9.1%]	(72) 10.4% [12.9%]	(16) 4.1% [5.4%]	(21) 3.7% [4.6%]

Table 2. Topics in all content studied. This table shows the percentages, frequencies and percent of cases data on topics of the news coverage in English and Russian samples in both timelines. N in this table stands for the number of texts coded; T is the overall number of topics that were coded, up to two topics could be coded for each text, which is why T is higher than N. Frequency in this table means the number of news articles coded as each topic; percentage stands for the percent of the selected topic among all topics that were coded, and percent of cases refers to the percent of texts in the entire sample that were coded as the selected topic.

Topic of international relations and diplomacy is dominant in both samples and both languages of coverage, from which we can understand that the events in both Ukraine and Syria are presented as issues relevant to international relations more than to internal politics of each country, or to humanitarian issues. Particularly striking is the relatively low share of the topic of humanitarian issues, especially considering that the events that were covered relate to conflicts with considerable civilian casualties - the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights had estimated the civilian deaths in the war in Ukraine at 13 000 between April 2014 and January 2019 – and this toll excludes all injured civilians and those who were killed in the Euromaidan protests in Kiev (RFERL 2019), while figures for the civilian casualties in the Syrian war go as high as 116 000 according to activist group

Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR 2020). When the humanitarian topics in war reporting are so low on the list of priorities (they come fourth - after international topics, reports on military developments and the involved countries' internal politics), there are questions to be asked about where RT places the main responsibilities of their journalism – whether it is reporting injustices and suffering or discussing the politics involved. From the data we can argue that the official and the diplomatic angle is more important in RT's conflict reporting than the civilian and humanitarian angle. We can recall here a quote from RT's editor-in-chief Margarita Simonyan, presented in Chapter 3, where she argues that Western mainstream media such as CNN underreport humanitarian stories in foreign conflicts in favour of their state interests, and that RT's focus on such civilian and humanitarian aspects sets them apart from their Western mainstream competitors (Kommersant 2012). However, the data presented in this section of the chapter indicates that in the Ukrainian and Syrian conflicts, at least topic-wise, humanitarian topics were not the main focus of coverage. What is even more interesting, the number of articles with the international relations and diplomacy angle also surpassed the number of articles with the military actions angle in every sample, keeping in mind the sample consists of coverage of two wars, which means that the international relations angle as the main angle of coverage in RT's conflict reporting can be interpreted as a strong focus on the geopolitical side of the international conflicts.

Looking at the differences between the Russian and the English language samples we can see that the conflict in Ukraine was covered relatively similarly in the two languages in terms of topic distribution, the biggest variation can be seen in the distribution of military topics, which appeared 4.4% more in the English sample. In the coverage of the conflict in Syria there is more variation between the two languages. The highest variation, at 15.2% can be

seen between the distribution of the topic of international relations, which appeared more in the Russian sample, and the topic of military action, which appeared 13.3% more in the English sample. From this we can further specify that the trend of covering the events from an international relations perspective was particularly strong in the Russian sample in the coverage of the events in Syria, and that coverage in English in both samples tended to be more focused on the military action, although this was more prominent in the coverage of Syria.

Final point that can be drawn based on this data relates to actors who appear in and are quoted in the news articles studied, as actors are set to play an important role in determining the angle of the texts. This is following the logic that an event, for example a battle in a war, can be covered referring to and quoting diplomats and state officials, and the article will take an angle of politics and diplomacy, while the same battle can also be covered with references to and quotes from civilians affected by the battle, witnesses, human rights activists and refugees that fled the war, in which case the article is likely to take a more humanitarian approach. Thus, from looking at the spread of topics between samples we can anticipate seeing in the Actors section of this chapter that diplomats and state officials are likely to be the actors who appear and are quoted more often.

## **Sources**

By sources this study understands any sources of information that are referenced in the text of the news articles. The purpose of gathering this data was to see and analyse where the information that RT uses comes from, whether it is primary and has been gathered by the reporters, whether it comes from other media or statements and press releases from the governments.

First, as Table 3 below shows, in the Ukrainian sample 16.3% of the articles in English and 7.5% of the articles in Russian did not mention any sources in the text. In the Syrian sample the numbers are 17.1% for English and 10.9% for Russian. This of course doesn't mean that these articles did not have a source of information at all – just that it was not disclosed in the text, which would mean that the readers were not be able to make a judgement on the source's credibility, potential bias and partisan interests. It is clear that RT in English did not mention the sources more often than RT in Russian – again, as with other comparisons between the two language services, this could be rooted in different editorial practices. However, despite the reason for this difference, it means that the readers of RT.com were more often unable to analyse the information relayed in the news coverage against the source.

### Sources in all texts

Sources	Ukraine N=767		Syria N=755	
	English sample N=209 T=390 (frequency), %, [% of cases]	Russian sample N=558 T=780 (frequency), %, [% of cases]	English sample N=298 T=522 (frequency), %, [% of cases]	Russian sample N=457 T=624 (frequency), %, [% of cases]
Other media	(131) 33.6% [62.7%]	(354) 45.4% [63.4%]	(142) 27.2% [47.7%]	(176) 28.2% [38.5%]
Own reporter/ interview	(52) 13.3% [24.9%]	(91) 11.7% [16.3%]	(99) 19% [33.2%]	(138) 22.1% [30.2%]
Social media	(37) 9.5% [17.7%]	(41) 5.3% [7.3%]	(17) 3.3% [5.7%]	(15) 2.4% [3.3%]
Russian gov-t/ army	(24) 6.2% [11.5%]	(51) 6.5% [9.1%]	(88) 16.9% [29.5%]	(106) 17% [23.2%]
Russian non gov-t sources	-	(3) 0.4% [0.5%]	(3) 0.6% [1%]	(9) 1.4% [2%]
Ukrainian/Syrian gov-t/army	(26) 6.7% [12.4%]	(67) 8.6% [12%]	(29) 5.6% [9.7%]	(30) 4.8% [6.6%]
Ukrainian/Syrian non gov-t sources	(23) 5.9% [11%]	(31) 4% [5.6%]	(9) 1.7% [3%]	(9) 1.4% [2%]
Other countries' gov-t	(12) 3.1% [5.7%]	(14) 1.8% [2.5%]	(17) 3.3% [5.7%]	(27) 4.3% [5.9%]
International organisations	(18) 4.6% [8.6%]	(10) 1.3% [1.8%]	(15) 2.9% [5%]	(10) 1.6% [2.2%]
Expert	(1) 0.3% [0.5%]	(27) 3.5% [4.8%]	(1) 0.2% [0.3%]	(22) 3.5% [4.8%]



Eyewitness	(7) 1.8% [3.3%]	(13) 1.7% [2.3%]	(8) 1.5% [2.7%]	(1) 0.2% [0.2%]
Bloggers	-	-	(1) 0.2% [0.3%]	-
Activists	-	-	-	(2) 0.3% [0.4%]
Other sources	(25) 6.4% [12%]	(34) 4.4% [6.1%]	(42) 8% [14.1%]	(29) 4.6% [6.3%]
No mentioned sources	(34) 8.7% [16.3%]	(42) 5.4% [7.5%]	(51) 9.8% [17.1%]	(50) 8% [10.9%]

*Table 3. Sources in all texts. This table shows the percentages, frequencies and percent of cases data on sources in the news coverage in the English and Russian samples in both timelines. N in this table stands for the number of texts coded; T is the overall number of sources that were coded, there was no limit on the number of sources that could be coded per text. Frequency in this table means the number of news articles coded for each source; percentage stands for the percent of the selected source among all sources coded, and percent of cases refers to the percent of texts in the entire sample that were coded as the selected source.*

The most popular source across the sample are other media, which makes up between 38.5% and 63.4% across different samples. The coding schedule also gathered information on which countries these media are from, concluding that Russian media as sources were dominant in the Russian coverage of both the Ukrainian (71.7%<sup>97</sup>) and Syrian (79.8%) events, as well as the English coverage of the Ukrainian events (57%). As discussed previously, studies have shown that in their coverage of the conflicts and wars Russian media side with the Russian government and promote pro-Russian and anti-Western narratives (see Chapter 3). Thus, we can assume that in using Russian media as sources of the coverage RT transferred some or all of the pro-Russian messages into its coverage of the wars in Ukraine and in Syria. Moreover, Russian media often appeared as the sole sources in a number of articles: in the Ukrainian sample 46.9% of the English articles and 71.9% of the Russian articles referred to only one source, and in the Syrian sample so did 55% of the English articles and 73.5% of the Russian articles. The most popular source in the articles that only referred to one source were other media (46.6% of the English articles in both samples and 56.4% of the Russian articles<sup>98</sup> in both samples). This means that the points of view and angles presented in the Russian media

<sup>97</sup> Percentages for the origin countries of other media are calculated as percent of all media referred to as sources.

<sup>98</sup> These are percentages referring just to the articles that referred to one source only.

coverage would often be undisputed by other points of view, for example those of Western governments, media and international organisations. International<sup>99</sup> media sources are dominant only in the English coverage of the Syrian events (59.2%). However, the presence of international media sources should not be seen as necessarily providing an alternative point of view compared to the Russian media. As Fredheim (2015: 37) observed, Russian media filter Western news that they translate and report on, selecting articles that support the idea that Russia is not treated fairly by the West, and ignoring articles that offer substantiated criticism of the Russian policies. This stereotype that the Western media are not objective on Russia is also central in RT's own self-positioning as a source of 'alternative perspectives and a Russian viewpoint on major global events' (Rt n.d.), therefore it is reasonable to expect that this will be reflected in the choice of Western coverage that the channel focuses on – this topic will be explored further in the textual analysis. Local media sources – Ukrainian and Syrian ones in the respective samples – represent a minority, with the Ukrainian media sources making up 13.3% of the English coverage and 11.8% of the Russian one, and the Syrian media sources making up 10.9% of the English coverage and 2% of the Russian one. This points at the lack of local perspectives and angles on the events, especially in the coverage of the war in Syria. Despite RT's criticism of the Western mainstream media as only interested in Western perspectives on news and global affairs, relayed earlier in this thesis, we can see that RT is also not including local perspectives in its coverage. Instead, the alternative perspective, as can be observed so far in this thesis, comes only in the form of Russian views.

Further examining the data from Table 3 shows that the amount of original content reported by RT's own correspondents is fairly low in the Ukrainian coverage, particularly in Russian

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<sup>99</sup> This category included media from all countries apart from Russia and Ukraine/Syria in respective samples.

where reporters only appeared as sources in 16.3% of the coverage. The number of articles that refer to reporters as sources rises in the Syrian coverage, to 33.2% in English and 30.2% in Russian. This difference could be explained by the changing editorial practices, but we should also consider the fact that RT, among other Russian media, had better access to reporting on Syria – as can be evidenced from the sample of this study, RT’s journalists regularly reported from the restricted areas just taken by the Syrian army, and often reported from the press trips organised by the Russian army. In Ukraine, meanwhile, at various stages during the conflict Russian journalists were banned from entering the country (TASS 2014), non-Russian RT journalists faced threats (RT 2015b), and, eventually, RT was among the media banned from the country (CPJ 2017). However, in the English language articles own reporters were used as sources in almost a quarter of the articles (24.9%), so the lack of access cannot be the only explanation, and that RT in Russian’s reliance on other media, particularly Russian media, likely plays a more important role.

Reliance on the Russian government and army as sources is higher in English in both event samples. In the Ukrainian sample the percentage of references to the Ukrainian government as a source is slightly higher than references to the Russian government (biggest difference is 2.9%), while in the Syrian sample references to the Syrian government appear significantly more rarely. Considering that the Syrian media is also almost never appears among ‘Other media’ sources discussed earlier, we see further development of the trend that the local perspectives are almost absent from the RT coverage. Further, we see that Russian non-government sources (which would include, for example, Russian non-governmental opposition) are very rare, from which we can argue that the ‘Russian viewpoint on major global events’ contains strictly the government viewpoints, and the breadth of opinions that exists within Russia is not represented in the coverage. Official sources are of course

prevalent in media reporting (Splendore 2020), especially of wars and conflicts (Shoemaker & Reese 1996: 45), but non-government sources in Ukraine (for example, the insurgents) are utilised in the coverage often, especially in the English language articles, where they appear almost as often as the sources in the government. Considering the covered events deal with secession and separatism, RT coverage presented an almost perfect technical balance of views: those who challenged the official politics were referred to as often as those in power. The percentage of the Syrian non-government sources (these include opposition and opposition forces) is low (3% and 2%). Thus, those who challenge the power of Russia and Russian allies (Syria) are rarely used by RT as sources, while those who challenge the power in a country in conflict with Russia (Ukraine) are used as sources by RT almost as regularly as the governments of those countries.

Governments of countries other than Russia, Ukraine, and Syria are referred to as sources very rarely – from 2.5% to 5.9% across the samples. This category includes countries that both support and oppose policies of the Russian government, though most Western countries are critical of the Russian position – we will be able to see how often they appear in the Actors section below. The lowest share of foreign governments as sources (2.5%) can be found in the Russian coverage of the Ukrainian events, from which we can assume that perspectives of foreign governments (which are likely to be critical of Russia in the situation in Ukraine) are deemed by RT as less important for the Russian-speaking audiences, or perhaps even irrelevant for the topic. This reflects the Russian foreign policy point on multipolarity and the new world order, which argues that regional conflicts should be solved by regional players.

Finally, we see that experts<sup>100</sup> are used as sources more often in the Russian coverage: the English language share of texts that use experts as sources is 0.3% and 0.5%, while 4.8% of the Russian texts in both samples refer to experts as sources. Further, 10 articles covering Ukraine and 5 articles covering Syria in Russian are based only on information received from an expert (experts appear the only sources in the texts).

## **Actors**

The goal of looking at actors in this study is to see who appears and who speaks in RT coverage, and how often, thus shaping the coverage. As previous studies of RT have shown, frequency of depiction of actors does not translate into the channel giving voice, agency or support to those actors (Dajani et al 2019), which is why this study looked separately at actors who are given a ‘voice’ through being quoted and those who are simply mentioned. The quoted actors are bound to have a more profound effect on the audience than those who are mentioned, and whose speech is reported, as reported speech might distort some of the meanings and nuances of the original speech. In addition, while this study does not look at perception, exposure to verbatim speech has been shown to elicit positive emotions among the audiences, as well as appealing to journalistic values of transparency (Dumitrescu & Ross 2020). However, it should be said that this study did not set out to view quotes as something reserved for actors who are politically aligned with RT and Russia – rather that presenting a quote of an actor raises the impact of what was said, and this impact can be both positive and negative.

## **Russian actors**

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<sup>100</sup> Only actors referred to as ‘experts’ (or, in Russian, «эксперты») were counted in this category. Anyone else who presented specialist knowledge but not labelled ‘expert’ in the text was counted in the ‘Other’ category’.

Russian actors were quoted in 55.5% of the English and in 32.6% of the Russian coverage of Ukraine, and in 52% of the English coverage and 52.7% of the Russian coverage of Syria.

They were mentioned in 56% of the English coverage and 36.7% of the Russian coverage of Ukraine, and in 61.4% of the English coverage and 64.3% of the Russian coverage of Syria.

From the Tables 4 and 5 below we can see that the actors quoted and mentioned most frequently are the Russian government officials – apart from the most quoted category of other government officials to person-specific categories (president Putin and his spokesman Peskov<sup>101</sup>, foreign affairs minister Sergei Lavrov and Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokeswoman Maria Zakharova). The reliance on government officials as actors in the coverage of conflicts and wars has been well-documented in media research, for example during the Iraq campaign the American media quoted government and military sources more often (Dimitrova & Stromback 2005), with the majority of the quotes attributed to the President Bush administration (Aday 2010). However, while this applies to the war in Syria, where Russian military were involved, Russia has denied any regular military troops being involved in the war in Ukraine on several occasions (Walker 2015), and, as this chapter will show later in the descriptions section, the conflict was often presented by RT as an internal struggle between Ukrainians. Indeed, the numbers of Russian actors who appear and are quoted in the coverage of an event that was conceptualised as an insurgency and a struggle of internal separatists against the state power is staggering, with over half of all articles including a quote from a Russian government official.

### Quoted Russian actors in all texts

Actors	Ukraine N=767		Syria N=755	
	English sample N=209	Russian sample N=558	English sample N=298	Russian sample N=457

<sup>101</sup> These were counted together because Putin does not make many public appearances or gives many interviews and because his spokesman Dmitry Peskov is often presented as the voice of the president; in addition, Krasnyak (2020) argues that the role of spokespeople in Russian public diplomacy is increasing.

	A=116 T=153 (frequency), %, [% of cases]	A=182 T=199 (frequency), %, [% of cases]	A=155 T=210 (frequency), %, [% of cases]	A=241 T=261 (frequency), %, [% of cases]
President Putin / spokesman Peskov	(27) 17.6% [23.5%]	(30) 15.1% [16.5%]	(41) 19.5% [26.5%]	(39) 14.9% [16.2%]
Sergei Lavrov	(21) 13.7% [18.3%]	(16) 8% [8.8%]	(29) 13.8% [18.7%]	(23) 8.8% [9.5%]
Maria Zakharova	(2) 1.3% [1.7%]	-	(11) 5.2% [7.1%]	(14) 5.4% [5.8%]
Other gov-t officials	(74) 48.4% [64.3%]	(107) 53.8% [58.8%]	(90) 42.9% [58.1%]	(109) 41.8% [45.2%]
Military	-	(4) 2% [2.2%]	(30) 14.3% [19.4%]	(33) 12.6% [13.7%]
Non-gov-t opposition	(1) 0.7% [0.9%]	-	-	-
Experts	(2) 1.3% [1.7%]	(17) 8.5% [9.3%]	(1) 0.5% [0.6%]	(21) 8% [8.7%]
Activists	(2) 1.3% [1.7%]	-	-	(1) 0.4% [0.4%]
Other	(20) 13.1% [17.4%]	(25) 12.6% [13.7%]	(8) 3.8% [5.2%]	(21) 8% [8.7%]

Table 4. Quoted Russian actors in all texts. This table shows the percentages, frequencies and percent of cases data on quoted Russian actors. *N* in this table stands for the number of texts published in the sample; *A* stands for the number of texts that contain an actor; *T* is the overall number of actors that were coded, there was no limit on the number of actors per text. Frequency in this table means the number of articles coded for each actor; percentage stands for the percent of the selected actor category among all actors coded, and percent of cases refers to the percent of texts in the entire sample that were coded as the selected actor.

### Mentioned Russian actors in all texts

Actors	Ukraine N=767		Syria N=755	
	English sample N=209 A=117 T=182 (frequency), %, [% of cases]	Russian sample N=558 A=205 T=284 (frequency), %, [% of cases]	English sample N=298 A=183 T=291 (frequency), %, [% of cases]	Russian sample N=457 A=294 T=461 (frequency), %, [% of cases]
President Putin / spokesman Peskov	(48) 26.4% [40%]	(72) 25.4% [34%]	(41) 14.1% [22.3%]	(97) 21% [33.2%]
Sergei Lavrov	(10) 5.5% [8.3%]	(16) 5.6% [7.5%]	(13) 4.5% [7.1%]	(36) 7.8% [12.3%]
Maria Zakharova	-	(1) 0.4% [0.5%]	(1) 0.3% [0.5%]	(1) 0.2% [0.3%]
Other gov-t officials	(46) 25.3% [38.3%]	(83) 29.2% [39.2%]	(69) 23.7% [37.5%]	(88) 19.1% [30.1%]
Military	(38) 20.9% [31.7%]	(48) 16.9% [22.6%]	(127) 43.6% [69%]	(183) 39.7% [62.7%]
Non-gov-t opposition	21) 1.1% [1.7%]	-	-	-

Experts	-	(5) 1.8% [2.4%]	(6) 2.1% [3.3%]	(7) 1.5% [2.4%]
Activists	(1) 0.5% [0.8%]	-	-	-
Other	(37) 20.3% [30.8%]	(59) 20.8% [27.8%]	(34) 11.7% [18.5%]	(49) 10.6% [16.8%]

*Table 5. Mentioned Russian actors in all texts. This table shows the percentages, frequencies and percent of cases data on mentioned Russian actors. N in this table stands for the number of texts published in the sample; A stands for the number of texts that contain an actor; T is the overall number of actors that were coded, there was no limit on the number of actors per text. Frequency in this table means the number of articles coded for each actor; percentage stands for the percent of the selected actor category among all actors coded, and percent of cases refers to the percent of texts in the entire sample that were coded as the selected actor.*

The number of official Russian actors who are quoted in the texts allows us to say that Russian perspectives, presented in the form that the actors put them in (quotes rather than reported speech) played a central role in shaping the coverage of both conflicts, even the one that Russia denied it was a part of.

### **Ukrainian actors**

Ukrainian actors were quoted in 53.6% of the English texts and 37.5% of the Russian texts and were mentioned in 96.2% of the English texts and 89.4% of the Russian texts. They were tracked only in the coverage of the Ukrainian conflict, and a comparison with the Russian actors in Tables 4 and 5 above allows us to further develop the suggestion that Russian actors were central in shaping the coverage of the conflict in Ukraine. In relation to this, it makes sense to analyse RT's coverage of Ukraine from a postcolonial perspective, considering the colonial legacy in the relationship between Russia and other former Soviet countries, including Ukraine. Scholars have noted that inclusion of postcolonial theory can improve our understanding of the issues connected to the Russian foreign policy (Morozov 2013), especially considering the unique position of Russia as a 'subaltern empire', both a subaltern actor (in relation to the West) and a coloniser (in relation to the post-Soviet, or, even earlier, the former Russian empire colonies), and that both these positions should be considered in analysis of the country's relations (see Tlostanova 2012; Morozov 2013, Morozov 2015). In



its relationship with Ukraine, of course, Russia is seen as a coloniser, therefore the questions of whether the ‘subaltern speaks’ (see Spivak 2003; Morozov 2013) can be investigated by analysing the quoted Ukrainian actors. For example, Putin was quoted more often than both presidents of Ukraine, the country at the centre of the events, and Ukrainian actors are surely more topical and relevant for the coverage of conflict in their own country.

### Ukrainian actors in all texts

Actors	Ukraine N=767			
	English sample N=209 (frequency), %, [% of cases]		Russian sample N=558 (frequency), %, [% of cases]	
	Quoted A=112 T=170	Mentioned A=201 T=575	Quoted A=209 T=254	Mentioned A=499 T=1159
President Poroshenko	(18) 10.6% [16.2%]	(30) 5.2% [14.9%]	(12) 4.7% [5.7%]	(60) 5.2% [11.9%]
President Yanukovich	(6) 3.5% [5.4%]	(43) 7.5% [21.4%]	(3) 1.2% [1.4%]	(81) 7% [16.1%]
Other gov-t officials	(50) 29.4% [45%]	(143) 24.9% [71.1%]	(117) 46.1% [55.5%]	(297) 25.6% [59%]
Military	(9) 5.3% [8.1%]	(83) 14.4% [41.3%]	(18) 7.1% [8.5%]	(156) 13.5% [31%]
Insurgents	(43) 25.3% [38.7%]	(114) 19.8% [56.7%]	(62) 24.4% [29.4%]	(233) 20.1% [46.3%]
Experts	(2) 1.2% [1.8%]	-	(2) 0.8% [0.9%]	(2) 0.2% [0.4%]
Activists	(4) 2.4% [3.6%]	(1) 0.2% [0.5%]	(1) 0.4% [0.5%]	(15) 1.3% [3%]
Eyewitnesses	(10) 5.9% [9%]	(3) 0.5% [1.5%]	(9) 3.5% [4.3%]	(4) 0.3% [0.8%]
Other	(28) 16.5% [25.2%]	(158) 27.5% [78.6%]	(30) 11.8% [14.2%]	(311) 26.8% [61.8%]

Table 6. Ukrainian actors in all texts. This table shows the percentages, frequencies and percent of cases data on Ukrainian actors. N in this table stands for the number of texts published in the sample; A stands for the number of texts that contain an actor; T is the overall number of actors that were coded, there was no limit on the number of actors per text. Frequency in this table means the number of articles coded for each actor; percentage stands for the percent of the selected actor category among all actors coded, and percent of cases refers to the percent of texts in the entire sample that were coded as the selected actor.

The Ukrainian state officials are quoted often in both English and Russian coverage (45% and 55.5%), but the voices and presence of the pro-Russian insurgents is also high (38.7% and 29.4%). While these numbers could be seen as editorial balance, the insurgents are quoted more often than President Poroshenko and the Ukrainian military counted together,

which means that the official Ukrainian view of the war in Eastern Ukraine is diluted and challenged in the coverage with the view of the insurgents. Considering the insurgents' pro-Russian position, we can conclude that the pro-Russian messages dominate the coverage not only through the prevalence of Russian sources and frequent inclusion of Russian voices, but also through the inclusion of the Ukrainian actors who side with Russia, and, importantly, challenge the Ukrainian government.

### Syrian actors

Compared to the Russian and Ukrainian actors discussed above, we can see that Syrian actors were quoted in RT very rarely: in 27.2% of the English texts and 14.7% of the Russian texts; further they were mentioned in 87.2% of the English texts and 81.8% of the Russian texts. Putin (26.5% in English and 16.2% in Russian) is quoted more often than Assad (11% and 13.2% accordingly) and the Russian state officials (55.5% and 59%) are quoted more often than the Syrian ones (31.7% and 38.2%), from which we can suggest again that Russian actors shape and narrate the way that the war in Syria is covered by RT.

#### Syrian actors in all texts

Actors	Syria N=755			
	English sample N=298 (frequency), %, [% of cases]		Russian sample N=457 (frequency), %, [% of cases]	
	Quoted A=81 T=98	Mentioned A=260 T=773	Quoted A=67 T=73	Mentioned A=374 T=857
Bashar Assad	(9) 9.2% [11%]	(93) 12% [35.8%]	(9) 12.3% [13.2%]	(109) 12.7% [29%]
Other gov-t officials	(26) 26.5% [31.7%]	(125) 16.2% [48.1%]	(26) 35.6% [38.2%]	(137) 16% [36.4%]
Military	(15) 15.3% [18.3%]	(176) 22.8% [67.7%]	(12) 16.4% [17.6%]	(188) 21.9% [50%]
Opposition	(17) 17.3% [20.7%]	(178) 23% [68.5%]	(11) 15.1% [16.2%]	(210) 24.5% [55.9%]

Experts	(1) 1% [1.22%]	(1) 0.1% [0.4%]	(5) 6.8% [7.4%]	(1) 0.1% [0.3%]
White Helmets	(1) 1% [1.22%]	(12) 1.6% [4.6%]	-	(11) 1.3% [2.9%]
Activists	-	(2) 0.3% [0.8%]	-	(2) 0.2% [0.5%]
Eyewitnesses	(4) 4.1% [4.9%]	(5) 0.6% [1.9%]	-	(5) 0.6% [1.3%]
Other	(25) 25.5% [30.5%]	(181) 23.4% [69.6%]	(10) 13.7% [14.7%]	(194) 22.6% [51.6%]

*Table 7. Syrian actors in all texts. This table shows the percentages, frequencies and percent of cases data on Syrian actors. N in this table stands for the number of texts published in the sample; A stands for the number of texts that contain an actor; T is the overall number of actors that were coded, there was no limit on the number of actors per text. Frequency in this table means the number of articles coded for each actor; percentage stands for the percent of the selected actor category among all actors coded, and percent of cases refers to the percent of texts in the entire sample that were coded as the selected actor.*

Unlike the Ukrainian army, which is quoted more rarely than the Russian army, the Syrian military is quoted in English almost as often (18.3%) as the Russian military (19.4%), and in Russian it is quoted more (17.6%) than the Russian military (13.7%). The Ukrainian army was, of course, fighting the pro-Russian insurgents, while the Syrian army is an ally of the Russian army, therefore the higher percentages of the quotes is directly related to the fact that the content of the quotes is unlikely to challenge and likely to support the Russian messages of the events covered.

The Syrian opposition groups are quoted as often as the Syrian military, with small variation. Unlike the insurgents in Ukraine, who are uniform in their rejection of the central government, some of the opposition groups in Syria are working with the government in their fight against IS. Therefore, we cannot suggest that both sides of the struggle for power in Syria are represented in a balanced way by RT because the topic of coverage is not always the struggle for power but also the struggle against IS. The question of whether this represents a balanced coverage or coverage that furthers the Russian perspectives of events requires further examination through the textual analysis in the next chapter of this thesis.

## **Foreign actors**

In the Ukrainian sample foreign actors were quoted in 43.1% of the texts in English and 28.5% in Russian, and in the Syrian sample in 49.3% of the texts in English and 32.8% in Russian. Further, they were mentioned in 59.3% of the texts in English and 46.6% in Russian in the Ukrainian sample, and 83.9% of the texts in English and 77.2% in Russian in the Syrian sample. Thus, foreign actors played a bigger role in the coverage of events in English than in Russian.

### Quoted foreign actors in all texts

Actors	Ukraine N=767		Syria N=755	
	English sample N=209 A=90 T=126 (frequency), %, [% of cases]	Russian sample N=558 A=159 T=187 (frequency), %, [% of cases]	English sample N=298 A=147 T=201 (frequency), %, [% of cases]	Russian sample N=457 A=150 T=189 (frequency), %, [% of cases]
Barak Obama	(9) 7.1% [10%]	(6) 3.2% [3.7%]	(5) 2.5% [3.4%]	(5) 2.6% [3.3%]
Donald Trump	-	(1) 0.5% [0.6%]	(6) 3% [4.1%]	(9) 4.8% [5.9%]
Marine Le Pen	-	-	-	(1) 0.5% [0.7%]
Recep Erdogan	-	-	(4) 2% [2.7%]	(2) 1.1% [1.3%]
Other officials	(48) 38.1% [53.3%]	(90) 48.1% [55.9%]	(90) 44.8% [60.8%]	(79) 41.8% [51.6%]
International organisations	(38) 30.2% [42.2%]	(31) 16.6% [19.3%]	(30) 14.9% [20.3%]	(24) 12.7% [15.7%]
Experts	(1) 0.8% [1.1%]	(20) 10.7% [12.4%]	(3) 1.5% [2%]	(20) 10.6% [13.1%]
Activists	(1) 0.8% [1.1%]	(1) 0.5% [0.6%]	(1) 0.5% [0.7%]	(1) 0.5% [0.7%]
Other	(29) 23% [32.2%]	(38) 20.3% [23.6%]	(62) 30.8% [41.9%]	(48) 25.4% [31.4%]

Table 8. Quoted foreign actors in all texts. This table shows the percentages, frequencies and percent of cases data on quoted foreign actors. N in this table stands for the number of texts published in the sample; A stands for the number of texts that contain an actor; T is the overall number of actors that were coded, there was no limit on the number of actors per text. Frequency in this table means the number of articles coded for each actor; percentage stands for the percent of the selected actor category among all actors coded, and percent of cases refers to the percent of texts in the entire sample that were coded as the selected actor.

Putin was quoted more often than both Barak Obama and Donald Trump in all of the studied coverage. Other government officials as a category in this instance meant officials from all

states and at all levels (from heads of state to opposition parties), but even considering the vast amounts of people who qualify for this group, the Russian state officials were quoted more often than the officials of the rest of the world in the coverage of Ukraine (64.3% and 58.8%). In the coverage of Syria, the Russian officials were quoted slightly less (58.1% and 45.2%) than the foreign ones (60.8% and 51.6%), but still, considering that the category for foreign actors includes officials from all countries in the world, officials from just Russia were quoted almost as often. Not one other country's official views and messages are represented in RT coverage as extensively as those of Russia.

### Mentioned foreign actors in all texts

Actors	Ukraine N=767		Syria N=755	
	English sample N=209 A=124 T=193 (frequency), %, [% of cases]	Russian sample N=558 A=260 T=376 (frequency), %, [% of cases]	English sample N=298 A=250 T=523 (frequency), %, [% of cases]	Russian sample N=457 A=353 T=625 (frequency), %, [% of cases]
Barak Obama	(13) 6.7% [10.5%]	(33) 8.8% [12.6%]	(26) 5% [10.4%]	(39) 6.2% [11.1%]
Donald Trump	(3) 1.6% [2.4%]	(8) 2.1% [3.1%]	(25) 4.8% [10%]	(27) 4.3% [7.7%]
Marine Le Pen	(1) 0.5% [0.8%]	-	(1) 0.2% [0.4%]	-
Recep Erdogan	-	-	(7) 1.3% [2.8%]	(12) 1.9% [3.4%]
Other officials	(63) 32.6% [50.8%]	(131) 34.8% [50%]	(113) 21.6% [45%]	(137) 21.9% [39%]
IS	(1) 1% [1.6%]	(1) 0.3% [0.4%]	(161) 30.8% [64.1%]	(196) 31.4% [55.8%]
International organisations	(54) 28% [43.5%]	(83) 22.1% [31.7%]	(73) 14% [29.1%]	(71) 11.4% [20.2%]
Experts	-	(13) 3.5% [5%]	(4) 0.8% [1.6%]	(9) 1.4% [2.6%]
Activists	-	-	(1) 0.2% [0.4%]	-
Other	(57) 29.5% [46%]	(107) 28.5% [40.8%]	(112) 21.4% [44.6%]	(134) 21.4% [38.3%]

Table 9. Mentioned foreign actors in all texts. This table shows the percentages, frequencies and percent of cases data on mentioned foreign actors. N in this table stands for the number of texts published in the sample; A stands for the number of texts that contain an actor; T is the overall number of actors that were coded, there was no limit on the number of actors per text. Frequency in this table means the number of articles coded for each actor; percentage stands for the percent of the selected actor category among all actors coded, and percent of cases refers to the percent of texts in the entire sample that were coded as the selected actor.

The other government official category asked for additional coding of the country and found that officials from the US were the most popular actors in this category in all of the coverage (Ukraine at 46.5% in English and 43.9% in Russian, Syria at 56.8% in English and 54% in Russian). Other Western countries' officials made up the majority of the rest: the UK (Ukraine at 9.9% in English and 13% in Russian, Syria at 23.5% in English<sup>102</sup> and 12.2% in Russian), France (Ukraine at 5.6% in English and 6.5% in Russian, Syria at 6% in English<sup>103</sup> and 11.2% in Russian<sup>104</sup>), Poland (Ukraine at 12.7% in English and 7.5% in Russian), and Germany (Ukraine at 15.5% in English and 9.4% in Russian, however in the coverage of Syria at only 3% in English and 2% in Russian). Quotes from the Turkish state officials played an important role in the Russian coverage of Syria at 11.3%, where the majority of actors appear in a specific event – S8, which focused on the recapturing of Aleppo. Overall, a large portion of foreign state actors is concentrated in the coverage of this event, which is explained by it being one of the largest events in the sample of this study. In contrast, the coverage of the downing of the flight MH17 in English contained only 5 quotes from other government officials, of them 2 were from the US, and 1 each from Australia, China and Malaysia. Table 10 below details the foreign actors data for that event (U4) in further detail, demonstrating that foreign officials' and heads' of state voices were reduced to a minimum in the coverage of that event, especially in English, where, out of 26 articles, there was one quote from Barak Obama in addition to the aforementioned 5 quotes from other states' officials.

#### **Foreign actors in U4**

<b>Actors</b>	<b>English sample</b>	<b>Russian sample</b>
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<sup>102</sup> Curiously almost all quotes from UK state actors in the coverage of Syria in English appear in event S8, the recapturing of Aleppo.

<sup>103</sup> Almost all quotes from UK state actors in the coverage of Syria in English appear in the event S8, the recapturing of Aleppo.

<sup>104</sup> Almost all quotes from French state actors in the coverage of Syria in Russian also appear in the event S8, the recapturing of Aleppo.

	<b>Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 19</b>	<b>Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 39</b>	<b>Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 31</b>	<b>Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 88</b>
Barack Obama	(1) 5% [7.7%]	(2) 5.1% [8.3%]	(3) 9.7% [11.5%]	(1) 1.1% [1.9%]
Donald Trump	-	-	-	-
Marine Le Pen	-	-	-	-
Recep Erdogan	-	-	-	-
Other foreign officials (specify)	(5) 30% [46.2%]	(5) 12.8% [20.8%]	(12) 38.7% [46.2%]	(20) 22.7% [38.5%]
IS	-	(1) 2.6% [4.2%]	-	-
International organisations	(3) 15% [23.1%]	(8) 20.5% [33.3%]	(2) 6.5% [7.7%]	(11) 12.5% [21.2%]
Experts	(1) 5% [7.7%]	-	(1) 3.2% [3.8%]	(10) 11.4% [19.2%]
Activists	-	-	-	-
Other (specify)	(9) 45% [69.2%]	(23) 59% [95.8%]	(13) 41.9% [50%]	(46) 52.3% [88.5%]

Table 10. Quoted and mentioned foreign actors in event U4. N in this table refers to the number of actors quoted or mentioned in each group. Percent of cases adds up to a number higher than 100% because more than one actor can be quoted and mentioned in one article.

Considering that it was the foreign governments who led the criticism of the local investigations of the downing of the Malaysian Airlines plane and drew links between Russia and the insurgents in Ukraine who were suspected of downing the plane with Russian-supplied weapons (and, since, four Russian citizens have been charged in court<sup>105</sup>), the low inclusion of voices of official foreign actors can mean that this criticism was either downplayed or absent from the coverage – the textual analysis investigates this question further.

## Descriptions

<sup>105</sup> See BBC (2019) for more.

This study looks at descriptions in the sample in a quantitative way in order to understand the ways in which various countries, institutions, people and entities are systematically presented to the readers in the RT coverage, and to see the scale and spread of these descriptions in a numeric way. This will help to identify in this study the presence of messages of the Russian viewpoint of major global events.

As specified in the introduction to this chapter, adjectives and participles were specified as ‘descriptions’ in the coding manual. In order to obtain clear and interpretable results, the adjectives and participles that were close in meaning were grouped together during the process of counting and analysis (for example, ‘violent’ and ‘brutal’ were grouped together, as were ‘lawful’ and ‘legal’). In Russian, all adjectives are presented in the tables in masculine form, but actual adjectives counted included all gender forms. Finally, tables in this chapter only include description groups that appeared more than once – this was done in order to simplify the presentation of the data and because descriptions that only appeared once are less important in a quantitative content analysis with a sample of 1522 texts. For all of the descriptions that were collected in the course of the content analysis see the detailed tables in Annex 3.

Why are descriptions important for this study? Since this chapter is focused on answering the first research question of this study, dedicated to describing and understanding the ‘Russian viewpoint on major global events’ contained in the RT content, looking at how the channel describes the countries involved in the coverage is crucial for understanding the ‘Russian viewpoint’, and answering the first research question. Further, the first sub-question specifies that we want to understand the characteristics of the ‘Russian viewpoint’ that RT presents to its audiences. The ways in which countries are presented in text, on the basic level of



adjectives and participles, is a crucial component of these themes and messages that this thesis seeks to identify and decode. This chapter will first focus on the descriptions of people, organisations and Ukraine in the coverage of the war in Ukraine, then it will look at similar descriptions of Syria in the coverage of the war in Syria; finally, the last sections will present descriptions of Russia and other countries.

One way to understand the importance of descriptions is by looking at the theory of attribute agenda setting, which looks at the attributes (or the properties and characteristics) of the objects of media coverage (McCombs et al. 1997). This study understands descriptions as one way that media texts express attributes of the objects of media coverage, in this case the countries, their officials, armies, and people. McCombs et al (1997: 704) position this way of looking at media coverage as a combination of elements of agenda setting and framing theories, where we understand that the attributes (descriptions) contained in the coverage have undergone a selection process (i.e. that there are more attributes to an object than can be contained in media coverage) and that these attributes influence not only ‘what we think about’ (as agenda setting theory argues on the first level) but also how we think about it. Agenda-setting theory comes, of course, with the implication of audience attitudes research, which is not something that this thesis is going to do for the reasons relayed in Chapter 4. However, this theory has been used many times to show attitudinal consequences of attributive agenda setting, particularly in partisan contexts (see Hyun & Moon 2016), and therefore can be seen in this thesis as a useful reminder of the importance of object attributes in media content.

Finally, this quantitative analysis will only be able to capture the most obvious, manifest traits as descriptions - the adjectives and participles in the case of this chapter. The qualitative

textual analysis in the following chapter will seek to fill in the gaps as it also looks for latent meanings and meanings contained elsewhere in the texts of the coverage.

### **Descriptions in Ukrainian events**

This question looks at the words that are used to describe Ukraine, the military action in Ukraine and the insurgents. As the coding schedule specifies, there are different ‘aspects’ of Ukraine that can be coded under the umbrella term of Ukraine: different fractions of the Ukrainian government (particularly the study will distinguish between the descriptions of the pro-Russian Yanukovich government and the interim and new governments that came after it), Ukrainian people, regions, and organisations. For this purpose, during the coding process all descriptive words were marked with the nouns that they are describing. As the answers were grouped and analysed, it became clear that the ‘aspects’ of Ukraine that are described in the studied RT coverage most often are Yanukovich and his government, the political opposition at the time of the Euromaidan protests, the interim government and the newly elected president Poroshenko and his government, the Ukrainian army and, in some cases, Ukrainian people.

First of all, in Russian 72.6% (405) of the texts contained at least one description of Ukraine, as did 92.8% (194) of the texts in English. It is important to recognise here that this includes all adjectives, including words like ‘Ukrainian’ and geographical adjectives like ‘Eastern’ and ‘Western’. The difference between the English and Russian percentages is an interesting one and could be partially explained by the fact that there are more medium and long texts in the English language sample, and it is these texts that would contain more background information and analysis and are therefore would be more likely to contain descriptions.

However, it is important to recognise the linguistic differences between Russian and English that are crucial for the correct interpretation of this data. Where in news writing in English the phrase ‘Ukrainian president’ is as widely used, if not more than the clunkier adjective-less phrase ‘the president of Ukraine’, in Russian the phrase without the adjective (‘prezident Ukraini’) is shorter, doesn’t require a preposition like it does in English, and is used in news writing as widely as the ‘Ukrainian president’ (‘ukrainskiy president’). Thus, the difference between the number of descriptions in the Russian and English samples could be explained partially by linguistic differences between the languages, and partially by the fact that there are more long texts in the English sample. However, we should also consider the possibility that there are more descriptions in the English sample for other reasons, for example because there is a need to contextualise the information presented to the readers who are less familiar with the country, or because the texts in the English sample contain more descriptions that express an evaluation of the objects of coverage (descriptions that attribute qualities to the nouns they describe). This point will be further supported later in the chapter when we will see that the difference between the number of descriptions in the Russian and English articles on Syria is smaller.

From the sections of this analysis that focus on the individual events we can see that there are two major trends in describing the Ukrainian government. First, the pro-Russian president Yanukovich, who features mostly in the first event, is described consistently as ‘lawful’ (22.9% and 53.8%). As we can see from Table 11, the most popular descriptors in English are ‘Ukrainian’ and ‘incumbent’, which can be seen as necessary for the English-speaking audience, who might not know who Yanukovich is, or, in the process of protests against the government, which government and parties are incumbent, and which are fighting to come into power.

### **Descriptions of Yanukovich in all texts**

<b>Descriptions</b>	<b>English sample N= 32 (frequency), % of descriptions</b>	<b>Russian sample N= 51 (frequency), % of descriptions</b>
Ukrainian Украинский	(10) 31.3%	(13) 25.5%
Lawful/legitimate Законный, законно избранный, легитимный	(7) 21.9%	(28) 54.9%
Ruling, acting Действующий	(13) 40.6%	(2) 3.9%
Ousted, removed from power Отстраненный (от власти)	(2) 6.2%	(8) 15.7%

*Table 11. Descriptions of Yanukovich in all texts. N in this table refers to the number of descriptions recorded. This table does not include descriptions that were recorded once in each sample – these are included in Annex 3.*

Descriptions of Yanukovich as ousted and/or removed from power are particularly interesting as both are in the passive form in both English and Russian, placing on others (the protesters and the opposition MPs in the Ukrainian parliament) not only the responsibility of the political chaos but also the responsibility of breaking the laws and betraying democracy (by removing, as other descriptions established earlier, a lawfully elected president from power). This description is also not fully transparent about the chronology of events as Yanukovich has fled Ukraine before he was officially removed from power by the Ukrainian parliament the next day in a decision that referred to the president leaving the country as ‘self-removal from power’ (Malik et al 2014; Verkhovna Rada Ukraini 2014), thus ‘runaway’ or ‘fugitive’ president would have been a more accurate description than ‘ousted’.

The percentages in Table 11 refer to the percent that each description group occupied in all descriptions of Yanukovich, but’s also important to understand how the number of descriptions in each group compares to the number of texts in which he was quoted or mentioned in. Yanukovich was quoted and mentioned in 72 texts in Russian and in 40 texts in English. This means that he was described in 80% of the texts that he appeared in in English

and in 70.8% of the texts in Russian. If we consider ‘Ukrainian’ and ‘acting’ as neutral descriptions that serve to inform the audience of the facts it might not be aware of, rather than to evaluate the actor being described, then Yanukovich was described in neutral words in 57.5% of the texts in English and only in 20.8% of similar texts in Russian. At the same time ‘lawful’ is a word with more evaluative connotation as some things can be legal according to some people, or in certain countries, and illegal according to others. This applies even more obviously to the word ‘legitimate’, which was discussed in the previous chapter in the document analysis as comprising of moral and traditional dimensions<sup>106</sup> (see Kuhrt 2017, Voskoboyev 2008). Yanukovich, therefore, was described in an evaluative and positive way as ‘lawful’ and ‘legitimate’ in 38.8% of the texts he appeared in in Russian, and in 17.5% of the texts in English. Thus, we can see overall that Yanukovich and his government were described in RT coverage in neutral and positive words, and his departure from power was presented as the fault and responsibility of others.

The second major observation in descriptions of the Ukrainian government is that the descriptions changed drastically after the interim government was appointed by the Ukrainian parliament.

**Descriptions of the interim government in Ukraine,  
president Poroshenko, and his government<sup>107</sup> in all texts**

<b>Descriptions</b>	<b>English sample N= 139 (frequency), % of descriptions</b>	<b>Russian sample N= 228 (frequency), % of descriptions</b>
Ukrainian	(44) 31.6%	(72) 31.6%

<sup>106</sup> The reason the two words were combined into one description category because in everyday use (unlike in use in official documents) they are close in meaning.

<sup>107</sup> The descriptions of these actors are looked at together because the ways in which they were described was similar; in addition, both the interim government and Petro Poroshenko and his government took a pro-EU, anti-separatist stance, therefore by looking at descriptions of them as a group this thesis is looking at the descriptions of implicitly (and sometimes explicitly) anti-Russian government.

Украинский		
Kiev Киевский	(27) 19.4%	(55) 24.2%
Unlawful, illegitimate, coup-imposed/appointed, 'who seized the power' Нелегитимный, незаконный, пришедший к власти в результате переворота, захвативший (власть)	(30) 21.5%	(17) 7.4%
New Новый	(13) 9.3%	(29) 12.9%
Ruling, acting, incumbent Действующий	(3) 2.2%	(8) 3.5%
Self-proclaimed Самопровозглашенный	(4) 2.9%	(11) 4.8%
Nationalist Националистический	(1) 0.7%	(4) 1.7%
Fascist, Nazi, neo-Nazi, neofascist Фашистский, нефашистский, нацистский, неонецистский	(4) 2.9%	(5) 2.1%
So-called Так называемый	(1) 0.7%	(11) 4.8%
Radical, extremist Радикальный, радикально-настроенный, экстремистский	(3) 2.2%	(6) 2.7%
Billionaire	(3) 2.2%	-
Controlled by the Right Sector Подотчетный/подконтрольный Правому Сектору	(1) 0.7%	(2) 0.8%
Today's, current Нынешний	(5) 3.7%	(8) 3.5%

Table 12. Descriptions of interim government in Ukraine, President Poroshenko and his government in all texts. *N* in this table refers to the number of descriptions recorded. This table does not include descriptions that were recorded once in each sample – these are included in Annex 3.

When we look at the descriptions of the Ukrainian presidents and governments that came after Yanukovich, one of the most obvious differences is that apart from also being described as 'Ukrainian', these governments are described as 'Kiev' (19.4% and 24.2%). 'Kiev' as the description of the government is an interesting case – while an argument can be made that it

is a neutral description based on the capital where the Ukrainian government is indeed located, I would argue that it is not the case. First of all, this description is imprecise as it might confuse for the audiences the local municipal authorities in Kiev and the state authorities. While understandably journalists and news writers need a way to distinguish between the state government, the Crimean government, and the insurgent Eastern Ukrainian government, 'Kiev government' 'Kiev authorities', and 'Kiev officials' is not a straightforward replacement for 'Ukrainian government', 'Ukrainian authorities', and 'Ukrainian officials.' While a case can be made that the usage of 'Kiev' is introduced to avoid repeating the word 'Ukrainian', it is important to note that the government of president Yanukovich was never described as 'Kiev', the Crimean government, when described, was called (96.6% and 43.5%) 'Crimean' and never 'Simferopol' after the town where the government is based. Further, we will see later that the Russian government is never called 'Moscow' government, the Syrian government is called 'Damascus' only twice in the entire sample, and various foreign governments are also described with the name of the country/state and not the capital. Therefore, the argument that the name of the city where the government is based is used by RT in a neutral way as a synonym for the adjective referring to the country is doubtful, because it is clearly used exceptionally in the case of Ukraine. In addition, the description 'Kiev' first appears in the second event in the timeline of the Ukrainian events, which is the Crimean referendum, with its main theme of separatism, therefore the introduction of 'Kiev' as a description for the authorities coincides with the theme of insurgency and separatism and could be understood either as a comment on who the authorities in question represent and govern, or as reinforcing the message of the government's illegitimacy expressed in the other popular description category of unlawfulness, which therefore can be seen as making a case for separatism (if it is the Kiev government and not the Ukrainian government, it does not rule over Crimea and has no claim

to do so, therefore secession is the logical next step for the region). Thus, the use of the adjective ‘Kiev’ as a description cannot be seen as politically neutral in the coverage of a complex political and military situation that involves secession and separatism, and indicates the journalists taking a side in the debate by viewing Ukraine as a fractured country, and the Ukrainian government as a government that doesn’t rule over or represent its entire territory.

In addition, Table 12 shows several negative description categories. First of all, the Ukrainian government is described as ‘unlawful’, the category that also involves adjectives that point at the source of this unlawfulness – ‘coup-imposed’, ‘coup-appointed’, ‘seized’ (21.5% and 7.4%). This description group communicates a clear judgement and evaluation of the Ukrainian government, one that is, crucially, misleading and inaccurate, whether we talk about the interim government or Petro Poroshenko’s government - the latter was elected, and the former was appointed by the existing legal parliament which has the right by law to install new interim officials.

Further the Ukrainian government is negatively described as ‘nationalist’ and ‘Nazi’/‘fascist<sup>108</sup>’, as well as ‘radical and ‘extremist’. Even taking into account the relatively low percentages of these descriptions compared to the other descriptions, the power and gravity of the accusation contained in these words mean it is important to consider the potential context and implications. A ‘nationalist’ government in the Ukrainian context indicates that the government is striving to support Ukrainian independence and independent international politics without being subjected to Russian influence, as well as a stricter, more nationalist language policy, where the Ukrainian language is prioritised over Russian.

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<sup>108</sup> In explaining the meaning of the adjective ‘fascist’ in Russia Gaufman (2015: 148) notes that despite the word’s vagueness in English in Soviet and Russian tradition it has become associated firmly with the WWII history, while the word ‘Nazi’ is used more to refer to contemporary neo-Nazi movements. Remarkably, both words are used to describe the Ukrainian government.



Considering the idea, discussed previously in the literature review, that ‘Russia is more than just its geographical borders’ (Makinen 2016: 104-105), which identifies Russia as concept that includes Russian speakers, Russian citizens and people all around the world who identify with Russia and Russian culture and history, we can see that the positioning of the Ukrainian government as nationalist puts it in direct conflict with this idea of Russian public diplomacy and national interests. Earlier in this thesis the Literature Review chapter discussed the significance and power of mythologising the WWII history in the Soviet propaganda tradition and the importance of the ‘Nazi’ comparison as a name-calling propaganda device – it is a particularly powerful and emotional tool in communication in general and holds particular weight with Russian and post-Soviet audiences. The descriptions that associate the government with the Ukrainian organisation Right Sector are further emphasising the nationalist link as Right Sector on its own is described as ‘nationalist’ and ‘far right’ (50% of the English descriptions and 39.1% of the Russian ones) and ‘radical’ and ‘extremist’ (23.5% and 39.1% accordingly). Exploring Soviet propaganda techniques and their legacy in contemporary Russian political communication, Kuzio (2016: 96) links the ‘Ukrainian nationalist/Nazi’ trope to the blurring and denial of the Ukrainian national identity by the Soviet and Russian states through the years, thus arguing that as a propaganda device the nationalist/Nazi association’s primary aim is to deny the separation of Ukraine from Russian influence. Finally, the document analysis has shown earlier that the association between Ukraine and Nazi Germany is still a consistent message of the Russian foreign policy as it has appeared in several of Putin’s speeches. For example, in the ‘Crimea’ speech in 2014 he said:

The main force behind the coup in Ukraine were nationalists, russophobes, antisemites, who have taken the power through violence, murder, terror and pogroms.

[...] The current Ukrainian authorities are ideological heirs of Bandera, a Hitler henchman during the WWII (Putin 2014).

Thus, the description of the Ukrainian government as nationalist/Nazi is in accordance with Russian foreign policy and can be seen as a propaganda device.

Further supplementing the negative descriptions is 'so-called'. In the context of describing a government this word introduces doubt and signifies that the speaker/journalist does not recognise the authority of the government described as 'so called', and that the government in question is a government only in name but not in function. Further, this is a description that Putin uses to refer to the Ukrainian government in his Crimea speech, where it has been interpreted by researchers as an undermining mechanism (Bacon 2015: 29). And finally, in an interesting position is 'self-proclaimed'<sup>109</sup>, which, depending on the circumstances, can point at the lack of the democratic process (and therefore unlawfulness), but in other circumstances can also be seen as an expression of self-determination and self-governance. Considering all the other negative description groups that are used to describe the Ukrainian government this chapter will interpret 'self-proclaimed' as a negative description. This way, of all the descriptions referring to the Ukrainian government 46.8% (in English) and 51.5% (in Russian) are neutral, which means that more than half of the descriptions in English (53.2%) and almost half of the descriptions in Russian (48.5%) have negative meanings.

Even though the Ukrainian army is not particularly addressed or discussed in the Russian foreign policy documentation, the significance of looking at the way it is covered by RT lies in the fact that the army is one of the central actors in the military events in the sample of this

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<sup>109</sup> This category, even though close in meaning to adjectives in the 'unlawful' category, was counted separately in order to later analyse the way that the Ukrainian government was described compared to the way insurgents in Eastern Ukraine were described, where 'self-proclaimed' is a major description.

thesis. In addition, we can draw conclusions about the way the coverage portrays the Ukrainian government from the way that it portrays the Ukrainian army. It is described in neutral adjectives ('Ukrainian', 'government') in almost half of all cases in English (47.9%) and the majority of the cases in Russian (71.8%).

### Descriptions of the Ukrainian army in all texts

Descriptions	English sample N= 134 (frequency), % of descriptions	Russian sample N= 188 (frequency), % of descriptions
Ukrainian Украинский	(53) 39.7%	(122) 64.9%
Kiev Киевский	(51) 38%	(13) 6.9%
Government Правительственный	(11) 8.2%	(10) 5.3%
Adjectives relating to location/base of the regiment/army	-	(3) 1.6%
Unqualified Малоквалифицированный, не умеющий обращаться с оружием, непрофессиональный	(2) 1.5%	(3) 1.6%
Violent, punitive, assault Отличающийся жестокостью	(2) 1.5%	(1) 0.5%
Adjectives relating to the army's weakness or losing positions	(11) 8.2%	(20) 10.7%
Demoralised Деморализованный	(1) 0.7%	(9) 4.8%
Adjectives relating to professionalism and good organisation	(1) 0.7%	(5) 2.7%
Enemy	(2) 1.5%	-
Adjectives relating to soldiers' inappropriate behaviour	-	(2) 1%

*Table 13. Descriptions of the Ukrainian army in all texts. N in this table refers to the number of descriptions of the Ukrainian army that were recorded. This table does not include descriptions that were recorded once in each sample – these are included in Annex 3.*

However, adjectives with positive meanings (relating to the professionalism and good organisation) are minimal in both samples (0.7% and 2.7%), while adjectives with negative meanings (relating to violence, lack of professionalism, weakness) make up the rest: 51.4% of the descriptions in English and 25.5% in Russian. Counted among the negative descriptions is the adjective ‘Kiev’, which here is understood to have the similar connotations and implications as discussed earlier in this chapter when it describes the Ukrainian government.

Looking at the larger picture, Ukraine as a country is described largely (59.3% in English and 54.3% in Russian) by words referring to geography (East, West). These descriptions can be seen as mostly neutral, however, keeping in mind that geographical divisions inside Ukraine are often used to symbolise political differences within the populations, where Western Ukraine is generally thought of as Ukrainian-speaking and pro-EU and Eastern Ukraine as largely Russian-speaking and pro-Russian (see Connolly 2014; Kates 2014; Rosenberg 2013). In addition, Ukraine was described with words that referred to the country’s relationship with Russia in 14.8% of the Russian descriptions and 11.4% of the English descriptions. These words, for example ‘brotherly’ and ‘fraternal’ are often seen as manifestations of Russia’s post-imperial aspirations, and while not outwardly negative they have come to be seen as a colonial way to describe the relationship between two countries, where Russia is the ‘big brother’ watching over the ‘little brother’ Ukraine (see Wilson & Popescu 2009; Miazhevich 2014; Riabchuk 2016; Khaldarova 2019). From a journalistic and public diplomacy point of view we can see from these descriptions that even in news in English aimed at an international audience, the relationship between Ukraine and Russia is central to the way Ukraine is described. Finally, earlier in this thesis the document analysis has placed the idea of a familial relationship between Russia and Ukraine within the Russian foreign policy

agenda: for example, Putin has referred to the ‘fraternal Ukrainian nation’ in his Crimea speech at least twice. This is another connection between the way Ukraine is described in Russian foreign policy and the RT content.

Looking specifically at the Euromaidan protests and protesters, we see that in the two events that focused on Euromaidan, 34% of the coverage in English and 25% of it in Russian contained descriptions of the protests; in addition, 32.9% of the English sample and 17.2% of the Russian sample contained descriptions of the Euromaidan protesters<sup>110</sup>. These descriptions are consistently negative, especially in the English coverage, where negative descriptions like ‘illegal’, ‘violent’, ‘bloody’ and ‘deadly’ and others make up 82.8% of all the descriptions of the protests (the same groups make up 65.4% of all the Russian descriptions).

#### Descriptions of the Euromaidan protests in all texts

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=46	Russian sample (cases), % N=81
Violent, brutal, fierce <i>Ожесточенный, силовой</i>	(20) 43.8%	(23) 28.4
Bloody <i>Кровавый, кровопролитный</i>	(7) 15.3%	(6) 7.4
Street <i>Уличный</i>	(1) 2.1%	(8) 9.9
Illegal, unconstitutional <i>Противозаконный, имеющий признаки гос. переворота, противоправный</i>	(2) 4.3%	(19) 23.5
Peaceful	(2) 4.3%	-
Deadly	(4) 8.7%	-
Large-scale, mass <i>Масштабные, массовые</i>	(3) 6.5%	(16) 19.9%

<sup>110</sup> These percentages refer to the number of descriptions in U1 and U2 only, as descriptions of protests and protesters were not tracked in the coverage of the military confrontations in Eastern Ukraine.

Worst	(2) 4.3%	-
So-called peaceful, 'peaceful' <sup>111</sup> <i>Так называемый мирный марш, «мирный марш»</i>	(1) 2.1%	(2) 2.4%
Supported by the US <i>Осуществленный при поддержке США</i>	-	(2) 2.4%
Continuing <i>Продолжающийся</i>	(2) 4.3%	(2) 2.4%
Armed <i>Вооруженный</i>	(2) 4.3%	(3) 3.7%

Table 14. Descriptions of Euromaidan protests in all texts. N in this table refers to the number of descriptions recorded. This table does not include descriptions that were recorded once in each sample – these are included in Annex 3.

### Descriptions of the Euromaidan protesters in all texts

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=69	Russian sample (cases), % N=72
Armed <i>Вооруженный</i>	(7) 10.1%	(13) 18%
Mass	(3) 4.4%	-
Radical, extremist <i>Радикальный, радикально- настроенный, экстремистский</i>	(25) 36.2%	(28) 38.9%
Violent, aggressive, rioting <i>Ожесточенный, силовой</i>	(8) 11.7%	(17) 23.6%
Oppositional <i>Оппозиционный</i>	(4) 5.8%	(1) 1.4%
Maidan self-defence <i>Уличный</i>	(2) 2.9%	-
Peaceful <i>Мирный</i>	(1) 1.4%	(3) 4.2%
Ukrainian	(2) 2.9%	-
Masked	(6) 8.7%	-
Well-equipped, well-trained <i>Хорошо вооруженный</i>	(5) 7.2%	(4) 5.6%
Far right, nationalist	(4) 5.8%	(4) 5.6%

<sup>111</sup> The adjectives prefaced by so-called were grouped here with adjectives in quotation marks because quotation marks are seen as a similar delegitimising phrasing (see Altheide & Schneider 2013: 15). Further, as Chapter 2 has shown, the use of quotation marks as an irony device in Soviet propaganda has been connected with double nominations (Kostylev 2012)

Националистический		
So called	(2) 2.9%	(2) 2.7%
Так называемый		

*Table 15. Descriptions of Euromaidan protesters in all texts. N in this table refers to the number of descriptions recorded. This table does not include descriptions that were recorded once in each sample – these are included in Annex 3.*

Looking at the differences between the two samples provides an insight into how the protests and protesters were presented to the different audiences, or rather the ways in which the negative view of the protests was communicated to the different audiences. For the international English-speaking audience, the largest negative description group of the protests had to do with violence (43.8%), while for the Russian-speaking one violence (28.4%) was combined with unlawfulness (23.5%), which was barely mentioned in English (4.3%). The prominence of unlawfulness can be seen as a way to emphasise the illegality of the protests for the Russian-speaking audiences as a part of the delegitimization process, which can potentially have internal political purpose in Russia. As discussed in Chapter 3, the critical portrayal of protests in Ukraine and other post-Soviet countries by internal Russian media is often credited to the fact that it discredits popular unrest as a political tool for the Russian audiences in the interest of the Russian government that does not want to see an emergence of a protest movement in the country (see for example Osipian 2015). While the audience of RT's Russian service is seen as wider than just Russian citizens and including of Russian speakers all over the world, this effect might have been carried over from the service relying on Russian national media and news agencies for the content, which, as discussed earlier, consisted of more short news stories.

At the same time when talking about protesters, descriptions connected to violence (violent, armed) and extremism and radicalism make up 80.5% of all Russian descriptions and 58% of the English ones. While one could suggest that this particular brand of critical coverage focused on violence of the protests could be explained by the fact that the cause at the centre of them was a pro-EU one, which is automatically understood as anti-Russian, we should also

consider how global mainstream media cover protests in general, and where RT's coverage fits. On one hand, the negative angle of coverage follows at least partially the protest paradigm, which is a concept used by media scholars to describe the phenomenon in which mainstream media tends to demonize and delegitimise protesters by, among other things, focusing on the violent actions of the protesters rather than the issues they are protesting<sup>112</sup> (McLeod & Detenber 1999; Shahin et al 2016; Harlow et al 2020). The lack of context on the issues holds up as the pro-EU, anti-corruption messages of Euromaidan protests are completely absent from the texts on the level of descriptions. Of particular interest in the discussion of the protest paradigm is the word 'mainstream' as alternativeness to the global Western mainstream media is at the centre of RT's self-positioning. RT's negative coverage of the Euromaidan protests thus falls in line with mainstream media described by the protest paradigm. However, most studies that use the protest paradigm focus on national media reporting events in their own countries (McLeod & Detenber 1999; Shahin et al 2016), and sometimes on national/international media reporting protests in other countries (Peng 2008; Boyle et al 2012). RT is a state-financed international broadcaster, in this event reporting on the protests in another country for two different audiences, therefore the nuances of the applicability of the protest paradigm are unclear. But in case with other protests, particularly the Occupy Wall Street and *Gilets Jaunes* movements, RT was seen universally as providing a sympathetic pro-protest coverage (RT 2015; White 2017; Roth & Chrisafis 2018), which goes against the protest paradigm and therefore could be used as an argument in support of RT's alternative stance<sup>113</sup>. In the case with *Gilets Jaunes*, RT was often cited as the most popular media source for protesters themselves as it was seen the most fair and unbiased (Simonyan 2020), and RT's head of communications has attributed the success to the fact

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<sup>112</sup> Other aspects of the protest paradigm, particularly reliance on official sources, will be explored later in this chapter.

<sup>113</sup> However, notably some see this coverage not as supportive but rather as an attempt to co-opt the protests and use them to achieve Russia's public diplomacy goals (White 2017; Roth & Chrisafis 2018)



that RT's reporting filled the gap left by the mainstream media's misreporting of the events (Agnew 2019). I believe that the key to understanding the mainstream/alternative component and RT's coverage of the Euromaidan protests lies in the fact that RT's alternativeness is informed, first of all, by its anti-Western, anti-mainstream media stance. Where Western mainstream media report on conflicts in a negative way (eg. Gilets Jaunes), or don't report at all, at least initially (eg. Occupy Wall Street), and where protests were informed by the criticism of the Western governments or elites as they were in both of these two cases, RT's coverage was favourable and supportive. Therefore, in the case of Euromaidan, which was reported on favourably by the Western mainstream media (Liu 2020) and was focused on criticism of the pro-Russian president, RT's coverage was negative, but, at this point, not different from the way Western mainstream media cover protests in their own countries, with the exception that RT was of course reporting on international events.

Interestingly all the neutral descriptions of the protests (like 'street' and 'large scale') appeared in the first event in the Ukrainian timeline (U1, which focused on the protests themselves) and all descriptions of the protests in the second event (U2, the Crimean referendum) were negative<sup>114</sup>, both in the English and Russian samples. This indicates a shift in the way the Russian viewpoint saw the protests at the time when only Ukrainian actors were involved in the events, versus how it started to see them after the referendum in Crimea was set in motion and Russia was directly involved in the events. Crucially, the next chapter will clarify this connection and further contextualise the change in the descriptions. It will also discuss in detail how the Crimean referendum was presented in the RT content. In this chapter, however, a look at the descriptions, particularly in the second event of the timeline (U2) will allow us to paint a quantitative picture of the coverage of the referendum.

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<sup>114</sup> See Annex 3 for tables detailing descriptions of the protests for each event.

### Descriptions of people in Crimea

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=11	Russian sample (cases), % N=9
Crimean <i>Крымский</i>	(2) 18.2%	(2) 22.2%
Russian-speaking, ethnically Russian <i>Русскоязычный, русскоговорящий</i>	(9) 81.8%	(3) 33.3%
Long-suffering <i>Многострадальный</i>	-	(4) 44.4%

*Table 16. Descriptions of people in Crimea. N in this table refers to the number of descriptions recorded. This table does not include descriptions that were recorded once in each sample – these are included in Annex 3.*

First of all, the main description of the Crimean population in the English coverage was ‘Russian-speaking’ and ‘ethnically Russian’ (since both indicate a connection with Russia they were grouped together), and the description was the second most used one in the Russian sample. It is important to remember that a crucial argument of the justification of the Crimean secession and joining Russia was that the rights of the Russian speakers in Ukraine were being violated by the new nationalist government (Yuhas & Jalabi 2014). Therefore, while ‘Crimean’ (18.2% and 22.2%) is a neutral factual description, the descriptions identifying a connection to Russia can be seen as serving as a justification for the separatist movement by highlighting the ethnicities and language spoken by the population. These ethnicity and language-based descriptions introduce Russian nationalism into the conversation, and it appears to be acceptable, unlike the Ukrainian nationalism described earlier. Researchers have previously introduced the concept of ‘competing nationalisms’, which argues that in the public discussions of Ukraine, Russian nationalism emerges as a defence strategy against Ukrainian nationalism (Molchanov 2006; Kuzio 2015). Notably, all the ethnic Russians and the Russian speaking people were, at the time of publications, Ukrainian citizens, which was not reflected in the coverage in a way that could be identifiable in this content analysis, instead the Russian identity was projected onto the entire population.

The most popular Russian description, ‘long-suffering’ (44.4%) serves as a further addition to this message, pointing out that these people are victims in the Ukrainian Crimea. This clearly places RT on one side of the argument, especially when no positive connection of the population to Ukraine is communicated in the coverage. In addition to that, it mirrors the points in Putin’s Crimea speech, where one of the main accents is on the national identity and language of the Crimean people, who he identified in the speech as ‘compatriots’ (Putin 2014). Further, as discussed earlier in the document analysis, most Ukrainians nowadays can understand and speak both Russian and Ukrainian and the choice of language is not as clear-cut a distinguishing characteristic as it is presented to be (see Wanner 2014).

### **Descriptions of the Crimean government**

<b>Adjectives</b>	<b>English sample (cases), % N=20</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N=28</b>
Crimean <i>Крымский</i>	(10) 50%	(28) 100%
Occupied	(2) 10%	-
Independent, sovereign, autonomous	(6) 30%	-
Regional, local	(2) 10%	-

*Table 17. Descriptions of the Crimean government. N in this table refers to the number of descriptions recorded. This table does not include descriptions that were recorded once in each sample – these are included in in Annex 3.*

Unlike the pro-EU Ukrainian government, the pro-Russian Crimean local government is described in neutral and positive words, as ‘Crimean’ in the Russian sample and additionally by adjectives indicating its independence in English. Further, the study briefly looked at the way that the unidentified forces active in Crimea at the time of the referendum were described in the coverage. These soldiers, who were not wearing insignia on their uniforms, have become known as ‘little green men’ or ‘polite people’ and are universally understood (despite the official Russian denial) by journalists, investigators, experts and researchers and foreign officials to be Russian soldiers (Shevchenko 2014; Buckley et al 2014; Wolczuk

2014). However, as per the official Russian denial of the country’s connection to the soldiers, RT coverage identifies them as ‘self-defence’, Crimean and even as former Ukrainian soldiers. Thus, we can see that the RT coverage continues to deliver the official Russian versions of events in this instance.

### Descriptions of the formally unidentified forces in Crimea

<b>Adjectives</b>	<b>English sample (cases), % N=15</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N=0</b>
Self-defence	(9) 60%	-
Crimean	(4) 26.7%	-
Former Ukrainian, former and current Ukrainian	(2) 13.3%	-

*Table 18. Descriptions of the formally unidentified forces in Crimea. N in this table refers to the number of descriptions recorded. In the Russian sample the forces were only described twice (as ‘local’ and ‘well-organised’), both descriptions only appeared once and therefore are excluded from this table as it does not include descriptions that were recorded once in each sample – these are included in Annex 3.*

When it comes to the descriptions of the military action in Eastern Ukraine, descriptions are present in 37.8% of the Russian sample and 58% of the English one, and descriptions of the insurgents in Eastern Ukraine are present in 25.8% of the Russian sample and 73.2% of the English one.

### Descriptions of the military action in Eastern Ukraine

<b>Adjectives</b>	<b>English sample (cases), % N=91</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N=134</b>
Violent, heavy, intensive Ожесточенный, силовой, интенсивный	(21) 23%	(20) 14.9%
Military, army Армейский, военный, восковой	(6) 6.6%	(40) 29.8%
Punitive Карательный	(3) 3.3%	(10) 7.5%
Armed Вооруженный	(1) 1%	(11) 8.2%
Anti-terrorist, counterterrorist	(9) 10%	(4) 3%

Антитеррористический		
So-called anti-terrorist Так называемый антитеррористический	(7) 7.7%	(8) 6%
Ongoing, non-stop Продолжающийся	(10) 11%	(8) 6%
Kiev's	(11) 12%	-
Massive, full scale	(5) 5.5%	(3) 2.2%
Ukrainian Украинский	(6) 6.6%	(3) 2.2%
Bloody, deadly Кровавый	(4) 4.4%	(2) 1.5%
Civil, internal Гражданский, внутриукраинский	(8) 8.9%	(22) 16.5%
Street Уличный	-	(3) 2.2%

Table 19. Descriptions of the military action in Eastern Ukraine. N in this table refers to the number of descriptions recorded. This table does not include descriptions that were recorded once in each sample – these are included in Annex 3.

Descriptions that indicate the violence and intensity of the war are crucial in English, however, in Russian these are exceeded by the more neutral descriptions like ‘military’, and words that identified the conflict as an internal Ukrainian war, which further supports the Russian position that Russia was not involved in the conflict as a side. Words ‘civil’ and ‘internal’ point to conflict as an internal Ukrainian issue, in which Russia is not a side. The word ‘civil’ in this context is used in combination with the word war, however, research has pointed out that classifying the conflict in Eastern Ukraine as a civil war is misleading as the process of the conflict was ‘catalysed and escalated’ with the help of Russia (Wilson 2016a: 649). In addition, this is also reflective of the way the conflict is portrayed by the Russian Foreign Policy Concept (2016a), which calls the conflict ‘inter-Ukrainian<sup>115</sup>’. Therefore, this particular description, like the Russian foreign policy documents, downplays the Russian involvement in the conflict and instead portrays it as a conflict between a grassroots

<sup>115</sup> In Russian: внутриукраинский

movement and the state. Further, in English the description “Kiev’s” (12%) places the blame of war on the government of Ukraine, which is further underlined in the descriptions of the insurgents as ‘self-defence’ (see table G20 below), which paints the insurgents as protectors of Eastern Ukraine, which, as was discussed earlier, is under persecution and attack from the Ukrainian government and the Ukrainian army, who are consistently presented in terms of violence and threatening associations with Nazism. The negative descriptions of the Ukrainian government here add context to how readers will think about the insurgents, who are presented in terms of their opposition to the government as ‘anti-Kiev’ and ‘anti-government’, and thus in opposition to the values ascribed to the government.

Descriptions of insurgents were present in 39.2% of the English coverage and 11.6% of the Russian coverage. As Table 20 demonstrates, the insurgents were presented first of all with words ‘self-defence’ in English (36%) and ‘self-proclaimed’ in Russian (36.4%). Both words contain the prefix ‘self’, including the original word used in Russian (‘samoprovoglashenniy’), which signifies independence. As discussed earlier, ‘self-proclaimed’ can be seen to carry both negative and positive connotations and looking at other descriptions and context can help identify the intended tone – this will be done further in this chapter and in the textual analysis chapter that follows.

### **Descriptions of insurgents in Eastern Ukraine**

<b>Adjectives</b>	<b>English sample (cases), % N=114</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N=55</b>
Anti-Kiev Антикиевский	(15) 13.2%	(1) 1.8%
Local	(10) 8.8%	-
Anti-government Антиправительственный	(19) 16.8%	(7) 12.7%
Rebel	(7) 6.1%	-
Unrecognised	-	(2) 3.6%

Непризнанный		
Self-proclaimed Самопровозглашенный	-	(20) 36.4%
Self-defence	(41) 36%	-
Russia-backed, pro-Russian Пророссийский, поддерживаемый Россией	(5) 4.4%	(10) 18.2%
Ukrainian Украинский	(6) 5.4%	(2) 3.6%
Strong Сильный	-	(3) 5.5%
People's Народный	(1) 0.8%	(4) 7.3%
Armed Вооруженный	(1) 0.8%	(4) 7.3%
Federalist	(2) 1.7%	-
Militia	(3) 2.6%	-
Donetsk	(2) 1.7%	-
Over-vigilant	(2) 1.7%	-
Formed in reaction to a coup <i>Возникший как реакция на госпереворот</i>	-	(2) 3.6%

Table 20. Descriptions of insurgents in Eastern Ukraine. N in this table refers to the number of descriptions recorded. This table does not include descriptions that were recorded once in each sample – these are included in the detailed tables for each event in Annex 3.

Despite the insurgents being one of the two opposing sides in the war in Eastern Ukraine, they are only described as ‘armed’ in a very small number of descriptions. Considering the number of texts published in each sample, 1 description in English equals 0.6% of all the texts that insurgents appear and are quoted in, and 4 descriptions in Russian equal 1.3%. This is in stark contrast with the descriptions of the Euromaidan protesters, who were in their majority not armed (especially not with military-type weapons as the insurgents were) but were described as armed and violent in a much larger percentage of the texts (38.5% in the English coverage that mentioned or quoted the protesters and 27.8% in the Russian one).

Thus, we can see that the descriptions in the RT coverage of the Ukrainian conflict were supportive of the pro-Russian sides in the conflict (such as Yanukovich and insurgents in Eastern Ukraine) and critical of the pro-Ukrainian sides (such as the Euromaidan protesters, opposition, the post-Yanukovich governments in Ukraine and the Ukrainian army), which is in line with the Russian foreign policy agenda described in Chapter 5.

### Descriptions in Syrian events

At least one description<sup>116</sup> of Syria was contained in 85.6% of the English texts and 72.4% of the Russian texts. Compared with the Ukrainian sample, there was less variety in descriptions, which were predominantly neutral: both Assad and the Syrian government were described in the majority of texts as ‘Syrian’ (from 77.2% to 95.5% depending on the sample).

### Descriptions of Assad in all texts

<b>Descriptions</b>	<b>English sample N= 44 (frequency), % of descriptions</b>	<b>Russian sample N=35 (frequency), % of descriptions</b>
Syrian Сирийский	(42) 95.5%	(27) 77.2%
Legitimate, legal Легитимный, легальный	(2) 4.5%	(4) 11.4%
Today’s Нынешний	-	(2) 5.7%
Encouraged and supported by Putin’s Russia Поощряемый и поддерживаемый путинской Россией	-	(2) 5.7%

Table 21. Descriptions of Assad in all texts. N in this table refers to the number of descriptions of president and his government that were recorded. This table does not include descriptions that were recorded once in each sample – these are included in Annex 3.

<sup>116</sup> This includes all adjectives, including words like ‘Syrian’.



The second most used description was ‘legal’, which can be seen as a positive description – as with descriptions of other actors and events in the Ukrainian sample, this description referring to legality was more popular in the Russian sample (11.4% and 18.5% for Assad and the government accordingly) than in the English one (4.5% and 5%).

### Descriptions of the Syrian government in all texts

<b>Descriptions</b>	<b>English sample N= 198 (frequency), % of descriptions</b>	<b>Russian sample N= 114 (frequency), % of descriptions</b>
Syrian Сирийский	(172) 87%	(87) 76.4%
Legitimate, legal ЛЕГИТИМНЫЙ, ЛЕГАЛЬНЫЙ	(10) 5%	(21) 18.5%
Official ОФИЦИАЛЬНЫЙ	-	(2) 1.7%
Today’s Нынешний	-	(2) 1.7%
Assad’s	(16) 8%	-
Central Центральный	-	(2) 1.7%

*Table 22. Descriptions of the Syrian government in all texts. N in this table refers to the number of descriptions of president and his government that were recorded. This table does not include descriptions that were recorded once in each sample – these are included in the detailed tables for each event in Annex 3.*

Compared with the selection of evaluative and negative descriptions of the post-Yanukovich Ukrainian governments, the descriptions of Assad and his government are austere in their neutrality – RT does not portray those in power in Syria in a negative way, but also doesn’t portray them positively at the same scale that it did with Yanukovich and his government or with the insurgents in Eastern Ukraine.

The Syrian army was most often described as ‘Syrian’ and ‘government’, which are neutral adjectives pointing out the allegiance but not evaluating. Compared with the Ukrainian army,

which was described frequently as ‘Kiev’ (38.5% in English and 6.9% in Russian), the Syrian army was only ever described as ‘Damascus’ in 0.6% of the coverage in English. At the same time, the only descriptions that could be seen as negative were relating to the army’s struggles and only appeared in only in English and rarely (0.9%).

### Descriptions of the Syrian army in all texts

<b>Descriptions</b>	<b>English sample N= 341 (frequency), % of descriptions</b>	<b>Russian sample N=415 (frequency), % of descriptions</b>
Syrian Сирийский	(222) 65.1%	(258) 62.2%
Government Правительственный	(100) 29.2%	(151) 36.4%
Legitimate, legal Легитимный, легальный	(1) 0.3%	(2) 0.4%
National	(3) 0.9%	(2) 1.7%
Struggling	(3) 0.9%	-
Assad’s	(8) 2.4%	-
‘The only force capable of fighting IS’ <i>Единственная способная сила</i>	(2) 0.6%	(4) 1%
Damascus	(2) 0.6%	-

Table 23. Descriptions of the Syrian army in all texts. N in this table refers to the number of descriptions the army that were recorded. This table does not include descriptions that were recorded once in each sample – these are included in Annex 3.

The descriptions of the Syrian opposition appear in 49.7% of the coverage in English and 33.5% in Russian. They present a contradictive picture: on one side they are neutral (‘Syrian’), on another - negative (‘terrorist’, ‘so-called moderate’, ‘Al-Qaeda affiliated’, ‘illegal’, ‘armed’), and in some cases even positive (‘patriotic’, ‘democratic’). This is because, as an umbrella category, this group includes descriptions of different fractions and groups within the opposition. In fact, from the descriptions we can see which groups dominate the coverage on RT: the ones described in negative terms associated with terrorism (15.5% and 23.4%). Adjectives indicating a connection between the opposition and the West are particularly interesting (7.6% and 2%) as they suggest that the opposition is acting in the

interests of foreign powers, while any descriptions that indicate any political demands of the opposition are downplayed (for example ‘democratic’ accounts for less than 1% in both samples), and extremist religious affiliations are underlined with adjectives like ‘Islamist’ and ‘jihadist’ (1.8% and 2%). As the document analysis has shown, the idea of Western meddling in other countries’ affairs is a major theme in the Russian foreign policy agenda, and by emphasising this connection the RT coverage is discounting any grassroots political demands.

### Descriptions of the Syrian opposition in all texts

Descriptions	English sample N= 329 (frequency), % of descriptions	Russian sample N=252 (frequency), % of descriptions
Syrian Сирийский	(39) 11.9%	(43) 17%
Terrorist, extremist Террористический, экстремистский	(39) 11.9%	(59) 23.4%
So-called moderate, so-called opposition Так называемая оппозиция, так называемая умеренная оппозиция	(50) 15.2%	(37) 14.7%
Al Qaeda affiliated	(12) 3.6%	-
Adjectives indicating a connection with the West <sup>117</sup>	(25) 7.6%	(5) 2%
Patriotic Патриотический	(4) 1.2%	(4) 1.6%
Illegitimate, illegal Нелегитимный, нелегальный	(4) 1.2%	(5) 2%
Armed Вооруженный	(23) 7%	(34) 13.5%
Moderate Умеренный	(8) 2.4%	(7) 2.8%
Democratic, civic Демократический	(3) 0.9%	(2) 0.8%

<sup>117</sup> Including adjectives like US-backed, Pentagon-trained, supervised by the west, western-backed, US-vetted and others.

Rebel	(57) 17.4%	-
Opposition/al Оппозиционный	(26) 7.9%	(19) 7.5%
Militant	(19) 5.8%	-
Adjectives indicating connection with Islam <sup>118</sup>	(6) 1.8%	(5) 2%
Injured/wounded	(1) 0.3%	(2) 0.8%
Anti-government, anti-Assad Антиправительственный	(7) 2.1%	(12) 4.7%
Kurdish	-	(6) 2.4%
Banned in Russia Запрещенный в России	-	(3) 1.2%
‘Who announced their dedication to the truce’ Заявивший о своей приверженности прекращению боевых действий/прекращению огня	-	(2) 0.8%
‘Using civilians as human shields’ Использующие мирных граждан в качестве живых щитов	-	(2) 0.8%
Implicated in/responsible for chemical attack Совершившие химическую атаку	(2) 0.6%	(1) 0.4%
Efficient, major	(2) 0.6%	(2) 0.8%
Revolutionary, insurgent Революционный, повстанческий	-	(2) 0.8%
Ankara-backed	(2) 0.6%	-

Table 24. Descriptions of the Syrian opposition in all texts. N in this table refers to the number of descriptions recorded. This table does not include descriptions that were recorded once in each sample – these are included in Annex 3.

Descriptions of the military action appear in 51.7% of the texts in English and 31.3% in Russian. After the neutral description ‘Syrian’, the war in the country is described as ‘civil war’ (31.3% and 23.2%) and with adjectives emphasising the severity, violence and tragedy of the war (tragic, bloody, violent and others – 10% and 15.8%). Unlike the descriptions of the war in Ukraine, these descriptions do not place blame on either of the sides in the ways

<sup>118</sup> Adjectives like ‘Islamist’ and ‘jihadist’

that can be detected by this method, further showing that the war in Syria was described more neutrally than the war in Ukraine.

### Descriptions of the war in Syria in all texts

<b>Descriptions</b>	<b>English sample N= 80 (frequency), % of descriptions</b>	<b>Russian sample N=95 (frequency), % of descriptions</b>
Syrian Сирийский	(32) 40%	(42) 44.3%
Tragic, bloody, fierce, violent Ожесточенный, трагический, кровавый	(8) 10%	(15) 15.8%
Civil (war) Гражданская (войны)	(25) 31.3%	(22) 23.2%
Full scale, massive Массированный, широкомасштабный	(8) 10%	(8) 8.4%
Ongoing	(4) 5%	-
Military	(1) 1.2%	(6) 6.3%
Successful	(2) 2.5%	-
Armed Вооруженный	-	(2) 2%

Table 25. Descriptions of the war in Syria in all texts. N in this table refers to the number of descriptions recorded. This table does not include descriptions that were recorded once in each sample – these are included in Annex 3.

The anti-terrorist focus of the Russian campaign is underlined in both samples (58.4% and 35.3%), and positive descriptions like ‘successful’ appear in Russian (23.5%). The anti-terrorist emphasis implies that Russia has no political interests in the region beyond the eradication of terrorism, that it is not interested in supporting either side of the civil war. The other descriptions in Syrian events stand out here as they also don’t point towards an allegiance or a side, at least not at the scale of the descriptions of the war in Ukraine, where RT’s siding with the pro-Russian politicians and insurgents is undeniable.

### Descriptions of the Russian campaign in Syria in all texts

<b>Descriptions</b>	<b>English sample N= 48</b>	<b>Russian sample N=17</b>
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	<b>(frequency), % of descriptions</b>	<b>(frequency), % of descriptions</b>
Russian, Russian-backed Российский	(15) 31.3%	(5) 29.4%
Precise, pointed Точечный	-	(2) 11.8%
Anti-terrorist, anti-ISIS Контртеррористический	(28) 58.4%	(6) 35.3%
Coordinated with Damascus, requested by Syria	(2) 4.1%	-
Successful Удачный, успешный	-	(4) 23.5%
Five-months long	(3) 6.2%	-

Table 26. Descriptions of the war in Syria in all texts. N in this table refers to the number of descriptions recorded. This table does not include descriptions that were recorded once in each sample – these are included in Annex 3.

Remarkably, there are more descriptions of the chemical attack in Khan Sheikoun and the following American attacks on the Syrian airfield than there are descriptions of the Russian campaign<sup>119</sup>. The chemical attack is described with words doubting that the event even took place, especially in the Russian sample where it makes up 92.9% of all the descriptions. This coverage is in line with the official position of Russia, which was doubting the event (BBC 2018). This is also the only category of descriptions where the main description is not neutral – several organisations, including the UN and the Organisation for the Prohibition of the Chemical Weapons have carried out investigations concluding the chemical attack took place (BBC 2017; HRW 2017; Higgins 2017; OPCW 2017), thus any descriptions that say that is ‘alleged’ are misleading. In addition, this way of describing the event naturally introduces doubt (over whether the attack happened or not, and over the way it was reported by other media and governments). As the post-truth section in Chapter 2 noted, spreading of doubt is something that several researchers have ascribed to RT (Meister & Puglierin 2015; Fedchenko 2016; Roloff & Dunay 2018; Kurowska & Reshetnikov 2020), which means that

<sup>119</sup> The American attack was described in 102 descriptions in English and 84 in Russian. The majority of descriptions were neutral and pointed out the weapons used and the country whose army was involved.

the way RT covered this particular event with consideration of the post-truth environment will be one of the focal points of the textual analysis in the next chapter.

### Descriptions of the Khan Sheikhoun chemical attack in all texts

<b>Adjectives</b>	<b>English sample (cases), % N=66</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N= 14</b>
Reported, alleged, suspected Предполагаемый, якобы имевший место	(51) 77.3%	(13) 92.9%
Syrian, Syria	(2) 3%	-
Horrific, reprehensible, brutal, senseless, tragic	(7) 10.6%	-
'Barbaric'	(3) 4.6%	-
Perpetrated by militants	(1) 1.5%	-
Carried out by Syrian authorities Осуществленная сирийскими властями	-	(1) 7.1%
Assad's	(1) 1.5%	-
Recent	(1) 1.5%	-

*Table 27. Descriptions of the chemical attack in Khan Sheikhoun. N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions of protests. It is different from the overall number of articles that feature descriptions because some articles contain more than 1 description.*

Thus, we can see that in principle the descriptions in the Syrian sample were also following the Russian foreign policy agenda in presenting any pro-Russian actors and Russian allies in a positive light, and those challenging Russia and Russian allies in a negative light, this was done overall in a way that was more reserved compared to the coverage of the war in Ukraine: there were less appeals to emotion, the most-used positive description was 'legal', and the most-used negative descriptions were still used less than those in the Ukrainian sample. At the same time, as the document analysis has shown in Chapter 5, the Russian foreign policy agenda spends significantly less time discussing the conflict in Syria than it does Ukraine, thus the approach of the coverage reflects the evident levels of importance of the conflict for Russian foreign policy overall. It is only in the coverage of the chemical

attack in Khan Sheikhoun that the descriptions become more evaluative and, at times, obviously misleading, as they suggest the attack had not actually taken place – this particular angle of coverage is studied further in the textual analysis in the next chapter.

## Descriptions of IS

Descriptions of IS appeared in 19.8% of the texts in English and 21.2% in Russian, and as the Foreign Actors section has shown earlier, as an actor IS appeared in 64.1% of the articles in English and 55.8% in Russian. This means that often the group was not described when it was mentioned in the texts. As the Russian campaign in Syria was emphasised as anti-terrorist, this small number of descriptions is surprising, even though as Table 28 shows, the main description of IS was ‘terrorist’ along with words pointing to violence and establishing a connection with Islam.

### Descriptions of IS in all texts

<b>Adjectives</b>	<b>English sample (cases), % N=66</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N= 141</b>
Terrorist <i>Террористический</i>	(39) 59.1%	(123) 87.3%
International <i>Международный</i>	(2) 3%	(2) 1.4%
Adjectives identifying a connection to Islam (Islamist, jihadist)	(7) 10.6%	(5) 3.6%
Adjectives pointing to violence	(7) 10.6%	(4) 2.8%
Banned in Russia <i>Запрещенный в России</i>	-	(4) 2.8%
Armed <i>Вооруженный</i>	(3) 4.5%	(4) 2.8%
So-called <i>Так называемый</i>	(4) 6.1%	(1) 0.7%
Militant	(4) 6.1%	-

Table 28. Descriptions of IS in all texts. N in this table refers to the number of descriptions recorded. This table does not include descriptions that were recorded once in each sample – these are included in Annex 3.



## Descriptions of Russia

When it comes to describing Russia and the Russian government, we see that it is not being consistently described in a way that can be identified by this quantitative content analysis apart from the adjective ‘Russian’. Other descriptions appear occasionally but never repeat beyond the scope of each event’s timeline. While this result on its own is not something we can analyse at length, seeing how it compares to the descriptions of the other countries and their governments can suggest that the lack of direct descriptions means that the ideas that the coverage assigns to Russia are too complex to be expressed in adjectives and short phrases that be counted in a quantitative content analysis. This is also significant in light of the study that looked at the descriptions of the ‘self’ and ‘other’ groups in Soviet propaganda (Brunova 2011), discussed earlier in the literature review of this thesis, which found that the self-group was described almost four times less than the ‘other’ group. However, the textual analysis will provide a wider look at the way Russia is presented elsewhere in the texts.

### Descriptions of Russia in all texts

<b>Adjectives</b>	<b>English sample (cases), % N=570</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N= 590</b>
Russian (civic) Российский	(535) 93.9%	(519) 88%
Russian (ethnic) Русский	-	(4) 0.7%
Other descriptions	(35) 6.1%	(67) 11.3%

Table 29. Descriptions of Russia in all texts. N in this table refers to the number of descriptions recorded. This table does not include descriptions that were recorded once in each sample – these are included in Annex 3.

## Descriptions of other countries

Similar to the descriptions of Russia, countries other than Syria and Ukraine do not get consistently described in ways that can be identified by the quantitative content analysis. This is not surprising, considering that countries other than Syria and Ukraine do not appear in the coverage as consistently, and are rarely the main topic of the articles. Similar to Russia,

foreign countries and their government most often get described simply with the adjective referring to the country ('American', 'French', 'British' etc), with other descriptions appearing just once and only in the scope of single events. This is why the descriptions of other countries will be studied in the context of entire articles in the textual analysis chapter of this thesis.

### Descriptions of other countries in all texts

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=239	Russian sample (cases), % N= 357
Country/nation-based adjectives	(174) 72.8%	(277) 77.6%
Other descriptions	(65) 27.2%	(80) 22.4%

*Table 30. Descriptions of other countries in all texts. N in this table refers to the number of descriptions recorded. This table does not include descriptions that were recorded once in each sample – these are included in Annex 3.*

## 6:4 Conclusion

This chapter presented the findings of the content analysis study of the RT coverage in English and in Russian of selected events of the conflicts in Ukraine and in Syria. It aimed to describe the characteristics of RT's 'Russian viewpoint on major global events'<sup>120</sup> and has demonstrated through a look at the sources and the actors that Russian perspectives and messages are likely to dominate the coverage of both conflicts in both languages, and that local perspectives, particularly in Syria, are almost absent from the coverage. Through looking numerically at the descriptions of the countries and the actors the chapter has also begun the process of studying those themes and messages, and has shown that a portion of the descriptions, particularly of the sides of the war in Ukraine, is consistent with the Russian foreign policy agenda, outlined in the document analysis. At the same time a look at the descriptions of the war in Syria has shown us a coverage that is a lot drier and more neutral than the coverage of the war in Ukraine – evaluative adjectives make up smaller portions

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<sup>120</sup> RQ1-a. What are the characteristics of the messages that are contained within the 'Russian viewpoint'?

overall. Thus, in this chapter the thesis started answering the two research questions detailed in the introduction: it showed that the themes and messages of the ‘Russian viewpoint’ on the war in Ukraine appeal to emotions, particularly negative ones in the portrayal of the government of Ukraine, and that positive and negative evaluations of the sides of the conflict are a crucial part of the Russian viewpoint of the conflict in Ukraine. The coverage of Syria, in comparison, with the exception of the coverage of the chemical attack in Khan Sheikhoun (event S9), contains significantly less emotion and evaluation. This is particularly interesting to this thesis as a previous study of Soviet propaganda, presented in Chapter 2, has found that actors identified as a part of the Soviet Self are described rarely and in neutral words, while those who fall into the ‘Enemy’ category are described often and in negative words (see Brunova 2011).

Further the chapter has shown that the coverage in English and in Russian does not majorly differ tonally but that different aspects of the same messages are emphasised to different audiences. In covering both wars RT relied heavily on the Russian officials as actors and on the Russian media sources, and that actors from the other countries were more likely to be quoted if they either supported Russia or challenged the West. At the same time there is little variety in the Russian actors who appear in the articles – the Russian viewpoint appears as consolidated and unchallenged from within Russia. The foreign actors that were quoted and appeared were mainly from the Western countries, particularly the US, the UK and the EU. Thus, RT’s claims of alternative angles are likely to come in the form of the high inclusion of the official Russian views of the major Western players in international relations, ‘alternative’ views from the other countries have not been detected by this thesis so far.

Comparing the findings of this chapter with the findings of the document analysis in Chapter 5 makes it clear that there are no ways in which RT contradicts the official Russian foreign

policy agenda<sup>121</sup> – the allegiances and criticism displayed in the foreign policy documentation and Vladimir Putin’s speeches are similar to the support and challenges found in the coverage of the two conflicts studied. When talking about the agency of RT, or the ways in which the channel’s Russian viewpoint differs from the official Russian foreign policy agenda, the discussion is likely to concern details of the coverage presented in different languages to different audiences – one negative description of an event prioritised over the other negative description, rather than a brand-new message. However, any possible further similarities and discrepancies between RT’s themes and messages and the Russian foreign policy agenda will need to be studied with a qualitative look at the coverage.

Therefore, it is important to recognise that the numerical data presented in this chapter is not sufficient on its own to describe the themes and messages in RT’s coverage. This content analysis has identified several topics that will be examined in more detail in the textual analysis, along with the list of additional questions already presented in the methodology chapter. For example, this chapter identified a need to look into the voices that shaped the coverage of the downing of the flight MH17, the way that the Khan Sheikhou attack was portrayed by the channel, the shift in the way that the Euromaidan protests were discussed in the events U1 and U2, the ways in which the channel used Western media as sources, described the various factions of the Syrian opposition, and Russia and other countries that appear in the majority of the coverage but are not described in ways that are detectable through a quantitative content analysis.

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<sup>121</sup> RQ1-b. How does the 'Russian viewpoint on global events' correspond to the country's foreign policy agenda?

## Chapter 7. Textual Analysis

### 7:1 Introduction

As the Methodology chapter explained, the quantitative content analysis, presented in the previous chapter, is supplemented in this study by a qualitative textual analysis of the longer texts of the same sample in order to look at the latent meanings, implications, assumptions and omissions of the text.

In order to continue the exploration of the 'Russian viewpoint on global events' that started in the previous chapter, the main themes and messages that will be studied as a part of the textual analysis were selected in reference to the coding schedule used in the quantitative content analysis with a focus on the descriptions of countries (Ukraine and Syria). Unlike the quantitative content analysis, which could only look at the manifest qualities of the texts, the textual analysis will look into how countries, governments and conflicts were portrayed in-depth in various ways in the texts. The first two sections of the chapter will focus on such portrayals relating to the conflict in Ukraine and the conflict in Syria. The third section will focus on the universal trends that emerged in the coverage of both conflicts, including portrayals of Russia and other countries, as well as the use of quotes and sources.

This chapter will aim to add to answering the same research questions as the quantitative content analysis<sup>122</sup> by looking at and explaining the political, media, and sociological contexts and implications of the articles rather than counting the topics, sources, definitions and actors featured in them. In addition, this chapter will also answer the sub-question 1b<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> Research question 1. What is the 'Russian viewpoint' that RT is delivering to the world?, Sub-questions 1a. What are the characteristics of the messages that are contained within the 'Russian viewpoint'?

<sup>123</sup> How does the 'Russian viewpoint on global events' correspond to the country's foreign policy agenda?

which looks at the relationship between RT's 'Russian viewpoint on global events' and the Russian foreign policy agenda, which is seen here as the official Russian viewpoint on the world and international politics, analysed earlier in this thesis in Chapter 5. To answer this question, the textual analysis will further flesh out which themes, messages and patterns are contained within RT content and compare and discuss them with the findings of the document analysis. In order to facilitate the analysis, the chapter will answer the additional research questions that were introduced in the Methodology chapter; in the section focusing on the conflict in Ukraine the chapter will ask:

14. How does RT present the Ukrainian government?
15. How does RT present the insurgents in Eastern Ukraine?
16. How does RT present Ukrainian people and Ukraine as a country?
17. How does RT present the conflict in Ukraine?

In the section focusing on the conflict in Syria the chapter will ask:

1. How does RT present the Syrian government?
2. How does RT present the Syrian opposition groups?
3. How does RT present the Syrian people and Syria as a country?
4. How does RT present the conflict in Syria?
5. How does RT present IS?

And, finally, in the section detailing the universal trends in the coverage the chapter will ask:

1. How does RT present Russia and the Russian government?
2. How does RT present other countries and their governments?
3. How does RT use actors and quotes in the coverage?
4. How does RT use sources in the coverage?

Each of the three sections of the chapter will present the answers to these additional research questions as themes that emerged during the analysis of the texts, informed by the literature on public diplomacy and propaganda, discussed in Chapter 2, and considering the context of Russian media and RT, discussed in Chapter 3.

This chapter will study 166 articles of the initial sample of 1522 texts in quantitative content analysis. Longer articles were selected as a sample for this method: over 750 words for the texts in English and over 599 words for the ones in Russian. The size of the text for the Russian sample was reduced to reflect the trend identified in the quantitative content analysis where texts in the Russian coverage of events tended to be shorter than texts in the English one. As the result of these criteria this chapter studies in the Ukrainian timeline 29 texts in Russian and 48 texts in English, and in the Syrian timeline 45 texts in Russian and 45 texts in English. There are less texts in Russian in the Ukrainian timeline due to the fact that the Russian articles RT published in 2014 tended to be the shortest of the entire sample.

## **7:2 Ukraine**

Following the additional questions presented earlier, this section of the chapter analyses the way that RT talks about the Ukrainian government, the insurgents in Eastern Ukraine, Ukrainian people, Ukraine as a country and the war in Ukraine.

### **How does RT present the Ukrainian governments?**

#### *Yanukovich as legitimate power*

As the content analysis in the previous chapter discovered, the pro-Russian president Yanukovich is presented by RT with an emphasis on legality, using words like ‘legal’ and ‘legitimate’, or by identifying the events surrounding his removal from power as ‘illegal’ and

a 'coup'. As the textual analysis has discovered, Yanukovich is still identified this way in the articles published after his removal from power (for example articles 14/03/2014 14:38<sup>124</sup>, 16/03/2014 04:28; 16/03/2014 18:40, 17/03/2014 13:41). This use of the legitimising language when referring to the government and president who are no longer in power is in line with the analysis of the foreign policy documentation, where it was found that similar words are used to describe Yanukovich and his government. For example, in his March 2014 Crimea speech Putin says that there is 'sill no legitimate government in Ukraine', despite the fact that the parliament of the country had installed an interim government; in the December 2014 Federal Assembly address Putin identified Yanukovich, who has left Ukraine in February of the same year as 'an absolutely legitimate, internationally recognised head of state' (Putin 2014), even though Ukrainian people have elected a new head of state in May 2014. This shows that in relation to Yanukovich, the messages of RT match those expressed in the Russian foreign policy agenda. Further, the use of the words like 'legal' and 'legitimate' can also be seen as a verbal symbol of power, which is seen as a propaganda technique by Jowett and O'Donnell (2015: 323).

It is equally interesting to see how Yanukovich is not being described by RT: the coverage never mentions the politics, beliefs or leanings of Yanukovich, unlike the interim and the Poroshenko government who are described, as the content analysis has shown, with reference to nationalism or pro-Western policies. Thus, by never describing him as a pro-Russian president, RT never discusses the idea that it was his reluctance as a pro-Russian president to sign the association agreement with the EU that triggered the Euromaidan protests. Further, RT thus never puts in doubt the trustworthiness of its own reports as a Russian media outlet, by never suggesting that there might be Russian foreign policy interests in the game.

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<sup>124</sup> In this chapter articles are identified by the date and time on which they were published.



In only one article in the English sample RT offers any critical analysis of Yanukovich as a politician (22/02/2014 13:40). However, still, the biggest criticism levelled at him in this most critical article is his ‘lack of leadership’ and that he hasn’t ‘accepted the responsibility’ or ‘shown the necessary qualities to take control of the situation’ with the Euromaidan protests, which could be interpreted as criticism of the fact that he hasn’t suppressed the protests with even more violence, rather than collaborate with the protesters. Still, the article sums up, that ‘part of the blame lies with foreign governments, which were all too eager to cheer the Yanukovich-bashing crowds and turn a blind eye to the radical part of the protest and the violence’. Thus, the biggest criticism of Yanukovich still includes blame of the West.

#### *The lack of independence of the new Ukrainian government*

In descriptions of the Ukrainian government after the Euromaidan protests RT coverage largely follows the ideas laid out in the Russian foreign policy documents in relation to seeing the West as the puppeteer of the current Ukrainian government. It is done through phrases that directly refer to these ideas, for example the headline “Kiev, pushed by their Western guides has chosen a wrong path on every crossroad<sup>125</sup>”, and phrases like “Western guides, I mean, first of all, The United States of America of course<sup>126</sup>” and ‘Western sponsors/curators of today’s government<sup>127</sup>’ (18/07/2014 20:15). In another article a quote from the Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov states that ‘the United States, which in fact runs daily life there, has a decisive influence on Kiev's position<sup>128</sup>’ (13/03/2016 18:08) – and no quote or reported speech is presented in the article to represent an alternative point of view

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<sup>125</sup> In Russian: Киев, подталкиваемый западными поводьями, на каждом перекрестке выбирал не тот путь

<sup>126</sup> In Russian: западные поводья, в первую очередь я, конечно, имею в виду Соединенные Штаты Америки

<sup>127</sup> In Russian: Зарубежные спонсоры/ кураторы сегодняшних властей

<sup>128</sup> In Russian: решающее воздействие на позицию Киева имеют США, которые по сути дела руководят там повседневной жизнью

to the one expressed by Lavrov. This portrays the Ukrainian government as powerless, a puppet of other powerful states who are interfering in sovereign countries' businesses – the ideas at the centre of the Russian foreign policy agenda, which described the Ukrainian government as having 'foreign curators' (Putin 2014), while also introducing the idea of the Western meddling in other countries' affairs (discussed in more detail later in this chapter). The Russian word for 'guides' that was used ("povodyr") in the headline<sup>129</sup> presented above is also worth mentioning, as it carries the meaning of guide in the traditional sense but predominantly is used to refer to guides for blind people, like a seeing eye dog or an assistant, or wilderness guides. This way the Ukrainian government is presented as a blind person who is being guided around by the 'seeing eye dog' of the West. Researchers have previously pointed out that the media narrative of the Ukrainian government as US-backed has been connected to the Kremlin directly through a leak of hacked text messages that showed that the Kremlin staff, in particular Timur Prokopenko, the head of the Kremlin internal affairs department, and Alexey Gromov, the First Deputy Chief of Staff of the Presidential Administration and one of the initial founders of RT<sup>130</sup>, have allegedly instructed Russian domestic media to use this narrative (Fedchenko 2016: 160). Further, the portrayal of pro-democratic political unrest in post-Soviet countries and Russia's own internal political opposition have been consistently linked to the West by the Russian government as a way of undermining the political ideas suggested by the protesters (Malinova 2014). This could be seen as a way to both undermine the legitimacy of the claims by such political actors (the Ukrainian government in this case) and to portray them and their ideas as something foreign to the country, whether it is Ukraine or Russia.

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<sup>129</sup> This headline and phrases presented above are quotes from a speech by a Russian UN representative Vitaly Churkin dedicated to the downing of flight MH17 (which he is alluding is the fault of the Ukrainian government). They are presented in an article (18/07/2014, 20:15) that is dedicated entirely to relaying the main points of his speech and doesn't present any counterarguments with the points of view of Ukraine, the Netherlands or any other country involved in any role in the accident.

<sup>130</sup> For more information on Gromov's role in the founding of RT see TASS (n.d.)

The wider idea of the Ukrainian government's lack of independence can be traced back to the idea of Ukraine as a failed state that requires Russia's control, support or intervention in order to survive (Makarychev 2014: 194). This theme has also emerged in this textual analysis and will be explored next.

### *Ukraine as a failed state*

In media and political studies, a failed state refers to a state where formal institutions have collapsed, a country that is engulfed in chaos, anarchy and violence (see for example Hellmann 2020). In his Crimea speech, Putin (2014) discusses Ukraine as a failed state in terms that match with Hellmann's (2020) summary of the concept almost entirely: he says that a legitimate government has still not been elected in Ukraine, that the country is in chaos as political institutions are controlled by impostors who are in turn controlled by radicals. In RT coverage this idea finds reflection, first of all, in articles that directly use the term, stating that 'Ukraine is a failed state' that is 'decaying' and has no future (08/12/2016 13:57). References to the disintegration of institutions, chaos and political and economic collapse are also made: 'The state has run out of political resources for existence, and has, in effect, lost all political support inside and outside of the country' (02/02/2017 08:30); 'Kiev's continued economic struggles make some experts wonder who will support Ukraine's military reform' (15/03/2014 11:41). The only force that can stop this breakdown, as Makarychev (2014) suggested above, is Russia (08/12/2016 13:57). Other researchers also point out the idea of Ukraine as a failed state in Russian political communication (Fedchenko 2016: 159; Osipian 2015: 112); however, it is important to understand that this view is rooted in politics more than reality, where Ukrainian political institutions, though at risk in 2014, have not collapsed (Wilson 2016a). This theme, therefore, reflects the official position of the Russian foreign

policy agenda as it was expressed by Putin (2014). Further as a persuasion and rhetorical device it on one hand justifies the Crimean referendum and the region's decision to secede from Ukraine, the violent actions of the separatists in Eastern Ukraine, and any involvement of Russia in the crisis, and on the other hand it provides a warning tale about what happens after pro-European protests succeed and pro-EU politicians come to power.

### *Ukrainian nationalists*

Another type of description widely used is one that makes a connection between the Ukrainian authorities and Ukrainian nationalism. This is a trend identified by the quantitative content analysis chapter of this thesis, which saw that adjectives like 'nationalist', 'Nazi', 'fascist' and 'radical' were often used to describe the Ukrainian government that came into power after the protests. The textual analysis has shown that the context of these descriptions isn't always as simple as saying that the people in Petro Poroshenko's government (as well as Poroshenko himself) are nationalists – rather that they are dependent on or are controlled by nationalist organisations outside of the government, thus also contributing to the theme of the lack of independence of the government from a different angle. For example, the decision to establish a National Guard in Ukraine is presented as the authorities' attempt to establish a 'custodial' force of violent nationalists who will be doing the government's bidding (15/03/2014 11:41, 15/03/2014 23:58). Articles talking about Poroshenko's politics often explain his decisions and policies with the need to 'please' the nationalists in the government, his circles and the country, without whose support he will not be able to govern (19/02 2015 10:30; 30/01/2017 23:33). Further, coverage of the ceasefire agreement in Eastern Ukraine often states that the government is unable to control the nationalist regiments who refuse to observe the ceasefire (15/02/2015 01:00, 15/02/2015 10:00). At the same time the interim government, which was in power until the elections in May 2014, won by Petro Poroshenko,

is portrayed as holding the ideas of nationalism and fascism. One article (13/03/2014 12:58) directly calls the interim prime minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk and the acting president Oleksandr Turchinov ‘neofascists<sup>131</sup>’ and ‘supporters of the Nazi slogans<sup>132</sup>’. Another article (14/03/2014 01:49) presents a speech by Russia’s UN envoy Vitaly Churkin who is quoted to say that several high-ranking posts in the interim Ukrainian government are held by the members of the radical nationalist ‘Svoboda’ party, which has been declared racist, anti-Semitic and xenophobic by the European Parliament. No information or quotes are presented to dispute or contextualise his statement. Previous chapters in this thesis have discussed the connections between the Ukrainian government and Nazism that appear in Russian political communication and foreign policy agenda. In particular, in a statement similar to that of Churkin above, Putin (2014) has noted that the members of the interim government in Ukraine were ‘ideological heirs of Bandera, a Hitler henchman during the WWII’. By repeating these messages RT further equates its ‘Russian viewpoint on major global events’ with the Russian foreign policy agenda.

It was also previously discussed in this chapter that comparing political leaders to Hitler and producing an image of threat in connection with Nazism is a commonly used propaganda device. On one hand, it can be seen as the name-calling device, which attaches recognisable ‘villainous’ labels to a person in order to convince the audience to reject the person on the basis of the label’s insinuations (see for example Conway et al 2007) – Hitler, historically, is one of the most obvious labels that can be used for these purposes. Arguably, this comparison can also be seen as a transfer device, which transfers the qualities of one idea or person to another (*ibid.*). As Chapters 3 and 5 have noted, while references to Hitler and Nazism are

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<sup>131</sup> In Russian: неонацисты

<sup>132</sup> In Russian: сторонники нацистских лозунгов

popular propaganda techniques globally, they hold particular weight in Russia and the former Soviet Union, where historical circumstances and political, personal and public memories of WWII make them particularly effective and powerful. There is also a rich history of the use of these techniques and the Nazi narrative against Ukraine, where they were used as a way to undermine any independence movements (see Riabchuk 2016; Kuzio 2016), and in discussions of any popular pro-democracy protests in modern Ukraine (see Horbyk 2015, Gaufman 2015, Teper 2016, Fedchenko 2016, Sazonov & Kopōtin 2016, Patiselska 2017, Khaldarova 2019). Thus, whether RT is talking to its Russian or English-speaking audiences, these references to Hitler are likely to be powerful tools.

This connection between the Ukrainian government and nationalists is also used as a way to contextualise and justify the secession of Crimea from Ukraine and separatism in Eastern Ukraine. In his Crimea speech Putin (2014) explained that the ‘Russian-speaking Crimea’ was under the threat of ‘repressions and punitive operations’ from the nationalist Ukrainian government, ‘and the people of Crimea have come to Russia to ask for help protecting their rights and very lives’. RT coverage mirrors these ideas, saying people in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine feared these ‘extreme right-associated politicians’ and their proposed adoption of the ‘nationalist’ language policies, which would see removal of Russian as a state language (15/03/2014 11:41). Considering that the content analysis and the document analysis have discovered that Ukrainians from Eastern Ukraine and Crimea are often described as ethnically Russian or Russian speaking in both RT coverage and the Russian foreign policy documents, we can see that the coverage creates a conflict between this alleged Russianness of the people and the alleged Ukrainian nationalism of the government; this conflict,

naturally, is proposed to be solved through secession and joining Russia for Crimea, and by secession or federalisation for Eastern Ukraine<sup>133</sup>.

### *Ukrainian government untrustworthy*

RT coverage presents the Ukrainian government as highly untrustworthy, as often lying (and getting caught), and as trying to shift the responsibility it holds for negative developments in the war in Eastern Ukraine onto the insurgents. This is seen in statements that directly state that the Ukrainian government is lying: one such statement can be seen in a section headline in a longer news article detailing a speech given by the Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov: “The Ukrainian authorities are blatantly lying to the whole world about the implementation of the Minsk agreements<sup>134</sup>” (02/02/2015 04:31). This headline rephrases Lavrov, who is quoted later in the article saying that ‘Ukrainian authorities are imitating the fulfilment of their obligations and resort to blatant lies in their explanations to the whole world that they have fulfilled everything that was asked of them<sup>135</sup>’ (02/02/2015 04:31). The way that the headlines rephrases this quote, putting the verb into an active form from its original transgressive participle form<sup>136</sup> is particularly remarkable as it emphasises the action, as well as the fact that the expression of an opinion from the high-ranking Russian diplomat is turned into a headline written in RT’s own voice, without any attribution of the contents to Lavrov. The Russian official viewpoint as voiced by Lavrov thus becomes – with little transformation - RT’s Russian viewpoint of major global events<sup>137</sup>.

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<sup>133</sup> Though some of the coverage mentions attempts at independence referendums in Eastern Ukraine, these ideas are never discussed at length or beyond the news articles that briefly report on them – in other words, these ideas are not seriously entertained by RT.

<sup>134</sup> In Russian: *Власти Украины откровенно лгут всему миру о выполнении Минских соглашений*

<sup>135</sup> In Russian: *украинские власти, которые имитируют выполнение своих обязательств и опускаются до откровенной лжи, объясняя всему миру, что они выполнили всё до последней запятой.*

<sup>136</sup> Transgressive participles in Russian are forms of participles that indicate a secondary action, performed concurrently with the primary action, fulfilling a function similar to adverbs of manner in English.

<sup>137</sup> This phenomenon where RT presents statements from quotes without quotation marks will be further discussed later in this chapter in the ‘Universal’ section.

In other instances, RT coverage presents statements from the Ukrainian government as ridiculous, absurd and doubtful, often refuted by simple logic and easily proven facts and events. For example, one article (03/02/2017 23:58) states that if the Ukrainian government maintains that they are observing the ceasefire then the insurgents must be ‘bombing themselves’<sup>138</sup>. The same article calls statements made by the Ukrainian government ‘absurd’ and refutes the governments’ theories that the bombing of insurgents despite the ceasefire was a provocation. Other articles suggest that the Ukrainian government ‘can’t keep its word’<sup>139</sup> (15/02/2015 01:00) and repeatedly attempts to lie by refuting well-known facts and events of the conflict (15/02/2015 11:38). An article that presents a timeline of the ceasefire in Eastern Ukraine presents statements from the government as blame and accusations<sup>140</sup>, while similar statements from the insurgents are presented as facts<sup>141</sup>, without verbs expressing doubt<sup>142</sup> or quotation marks<sup>143</sup> (15/02/2015 10:00). This theme can be seen as further undermining of the Ukrainian government and its anti-Russian and pro-European position, and as supporting of the insurgents as the voices of reason and truth.

### *Ukrainian army as siloviki*

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<sup>138</sup> In Russian: сепаратисты сами себя обстреливали

<sup>139</sup> In Russian: не держит свое слово

<sup>140</sup> ‘The General staff of Ukraine accused the militia of firing at the positions of the Ukrainian military’; In Russian: В Генштабе Украины обвинили ополченцев в обстреле позиций украинских военных.

<sup>141</sup> ‘The head of DPR Alexander Zakharchenko called an emergency meeting to discuss the Ukrainian security forces’ violation of the ceasefire’; In Russian: Глава ДНР Александр Захарченко собрал экстренное совещание по факту нарушения украинскими силовиками режима тишины.

<sup>142</sup> ‘An hour after the start of the truce, Ukrainian security forces opened mortar and artillery fire on the positions of the LPR and DPR. This was stated by the Deputy commander of the DPR Defense Ministry Eduard Basurin’; In Russian: Через час после начала перемирия украинские силовики открыли миномётный и артиллерийский огонь по позициям ЛНР и ДНР. Об этом заявил замкомандующего корпусом Минобороны ДНР Эдуард Басурин

<sup>143</sup> ‘Ukraine has broken ceasefire, a statement made following an emergency meeting of the Deputy commander of the DPR Defence Ministry Eduard Basurin reads’; In Russian: Украиной нарушен режим прекращения огня, такое заявление сделано по результатам экстренного совещания замкомандующего корпусом Минобороны ДНР Эдуарда Басурина.



In the Russian coverage of the war in Ukraine RT regularly uses the word ‘siloviki’ to refer to the Ukrainian army (see for example 15/03/2014 11:41, 14/02/2015 16:41, 15/02/2015 01:00, 19/02/2015 18:14, 30/01/2017 23:33). The Russian word ‘silovik’ has come to be used in English both in journalism (see for example Weir 2015; Yasmann 2017) and in academia (see for example Renz 2006; Ilarionov 2009; Turnbull 2011) and means, literally ‘strongmen’. As RT itself explains on its Wikipedia-style Russapedia website<sup>144</sup>, the word has come to be used to refer to members of security services, police, and armed forces, as well as the group of high-ranking politicians in Russia (Russiapedia n.d.), though, of course, in the context of Ukraine the word is used in the former meaning. Studies of the Russian national media coverage of the war in Ukraine have shown that Ukrainian army is discussed in words that underline its violence and brutality (see for example Horbyk 2015; Gaufman 2015). The association of the word ‘silovik’ with the state, which in the case of Ukraine is portrayed as corrupt and dependent on foreign support and nationalists, underlines the state-sanctioned violence, while also adding violence and brutality to the list of qualities ascribed to the government.

### **In what way does RT present the insurgents in Eastern Ukraine?**

#### *Insurgents as rebels and militia*

RT coverage often refers to the insurgents in Eastern Ukraine as militia in both languages<sup>145</sup>, and as rebels in English. A lot of research has been carried out on the politics of naming, where scholars try to decipher the relationship between actual natures of various movements and groups and the name that is applied to them by those who have the power to name them in the public discourse, particularly in regard to the political context in which the naming occurs, and there is still a lot of disagreement about whether any label or name can truly

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<sup>144</sup> Siloviki – Russapedia: <https://russiapeda.rt.com/of-russian-origin/siloviki/>

<sup>145</sup> In Russian the word used is ‘opolchensty’(ополченцы), which translates as militia.

encompass the full meaning of any group or movement (Bhatia 2005). However, while the word ‘rebel’ can be seen as having certain derogatory meanings, it is mostly seen as having a neutral or a positive meaning (*ibid.*). Curiously, this topic was commented on in another context by Putin (2014a) in a Federal Assembly address, where he protested the use of the word rebels in relation to separatists in Chechnya: “We remember how the West supported terrorists and called those who had blood on their hands ‘rebels’”. From this we can assume that the president is saying that he considers the label ‘rebels’ too light-hearted and positive for the separatist fighters in Chechnya who he sees as responsible for the war and killings. While contextually the conflict in Chechnya is different from the conflict in Eastern Ukraine, the power relations as well as general lines of division (state versus separatist fighters, who they call terrorists in both cases) are similar enough to draw parallels and compare the use of language. This way when RT uses the word ‘rebel’ to refer to the insurgents in Eastern Ukraine the meaning of this word can be placed on the spectrum between neutral and positive.

The word ‘militia’, especially in Russian (‘opolchentsy’), has strong roots in historical naming; among many other examples, the word is used to refer to volunteer army movements that liberated Moscow from Polish occupation in the Polish-Muscovite war of 1605 – 1618, and to the volunteer armies that fought against Napoleon’s invasion of Russia in 1812<sup>146</sup>. The word carries the meaning of the last line of patriotic defence, where civilians get armed to protect their land and homes from foreign aggression and invasion, which, in the context of Ukraine is emphasised elsewhere in the coverage as the Ukrainian government is presented as dependent on and controlled by the West. Therefore both ‘rebels’ and ‘militia’ carry at least a

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<sup>146</sup> This historical link was also established by Gaufman (2015), who studied Russian national media coverage of the war in Ukraine.

neutral, and often a positive tone, and by using these words to refer to insurgents in Eastern Ukraine RT is clearly taking their side and portraying them as a worthy cause.

A look at the omissions shows that the word ‘insurgents’ is never used in the Russian sample and appears in the English sample once, in a quote from a Human Rights Watch statement (24/08/2014 18:36). The word ‘separatist’ appears in the textual analysis sample in reference to the insurgents just once in English, in a quote by the US UN representative Samantha Power (29/08/2014 02:12), and once in Russian in quotation marks (03/02/2017 23:58) and once in a quote by an expert – however in this instance the word is used sarcastically (30/12/2017 23:33). Researchers of the Russian national coverage of the war in Ukraine also emphasised that the word ‘separatist’ was never used – as Chapter 3 explained, one explanation of this was that despite the official neutral tone of the word, in modern Russia it has come to have negative connotations due to the associations with the wars in Chechnya (where groups officially identified as separatists were fighting against the Russian army), and because calls to separatism are criminalised in Russia (Kablukov 2015: 43). It can also be argued, in the context of the sample studied in this thesis, that perhaps RT doesn’t use the word separatist because it sees Ukraine as a failed state and doesn’t see the Ukrainian government as legitimate and legal in the first place, as was discussed earlier in this chapter and in the content analysis chapter. If a government is illegitimate, it has no claim to rule over the country, therefore its claim and attempts to rule over Eastern Ukraine (both in the political sense and in light of the war) have no grounds. And how can there be separatism in a failed state that is already disintegrating?

It is also useful to think about the choice of words here – militia, rebels, insurgents or separatists - as a case of double nominations, a technique in Soviet propaganda where

different ideologically-laden words were used to refer to the same phenomena depending on the Soviet ideological stance (Brunova 2011). Further, the fact that when RT had to use the word separatists it placed it between quotation marks (03/02/2017 23:58) further supports this thinking as Kablukov (2015) describes a practice that is similar to double nominations but instead of using different words he found the uses of irony, textually expressed by quotation marks or the word 'so-called'.

Finally, another omission in describing and portraying the insurgents becomes apparent in comparison with the way the Euromaidan protesters and the Syrian opposition groups are described in the coverage. As the content analysis has shown in the previous chapter, both the Euromaidan protesters and the Syrian opposition groups are described with words that refer to weapons, violence and threat ('radical', 'armed', 'extremist', 'so-called'). Eastern Ukrainian insurgents are very rarely described as 'armed', despite the fact that they have a force armed with combat weapons that takes part in warfare where they take on a regular army - in fact, most uses of the word 'armed' in the textual analysis sample relate to 'the armed coup in Kiev', or the Euromaidan protests. Any comparisons between Ukraine and Syria should acknowledge the vastly different political and military contexts of the two countries, but the fact remains that the armed-ness of one group is emphasised over the other. And in the context of the events in Ukraine, street protesters armed with sticks and stones<sup>147</sup> are described as having weapons more often than the insurgents armed with military weapons and tanks. Thus, RT coverage makes it clear that the channel's sympathies lie with the insurgents in Eastern Ukraine. And while the Russian foreign policy documents studied in Chapter 5 do not discuss the insurgents directly, they explain that at least part of the reason for

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<sup>147</sup> The makeshift nature of the weapons is actually mentioned in RT, when they say that the violent protesters were 'armed with makeshift weapons, flares, and even a tractor' (21/02/2014 06:15)

the war in Ukraine was Western ‘meddling’: its support of the Euromaidan protests and the interim government. Thus, by naming the insurgents ‘militia’ (‘opolchensty’), or patriotic defenders of the land against a foreign invasion, RT expresses a view of the conflict that reflects that of the Russian foreign policy.

*Politics over violence, or insurgents as government*

The leaders of the Eastern Ukrainian insurgents are identified in RT coverage by their self-proclaimed roles and titles, such as ‘head of the Donetsk People’s Republic<sup>148</sup> (DPR)’, ‘the authorities of DPR<sup>149</sup>’, ‘representative of the DPR Defence Ministry<sup>150</sup>’ (14/02/2015 16:41, 14/02/2015 17:37, 15/02/2015 01:00, 15/02/2015 10:00, 15/02/2015 11:38, 31/01/2015 14:02, 31/01/2017 23:33), ‘Eastern Ukrainian leaders’ (14/02/2015 17:37). In these cases, the coverage most often doesn’t specify that the titles in the text are not official titles that came as a result of a traditional political process and elections and are not recognised internationally. The authorities in Crimea after it joined Russia, which are also not recognised by almost all countries in the world, are also referred to simply as ‘Crimean authorities<sup>151</sup>’, ‘deputy prime minister of Crimea<sup>152</sup>’ (18/03/2014 13:39), without additional context about their legal status. The insurgent territories themselves are referred to as the ‘eastern Ukrainian republics’ (14/02/2015 17:37) rather than territory of Ukraine, and in another example an article presented a speech by one of the insurgent ‘officials’ suggesting that Eastern Ukraine is not a part of Ukraine, and that presence of the Ukrainian army in the region is regarded as a ‘temporary occupation’ (15/02/2015 11:38). On some occasions, in further foregrounding of

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<sup>148</sup> In Russian: глава ДНР

<sup>149</sup> In Russian: власти ДНР

<sup>150</sup> In Russian: представитель Минобороны ДНР

<sup>151</sup> In Russian: Власти Крыма

<sup>152</sup> In Russian: вице-премьер Крыма

politics over violence, insurgents are also presented as ‘opposition’ (17/07/2014 15:18, 17/07/2014 18:35, 02/02/2015 15:16).

In just one text Eastern Ukrainian leaders Denis Pushilin and Eduard Basurin were identified as ‘militia leaders’ but later sections of the same article go back to referring to them by their ‘government’ roles (15/02/2015 11:38).

Finally, the coverage also switches the roles between the insurgents and the Ukrainian authorities, as the content analysis has found that ‘self-proclaimed’ is also used to describe the official government of Ukraine. This way, RT texts refer to the Ukrainian government as ‘Kiev government<sup>153</sup>’, and ‘today’s government’ and ‘coup-installed government’ as a way of reducing their legitimacy and underlining their extreme temporality, while also referring to insurgent non-elected leaders by their self-proclaimed titles, increasing their legitimacy in the coverage and omitting information that might damage the appearance of their legality and claim to power. This way of presenting them also focuses on politics and diminishes associations of the insurgents with violence and war, even though, clearly, they are one of the two sides of the war in Eastern Ukraine. It will be particularly interesting to compare this to the way that Euromaidan protesters were presented by RT later in this chapter.

### **In what way does RT present Ukrainian people and Ukraine as a country?**

#### *Ukraine as a divided country*

As the previous chapter specified, the content analysis has found that more than half of all the descriptions of Ukraine detected in the texts refer to geographical terms, the textual analysis

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<sup>153</sup> In Russian: Киевские власти

can help us see the context of these descriptions. Geographical divisions in RT coverage present Ukraine as being divided geographically, politically and ideologically into Eastern<sup>154</sup> and Western Ukraine, where Eastern Ukraine is understood as generally pro-Russian and Russian-speaking industrial regions in the East and South of the country, and Western Ukraine is seen more pro-European, Ukrainian-speaking and nationalist. The capital Kiev exists outside of this division, though after Euromaidan it is presented as having been overtaken by the Western nationalists. While the division is not something borne out of RT coverage and exists in public discussions about Ukraine (see Rosenberg 2013; Kates 2014; Fisher 2014; Connolly 2014), it is emphasised in RT coverage through repetition and focus on the danger of one side (Western nationalist) and threat to the other (Russian-speaking East). Whether these stereotypes<sup>155</sup> are true or false is not the question here – instead what is important is that RT coverage uses this division to paint a picture of threat and danger in Ukraine and uses it to support its own messages about nationalism in the country. For example, Western nationalists, who are used as a justification of Crimea's secession from Ukraine and the insurgency in Eastern Ukraine, are an ever-present threat: 'Nationalists from western Ukraine and Kiev, such as members of ultra-nationalist Right Sector group, made multiple attempts to sneak into the autonomous region to stage protests against Crimean independence' (16/03/2014 04:28); 'As Yanukovich went missing, delegates from local governments decided in Kharkov that they should resist a new opposition-enforced government and form local militias to defend themselves from a potential armed attack from western Ukraine' (22/02/2014 13:40). This theme is also exemplified in the article headlined 'Ukraine's East on Fire: Kharkov Demands Referendum, Donetsk Prosecutor's HQ Stormed' (16/03/2014 18:40), which details how different regions in the East have protested the interim

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<sup>154</sup> In this case Eastern Ukraine includes not only regions controlled by insurgents but the general Eastern and Southern parts of Ukraine.

<sup>155</sup> This stereotype of 'split identity' was discussed, for example, by Anne Applebaum (2014) in her op-ed for the Washington Post titled Ukrainian Smears and Stereotypes.

government as illegal and ‘coup-installed’. This division reflects the general anti-Western sentiment present in RT coverage in the discussions of international politics, which is discussed in more detail in the Universal Trends section of this chapter.

### *Euromaidan protesters as violent*

The quantitative content analysis has already established that protesters on Maidan square are portrayed as dangerous and violent through the use of descriptions referring to violence, weapons and concealed identities. Further to these descriptions, textual analysis shows that the protests are more often identified in the coverage as riots or unrest (eg. 19/02/2014 21:09, 21/02/2014 06:15) which are both associated with danger and violence, and more rarely as protests (eg. 19/02/2014 10:26, 24/08/2014 18:36), which are more associated with shows of political will. In fact, the word ‘protests’ in this sample almost always refer to protests in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine demanding that Russia protects the regions from Kiev (eg. 14/03/2014 14:38, 16/03/2014 04:28) or events in other countries (15/03/2016 06:55, 15/03/2016 18:01). Coverage also establishes connections between the protesters and nationalist and neo-Nazi ideas and specifies that Yanukovich left the country ‘under the threat of violence’ from protesters (14/03/2014 01:49; 15/03/2014 11:41). In another article a claim about torture in the headquarters of the protesters is published undisputed.

### **How does RT present the conflict in Ukraine?**

#### *Euromaidan protests as a violent coup d’etat*

Following on from the earlier section that relayed the ways in which RT coverage presents Euromaidan protesters as violent and dangerous, this section looks at how the protests were presented as a political event. The protests were referred to in RT coverage as ‘the change of



power that bears traits of a coup d'etat<sup>156</sup>, or simply 'coup d'etat'<sup>157</sup>, (eg. 02/02/2015 15:16, 03/02/2017 09:08, 14/03/2014 01:49, 15/03/2014 15:20, 18/03/2014 15:35, 19/03/2014 09:59, 22/02/2014 19:05). This naming emphasises the illegality of the protests and the change in power that followed them and expresses doubt over the legitimacy of the interim government in the country. In addition, the word coup d'etat has connotations of violence, and indeed in Russian it is sometimes referred to with a synonymous phrase 'forceful change of power'<sup>158</sup>, (eg. 16/03/2014 08:20). This is further supported by the results of the content analysis, which showed that the protests and the protesters were overwhelmingly described with negative words referring to violence and extremism.

At the same time RT doesn't strictly follow the way Euromaidan is described by the Russian foreign policy agenda as in one overview article it acknowledges the political ideas that were at the centre of the protests. While in his Crimea speech Putin (2014) ignores the pro-EU slogans of protesters, RT coverage incorporates them into their coverage saying: 'When smiling young demonstrators turned out to Kiev with EU flags in November, one could hardly imagine that within just three months, the protests would be usurped by masked rioters with guns' (21/02/2014 06:15). This is one of the few ways in which RT content diverges from the Russian foreign policy agenda<sup>159</sup>.

Combined with some of the trends already highlighted by the content analysis, such as the over-reliance on the sources in the Yanukovich and Russian governments and the lack of sources or quoted actors from the side of the Euromaidan protesters, we can assess the

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<sup>156</sup> In Russian: Смена власти, имеющая признаки государственного переворота

<sup>157</sup> In Russian: государственный переворот

<sup>158</sup> In Russian: насильственная смена власти

<sup>159</sup> Admittedly, the article discussed in this example was published before Putin's Crimea speech; however, we should think of Putin's portrayal of the protests as originating from the ideas of the Russian foreign policy that existed before the speech.

coverage of the protests as unbalanced, one-sided and focused on the official Russian and pro-Russian messages only. The coverage also made use of the Soviet propaganda device of double nominations - as Chapter 2 revealed, the choice between referring to an event as either revolution or a coup d'état depending on the Soviet ideological evaluation of the event was a widespread practice (Brunova 2011).

### *Crimea like Kosovo*

In the coverage of the annexation of Crimea by Russia, RT presents the context of the situation as similar to that of Kosovo, which unilaterally declared independence from Serbia in 2008. This idea is expressed in articles by Putin, other Russian officials, Crimean officials and Russian and foreign experts (eg. 13/03/2014 14:47, 14/03/2014 01:49; 14/03/2014 14:38, 14/03/2014 17:53, 18/03/2014 11:08, 19/03/2014 19:33), and makes an argument for the secession and the referendum in Crimea as global practices and underlines the legality of what is happening in Crimea<sup>160</sup>. The issue of the peoples' right to self-determination is brought up in this regard (eg. 14/03/2014 01:49, 14/03/2014 14:38, 15/03/2014 15:20), and in other cases, Kosovo is brought up to point out the hypocrisy of the Western politicians who criticise Russia over Crimea (19/03/2014 19:33), thus rather than playing a role of a genuine comparison it is rhetorically employed to undermine criticism levelled at Russia.

Most obviously, this comparison is prominent in Putin's (2014) speeches reviewed in Chapter 5 as he argues that what was allowed for Kosovar Albanians should be allowed for 'Russians, Ukrainians and Crimean Tatars'. Researchers have noted that before the referendum in Crimea Russia was one of the critics of the Kosovo case, and only started viewing it as a

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<sup>160</sup> Similar argument was put forward by Kuhrt (2017: 40) as she argued that the comparison serves to emphasise the legality.

precedent in March 2014 (Malinova 2014). Indeed, the example of Kosovo is actually used as a negative example by RT in articles on other topics, for example one where the Serbian president (who is of course likely to express anti-Kosovo views) praises Russian effort in Syria as it prevented IS from forming a ‘Kosovo-style state’ (13/03/2016 14:30). Chapter 5 argued that such fluid use of comparisons means that the Russian view of the world is not a consistent set of views but rather a flexible series of ideas changing depending on the particular circumstances and the argument that needs to be made. The examples made in this section of the chapter prove the same is true for RT – this particular finding will be explored in more detail in the following chapter that aims to answer research question 2 of this study, which looks to identify the post-truth traits in RT’s work as an agent of Russian public diplomacy.

#### *Kiev as aggressor, insurgents as defenders*

The previous chapter and the analysis in this chapter have already established that the Euromaidan protesters were portrayed as dangerous and violent, and the change of government that followed the protests is portrayed as illegal and damaging to the country’s Eastern regions where people are described as Russian-speaking and therefore persecuted by the new nationalist government. The insurgents in this scenario are portrayed as rebelling against the injustice and protecting the population of Eastern Ukraine from the unfair and illegal events and processes in the country by refusing to recognise the ‘illegitimate’ and ‘coup-installed’ government with ties to neo-Nazis. The fact that the insurgents are acting on

the will of the population is underlined as ‘the people’<sup>161</sup> and ‘the regions’<sup>162</sup>, collectively are portrayed as the source of dissent (14/03/2014 14:38, 25/08/2014 17:49, 18/03/2014 18:01)

This portrayal of the insurgents as defenders of the people continues in the way the war is covered. First of all, the conflict is attributed to the Ukrainian authorities through descriptions like ‘punitive operation’<sup>163</sup>, (28/05/2014 23:14) and verbs that portray the Ukrainian government as ‘unleashing’ its army on the insurgents (26/05/2014 10:41, 26/05/2014 20:14). Secondly, the insurgents’ actions are portrayed as defensively mirroring the actions of the government and never instigating the fighting (02/02/2015 15:16). Thirdly, any loss of civilian lives in the conflict is attributed directly to the government<sup>164</sup> (02/02/2017 08:30, 03/02/2017 23:58). At the same time, loss of lives of the Ukrainian soldiers (or civilians) is never attributed to the insurgents in the same way, since the war is always the Ukrainian government’s fault; Ukrainian Army losses are presented as the losses of Kiev not as soldiers killed by the insurgents (19/02/2015 18:14). Finally, the Ukrainian government is presented as an aggressor, for example breaking ceasefires as explained before in the section on the theme of the Ukrainian government’s untrustworthiness, where the coverage undermined all statements from the Ukrainian government, presenting them as doubtful accusations, while statements from the insurgents were presented as facts, in neutral tones and often without

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<sup>161</sup> ‘Kiev’s military crackdown on in the south-east of the country started in April after the people in Donetsk and Lugansk Region refused to recognize the new coup-imposed authorities and demanded federalization of the country’ (25/08/2014 17:49).

<sup>162</sup> ‘Several regions in Southern and Eastern Ukraine, as well as Crimea, have not recognised the legitimacy of the Rada [*Ukrainian parliament*]’ (18/03/2014 18:01).

<sup>163</sup> In Russian: карательная операция

<sup>164</sup> For example: ‘Over the past day, the Armed forces of Ukraine have violated the ceasefire regime in the Donbas more than three thousand times. The fighting continues for the third day. The result — dozens of destroyed buildings in the vicinity of Donetsk, several dead civilians of the DPR and at least 80 killed soldiers of the armed forces of Ukraine’ (02/02/2017 08:30), In Russian: За минувшие сутки Вооружённые силы Украины более трёх тысяч раз нарушили режим прекращения огня в Донбассе. Бои не утихают третий день. Итог — десятки разрушенных зданий в окрестностях Донецка, несколько погибших мирных жителей ДНР и не менее 80 убитых бойцов ВСУ.

quotation marks (15/02/2015 10:00). This portrayal ensures that the government is seen as responsible for the war, which is described in terms relating to violence and destruction.

The coverage also suggests that the aggression of the Ukrainian government does not have popular support: an article on the conscription campaign for the Ukrainian army is focused on the anti-conscription protests, crying mothers of soldiers and interviews with men who had to flee the country to avoid being drafted<sup>165</sup> (02/02/2015 15:16; 18/07/2014 20:15). This separation of ordinary Ukrainians from the ‘corrupt elites’ fits within populist communication strategies and also the strategy of Soviet propaganda which tended not to present ordinary people in enemy countries as enemies, instead drawing the separation lines between Self and Other at class, power and wealth (see Vasiliyeva 2010; Brunova 2011). Further, the same article emphasised that conscription in the insurgent territory is voluntary and only a response to the conscription started by the Ukrainian government: thus, it is the Ukrainian government’s fault that they are starting the conscription in Ukraine, and it is also the Ukrainian government’s fault that the insurgents are starting conscription in Eastern Ukraine.

It is also underlined often that the conflict could have been avoided or cut short if the Ukrainian government wanted to and accepted Russia’s advice on peaceful regulation (18/07/2014 20:15); the collapse in peace-talks is further credited to political games and intrigues playing out inside the Ukrainian government (02/02/2017 08:30). In an article discussing the collapse of the peace talks between the insurgents and Kiev, presented as ‘they said’ versus ‘they said’ insurgents are quoted 6 times comprising several sentences each, Ukrainian officials are quoted just once, and the quote is only a phrase, half of a sentence,

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<sup>165</sup> The same article presents a recruitment drive by the insurgents in neutral tones as a necessary reaction to Kiev’s conscription and presents it within Kiev’s inability to stick to peace talks (15/02/2015 10:00).

and insurgents get the last word in the argument (02/02/2015 15:16). This attributes not only the responsibility but also the cruelty to the Ukrainian government, and further removes any responsibility from the insurgents and any possible support that Russia might have shown them. It further proves the thesis, previously put forward by this chapter, that RT is effectively taking the side of the insurgents in their coverage of the conflict in Eastern Ukraine.

### *MH17 crash – the many versions*

The textual analysis sample contains only 5 articles<sup>166</sup> that focus on the downing of the Malaysian Airlines flight MH17 in Eastern Ukraine, and another one article that discusses the event as one of the several topics. A distinct theme emerges, however, from the analysis of these 6 articles – it is that there are many versions, views and possible scenarios of what had happened. Most of these articles present more than one version of the events, sometimes repeating the same versions in the course of an article while also providing conflicting versions; the versions come from officials, experts and unverified sources<sup>167</sup>. Notably, all the versions still remain on the RT website now, even though some have since been proven wrong by the official investigation into the crash. Below is the list of themes that place blame and responsibility on various actors in the 6 articles analysed:

1. The plane crashed because it was faulty (17/07/2014 15:18).

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<sup>166</sup> As the content analysis chapter has shown, the majority of the texts in both Russian and English in the sample of this event are shorter and therefore did not fit the criteria of textual analysis.

<sup>167</sup> In one such case an article (17/07/2014 15:18) refers to 'Patrick Lancaster, who was at the crash site of the Malaysian jet'. It is not specified who Patrick Lancaster is, and why he is a credible source beyond being on the site of the crash. In addition, the name is not a typical Ukrainian name, but RT doesn't present any explanation of what a person with a Western name is doing on rebel territory in Eastern Ukraine, which is notoriously difficult to access even for Ukrainians. A search online shows that Lancaster is presented by several websites as a 'US journalist', however, there is no evidence of him having ever reported or worked on anything for any recognised media outlet. His Youtube channel shows that first video dates back to just before the Crimean referendum, and is not produced professionally.

2. Insurgents could not have shot the plane down because they don't have the necessary weapons (17/07/2014 15:18, 17/07/2014 18:35).
3. Insurgents could not have shot the plane down because they don't have the necessary skills to operate a surface-to-air missile launcher (17/07/2014 18:35).
4. Insurgents could not have shot the plane down because they don't have any technology to track or navigate a plane on their territory (17/07/2014 15:18).
5. Insurgents are not guilty (17/07/2014 15:18).
6. Russia is not guilty (17/07/2014 15:18).
7. Ukrainian army is unqualified so they might have done it by accident (17/07/2014 15:18).
8. Ukrainian air traffic controllers might be responsible (18/07/2014 20:15, 29/08/2014 02:12).
9. Ukrainian air traffic controllers are responsible (18/07/2014 20:15).
10. Ukraine is guilty because they closed and reopened their airspace a couple of days before the crash (17/07/2014 15:18).
11. The Ukrainian government is responsible because it happened on their territory, whether it was them who shot the plane down or not (18/07/2014 22:44).
12. The Ukrainian government is guilty (18/07/2014 20:15).
13. The Ukrainian government is guilty because it has the air defence complex that can be used to shoot down a plane (17/07/2014 15:18).
14. The Ukrainian government is guilty because it deployed air-to-surface missiles to the site of the crash a couple of days before the crash (17/07/2014 18:35).
15. Ukraine might be responsible because it shot down civilian planes by accident before (17/07/2014 15:18, 17/07/2014 18:35).

16. We don't yet know who is guilty, but we need to have an international investigation (18/07/2014 20:15, 18/07/2014 22:44).

17. We don't yet know who is guilty, but Western countries are quick to blame (17/07/2014 18:35).

18. The plane was shot down because it was a provocation by the Ukrainian army against the insurgents (17/07/2014 15:18).

This number of versions of the event in small a period of time and compacted into just several articles ought to have a disorienting effect on the audience, especially considering there might have been more versions put forward in the rest of coverage of RT that did not fit the textual analysis criteria<sup>168</sup>. The question of whether this was a deliberate tactic by RT or rather just an attempt to cover all possible version has to be asked. Gatov (2018) offered a comparison between the Russian national coverage of MH17, which also featured a high number of versions of the event, and the work of Soviet propaganda, where a special department of KGB was responsible for creating 'smoke screens' by distributing many alternative versions around news events that implicated the Soviet regime<sup>169</sup>. He also noted that this particular type of propagandist practice was not particularly successful – however, the presence of this historical practice might suggest that RT's coverage might have been following a deliberate tactic. Further, Chapter 2 of this thesis mentioned a distinction between propaganda and agitation as defined by Lenin, where propagandist must present many ideas, so many that they will only be understood by comparatively few people, and an agitator, on the other hand, must present a single idea to the masses and arouse their feelings over the single idea (Clews 1964; Chogandaryan 2013). According to this distinction, RT's coverage

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<sup>168</sup>The content analysis sample for this event included 26 articles in English and 62 articles in Russian.

<sup>169</sup> Gorgidze (2017: 55) calls this propaganda technique the 'principle of relevant contrast'.



of MH17 is true propaganda according to Lenin, while the rest of the events are mere agitation.

Another important point is that none of articles presented a version of events where the insurgents and Russia as their supporter might be responsible for the crash, even though this was widely discussed and reported on in major media outlets at the time (see for example Tharoor 2014; Luhn 2014a; Wilson et al 2014). This way it is fair to suggest that while an argument could be made that RT tried to cover the story from different angles, the absence of one of the main angles, one that attributes responsibility to the insurgents, indicates that the multiple versions were rather an attempt to put up a smoke screen and sow confusion in order to minimise the impact of allegations against Russia or Russia's allies and proteges, which again places RT on the side of the insurgents. Finally, this finding will be discussed in more detail in relation to the 'multiple truths' that it presented in the post-truth section of the next chapter.

### **7:3 Syria**

Following the additional questions presented earlier, this section of the chapter analyses the way that RT presents the Syrian government, the Syrian opposition, Syrian people and Syria as a country, how it presents IS and the war in Syria.

#### **How does RT present the Syrian government and the army?**

As the content analysis has established in the previous chapter, the Syrian government did not get described by RT very often, and the most popular descriptions were neutral. This textual analysis shows that in the overall texts the Syrian government is indeed described less than the Ukrainian government.

### *Syrian government under threat from the West*

Bashar Assad and his government are often described in RT coverage through the descriptions of the US and ‘the West’ who are consistently presented as aiming to remove Assad from power either through supporting the Syrian opposition groups, through putting pressure on international organisations such as UN, through information wars and through direct military attacks (eg. 08/12/2016 19:41, 09/12/2016 16:25, 11/12/2016 15:19). These ideas are presented in quotes from Russian, Syrian and various foreign politicians, experts and journalists. The motivations of the West are never discussed in detail and an idea that this is a typical move for the West overshadows any disputes over politics and human rights – the reflection of this idea in the Russian foreign policy agenda will be discussed later in this chapter, however, crucially, Putin (2015) mentioned the idea of the Syrian government being under attack from the West before Russia got involved in the war directly. Finally, this positioning of Assad and the Syrian government in opposition to the meddling West means that they are portrayed as a strong, legitimate power constantly under attack by the violent forces or foreign meddling, which is not unlike the portrayal of Russia and the Russian government in the Russian foreign policy documents (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2016a).

### *Syrian government and army as humane*

Unlike most Western media portrayals of Bashar Assad and his government that portray them as a brutal regime, RT’s coverage underlines the humane, soft and reasonable side of this government. On one side it is done through direct statements of details that show the humanitarian steps the government is taking in a bid to protect its citizens, even when it means that they might lose out militarily or politically (15/03/2016 18:01, 12/12/2016 16:39, 07/12/2016 19:16), or pointing out that the Syrian government offers all opposition fighters

an option of amnesty and a return to the civilian life (07/12/2016 19:16, 08/12/2016 16:07). On the other side in a lengthy interview with Bashar Assad RT journalist Maria Finoshina discusses with him the fact that Assad regularly pardons members of the opposition who put down the weapons in an attempt to return to the normal life (14/12/2016 18:15). While Assad's answers expectedly portray him and his government as humanitarians who value human life most of all, it is Finoshina's questions and her voice as a representative of RT that set the tone for the answers. For example, she says: "I feel that you call them terrorists, but at the same time you treat them as human beings, you tell them 'you have a chance to go back to your normal life'" (14/12/2016 15:01, 14/12/2016 18:15).

While Syria is not discussed in the Russian foreign policy documents in detail, it is important to see this positioning of the Syrian government as reflecting not just on Assad, but on Russia as his ally. By portraying Assad as humane and reasonable RT is portraying Russia as being on the right side of international politics.

### **How does RT present the Syrian opposition groups?**

#### *Violence over politics*

Descriptions of the Syrian opposition groups in RT coverage are used to emphasise violence over political disagreements with the Assad government, in a way that is not dissimilar from the ways in which RT presented the Euromaidan protesters in Ukraine. This focus on violence has been previously established in the content analysis, which has shown that the opposition groups were described with words referring to violence, terrorism and religious extremism. While the word opposition, which does imply political disagreements, is used to

refer to the groups, it often appears in conjunction with words like ‘fighters’ or ‘militants’<sup>170</sup>, which emphasise the violence (28/03/2016 14:31, 13/12/2016 23:01, 11/12/2016 15:19). Often, RT adopts the way the Syrian government refers to these groups as ‘terrorists’ (eg. 03/08/2016 17:05, 12/12/2015 04:00, 28/09/2015 16:16). This also makes it more difficult to distinguish between IS fighters and the Syrian opposition groups in the text - they are often referred to with the same word, which blurs the lines between them in crucial scenarios, for example when an article states that ‘US are supporting fighters with weapons’ (09/12/2016 12:27, 13/12/2016 23:01). In these cases, only an attentive reader with background knowledge of the situation in Syria might be able to understand if the texts talk about IS or the Syrian opposition fighters from the context. This blurring of the lines brings them closer together and conveys an idea that anyone fighting against the Syrian and Russian armies is dangerous. This idea was also put forward by Piper (2019: 382) who said that one of the main narratives of the Russian foreign policy in relation to Syria is that ‘all anti-Assad forces are deemed terrorists.’ On the other hand, articles don’t always need to confuse the readers with opaque naming of the different groups - the actions of the opposition groups are also often directly compared to those of IS: for example, in an article recounting the downing of the Russian helicopter by the opposition the text recounts all the times that IS has attacked Russian helicopters (01/08/2016 9:52). This way of portraying an extremely complex war in a simplified way removes any possible grey areas in Russia’s participation in the conflict – Russia’s support for the Syrian government becomes support for the only legal and reasonable force in the region.

Finally, when RT coverage does use the words like ‘Syrian opposition’ or ‘rebels’ it almost always uses the phrase ‘the so-called Syrian opposition’, ‘the so-called rebels’, or ‘the so-

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<sup>170</sup> In Russian in both cases: боевики

called moderate opposition<sup>171</sup>, or puts them in quotation marks (eg.18/12/2016 07:48, 03/12/2015 21:18, 29/02/2016 07:29) to introduce doubt over this classification of the groups, and, possibly, to express irony or sarcasm. The word opposition is used to describe a political opponent, so by expressing doubt over whether the term applies to the groups RT is dismissing the groups as independent political actors.

### *Connection with the West*

Another theme that emerges in connection with the Syrian opposition is that of their connection with the US in particular and the West in general. This is done through extensive coverage of the US support of the opposition groups with weapons (eg. 01/08/2016 09:52, 09/12/2016 12:27, 11/12/2016 15:19) and through emphasising political support for the groups from various Western countries (eg. 07/04/2017 01:32, 07/04/2017 11:17, 08/12/2016 16:07). Similar to the case that RT coverage made in the Ukrainian conflict implying that the West is puppeteering the post-Euromaidan government in Ukraine, the connection is used to produce a negative view of the opposition by association with the West and underlines the idea, widely featured in the Russian foreign policy documents, that the West is manipulating other countries for its own political and economic benefit and to resist the growing power of Russia as a part of the new multipolar world (eg. Putin 2013, Putin 2015). Further, this concept is used to undermine the opposition as it portrays them as a ‘tool’ of the West, as not having agency of their own, and portrays any ideas or political views they may have as foreign.

### **In what way does RT present Syrian people and Syria as a country?**

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<sup>171</sup> In Russian: так называемая сирийская оппозиция, так называемые повстанцы, так называемая умеренная оппозиция

### *Dismissal of White Helmets*

The White Helmets, the group known as Syria Civil Defence, is presented in RT coverage as an untrustworthy, biased organisation that works as an anti-Assad propaganda outlet (18/12/2016 05:04). Information presented by the White Helmets is subjected to doubt by descriptions of the groups as ‘very conveniently happened to be at the epicentre of the event<sup>172</sup>’, ‘biased<sup>173</sup>’ and ‘amateur<sup>174</sup>’ (06/04/2017 01:14). The group is also described as ‘Oscar-bearing<sup>175</sup>’ (06/04/2017 01:14), referring to the Academy Award received by the documentary about the group. This description is particularly interesting as it achieves two goals – creating a connection with Hollywood and the film business, echoing the accusations that group’s videos are staged, and producing a connection with the USA and the West, thus portraying the group as foreign, pro-Western, and anti-Syrian. Describing organisations and actors with words and phrases underlining their connection to the West can be seen as one of RT’s main tools of delegitimising their criticism of Russia, Russia’s policies and Russia’s allies such as Syria.

### *Syrian people support Assad*

As the lack of popular support for the Ukrainian government was emphasised in RT’s coverage of Ukraine, in Syria RT focuses on the support that the Syrian government and army have from the civilians. In an article on the liberation of Aleppo significant space is dedicated to detailing of the rejoiced reactions of the locals who are celebrating the advances of the Syrian army (14/12/2016 01:41). This further legitimises the Syrian government and the Russian support for it.

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<sup>172</sup> In Russian: как нельзя кстати оказавшимися в центре событий

<sup>173</sup> In Russian: ангажированные

<sup>174</sup> In Russian: самодеятельность

<sup>175</sup> In Russian: оscarоносные

## **How does RT present the conflict in Syria?**

### *Anti-terrorist operation*

The conflict in Syria is most often described simply as war, but most of the times the conflict is mentioned and discussed in political terms is in reference to the Russian involvement. In this sense, the military action is almost always described as Russia's anti-terrorist operation and assistance to the Syrian army (28/09/2015 21:10, 30/09/2015 07:12, 24/03/2016 12:58).

The document analysis has shown the main threats in the world were identified as the unstable situation in international affairs (where the West is constantly trying to retain its powers in a changing multipolar world) and international terrorism, which is posed a threat to Russians in Russia. While the conflict in Ukraine was explained in both the coverage and the foreign policy documents as being about protecting Russian speakers and Russians and resisting Western expansion attempts, the conflict in Syria combines the two main international threats, thus legitimising Russia's involvement in it.

### *Proxy war*

The conflict in Syria is identified as a 'proxy war' several times in the textual analysis sample. This means that sides of the conflict represent bigger regional and international players. This idea is introduced in an interview with Assad, who says that the West's support for opposition groups made them a pawn in a proxy war (14/12/2016 15:01). This idea is further developed in an interview with Lord Truscott, a non-affiliated member of the House of Lords who has been accused of corruption in the 2009 cash for influence scandal and is in business with Russian oil companies<sup>176</sup>, as he adds the idea of a geopolitical split and that multiple players are fighting for influence over Syria (15/12/2016 18:29). This is an idea

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<sup>176</sup> Lord Truscott's suitability as an expert on the topic of Syria and Russia is discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

well-explored in Chapter 5 as it relayed the Russian view on the Western interference in conflicts abroad, which further connects to one of the main pillars of the Russian foreign policy agenda, the idea of the emerging multipolar world (see for example President of Russia 2009, Putin 2014, Putin 2015, President of Russia 2015, Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2016).

### *Chemical attack in Khan Sheikhoun – the many versions*

The coverage of the chemical attack in Khan Sheikhoun was similar to the coverage of the downing of MH17 in Eastern Ukraine in the sense that multiple, often conflicting, versions of the event were offered by RT. All accusations that the Syrian army, and Russia as Syria's ally, are responsible for the attack were called into doubt in several ways: 1. With quotes and interviews of Russian, Syrian and some foreign politicians who either denied involvement or said they don't believe Syria and Russia are responsible; 2. With quotes and interviews with military and weapon experts who questioned the technical details of the reports of the attack; 3. By questioning the main sources of accusations, especially the reports by the White Helmets, who are repeatedly described as biased, untrustworthy and having a strong connection to the West; 4. By accusing the Syrian opposition groups of the attack by implying that the chemical weapons used were handmade and mentioning the previous cases where the groups have been accused of similar attacks. All experts that appear in the coverage are firmly pro-Russian and pro-Syrian – sometimes entire articles are made up of pro-Russian experts with not one doubting the innocence of Syria and Russia (06/04/2017 01:14). The coverage contained no mentions of the history of bombings and attacks by the Syrian army, instead it recounted the occasions in which chemical weapons were used by the opposition – similar to how the coverage of MH17 referenced the downing of a Russian passenger plane by Ukraine. In further symmetry with the MH17 attacks, one version



maintains that the attack was a provocation against Assad and his army in the same way that the insurgents in Eastern Ukraine argued that it was the Ukrainian army who shot down MH17 in order to pin it on the insurgents. Below is the full list of the versions of the chemical attack found in the textual analysis sample:

1. The attack is an excuse to overthrow Assad (07/04/2017 01:32, 07/04/2017 11:17, 07/04/2017 12:44).
2. The attack was not a bombing (06/04/2017 01:14).
3. Russia is not guilty (05/04/2017 12:58, 06/04/2017 01:14, 07/04/2017 01:32).
4. Syria is not guilty (04/04/2017 11:45, 07/04/2017 09:14, 07/04/2017 12:44).
5. Syria is not guilty because there is no proof (05/04/2017 12:58).
6. Syria is not guilty because their chemical weapons were destroyed in 2013 (05/04/2017 15:46, 06/04/2017 01:14).
7. Biased Western countries are quick to blame Syria and Russia without any evidence (05/04/2017 12:58, 06/04/2017 01:14, 07/04/2017 01:32, 07/04/2017 12:44).
8. Biased Western media says Syria and Russia are guilty (05/04/2017 12:58).
9. Syria did not do it because they had no reason to (06/04/2017 01:14).
10. Opposition did it – they have carried out similar attacks in the past, where the Syrian government was falsely blamed (04/04/2017 11:45, 05/04/2017 12:58, 06/04/2017 01:14).
11. We need to find out who did it (05/04/2017 12:58, 05/04/2017 15:46, 06/04/2017 04:05).
12. Even if the Syrian government did it, they did it by accident by hitting rebels supplies of chemical weapons (04/04/2017 11:45, 05/04/2017 12:58, 06/04/2017 01:14, 07/04/2017 09:14).
13. IS did it (04/04/2017 11:45).

14. The US coalition did it because they're struggling in Mosul (06/04/2017 01:14)
15. The attack was a rebel provocation against Assad (05/04/2017 12:58, 06/04/2017 01:14, 07/04/2017 23:55).
16. It is not proven there was even an attack (07/04/2017 09:14, 07/04/2017 12:44).

A notable difference from the RT coverage of the crash of MH17 is that the versions that allege Russia or Russian allies might be responsible are present in the coverage of the chemical attacks. They are, however, presented in a way that immediately puts them in doubt without allowing the reader to consider them. A suggestion that the Syrian government might have been responsible but not guilty (they hit the oppositions' chemical weapon warehouse by accident) is an interesting one as it becomes almost a middle ground as the channel is negotiating the various degrees of responsibility in its multiple versions of events.

In another divergence from the coverage of MH17, which featured an article that discussed the victims and the grief of their friends and family following the downing of the plane, the coverage of Khan Sheikhoun features no discussions of or testimonies from the victims, thus completely ignoring any humanitarian angles of the event in favour of a coverage completely focused on blame and responsibility. This is in line with the findings of the content analysis, which pointed out the lack of humanitarian topics and angles of the coverage in general and contradicts the channel's editor-in-chief's promise of a channel that will provide an alternative to the Western coverage of wars that is entirely focused on losses by and damages to the weapons and property of Western countries while completely ignoring the loss of civilian lives on the other side.

Thus, again, this coverage's focus on the multiple themes of blame and responsibility can be seen as a smoke screen as described by Gatov (2018), designed to be contradictory and confusing in order to minimise the impact of the allegations against Russia or Russia's allies. Whether this places RT on the side of the Syrian government is a complex question as the channel is obviously willing to ascribe some sort of responsibility to the Syrian government in the way that it is not ready to do with the Eastern Ukrainian insurgents. This underlines again a point put forward in the conclusion of Chapter 5 that stated that Russia is potentially less invested in Syria than it is in Ukraine as less space and emotions are dedicated in the foreign policy documents to the discussion of the involvement in Syria. RT's willingness to give up some of the ground to potential allegations against Assad further support this point, and act as further proof that RT's coverage is aligned with the Russian foreign policy agenda.

### **How does RT present IS?**

#### *US helping IS*

As the content analysis has found, there are few descriptions of IS present in RT coverage with the exception of 'terrorist', which doesn't allow us to judge how RT presents the group beyond that one word: RT coverage clearly does not seek to 'rebrand' the organisation by inventing new ways of describing it but instead utilises the existing theme of terrorism, in which IS already exists in all other global media. The Russian foreign policy documents also name international terrorism as one of the main threats in the world today, so RT descriptions of IS as an image of threat are firmly aligned with the Russian foreign policy agenda.

However, one might argue that portraying IS as terrorists is not a viewpoint that is exclusive to Russia. Textual analysis shows, instead, that another theme emerges in RT coverage – that of the USA helping IS, intentionally or unintentionally. First of all, the coverage explains that the USA's readiness to send arms to the Syrian opposition and the Iraqi army has been

beneficial for IS as the weapons end up in their possession, as well as any US-trained fighters that have left the opposition for IS (eg. 01/02/2015 16:08; 09/12/2016 12:27, 12/12/2016 16:39), and by persisting in their anti-Assad stance and depleting the resources of the Syrian army which could be used to fight IS (eg. 07/04/2017 16:13, 07/04/2017 23:14, 08/12/2016 16:07, 09/12/2016 16:25). When IS had retaken Palmyra from the Syrian army in December 2016 RT coverage alleged that IS attack was orchestrated by the US to distract the Syrian army that was moving forward in Aleppo (13/12/2016 00:30, 12/12/2016 16:39, 14/12/2016 16:15). A Q&A style interview with Assad suggests that IS is only ‘as strong as the support that they get from the West and regional powers [...] the money, the oil field investment, the support of the American allies' aircrafts, that's why they are strong’ (14/12/2016 16:15).

The Russian foreign policy documents also identify a connection, arguing that IS owes to US with its entire existence – a point that is used to emphasise the harmful consequences of the West’s meddling in other countries’ affairs (President of Russia 2015). In the coverage similar ideas are expressed in an article where the connection is made even in the headline: ‘From regime change to ISIS: 5 years of US meddling in Syria’ (15/03/2016 06:55). Some might argue that these descriptions do more in terms of presenting the West and US than they do IS. However, it is important to note the similarity in the way that connections with the West are established for actors who are fighting against Russia, or who Russia fights and resists, either militarily or politically (the Syrian opposition, the Ukrainian government).

#### **7:4 Universal trends**

This section will discuss the trends in the articles that apply to the coverage of both conflicts, will complement the quantitative content analysis and compare and discuss the findings in conjunction with the findings of the document analysis chapter. Following the additional

research questions presented earlier, this section will look at the way RT coverage presents Russia, the Russian government, other countries (except for Syria and Ukraine) and their governments, how it uses actors, quotes, and sources in the coverage.

### **How does RT present Russia and the Russian government?**

#### *Russian power*

The power of Russia is frequently emphasised in RT coverage in articles that focus on the newest developments in Russian weapons and underline the military might of the country. This is particularly characteristic for the coverage of the war in Syria, which is used as a news hook for detailed coverage of Russia's newest weapons (eg. 11/12/2015 13:17, 15/03/2016 16:52). These texts are often practically unreadable for those who don't possess background technical knowledge of weapons in general and Russian weapons in particular as they consist of technical details of the weapons reviewed, as well as comparisons with older or similar foreign models. Apart from reading like press release copy from the Defence Ministry, these articles are important symbolically as they present a visual (with photos) and verbal symbols of power and promote Russia as a powerful and modern actor in world politics – all ideas emphasised in the Russian foreign policy documents (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2000; President of Russia 2009). This format can also be seen as propaganda by implication, reviewed earlier in Chapter 2 as a Soviet technique that served to remind the world of the Soviet military might (Barghoorn 1964).

#### *Russia as a reminder of laws*

One of the most unusual ways that RT coverage displays themes of the Russian foreign policy could be detected through the verbs that are used to describe actions of Russian officials when they are dealing with officials from other, mostly Western, countries. Apart

from the verbs ‘say’, ‘claim’ and ‘state’, which are used for government officials of all countries, there are some verbs reserved only for Russian politicians - ‘remind’, and ‘correct’, both appearing most often after quotes in phrases like ‘the spokesman reminded the Western colleagues<sup>177</sup>’, although on some occasions, when these verbs are not used, similar meaning is conveyed through other means. Most often the subject of reminding and correcting of Russian officials is international law and legal procedures. For example, Russian UN envoy Vitaly Churkin in reports from UN is often portrayed as ‘reminding his Western colleague about the American constitution’ or ‘correcting’ them (03/02/2017 09:08), as well as voicing calls to observe UN procedure, international law and human rights principles (15/03/2014 15:20, 14/12/2015 10:00, 07/04/2017 01:32). This way of portraying on one hand emphasises the Russian respect for the international law, which has also been highlighted in the foreign policy agenda (see for example Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2016a, Putin 2013, President of Russia 2012), and on the other hand portrays Western officials as, at best, forgetful, or, at worst, as disrespectful of the international law, which is also an issue pointed out by some documents on the Russian foreign policy (see for example Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2016a, President of Russia 2015).

### *Russia successful in Syria*

RT portrays the Russian operation in Syria as successful and portrays any advances and successes of the Syrian army as owing to the Russian military support (11/12/2016 15:19; 13/12/2016 23:01). This is done by underlining of the successes of the Russian operation directly in the main text of the article (05/04/2017 14:24, 11/12/2016 15:19, 13/13/2016 23:01) and in quotes and reported speech (12/12/2015 04:00, 13/03/2016 14:30, 15/03/2016 04:22). In addition, when Russia announced in March 2016 that it was pulling out the main

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<sup>177</sup> In Russian: пресс-секретарь напомнил западным коллегам

contingent of its army from Syria, RT's coverage took an angle of victory, alleging that the war in Syria has been won and Russia played a crucial role in it<sup>178</sup> (15/03/2016 18:01).

This focus on the country's success further underlines the idea that Russia is an important player in international affairs – one that mirrors the discussion in the foreign policy documents of the emerging multipolar system where Russia is one of the emerging centres of power (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2016a).

### *Russia as an important force in world politics*

RT further emphasises the importance of Russia for international politics and the peace process in different parts of the world, from Ukraine (eg.08/12/2016 13:57) to Syria (eg. 05/12/2016 19:44). This theme is reflected in dry, factual statements that are presented as truth that doesn't need to be proven, as universal knowledge: 'Only Russia is operating in Syria legally', 'The wider front to fight terrorism should be built around Russia' (09/12/2016 16:25), and 'In Geneva peace talks Russia is ready to take on the role of the leader' (15/03/2016 13:27). This way of presenting potentially disputable statements as facts was also noted by Mescheryakov (2016: 88), who refers to the practice as an 'unproven indication of a universal norm' and considers it an essential tool in Russian propaganda and counterpropaganda in the media.

At the same time Russian government officials are often quoted to refer to Europe and North America in the text as 'our Western partners/colleagues'<sup>179</sup> (eg.14/12/2015 10:00, 03/02/2017 09:08, 03/10/2015 21:18), a phrase that emphasises equality in the relationship between the countries, a partner-like cooperation, which corresponds to the idea of Russia as a great power that is expressed in the country's foreign policy documents. This further adds to the

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<sup>178</sup> See, for example, this headline: From Arab Spring to 2016 truce: RT's timeline of 5-year Syrian war (15/03/2016 18:01).

<sup>179</sup> In Russian: наши западные партнеры/коллеги

idea of Russia as an important force and an emerging power and a ‘great power’ in world affairs (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2016a).

### *Russia and first-person plural*

On one occasion RT coverage – when looking specifically at the main body of text written by the journalist, not the quotes – uses first-person pronouns to refer to Russia and Russian army in a Russian language article, which is universally seen as one of the ways of determining who is presented as a part of the Self (or Us, as opposed to Them) in media coverage (Coleman & Ross 2010). The article, detailing reactions to the Russian and Syrian success in Aleppo, features the following paragraph not credited as a quote, which clearly refers to Russia and Russian as ‘we’:

We will come out of this conflict enriched with the invaluable military experience and having demonstrated to the whole world our fighting capabilities. We will also get two military bases in Syria in Tartus and Khmeimim, which will ensure our influence in the region in the future<sup>180</sup> (13/12/2016 23).

The fact that this only occurs once in the textual analysis sample does mean of course that this particular theme cannot be generalised. However, it is important to note and analyse this occurrence as it points further at the blending between the voice of the Russian foreign policy agenda and that of RT.

### *Russia is in Syria to save the world*

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<sup>180</sup> In Russian: Из этого конфликта мы выйдем не только с обогатившейся бесценным боевым опытом армией, продемонстрировавшей на зависть всему миру свою боеспособность, но получим также две военных базы на сирийской территории — военно-морскую в городе Тартусе и военно-воздушную — в Хмеймиме, которые в дальнейшем обеспечат наше влияние в регионе (13/12/2016 23).



The goal of the Russian presence in Syria is emphasised in RT coverage often as saving the world from international terrorism. This reflects the Russian foreign policy view of terrorism as one of the main threats in the world (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2016a) and produces an image of a noble cause for Russia to be involved in a conflict far away from its own borders: ‘they are defending Europe directly’ (12/12/2016 04:00), ‘We know Russia is fighting for peace in Syria’ (13/12/2016 00:30), ‘the goal of the operation is to prevent further spread of terrorism’ (01/10/2015 16:08). At the same time this theme diverges from the way Putin (2015) explained Russian involvement in Syria when he argued that Russian army in Syria is fighting for the safety of Russian citizens, rather than the world. The widening of this message to include the world is logical as RT talks to much wider audiences, thus Russia’s involvement is opened up so a wider audience can relate to it. Within this theme, Russian soldiers and military and medical personnel in Syria are portrayed as heroic and selfless humanitarians (eg. 01/08/2016 09:52, 05/12/2016 12:38, 15/03/2016 04:22), Russian policies as transparent and removed from the games that others are trying to drag Russia into (03/20/2015 21:18, 15/03/2016 16:52), and Russia is presented as a reconciliator rather than an aggressor, particularly in opposition to the West that is not interested in the peace process in either Syria or Ukraine (03/10/2015 21:18, 04/04/2017 11:45).

### **How does RT present other countries and their governments?**

#### *The West as an actor (consolidation and generalization of the West)*

The West exists in RT coverage as an entity that often gets referred to as if it was a country or an international organisation with a unified agenda of its own. A group of countries, including the USA, Canada, the UK and Western Europe and the EU is generalised and presented as a political actor – often countries’ names and the word ‘the West’ get used interchangeably, for example in the headline “‘The West has no courage’: officials and

experts on the US and allies' position on Aleppo<sup>181</sup>' (08/12/2016 19:41). This simultaneous highlighting as an actor and usage as a stand-in for any of the countries involved is expressed in phrases like 'western politicians' (eg. 14/12/2016 18:15, 07/04/2017 01:32) 'western authorities'<sup>182</sup> (08/12/2016 19:41) and sentences like 'The West was confused' (08/12/2016 19:41) and 'The West is keeping Aleppo from being liberated' (08/12/2016 16:07). This continuous referral to the West blurs any distinguishing characteristics of separate countries that make up the West. Magomedov & Chogandaryan (2013: 123) mention generalisation as a propaganda device used in Soviet propaganda and Lenin in his writing, whenever he referred to Western countries as capitalist countries, presenting them as a whole. Also, crucially, when RT talks of the West it creates another actor, the East, which, while never being mentioned, exists in silent opposition to the West. As Russia is the country that gets brought up most often as 'the opposite' of the West, it can be assumed as at least a member, if not the leader of the East, the same way that the USA is referred to most often as the leader of the West - this way the West becomes a defining object of Russia's identity<sup>183</sup> and picture of the world and international politics.

The way that Soviet propaganda invented the West as an enemy actor in the public discourse (Astashkin 2011; Fedosov 2013) and utilised the 'East vs West' trope as a 'bad guy vs good guy' theme in order to construct a simplified version of the world has been discussed in Chapter 2 (see for example Nagorski 1971; Khaldarova & Pantti 2016). By extension, we can conclude that the existence of the West as an actor exists in RT coverage to create contrast between Russia and the Western countries, and to present a simplified version of the international relations in its coverage. Even though RT operates in the world where the Soviet

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<sup>181</sup> In Russian: "У Запада нет мужества": политики и эксперта о позиции США и союзников по Алеппо (08/12/2016 19:41)

<sup>182</sup> In Russian: западные власти

<sup>183</sup> This idea was also discussed by Tsygankov (2012: 698) and Kuznetsova (2018: 198).

Union doesn't exist, we can see that it borrows tropes that were used to describe the world in Soviet propaganda almost 30 years after the fall of the USSR.

### *The West as a manipulating force*

The main theme that emerges both from RT coverage and the document analysis is that of the West as a manipulating force that uses its influence to pit other countries against each other in pursue of own economic and political goals (17/03/2014 13:18). This is expressed through creating a connection between the political powers that are portrayed in negative ways (as incompetent, illegitimate or violent) to the West, for example that of Ukraine, by directly stating that the West is 'playing games' or uses blackmail to get what it wants (03/12/2015 21:18, 07/04/2017 09:14, 07/04/2017 12:44). In the coverage of the war in Syria the West is portrayed as uninterested in peace without removing Assad from power, even if it means more deaths, more refugees, and a growing threat of IS. This theme emerges as one of several anti-Western themes in RT content, which will be detailed below, followed by a discussion of how these themes fit into RT's delivery of the Russian viewpoint on major global events.

### *The West as an emotional actor*

In this theme the West as an actor is portrayed as emotional in a negative way, on one hand using emotions to manipulate other countries, as well as relying on emotions rather than facts (eg. 05/04/2017 15:46, 08/12/2016 16:07)) or by acting hastily based on emotions rather than thinking logically and with reliance on international law (eg. 07/04/2017 16:13), thus displaying irrationality<sup>184</sup>. This type of negative portrayal reflects the way Putin (2014; 2015) talks about Western political actors when he stresses that Russian policies are not being

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<sup>184</sup> A similar connection between portraying an actor as emotional and irrational was made by Dubrovskaya & Kozhemyakin (2017: 103).

affected by emotions ('They won't get a nervous, hysterical, dangerous reaction from us'<sup>185</sup>), while policies of the Western countries are guided by 'hysterical Cold War rhetorics' and 'nervous' reactions (Putin 2014).

*The West has no moral ground to criticise Russia*

In the coverage that includes criticism of Russia a theme emerges where the West as a source of criticism is undermined by RT pointing out the hypocrisy of such criticism. For example, when the UK UN representative criticised Russia over Crimea, the coverage refers to the UK's own controversial land claims (03/02/2017 09:08). This way rather than refuting the main point of the criticism (Russia annexing Crimea), RT shifts the point of debate towards the background and history of the source of criticism (the UK's own history of imperialism and controversy), which is a propaganda device known as the 'shift' (Mescheryakov 2016: 87). This brings in the idea of the West being biased against Russia, inconsistent in the way that it regards international law and norms, and hypocritical in its criticism. This also reflects the way RT deals with criticism when, instead of debating the main point of criticism the channel underlines that 'all media are doing it'<sup>186</sup>. This position is well summarised by a quote from RT's editor-in-chief:

I don't see why you have the nerve to think that you know better than anyone how to run the world, and who's marginal in the world and who isn't. You've made so many mistakes, you've started so many wars in the last few years, destroyed so many lives, killed so many people, created so many problems (Seddon 2016).

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<sup>185</sup> (Putin 2015)

<sup>186</sup> A recent study the Oxford Internet Institute describes RT as one of the most important organisations in the 'global political economy of disinformation' (Elsawah & Howard 2020). RT's journalist Simon Rite writes in response that it is as if 'RT operates in some kind of Bond-villain vacuum in which it is the only baddy' and that 'academics over at Oxford should spend some time in other news organisations too. They'll be in for a shock' (Rite 2020)

Thus, the themes that emerge in RT coverage of the West show that as an actor the West is consistently portrayed negatively, which is in line with existing research (see for example Malinova 2014; Szostek & Hutchings 2015; Kurowska & Reshetnikov 2020) and with the Russian foreign policy agenda that presents the West as dangerous, irresponsible and likely to ignore international law (eg. Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2013, Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2016a, President of Russia 2015, Putin 2013). Anti-Western ideas exist on their own as they undermine the credibility of Western countries and their criticism of Russia and are used to transfer negative qualities onto other actors outside of the West (for example the Ukrainian government or the Syrian opposition groups).

#### *Western media as mainstream media*

The final theme that emerges in connection with the West is connected to Western media, which is portrayed negatively and often conflated with the concept of mainstream media. First of all, the media in question are most often referred to as Western media<sup>187</sup> (eg. 05/04/2017 12:58, 08/12/2016 19:41), which, considering the anti-Western themes in RT content, automatically places such media under scrutiny. Second, Western media are often rhetorically presented as one with the Western governments, for example, through the phrases like ‘Western authorities and the media’<sup>188</sup>, where the two are unified by the same verb, showing a simultaneous action, by introducing the media as a political actor on the side of the West (eg. 14/12/2016 18:15) or by introducing the idea of ‘Western propaganda’, which again connects the two (14/03/2014 01:49). The conflation between Western media and mainstream media emerges when the coverage switches between the two words as if they are synonyms, or, when in discussions of the mainstream media the coverage uses only

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<sup>187</sup> Curiously in the Russian coverage the word Western is sometimes replaced with the word ‘foreign’ (in Russian: *зарубежный*) with the same negative connotations persisting.

<sup>188</sup> In Russian: *западные политики и средства массовой информации* (14/12/2016 18:15).

Western media as examples (eg. 14/12/2016 18:15, 17/12/2016 12:46, 18/12/2016 05:04). In addition, Western media are presented as biased and unethical, willing to forego their journalistic duties (to report events accurately) in favour of creating a politically desirable narrative. For example, in the coverage of Euromaidan, RT noted that Western media chose to ignore the nationalist flags put up by the protesters in favour of maintaining the idea of Euromaidan as a peaceful pro-EU rally (21/02/2014 06:15).

These negative themes in connection to Western media should be understood in the context of RT's own alternative positioning, which was discussed in Chapter 3. The ideas of Western mainstream media and RT's own positioning as a figure of resistance to the Western hegemony in global news production have been discussed extensively by RT's editor-in-chief, who states in interviews that RT is different (eg. see Kommersant 2012, Afisha Daily 2011). Whether or not RT could be seen as an alternative media is not the focus of this thesis, however, the dominance of official sources and other mainstream media as sources, as well as the dominance of the voices of the officials, identified in the content analysis, challenge the alternative claims as alternative media in journalism studies are understood in connection with grassroots, activist and local media (see Atton 2003; Morris & Meadows 2003; Weibull 2003). However, RT's conceptualization of mainstream media seems to be connected to political stance more than the ideas of grassroots production, therefore the themes of Western media as mainstream media not only position RT in the global media scene but also undermine any criticism levelled at the channel from Western media. This can be also seen from a postcolonial point of view, where Russia as a subaltern<sup>189</sup> is challenging the hegemonic and imperial Western media in the sphere of the global media production.

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<sup>189</sup> See Morozov (2013, 2015) for the discussion of Russia's mixed identity as a subaltern in discussions of the country's relationship with the West and as an empire in its relationship with the former Soviet countries.

## **How are quoted and mentioned actors presented in RT coverage?**

### *Repetitiveness in the presentation of quotes*

When investigating the use of quotes by RT this method discovered a theme of repetitiveness, where the journalist's text first describes what was said in passive voice and then presents the quote that repeats what have just been said, sometimes in slightly different words. This practice makes the quote technically irrelevant as it doesn't add any new information to the article. This repetitiveness can be detected in the channel's coverage of speeches and public appearances by Putin, minister of foreign affairs Lavrov, UN representative Vitaly Churkin and other Russian top politicians (eg. 02/10/2015 04:31, 03/02/2015 21:18, 15/03/2016 08:00). Interview and speeches by the Syrian government officials are covered in a similar way, and the same presentation appears in articles containing expert commentary that expresses pro-Russian views. Curiously, this only occurs in the Russian sample, only for the pro-Russian statements (05/12/2016 19:44), which could mean that this is an editorial standard for the Russian service. The effects of this way of presenting quotes could mean that the messages of the pro-Russian quotes are emphasised for the readers.

In addition, one of the formats in which speeches by Russian officials appear see the entire article dedicated to just the speech, often presented in this repetitive manner described above, and statements from the speech are presented as undisputable facts, as Mecheryakov's (2016) 'unproven indications of a universal norms' through phrases such as 'the president has noted/emphasised that...'<sup>190</sup>, for example: "Vladimir Putin noted that the decision to transfer

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<sup>190</sup> In Russian: президент отметил/подчеркнул (18/03/2014 15:35)

Crimea to the Ukrainian SSR has been made breaking the laws<sup>191</sup> (18/03/2014 15:35), which do not present any alternative views or allow doubt<sup>192</sup>. This means that there are articles that are essentially carrying only the pro-Russian messages, both in the body of the journalistic text and in the quotes within it.

### *Presenting statements from quotes without quotation marks*

In addition to the described repetitiveness, RT often presents the pro-Russian quotes in their main and section headlines without quotation marks (07/04/2017 01:32). This means that to the readers these statements read the same as facts presented by the RT editorial team in the body of the text, while in the quotes the readers would perceive the information with consideration of the source that it came from. Sometimes the statement gets attributed to the quote in the next sentence or paragraph, however, it is important to consider how often people only read the headlines or skim through the articles, and therefore might miss the attribution. One of the examples of this comes from an article detailing the reactions of various military experts and politicians to the Khan Sheikhoun chemical attack, where the following is the main body of the text:

All accusations of their [chemical weapons'] use in Khan Sheikhoun are unsubstantiated.

This was a claim made on Thursday, April 6, by Syria's Deputy UN Ambassador Mounzer Mounzer during a Security Council meeting regarding the situation in Idlib<sup>193</sup> (06/04/2017 01:14).

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<sup>191</sup> In Russian: Владимир Путин отметил, что решение о передаче Крыма Украинской ССР было принято с нарушениями (18/03/2014 15:35)

<sup>192</sup> For another example of this practice see text on the speech by a Russian UN representative Vitaly Churkin dedicated to the downing of flight MH17, which is presented in a similar fashion (18/07/2014 20:15).

<sup>193</sup> In Russian: Все обвинения в его применении в городе Хан-Шейхун безосновательны. Об этом заявил в четверг, 6 апреля, заместитель постоянного представителя Сирии при ООН Монзер Монзер в ходе заседания Совбеза по ситуации в Идлибе (06/04/2017 01:14).



Together with the repetitiveness in presentation, this means that Russian and pro-Russian themes and messages are not only repeated and emphasised but also made more prominent and presented as the journalist's words instead of those of interviewees, experts or officials.

### *Presenting statements critical of Russia*

When presenting quotes that criticise Russia, the Russian government or the army RT coverage employs several tools that introduce doubt, create distance and emphasise the fact that the statements can be an opinion. In English, this is done through the use of verbs like 'claimed'<sup>194</sup> (31/01/2015 14:02) and 'alleged' (15/12/2016 04:48), which immediately introduce doubt to the statements. In addition, doubt and distance are introduced through the use of reported speech and partial quotes rather than full quotes<sup>195</sup>, and the use of the word 'allegedly'<sup>196</sup> in the structures of reported speech, as well as prefacing the reported speech with phrases that invalidate the statements before they are even presented to the reader. For example, a quote from Theresa May is presented the following way: "Another statement that contradicted the common sense were the words of the British Prime Minister Theresa May. She insisted that the Russian army is allegedly hindering the delivery of humanitarian aid to Aleppo"<sup>197</sup> (08/12/2016 16:07).

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<sup>194</sup> It should be said that 'claimed' is also used in neutral and positive statements about Russia.

<sup>195</sup> In these cases the quotation marks contain the information most critical of Russia and most contested by RT, for example: "In particular, the US statement issued on December 7 says that Assad must approve the UN plan, which was previously adopted by the Syrian opposition. This, according to the West, will put an end to the 'terrible situation in Aleppo'" (in Russian: "В частности, в распространенном 7 декабря заявлении США говорится, что Асад должен одобрить план ООН, который ранее приняла сирийская оппозиция. Именно это, по мнению Запада, положит конец 'ужасной ситуации в Алеппо'") (08/12/2016 16:07).

<sup>196</sup> "According to her, the EU member States are allegedly 'the only suppliers' of humanitarian aid to the population of Syria" (In Russian: "По ее словам, страны-члене ЕС якобы являются 'единственными поставщиками' гуманитарной помощи населению Сирии") (08/12/2016 16:07).

<sup>197</sup> In Russian: Ещё одним противоречащим здравому смыслу заявлением стали слова британского премьер-министра Терезы Мэй. Она утверждала, что российские военные якобы препятствуют доставке гуманитарной помощи в Алеппо (08/12/2016 16:07).

In discussion of the Crimean referendum and the region joining Russia all arguments against the actions of Russia were presented as short quotes from officials which are combined in one article. For example, two similar articles in Russian and in English come with the following headlines: ‘Crimea is a part of Russia. The reaction of the international community<sup>198</sup>’ in Russian (18/03/2014 18:01), and ‘West furious as Crimea accepted into Russia’ in English (18/03/2014 19:09), emphasising the rage and emotion of the generalised West. Notably, this article also presents some pro-Russian points of view and a lengthy section subtitled ‘Russia’s response<sup>199</sup>’, which takes up a third of the article with quotes from Vladimir Putin and his spokesman, as well as a brief background information paragraph, which describes the events in the words of the Russian foreign policy agenda. In addition, the Russian side of the argument is repeated more often and has entire articles dedicated to it - usually through the coverage of speeches or interviews by Russian or pro-Russian Crimean politicians, while there are no articles that are dedicated solely to the points of view critical of Russia without inclusions of the quotes or reported speech from Russian politicians.

### **How does RT use sources in the coverage?**

#### *Presenting the world through the Russian eyes*

Looking at the use of sources by RT reveals that the channel often presents international events through statements, speeches and interviews issued by Russian officials, even when Russia itself is not involved in the events directly, and often relying on Russian state-sponsored or state-owned media (Rossiya 24, RIA-Novosti), who don’t always have sources on the ground<sup>200</sup> (18/02/2015 09:30, 15/03/2016 06:55). Reports from international diplomat

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<sup>198</sup> In Russian: Крым в составе России: реакция мирового сообщества (18/03/2014 18:01)

<sup>199</sup> In Russian: Ответ России (18/03/2014 18:01)

meetings are most often presented through the statements from the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which puts the Russian point of view at the centre of the report, with the other country's statements not included.

One of the best illustrations of this trend is a look at the headlines, which either refer to statements by the Russian government in the headline: 'Kiev continues to violate ceasefire agreement, opts for military solution - Moscow' (31/01/2017,20:35), "'Stick to Minsk deal': Russia slams Ukraine idea for EU peacekeepers' (18/02/2015 20:21), 'Syrian Army retakes 70% of E.Aleppo, evacuates over 1,200 civilians - Russian military' (07/12/2016 19:16), 'Military operation in eastern Aleppo over, govt restoring control - Russian UN envoy' (13/12/2016 17:27). On occasion, headlines quote Russian government officials without identifying them as the sources of quotes<sup>201</sup>, as explained earlier in the section focusing on presenting statements without quotation marks. Considering people often focus on the headline, such coverage brings the Russian official position to the centre of the coverage in a way that it is presented undisputed and unattributed. In this case the inclusion of the quotes and statements from the other side of the argument would be less prominent and often might go unnoticed by those that skim-read. At the same time when the source is in the Ukrainian government, their statements in the headline are often immediately balanced by an opposing statement right in the headline, for example "Kiev says troops withdrawn from Debaltsevo, rebels claim military 'surrender en masse'" (18/02/2015 09:30).

Thus, when the first research question of this thesis asks what the characteristics of the Russian viewpoint delivered by RT is, the answer will say that RT's Russian viewpoint is not

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<sup>201</sup> 'Russia-suggested statement on Ukraine ceasefire blocked at UNSC under 'frivolous pretext' (29/08/2014 02:12).

only aligned with the Russian foreign policy agenda, it sometimes *is* the Russian foreign policy agenda, delivered to RT audiences in the same words that it was put into by the officials.

### *Experts*

The final section of this chapter looks at the way RT coverage uses experts<sup>202</sup>. Experts are used in media coverage to provide interpretations of events; experts are seen as authoritative sources of knowledge (Batasheva 2017: 84). Their authority is based in technical knowledge, subject-matter mastery, cultural capital and the presumption of objectivity (Toal & O’Loughlin 2018: 886). Experts appearing on RT are, first of all, vessels for the Russian viewpoint. In the entire sample of this textual analysis there is not one expert who criticises or challenges Russia. Secondly, the way that RT presents experts and explains their relevance and expertise is also crucial. In cases where the expert’s credentials or job imply a position of power they are emphasised, for example in the case of former politicians, whose time in the government is used as proof of knowledge and relevance of expertise to the subject<sup>203</sup>. At the same time credentials of other experts are often presented in an opaque way, which impedes readers’ ability to judge the relevance and authority of the chosen experts. For example, journalists are often used as experts in RT coverage in both Russian and English, but the articles often present them in other roles. For example, Russian journalists Viktor Litovkin (ITAR-TASS) and Mikhail Khodarenok (Gazeta.Ru, Vesti FM) are both presented as ‘military experts’ (06/04/2017 01:14, 13/12/2016 23:01); Patrick Henningsen, a journalist for

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<sup>202</sup> While the content analysis coding manual specified that actors should only be coded as experts where they are identified with the word expert in the text, this method looks at the expertise in coverage more broadly, including in this analysis any actors who are present in the coverage in the expert quality, for example professors, scientists and other actors (who are not officials) appearing in articles to offer their opinion and take on the covered events.

<sup>203</sup> For example, ambassadors (eg. 17/03/2016 01:48, 08/12/2016 19:41, 13/12/2016 00:30).

alternative publications, is presented as a political scientist<sup>204</sup> (07/04/2017 01:32, 09/12/2016 12:27); Franco-Italian journalist Alexandre Del Valle is presented as a geopolitical expert (15/03/2016 13:27); Ukrainian journalist Vladimir Skachko is presented as a historian as he comments on the developments in the Ukrainian army, with no mention of his career as a journalist and potential bias as a major critic of the Ukrainian armed forces (15/03/2014 11:41). Journalists who write for and appear on RT are also often presented as experts without any mention of the potential conflict of interest as they are commenting on Russian policies and are being paid by RT, funded by the Russian government. Among them are Charles Shoebridge, who is presented as a former British military officer (05/04/2017 12:58), Martin Jay, presented simply as a journalist, with no mention of RT (12/12/2016 16:39), and Michael Maloof, presented as a former Pentagon official (05/04/2017 15:46). In other cases levels of opaqueness differ: a Syrian journalist called Alaa Ebrahim is presented as a journalist in some texts in the sample and as a political commentator in others (01/08/2016 09:52, 08/12/2015 16:53), the editor-in-chief of *Ukraina.Ru* is used as an expert on Ukraine and it is not specified that the website is a part of the Russian state-owned RIA-Novosti<sup>205</sup> agency (now *Rossiia Segondya*) (02/02/2017 08:30), and Willy Van Damme, presented as a Belgian journalist, has no online trail of any appearances and publications beyond RT and his free Wordpress blog (03/02/2016 17:05).

This doesn't only apply to journalists used as experts. Peter Ford, the former British ambassador to Bahrain and Syria and a colleague of Bashar Assad's father-in-law, is presented as expert on Syria in his former ambassador role, with his potential partisan interests not disclosed (13/12/2016 00:30). Lord Peter Truscott, a member of the House of

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<sup>204</sup> In Russian: политолог

<sup>205</sup> Wilson & Popescu (2009) talk about outlets like *Ukraina.ru*, and other Ukrainian media outlets owned by Russian media conglomerates, as a Russian soft/media power tools in the region.

Lords connected to Russian fuel companies and previously at the centre of corruption scandal, is used as an expert with no context of his expertise in foreign policy, or mention of how his pro-Russian comments might be seen in the light of his business connections in Russia (15/03/2016 18:29). Ukrainian politicians from Yanukovich's government are presented in ways that conceals their relationship with the former government and suggests independent expertise. For example, an adviser of Yanukovich's prime minister, Rostislav Ischenko<sup>206</sup>, is presented as 'president of the Centre for System Analysis and Forecasting' (02/02/2017 08:30). The Centre for System Analysis and Forecasting of has no online presence, it is unclear what it does, and it is only mentioned online by RT, its sister radio station Sputnik, and Russian language media.

In all these cases the omitted information would have been crucial for understanding where these experts are coming from in terms of their views, how knowledgeable, relevant and unbiased the information supplied by them might be. Further, considering the pro-Russian stance of these experts (there simply are no anti-Russian experts on RT), and the presumption of objectivity of the expert figure, the omission of information not only stands in the way of the audiences critically assessing the statements of these experts but also actively deceives them by presenting partisan information where the audience traditionally expects to receive objective one. Further, RT's use of experts as assumingly credible sources combined with an opaque presentation of them can be seen as two separate traits of propaganda as discussed by Jowett and O'Donnell (2015: 50) in Chapter 2.

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<sup>206</sup> Outside of the sample of this textual analysis Ischenko appears in an expert role in over 300 news articles and features published by RT in Russian.

## **7:5 Conclusion**

The goal of this chapter was to further detail the Russian viewpoint that RT delivers to the world by studying the main themes, messages and ways of delivering information in its conflict coverage, and to discuss what role that delivering this Russian viewpoint plays in the Russian foreign policy agenda by comparing the themes and messages of the coverage with those of the Russian foreign policy documents, studied in Chapter 5.

In relation to the first research question, this chapter has shown that most of the time the main themes and messages of RT coverage are aligned with the Russian foreign policy agenda. This can be observed through the way that RT presents events and actors in accordance with the official Russian position, for example by presenting the Ukrainian government as dependent on the Western support and nationalist and neo-Nazi forces inside Ukraine, by presenting the Crimean referendum as an essential show of popular will and self-determination, by presenting Russia's participation in the war in Syria as an anti-terrorist campaign, and by presenting anti-Western messages centred around the ideas about the West relayed in the Russian foreign policy agenda.

By looking at the ways in which this information is delivered this chapter connected RT coverage with the propaganda techniques and devices discussed in Chapter 2 (such as name-calling, transfer, smoke screen and others). In addition, it showed that the pro-Russian themes and messages are always dominant in RT coverage, often presented undisputed by any critique or challenges from other countries, emphasised by repetition and placed in prominent parts of the articles such as headlines. RT's use of sources, this chapter has shown, means that predominantly Russian sources (officials and media) are used in the coverage, and the use of experts means that partisan expert voices are presented instead of more balanced ones;

the ways in which the articles introduce experts are often opaque and omit the information crucial for understanding the context of their views and knowledge. Thus, by adopting and sometimes slightly reworking the main themes and messages of the Russian foreign policy, RT promotes a certain understanding of the events that is aligned with the Russian foreign policy agenda.

The chapter has also indicated an issue in regard to the Russian viewpoint of major global events and the second research question of this thesis<sup>207</sup> that deal with understanding RT's role in the modern post-truth communication environment. This issue is connected to the ways in which RT covered the downing of MH17 and the chemical attack in Khan Sheikhoun, where the channel presented multiple conflicting versions of events as opposed to the rest of the coverage of the two conflicts, which is aligned with the official Russian foreign policy agenda. Are all the versions of these two events Russian viewpoints, and how can they be when they are often conflicting? Is the Russian viewpoint, instead, in presenting all possible versions of events fairly? This is unlikely considering all the other events in this study's sample were covered in a way that was clearly aligned with the Russian foreign policy, and any departures from the official perspectives were small and not significant enough to be seen as separate or new messages altogether. All these questions will be discussed in the following chapter's section on RT and post-truth, which answers the second research question based on the findings presented in this chapter.

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<sup>207</sup> RQ2. How does RT use post-truth strategies in its news coverage?

- a. What does post-truth mean in communication studies?
- b. How do post-truth strategies manifest themselves in RT content?
- c. What role does post-truth play in the channel's coverage in relation to the foreign policy agenda?



## **Chapter 8. Discussion and conclusion.**

### **8:1 Introduction**

The previous three chapters presented the findings of the three research methods employed in this thesis: the document analysis (Chapter 5), the content analysis (Chapter 6), and the textual analysis (Chapter 7). First of all, this chapter further discusses the findings of the three methods together in relation to the concepts at the centre of this thesis: post-truth, propaganda, and public diplomacy, and summarises the answers to this study's research questions. Secondly, this chapter outlines this study's contribution to literature, limitations and presents suggestions for future research in order to conclude this thesis.

### **8:2 RT and post-truth**

This section of the chapter aims to further discuss and contextualise the findings of the textual analysis and the content analysis with regard to the emerging scholarly understandings of the concept of post-truth.

Chapter 2 has argued that post-truth can be seen as a complex communication environment where the audiences are offered multiple 'partisan truths' as actors on new media, social media, and in traditional media compete to work in a climate of political and social polarisation. As Chapter 7 presented the results of the textual analysis, it found that two events in the timelines of the conflicts studied in this thesis were covered differently from the other events – the downing of the Malaysian Airlines flight MH17 in Eastern Ukraine and the chemical attack in Khan Sheikhoun in Syria. While the coverage of all the other events promoted an understanding of the events that was aligned with the Russian foreign policy agenda as detailed by the findings of both the content analysis and the textual analysis<sup>208</sup>, the

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<sup>208</sup> Content analysis found that RT's Russian viewpoint on major global events is aligned with the Russian foreign policy agenda in the descriptions of various countries and their officials, in the use of sources in the

coverage of these two events presented multiple conflicting understandings of the events, presenting the audience, in essence, with multiple truths. But what does that say about RT's existence within the post-truth communication environment? This thesis argues that RT fits into this environment in two different ways: on one hand, in the majority of its coverage, as analysed in the previous two chapters, RT content presents a Russian partisan truth – what the channel calls the Russian viewpoint on major global events – because its coverage of the wars in Ukraine and in Syria is closely aligned with the Russian foreign policy agenda that has been identified in the analysis of the Russian foreign policy documents. This coverage exhibits several persuasion and rhetorical techniques that are seen among propaganda techniques and devices: namely the transfer and the name-calling devices, the legitimisation of allies and undermining of opponents, the opaque presentation of sources, quotes and expert figures; it also contains themes, messages and techniques with strong ties to the Soviet propaganda tradition, from its strong anti-Western stance to the way it undermines certain Ukrainian actors by establishing a connection between them and neo-Nazi views.

On the other hand, in the coverage of the two events we saw multiple themes emerge in reference to who was responsible for the downing of the flight MH17 in Eastern Ukraine and the chemical attack in Khan Sheikhoun in Syria. There were 18 themes of blame and responsibility that emerged in the coverage of MH17 that fit into just 5 articles in the textual analysis sample<sup>209</sup>. The coverage of the chemical attack in Khan Sheikhoun contained 16 themes of blame and responsibility, though, admittedly, spread over a larger sample of 13 articles. This is an impressive departure from the way the other events are covered by the

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Russian government and army as well as the Russian media, and in the dominance of Russian, pro-Russian and anti-Western actors. Textual analysis has shown that RT presents events and actors in accordance with the official Russian position in more than just descriptions but within the messages and themes in the texts.

<sup>209</sup> There were 6 articles in the textual analysis, but one was an article commemorating the victims that carried no responsibility or blame messages, therefore the 18 themes were all identified in just 5 articles.

channel, and one cannot ignore that the two events in question received global attention and had potential international consequences for Russia because of its connections with the sides that were widely seen as responsible for the events – the Syrian government and the insurgents in Eastern Ukraine. The partisan themes that emerged in this coverage were multiple and often contradicting, some were debunked and still clearly stayed published on RT's website for several years without any updates or corrections. These themes also saw little reflection in the Russian foreign policy agenda (with the exception of general anti-Western sentiment) and therefore cannot be seen as the Russian viewpoint. In addition, some of them contradict the others and one viewpoint in the traditional sense of the word cannot be contradicting itself.

Thinking of the definition of post-truth presented earlier, the coverage of these two events can be seen as a saturated information environment that saw multiple partisan truths compete for the attention of the RT audiences. The crucial difference, though, is that these themes, these partisan truths, came not from 'communities of belief' as they do in the genuine post-truth communication environment, but from RT journalists, and instead of existing in a complex communication environment that includes new media, social media, and traditional media, they all exist on one platform - RT. In addition, researchers have mentioned that one of the conditions of the post-truth environment is the democratisation of the news process where traditional journalistic media have been forced to surrender some of its gate-keeping responsibilities. What becomes clear from a closer examination of the themes that emerge in the coverage of these two events by RT, though, is that the channel has not come even close to giving up its gate-keeping duties: while the themes that emerged are diverse and potentially partisan (and as a result often contradict each other), the MH17 coverage does not

even mention the major version of the events that implicated the insurgents<sup>210</sup> (and, therefore, Russia), and the Khan Sheikhoun coverage, while mentioning the version of events that implicated Syria and Russia, presents them as doubtful and pushed by biased actors who provide no evidentiary support for their versions of events. The multiple versions of both events, while not always explicitly pro-Russian, cast doubts on the criticism of Russia and Russian allies and protégés. Thus, unlike the genuine environment of post-truth where partisan truths are created and disseminated by people who hold these beliefs, the partisan truths appearing on RT have clearly gone through the process of selection, of editorial gatekeeping where explicitly and implicitly anti-Russian truths were filtered out. Therefore, we can suggest that in case of the coverage of MH17 and Khan Sheikhoun RT recreates a post-truth environment within its own platform, and, while not uniformly delivering a Russian viewpoint aligned with the Russian foreign policy agenda, it selects to cover versions of events that do not challenge the Russian viewpoint.

So, to answer the first sub-question of RQ2 (how do post-truth traits manifest themselves in RT content?), RT is both a partisan voice in the choir of partisan voices in the modern post-truth communication environment, and it becomes, on certain occasions, a post-truth platform of its own, but only in the sense that it mimics the genuine post-truth environment online, while retaining editorial control.

In answering the second sub-question of RQ2 we have to consider the role this recreation of post-truth environment plays as a tool of foreign policy. First of all, thinking of these tools in relation to propaganda and public diplomacy, a clear connection emerges between this

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<sup>210</sup> An argument can be made that these versions were possibly mentioned outside of the sample of textual analysis. While this is true, the sample of the textual analysis focuses on the longer, more detailed texts published in the first three days since the event – if these versions were not mentioned in these articles, they were clearly not given the time or the platform to be discussed.

practice of presenting multiple alternative versions of events and the propaganda technique referred to as the ‘smoke screen<sup>211</sup>’ (Gatov 2018). The main aim of this technique is to introduce confusion and doubt into the conversations, thus influencing the public perception of the events, and who, if anyone, the public views as responsible or guilty. Chapter 2 defined propaganda and public diplomacy and argued that the main aspects of both practices consist of deliberate attempts to persuade or influence others, and additional aspects of propaganda might introduce the idea of manipulation of representations in order to influence.

Consequently, we can argue that RT’s recreation of the post-truth environment within its own platform serves a public diplomacy/propaganda role, and is meant to influence how its audiences view the events in Eastern Ukraine and in Syria, and who, if anyone, they see as responsible.

This way of thinking about RT and how they cover crisis events finds support in a study published by Ramsay & Robertshaw (2019: 6) who analysed how RT and Sputnik<sup>212</sup> covered the poisoning of the former Russian spy Sergei Skripal and his daughter, discussed earlier in Chapter 2. It found that the coverage offers ‘in total, 138 separate – and often contradictory – narratives explaining the incident and its aftermath’ united only by ‘the implication that the Russian state was not responsible for the attack’ (Ramsay 2019: 48). As an event the Skripal poisoning can arguably be seen as being of similar scale and importance for Russian public diplomacy as the downing of MH17 and the chemical attack in Khan Sheikhoun, therefore the results of the Ramsay and Robertshaw (2019) study can be put in line with the results of the analysis in this thesis, indicating that coverage that imitates a post-truth environment is a trend in RT coverage in particular and Russian public diplomacy in general.

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<sup>211</sup> Alternatively, in discussing Russian national media coverage of the MH17 crash Sazonov & Kopōtin (2016: 70) call this the ‘data deluge method’.

<sup>212</sup> Russian international multilingual news agency found in 2014.

Another similarity between the downing of MH17, the chemical attack in Khan Sheikhoun and the Skripal poisoning in terms of media coverage is that all three events were covered in what can be seen as a low-information environment: a lot of the initial coverage of the downing of MH17 had been difficult because of the lack of immediate access to the insurgent-controlled territory in Eastern Ukraine, the lack of reliable information from the ground and the initial confusion about the cause of the crash<sup>213</sup>. The coverage of the chemical attack in Khan Sheikhoun was impeded by the lack of access to Syria and the lack of reliable information from the ground, while the coverage of the Skripal poisoning had clear complications because the investigation was classified for security reasons. In their analysis of the ways in which RT and Sputnik covered the poisoning, Birge & Chatterje-Doody (2020) put forward an argument that Russian public diplomacy strategy capitalises on ‘mistrust and the low levels of publicly-available information that surround security cases such as the poisoning of the Skripals’. This connects further to the idea that post-truth is ‘fed by uncertainty’ (Watts 2018: 466). Therefore, we can say that RT’s coverage of the downing of MH17 and the chemical attack in Khan Sheikhoun made use of the low information environment to recreate a post-truth communication environment within its own platform in order to influence how their audiences understood the events and who, if anyone, they saw as responsible.

Finally, it is important to think about other events in the sample of this study that could be seen as equally high stakes for Russia as the downing of MH17 and the chemical attack in Khan Sheikhoun: the Crimean referendum and its annexation by Russia particularly come to mind because of the international reaction and severe circumstances for Russia. But RT coverage of this event, as the textual and content analyses have shown, was uniform and

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<sup>213</sup> Considering this was the second Malaysian Airlines flight to go down in 2014 after flight 370 went missing four months earlier in March.

aligned with the Russian viewpoint expressed in the foreign policy documents and Putin's Crimea speech, despite the clear international implications of the event that saw multiple sanctions placed on Russia. One possible explanation of RT's approach has to do with the lack of the low-information environment: as the referendum was announced in advance it has been covered extensively; access to it was less complicated than the other events discussed above. Therefore, the coverage did not have to fill a void of information with multiple versions of events and instead stuck to a firmly pro-Russian position. Another possible explanation of the lack of multiple versions of events is that RT did not cover the referendum and annexation as a crisis, which it did with MH17 and Khan Sheikhoun, and, as other studies showed, the Skripal poisoning – in fact, all the themes and messages of the referendum and its result spoke of a democratic event, an act of self-determination and a demonstration of the people's will, a legal and non-controversial instance that is being spun out of proportion by the pro-Western and anti-Russian actors in the Ukrainian and Western governments. From this we can further suggest that the post-truth coverage approach is reserved for the events understood as and portrayed as a crisis.

### **8:3 RT as propaganda**

This section of the chapter aims to put in context RT's role in Russian propaganda. As Chapter 2 specified, this thesis uses the word propaganda with a neutral meaning, understanding it as a state's activity in the sphere of explaining and promoting its policies and ideas among the publics. But in this analysis, it will also consider how propaganda is understood by people who accuse RT of it, especially when those who accuse are journalists for whom accusations of propaganda are akin to questioning of their professional integrity. First of all, as the content and textual analysis findings have shown, RT coverage is aligned with the Russian foreign policy agenda in the majority of the sample studied in this thesis.

This way the messages of the Russian viewpoint on major global events that RT is communicating to its Russian and English-speaking audiences can be seen as propaganda in the sense that they promote views of the world that are aligned with the Russian foreign policy agenda; this can also be called public diplomacy, of course. Even where the coverage doesn't align with the actual messages of the Russian foreign policy, like in the cases of the coverage of MH17 and Khan Sheikhoun discussed earlier in this chapter, the coverage remains implicitly pro-Russian.

Chapter 2 mentioned two forms of propaganda: the white one that comes from a correctly identified source and carries an accurate message, and black propaganda that comes from a concealed or wrongly credited source and aims to deceive or mislead (Jowett and O'Donnell 2015: 20). In this categorisation RT falls into both categories: on one hand RT's promise of a Russian viewpoint on major global events is fulfilled with coverage that relies on Russian officials and media as sources and actors, although one could suggest that a more accurate label for this would be the 'official Russian viewpoint' or the 'viewpoint of the Russian government'. Whether RT's messages, or any other media outlet's messages are 'accurate' is a tough question as it implies that there is an accurate and inaccurate understanding and interpretation of world events – however, RT's messages are accurate insofar as they are accurate representations of the Russian foreign policy agenda. The goal of the communication can be hardly seen as concealed considering the channel announces its dedication to delivering the Russian viewpoint right on its About Us page. On the other hand, RT often distorts the facts in a way that may mislead or deceive the audiences, for example by emphasising certain qualities of actors in its coverage and diminishing the others – for example, the way the channel describes (quantitatively) and portrays (qualitatively) the Euromaidan protests in Ukraine clearly overemphasises the violence and omits or dismisses the political nature of the protests, particularly in the Russian coverage. The way RT presents



and uses experts in its coverage, detailed in Chapter 7, can be seen as miscrediting or concealing the sources, particularly when it presents its own journalists and columnists as experts without mentioning their employer-employee relationship with RT, or when it leaves out crucial context about the experts' relationship with the topic they're commenting on.

In addition, RT regularly employs visual symbols of power that emphasise the effectiveness of Russian weapons in its coverage of the war in Syria. This can also be seen as the Soviet practice of 'propaganda by implication' (Barghoorn 1964), but instead of the menacing reminders of the Soviet nuclear power RT discusses the advantages of the new Russian anti-aircraft missile systems over the similar American systems. The name-calling and transfer propaganda devices (see Conway et al 2007; Koa 2018) are used by RT in the coverage of the Ukrainian government, which is described quantitatively with words referring to nationalism and extreme far right ideology, and qualitatively when it gets associated with Stepan Bandera, the Ukrainian nationalist who fought for the country's independence and also collaborated with Nazi Germany. Similarly, in the coverage of the war in Syria RT often refers to the opposition groups as terrorists, both within the main bodies of articles and in quotes and interviews with the Syrian government officials. The words that refer to radical Islamism, also used to describe the opposition, play the same role. Selective omission of information can be seen in the coverage of the Euromaidan protesters, the insurgents in Eastern Ukraine and the opposition groups in Syria as the coverage focuses either on the political or on the violent characteristics, omitting the other side. RT's image of Russia as a force for good, a force that supports self-determination, sovereignty and freedom from terrorism can be seen as a wide application of glittering generalities (see Conway et al 2007; Koa 2018).

Chapter 2 also emphasised the importance of ‘reframing’ the past in Soviet propaganda – this was also observed in RT coverage and in the Russian foreign policy, which often used the same words to reframe the historical interpretations of the Russian, Ukrainian and Crimean past with the goal of portraying the Crimean referendum as a historical opportunity to undo the past wrongdoings. Thus, instead of reframing the past in order to fit it into an ideology, like Soviet propaganda did, RT and the Russian foreign policy agenda renegotiate our understanding of the past in a pragmatic way, to use it as an explanation and a justification of Russia’s actions.

Apart from looking at the past, Soviet propaganda also promised a bright future. As Chapter 2 explained, it is now mostly seen as a tool of mobilisation and inspiration. And this is where RT’s coverage diverges from Soviet propaganda in a significant way, since the coverage is firmly rooted in the present and does not discuss the future at any point. Could it be that RT has nothing to promise the wide international audiences, or perhaps it is not one of its goals? If a bright future is a mobilisation tool, perhaps the lack of visions of the future in RT means that the channel has no goal of mobilising the audiences, at least in the coverage of the wars studied in this thesis.

One of the central features of Soviet propaganda<sup>214</sup> – the carefully sustained image of the enemy – is also central to RT coverage. RT even ‘inherited’ the main ‘enemy’ in Soviet propaganda – the West. Actors that come to be associated with the West automatically fall into the enemy group – from the openly pro-EU Euromaidan protesters, to the pro-EU Ukrainian government to the Syrian opposition groups. Often this association with the West comes not in the form of political alignment as such and more in the portrayal of the actors

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<sup>214</sup> Threat of an enemy, of course, is not just a Soviet invention but a universal propaganda technique (Berelson and Janowitz 1953; Lasswell 1971), however, RT’s direct connection to the Soviet propaganda (see Kuznetsova 2018) means that it is the most relevant reference in analysis.

such as protesters and opposition as ‘pawns’ of the West. One could in fact tell who is a part of ‘us’ and who is a part of the ‘enemy’ group in RT coverage from looking at the amount and nature of descriptions, which is exactly what Brunova (2011) did when she found that Soviet propaganda defined the ‘self’ groups almost 4 times less often (and with stylistically neutral words) than it defined the ‘enemy’ (which was also described with negative words). The look at the descriptions in the content analysis shows that Russia is simply ‘Russian’ in over 80% of all descriptions in both languages, Assad and his government are just ‘Syrian’ (in over 70% of all descriptions), while descriptions of the Ukrainian government and the Syrian opposition are split between multiple, mostly negative, adjective groups. Finally, in its portrayal of the enemy Soviet propaganda separated regular people in ‘enemy’ countries and portrayed them as a part of ‘us’, while the elites were firmly in the enemy category. A curious example of that can be seen in the way RT covered the conflict in Ukraine, and in particular the conscription drive in the country, where coverage featured crying mothers protesting on the streets against the war and scared men fleeing the country for the fear of being drafted, and the way that the insurgents were always portrayed as carrying out the will of the regular people in Eastern Ukraine. Thus, while the Ukrainian government and army are firmly in the enemy group, the same cannot be said for the Ukrainian people. In the coverage of the war in Syria the people are instead portrayed as rejoicing at the advancements of the government troops as another way of showing that the government of Syria is not a part of the corrupt ruling elites.

When it comes to portraying Russia, RT coverage follows the Russian foreign policy agenda in portraying the country as a responsible actor that puts international law above all else.

These themes match the Soviet propaganda messages of the Soviet struggle for peace, which, Barghoorn (1964) observed, often focused on the opposition of the reconciliatory and peaceful USSR and the inflexible and aggressive West, which are exactly the roles RT

assigns to not only to Russia but also to the pro-Russian actors and actors supported by the country, for example the insurgents in Eastern Ukraine, who are committed to protecting the citizens and observing truces while the antagonistic Ukrainian government keeps breaking the truces. Similar scenario is presented in Syria, where the Syrian government keeps offering the opposition an olive branch, which is never accepted.

RT also makes use of the Soviet technique of using polarising issues, frustrations and doubts in foreign audiences against the West as the 'enemy'. This is particularly visible with the way the discussion of the refugee crisis is woven into discussions of the war in Syria, where the West's unwillingness to be flexible in Syria<sup>215</sup> is portrayed as the reason why refugees keep coming into Europe.

Thus, the analysis of the RT conflict coverage shows a significant overlap between the channels' news content, propaganda techniques and devices and messages of Soviet propaganda. The view of the conflicts that RT presented to the audiences is pro-Russian explicitly and implicitly, Russian policies are practically never criticised in the coverage in the ways that the channel can control (through the choice of sources, interviewees and experts), and when Russia is criticised by foreign officials, their criticism is always rebuked, undermined or balanced out with a pro-Russian view. The coverage, as a result, is extremely politically biased in favour of Russia and pro-Russian actors and groups – but RT also doesn't promise objective coverage, instead committing to deliver the Russian viewpoint on major global events.

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<sup>215</sup> Unwillingness to be flexible and not fight until Assad leaves.

#### **8:4 RT in public diplomacy**

One of the main ideas in the Russian foreign policy documents, as discussed in Chapter 5, is multipolarity, a development that means that several centres of power, including Russia, are emerging in world politics. Connected to this idea is the issue that is discussed just as widely – the fact that this redistribution of power in the world means that Western countries are losing some of their powers are struggling against multipolarity and, as a result, are causing regional conflicts in the world. RT's work as an agent of Russian public diplomacy could be seen as an embodiment of this trend of multipolarity in the world of international broadcasting as the channel promises to provide alternative angles and a Russian viewpoint on major global events, to break the Anglo-Saxon media hegemony – thus, in Russian foreign policy thinking RT is a crucial political actor representing Russian interests on the global media stage.

But how does delivering the 'Russian viewpoint on global events' correspond to Russia's foreign policy agenda? First of all, as the textual and content analyses have shown, RT content is closely aligned with the Russian foreign policy agenda. On the level of communication this is done, among other things, by relying on Russian officials and media as sources, by negatively describing actors who challenge Russia, and by presenting the points of view of Russian officials in an unbalanced, unchecked way. On the level of themes and messages, RT content echoes the Russian foreign policy agenda on multiple points, for example by emphasising the same anti-Western and anti-Ukrainian messages. The West, as specified in Chapter 2, remains one of the central features in Russian public diplomacy, the ultimate Other.

Secondly, when RT's Russian viewpoint does diverge from the Russian foreign policy agenda, it mostly does so in subtle ways – this happens particularly in the English coverage. An example presented in Chapter 7 was to do with the way that RT reported on Putin's Crimea speech, where he presented Ukraine's Euromaidan protests as anti-corruption and did not mention the pro-EU slogans, which were the main reason and focus of the protests from the beginning, but RT coverage made a reference to the EU flags. The scale of this divergence is tiny – it could very well have been added in last minute by a sub-editor<sup>216</sup> - but the fact that a difference so small stood out is a testament to how closely RT is aligned with the Russian foreign policy the rest of the time. The other examples of RT's divergence from the Russian foreign policy agenda were discussed in the first section of this chapter that analysed the coverage of the downing of MH17 and the chemical attack in Khan Sheikhoun with reference to the concept of post-truth – it was concluded that even though the themes presented by the channel were not those of the Russian foreign policy agenda, they were implicitly pro-Russian and meant to influence the audiences' views of the events in the ways that benefitted Russia and pro-Russian entities. Thus, Russian viewpoint of major global events on RT doesn't always follow the Russian foreign policy agenda – in the coverage of crisis and low-information situations the Russian viewpoint widens to include multiple versions of events that are all implicitly pro-Russian but have no direct connection to the Russian view of the world expressed in the Russian foreign policy agenda.

Chapter 2 of this thesis reviewed studies of Russian public diplomacy and pointed out that most of them found that Russian public diplomacy messages often contradict each other as they are aimed at different audiences. This study, however, found that inside the Russian

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<sup>216</sup> It is also possible that the article was based on a report that was aired by RT UK, in which case it would be subject to the UK broadcast regulations.

viewpoint presented by RT there was not much variety in terms of different political views that exist inside Russia as the majority of the Russian actors who appear in RT coverage are government and military officials, therefore the Russian viewpoint is presented as a consolidated front with no internal variation or disagreements. When contradiction appears in RT conflict coverage it is in coverage of crisis events in low information environment, as discussed above. This could be explained by the fact that coverage of the wars and conflicts has been shown to be more pro-government universally (see for example Dimitrova & Stromback 2005; Aday 2010).

To summarise, the Russian viewpoint of major global events presented by RT in its war coverage is almost perfectly aligned to the Russian foreign policy agenda. When it is not, the Russian viewpoint becomes aligned with a pro-Russian stance, which is implicitly pro-Russian and makes use of the modern post-truth communication environment as a public diplomacy/propaganda tool. This way RT can be viewed as a crucial actor in Russian public diplomacy and foreign policy. The main conflict around the channel and its activity, where Western journalists and officials are seeking ways to limit RT's work in their countries<sup>217</sup>, can thus be interpreted as a conflict between the Western liberal understanding of the norms and values of journalism as an independent, impartial watchdog, and RT's understanding of its own work as a public diplomacy actor that works to explain and promote Russian policies and views among global audiences.

Finally, while recognizing the many differences between the two wars studied in this thesis, it is crucial to note that the war in Ukraine was covered in a way that appealed to emotions

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<sup>217</sup> This conflict around the channel is explained in detail in section 3.3 of this thesis.

through negative and positive descriptions and positioning of the sides of the conflict, while the war in Syria was more austere in descriptions, the most emotional of which were reserved for the Syrian opposition, not the main declared target of the Russian campaign, IS. In addition, while the potential responsibility of the Eastern Ukrainian insurgents for the downing of MH17 was not even mentioned in the textual analysis sample of the longest articles in coverage; the potential responsibility of the Syrian army for the chemical attack in Khan Sheikhoun was discussed, though in a way that minimised it. We can thus suggest that the support that the channel's coverage shows to various international pro-Russian actors is dependent on the importance of the actors to Russian foreign policy and national interests<sup>218</sup>.

## **8:5 Answers to the research questions**

### **RQ1. What is the 'Russian viewpoint' that RT is delivering to the world?**

The messages of the Russian viewpoint broadcast by RT are characterised primarily by their alignment with the Russian foreign policy agenda. This is seen both in the content of the coverage, which takes a form of public diplomacy, explaining the Russian policies and positions to the channel's global audiences, and the form that it takes when it employs devices and techniques of propaganda. In crisis and low-information environments the coverage diverges from the Russian foreign policy agenda and takes a general stance that is implicitly pro-Russian.

### **RQ2. How does the channel use post-truth tools/strategies in its coverage?**

This study defined post-truth as a complex communication environment where the audiences are offered multiple 'partisan truths' as actors on new media, social media, and in traditional

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<sup>218</sup> Chapter 5 discussed the importance of the post-Soviet space, including Ukraine, to Russian national interests.



media compete to work in a climate of political and social polarisation. Post-truth manifests itself in RT content in two distinct ways: on one hand RT is a partisan voice in the choir of partisan voices that make up the modern post-truth communication environment. On the other hand, RT becomes, on certain occasions, a post-truth platform of its own, but only in the sense that it mimics the genuine post-truth environment online, while retaining editorial control. RT's recreation of a post-truth environment within its own platform serves a public diplomacy/propaganda role, meant to influence how its audiences view the events in Eastern Ukraine and in Syria and who, if anyone, they see as responsible.

### **8:6 Theoretical implications (contributions to literature)**

As Chapter 3 has shown, RT's status and relationship with the Russian government is a topic of constant heated debates between officials, journalists, researchers and media regulators.

By analysing a large sample of RT coverage over three years this thesis supports the classification of RT as an agent of Russian public diplomacy, as the themes and messages of the content are aligned with the Russian foreign policy and some of the messages of Russian public diplomacy discovered by existing research. This has the capacity to provide evidence and clarity to the academic and professional debates around the channel and contributes to the ways in which we understand and conceptualise Russian international broadcasting as a tool of public diplomacy, and RT as a specific element of it.

Where RT messages modify the Russian foreign policy agenda, or where it acts in a low-information environment broadcasting messages diverging from the official Russian viewpoint, the channel demonstrates that it should be seen as an agent of public diplomacy that co-constructs the 'Russian viewpoint' with the Russian government for the international

audiences. This point provides further evidence to a similar conclusion reached by Dajani et al (2019), who studied the output of RT Arabic on social media.

At the same time, the findings of this thesis have demonstrated that RT's communication strategies and techniques undoubtedly borrow from the propaganda inventory and often match with the messages of Soviet propaganda. This means that classification of the channel as propaganda is accurate. The debates around the channel in the scholarly, political and professional journalistic circles, thus, can be understood both in the light of RT's themes and messages, which are aligned with the Russian foreign policy, and with communication techniques that involve propaganda, both of which come in conflict with the Western liberal understanding of the norms and values of journalism. Despite the channel's attempts to separate itself from the Soviet propaganda tradition in the way it is positioned to the audiences (exemplified, for example, by the way RT's editors and managers are described as young and non-Soviet), it is clear that some of the Soviet propaganda tradition lives on in the channel's content. This adds to the way we understand media in modern Russia, their relationship with the government and the legacy of Soviet propaganda.

This dissertation's contribution to literature on the topic of post-truth comes in the form of a working definition of the post-truth communication environment that can be used in further theoretical writing on post-truth and to analyse communication actors, their strategies and communication environments.

The findings of this thesis show that the way RT has been previously connected to the concept of post-truth by researchers needs to be refined. Rather than thinking of RT as a 'post-truth actor' that denies existence of truth in the post-modernist sense with the goal of

undermining public discussions (Fedchenko 2016; Mesiter & Puglierin 2018), this thesis argues that RT pragmatically imitates a genuine post-truth environment in the coverage of low-information, crisis events, while remaining the gatekeeper for the ‘truths’ that it publishes. In the majority of the coverage, however, the channel presents its audiences with a Russian viewpoint on major global events, a message strongly aligned with the Russian foreign policy agenda, thus being only one voice in the choir of multiple partisan voices in the modern post-truth communication environment. These findings further add to the research of Russian public diplomacy by Birge and Chatterje-Doody (2020) and Oastes’ (2014) writing on the way Russian strategic narratives adapt to the new media ecology. Finally, by demonstrating and discussing the two ways in which RT participates in and uses the modern post-truth communication environment this thesis further adds to the emerging understandings and conceptualisations of post-truth communication and the ways in which state and non-state actors respond to it.

It is also important to consider how this study contributes to the field of International Relations, where Russian foreign policy is a distinct field of scholarship. By studying the intersection between foreign policy and international broadcasting, this thesis demonstrates the role that media actors play in the Russian foreign policy, the agency they hold; it shows that the way Russia carries out its foreign policy is complex and that the end messages are often constructed by multiple actors, including media actors. While, of course, RT’s public diplomacy activity is arguably far from being independent from the state, it is the areas where it diverges, or where RT is co-constructing the messages rather than simply transmitting them, that show the multi-layered nature of the Russian public diplomacy activity, and the potential areas for its development and further scholarly enquiry. Further, this thesis makes an argument for including media, communication and journalism studies in the studies of

international relations and foreign policy as it demonstrates the importance of examining the journalistic aspects of the texts in order to fully understand all aspects of political communication delivered through the media channels.

By studying a large sample of RT news coverage quantitatively the study has provided an unprecedented look into the structure of the news content published by RT. Of particular value are the quantitative findings as the channel's content, which has not been studied this way before on this scale.

By studying content that RT puts out in two different languages the study has shown that Russia's public diplomacy messages in relation to wars do not vary dramatically between content aimed at different audiences (or audiences speaking different languages). This provides a potential counterargument to Averginos (2009), Simons (2015) and Saari (2014), who argued that Russian public diplomacy messages are often contradictory – though potentially this point could be further clarified by looking at other types of coverage that do not concentrate on wars. In war coverage, however, RT's public diplomacy sends out rather uniform messages.

Finally, this study's findings on RT's use of experts have the potential to inform not only future research but also endeavours in fact-checking and journalistic investigations.

### **8:6 Limitations of this study and suggestions for future research**

Like any other study, this thesis has limitations. First of all, as detailed in the Methodology chapter, this project's ambitions of interviewing RT journalists as an additional research method have been crushed against a wall of non-disclosure agreements that RT employees

sign on employment; it was clear that interviewing reporters and editors might put them at risk which I as a researcher found at odds with the principles of ethical research, the risk that the RT employees I talked to were, understandably, not willing to take. A recent study by the Oxford Internet Institute has taken on this challenge: researchers explain that of the 240 former and current RT employees that were contacted for an interview only 23 agreed to talk to the scholars, and of them 21 were former employees (Elswah & Howard 2020). While this provides an interesting look into the channel, interviewing former employees is a limitation in its own right. However, a study of RT that looks at the production side would be immensely valuable and scholars who would be able to get access to an RT newsroom would most definitely produce excellent research.

Secondly, this dissertation's exclusive look at content means that it is unable to make any conclusions about the way the content will be received by different audiences. A look at how convincing and effective RT content would be for various demographics would provide an invaluable insight into what might be going on on the other side of the content.

Finally, this study only analysed RT content in relation to the dominant foreign policy thinking expressed in official documentation. As a part of exploring the channel's co-construction of the 'Russian viewpoint on major global events', a look into how other foreign policy views that exist in Russia outside of the government mainstream might be reflected, repurposed or otherwise used by RT would be illuminating for our understanding of Russia's foreign policy and public diplomacy.

## **8:7 Conclusion**

This thesis set out to investigate the relationship between the Russian international broadcaster RT and the Russian foreign policy; it did so by exploring the relationship between the themes and messages of RT coverage of two wars and the Russian foreign policy agenda and by analysing RT coverage with reference to the concepts of propaganda, public diplomacy and post-truth. This chapter discussed and summarised the findings of the study, placed them within the existing scholarly writing on the topic, outlined the contribution and suggested some areas for future research.

To summarise, this thesis found that RT's Russian viewpoint on major global events is characterised primarily by its alignment with the Russian foreign policy agenda. This is seen both in the content of the coverage, which takes a form of public diplomacy, explaining the Russian policies and positions to the channel's global audiences, and the form that it takes when it employs devices and techniques of propaganda. In crisis coverage in low-information environment the coverage diverges from the Russian foreign policy agenda and takes a general stance that is implicitly pro-Russian. Post-truth manifests itself in RT content in two distinct ways: on one hand RT is a partisan voice in the choir of partisan voices that make up the modern post-truth communication environment. On the other hand, RT becomes, on certain occasions, a post-truth platform of its own, but only in the sense that it mimics the genuine post-truth environment online, while retaining editorial control. RT's recreation of a post-truth environment within its own platform serves a public diplomacy/propaganda role, meant to influence how its audience views the events in Eastern Ukraine and in Syria and who, if anyone, it sees as responsible. The chapter argued that RT is also a crucial actor in Russian public diplomacy as the Russian viewpoint that it promotes is almost fully aligned with the Russian foreign policy agenda. The importance of RT as an actor should not be

underestimated as the channel's budget only continues to grow (RBC 2020). In the cases where RT coverage diverges from the Russian foreign policy agenda are also the cases in which RT recreates a post-truth environment within its own platform. In these crisis events, while not delivering a pro-Russian viewpoint, the channel gives platform to themes and messages that either don't challenge Russia's character and reputation or are implicitly pro-Russian, thus still acting in the interests of the Russian foreign policy. Other divergences can be found in the details of coverage in English and Russian rather than trends sweeping through the entire sample, which emphasizes the importance of looking at a larger sample. At the same time, the relatively small scale of these divergences emphasizes the uniformity of the message elsewhere in the coverage.

The study's contributions to literature are in the sphere of public diplomacy, propaganda and post-truth, and more generally in the spheres of political communication, media, international broadcasting and international relations. The contributions range from adding to existing studies and knowledge, to providing analysis based on a large-scale sample, to introducing ways of conceptualising new phenomena and applying them in analysis.

## **Annex 1. List of selected events.**

### *Conflict in Ukraine*

**U1. 18 - 23 February 2014 – Kiev sees worst days of violence at the Euromaidan protests as at least 88 people are killed. Yanukovich flees the country.**

The first event in the timeline of the Ukrainian conflict is a six-day period in the Euromaidan protests, which began in November 2013 after the largely pro-Russian Ukrainian president Viktor Yanukovich suspended an agreement of closer trade ties with the EU under pressure from Russia<sup>219</sup>. The protests were largely seen as calling for less Russian involvement in the political life in Ukraine and closer association with the EU, and eventually led to civil unrest, Yanukovich fleeing Ukraine for Russia, and a change of government initiated by the Ukrainian parliament. While the protesters' tents remained on the main site of the protest, Kiev's Independence square, until August 2014, the most active part of the protests took place between November 2013 and March 2014. The period selected for this study, between 18 and 23 February, is seen as the culmination of the protests as those days saw some of the bloodiest clashes between protesters and riot police. In the timeline of Ukrainian crisis the BBC describes these events as Kiev's 'worst day of violence for almost 70 years (BBC 2014). Russia condemned the protests and continued support of Yanukovich, who fled from Ukraine to Russia. These days are seen as the main lead up to the change of government in Ukraine.

Including this event in the study sample is important because it is technically the start of the timeline of the conflict that ensued: the change of government in Ukraine was referenced as

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<sup>219</sup> Ukraine suspends preparations for EU trade agreement - BBC News: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-25032275>



the reason behind the referendum and crisis in Crimea and the military conflict in eastern Ukraine. Even though Russia technically was not a 'side' that was manifested physically in the protests, it is well-known that it supported the Yanukovich government in the country and took in the former president after he had to flee Ukraine. So, in a way, Ukrainian riot police and the Yanukovich government at the time can be seen as proxies for the Russian interests in the country which should be considered in the analysis. Studying this event is also an opportunity to see the way RT's 'Russian viewpoint of global events' presented both the pro-Russian and the pro-European governments of Ukraine.

**U2. 16 March 2014 – Crimean referendum. The region votes to secede from Ukraine and join Russia (dates in the sample - 13 - 19 March).**

The Crimean referendum in which the region voted to join Russia<sup>220</sup> is still seen by the majority of the world's countries as illegal and the region is not recognised as part of Russia<sup>221</sup>. The referendum was conducted after the pro-Russian forces took control of the Crimean Peninsula in Ukraine in February after Yanukovich fled the country and was removed from power by the parliament. Because the referendum and its consequences are seen in the world as an annexation, the event is a complex situation for the Russian public diplomacy to deal with and explain to the world and therefore studying this event in the sample has potential to reveal more details about the themes and messages of RT's 'Russian viewpoint'.

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<sup>220</sup> Crimea referendum: Voters 'back Russia union' - BBC News: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-26606097>

<sup>221</sup> Is Crimea's referendum legal? - BBC News: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-26546133>

**U3. 26-27 May 2014 – Battle for Donetsk airport (dates in the sample - 26 - 30 May).**

The battle for Donetsk airport is the first event that is a military operation associated with the war in eastern Ukraine in this timeline and is the biggest battle of the start of the war<sup>222</sup>. On one side of the conflict was the Ukrainian government forces that were conducting what the government called an ‘anti-terrorist operation’ against the pro-Russian insurgents affiliated with the self-proclaimed Donetsk People’s Republic. The pro-Russian groups held most of the city of Donetsk under their control, and the battle for the airport, the ultimate transport hub that was still held by the Ukrainian forces was seen as ‘the last frontier’ in the battle for control over the city. As one of the sides of the conflict has essentially announced that they are pro-Russian and want to follow in the Crimean footsteps to secede from Ukraine and join Russia and was viewed by many as an attempt to provoke a direct military involvement from Russia<sup>223</sup> in the conflict, the response to the event from Russian public diplomacy and RT is important to study.

**U4. 17 July 2014 - Malaysian Airlines flight MH17 is shot down over eastern Ukraine (dates in the sample - 17 - 20 July).**

On 17 July 2014 a passenger plane heading from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur was shot down while flying over eastern Ukraine, killing all 283 passengers and 15 crew on board<sup>224</sup>.

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<sup>222</sup> Ukraine unrest: Dozens die as Donetsk airport retaken - BBC News: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-27584718>

<sup>223</sup> Ukraine’s new leaders vow to strike decisive blow against pro-Russian separatists - The Washington Post: [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/ukrainian-separatists-claim-heavy-losses-in-airport-gunbattles/2014/05/27/e1c8971f-5cf2-4518-b1c4-99bfe0050288\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/ukrainian-separatists-claim-heavy-losses-in-airport-gunbattles/2014/05/27/e1c8971f-5cf2-4518-b1c4-99bfe0050288_story.html)

<sup>224</sup> MH17 Ukraine plane crash: What we know - BBC News: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-28357880>

Even though the event itself was not a part of the planned military operation by any of the sides of the conflict, the fact that the passenger plane was shot down, as independent investigators agree, by the pro-Russian insurgents makes for an essential choice in the timeline of Ukrainian crisis events. The disaster had arguably the biggest international impact among other events in this timeline because of the large number of foreign victims and was as much a public diplomacy issue for Russia as it was for the pro-Russian insurgents, as Russia was accused by the investigators of the crash of supplying the weapon that was used to shoot down the plane<sup>225</sup>. Russia denied the accusations even as three Russian citizens were formally charged<sup>226</sup>. It is important to include this event in the timeline because any public diplomacy on the Russian side at the time would essentially be crisis communication, and as the crisis itself involves many more countries than just Russia and Ukraine, there are more audiences for the public diplomacy. Therefore, studying how RT dealt with the situation would be revealing of many details of the ‘Russian viewpoint on global events.’

**U5. 22 - 26 August 2014 - Ukraine releases videos of captured Russian paratroopers. Russian convoy delivers humanitarian aid to the government-besieged city of Luhansk without Ukrainian permission (dates in the sample - 22 - 29 August).**

These events are the first instances of proven direct Russian involvement in the conflict between the Ukrainian government forces and the pro-Russian insurgents in eastern Ukraine. Two events happened in the timeframe specified above: Russian trucks with humanitarian aid crossed the border of Ukraine and proceeded to deliver the aid to the cities of eastern

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<sup>225</sup> MH17 missile owned by Russian brigade, investigators say - BBC News: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-44235402>

<sup>226</sup> MH17: Four charged with shooting down plane over Ukraine - BBC News: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-48691488>

Ukraine<sup>227</sup>, and the Ukrainian government released a video of ten Russian soldiers who were captured on Ukrainian territory in the east of the country<sup>228</sup>. Even though Russia was universally seen as a side in the conflict even before this evidence of direct involvement it is important to include these two almost simultaneous events in the timeline of this study in order to scrutinise how RT portrayed Russia's direct involvement compared to the indirect involvement before that.

#### **U6. The battle of Debaltseve:**

**30 January 2015 - civilian deaths and mass civilian evacuations in Debaltseve<sup>229</sup> (dates in the sample: 30 January - 2 February 2015);**

**12 - 18 February 2015 - new ceasefire agreement is signed in Minsk, fighting in Debaltseve continues and intensifies, 'non-stop explosions' are reported in the town<sup>230</sup>; Ukrainian forces start retreat from Debaltseve<sup>231</sup> (dates in the sample: 9 - 21 February 2015).**

The battle near the town of Debaltseve (also spelled Debaltsevo), situated just outside of Donetsk, is the first major military clash after the truce between pro-Russian insurgents and the Ukrainian military, which was signed 5 September 2014 in Minsk, Belarus. Debaltseve is seen as a strategic point as it is situated between the insurgent-held cities of Donetsk and Luhansk and was held by the Ukrainian army forces. The battle for the town continued for

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<sup>227</sup> Ukraine crisis: Russia aid convoy 'invades Ukraine' - BBC News: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-28892525>

<sup>228</sup> Captured Russian troops 'in Ukraine by accident' - BBC News: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-28934213>

<sup>229</sup> Ukraine battle rages for key town of Debaltseve - BBC News: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-31055881>

<sup>230</sup> Ukraine crisis: Debaltseve clashes undermine ceasefire - BBC News: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-31483116>

<sup>231</sup> Ukraine troops retreat from key town of Debaltseve - BBC News: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-31519000>

over a month, between 22 January 2015, when insurgent forces attacked Debaltseve, and 20 February 2015, when the last of the Ukrainian forces withdrew from the region. Because of the duration of the battle three key dates were selected for the study. As the first major operation in the conflict since the truce, it is important for the timeline and the analysis and would allow the study to see if and how the messages have changed in RT coverage after a year of conflict in Ukraine.

**U7. 29 January - 4 February 2017 - The Battle of Avdiivka (dates in the sample: 26 January 2017 – 7 February 2017)**

After the Ukrainian troops retreated after the battle of Debaltseve, several ceasefires have been signed between the fighting sides over the course of 2015 and 2016 and the war was branded by media a ‘frozen conflict’ since no big battles took place, a diplomatic stand still has been reached but the situation in the east of the country was far from peaceful<sup>232</sup>. The truce agreements were often broken by fighting but no major military operations took place until late January 2017. The battle near the town of Avdiivka (also spelled Avdeevka) is described as the biggest and deadliest operation<sup>233</sup> since 2015, as 46 people (including 14 civilians) were killed, and over 80 injured. As the fighting re-started after the ‘frozen’ period of war, it is important to include this event in the sampling to observe the consistency of the themes and messages of the public diplomacy over the years of the conflict.

*Conflict in Syria*

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<sup>232</sup> Ukraine conflict: Daily reality of east's 'frozen war' -BBC News: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-35990401>

<sup>233</sup> Ukraine conflict: Evacuation planned in frontline town of Avdiivka - BBC News: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-38807778>

**S1. 30 September 2015 - First Russian airstrikes in Syria (dates in the sample: 27 September - 3 October 2015).**

The timeline of the conflict for the study starts with the first instance of Russian involvement in the war, when Russia carried out its first air strikes in Syria<sup>234</sup>, declaring IS as the main target of the attacks. However, the US and the Syrian opposition groups have stated that the Russian forces have overwhelmingly targeted the anti-Assad rebels and not IS<sup>235</sup>. The event is important for content analysis as it is the first instance of the direct Russian military involvement not only in a crisis in the Middle East but also in a crisis so far away from Russia's own borders. Because of this the public diplomacy surrounding this event is of particular interest to this study.

**S2. 11 December 2015 - In a televised meeting Putin vows 'extremely tough' action on Syria threats (dates in the sample: 8 - 14 December 2015).**

A month and a half after Russian military first got involved with the conflict, Putin held a televised meeting with the defence officials, in which he ordered all threats to Russian forces in Syria to be "immediately destroyed"<sup>236</sup>. This speech also caused misunderstanding, as it was first understood that he said that Russia will be supporting the rebels' Free Syrian Army forces, which the country was previously reported to bomb. The Kremlin spokesman later announced that Russia supports only "the legitimate authorities of the Syrian Arab

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<sup>234</sup> Syria crisis: Russian air strikes against Assad enemies - BBC News: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-34399164>

<sup>235</sup> Russia begins Syria air strikes in its biggest Mideast intervention in decades - Reuters: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-russia/russia-begins-syria-air-strikes-in-its-biggest-mideast-intervention-in-decades-idUSKCN0RU0MG20150930>

<sup>236</sup> Putin vows 'extremely tough' action on Syria threats - BBC News: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-35070354>

Republic”<sup>237</sup>. While this event is not actually a military operation or battle, it relates to it by situating Russian involvement and intentions in the conflict directly and can be seen an act of public diplomacy in itself as Putin’s address was televised. The sample for this event also includes some news written as a follow-up for the earlier event from 24 November where Turkey shot down Russian jet on its border with Syria<sup>238</sup>.

**S3. 24 January 2015 - Capture of the towns of Rabia and Salma in Latakia (dates in the sample: 21 - 27 January 2015).**

The capture of the major rebel-held town in the Latakia region of Syria is one of the first big successes for the Syrian army since Russian airforce joined the conflict<sup>239</sup>. Russian support has also been called instrumental for this capture, and the coverage of this event is important for the timeline in order to see how the first successes of the campaign were covered by RT.

**S4. 14 March 2016 - Russian president Vladimir Putin announced the Syrian mission accomplished (dates in the sample: 11 March - 17 March 2016).**

Putin announced that he ordered the ‘main parts’ of Russian military to withdraw from Syria as mission which he had set for the Russian military in Syria was "on the whole accomplished”<sup>240</sup>. The coverage of this event is important for the timeline because this was a

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<sup>237</sup> Russia seems confused about whether it is arming Syrian rebels - The Washington post: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2015/12/15/russia-seems-confused-about-whether-its-arming-syrian-rebels/>

<sup>238</sup> Turkey's downing of Russian warplane - what we know - BBC News: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-34912581>

<sup>239</sup> Syria conflict: Major rebel town 'seized' in boost for Assad - BBC News: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-35395328>

<sup>240</sup> Syria conflict: Russia's Putin orders 'main part' of forces out - BBC News: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-35807689>

surprise announcement that contained an evaluation of the Russian forces' operation in Syria, which is important in a study of public diplomacy study.

**S5. 27 March 2016 - Palmyra recapture from IS (dates in the sample: 24 - 30 March 2016).**

The Syrian government forces retook Palmyra from IS with Russian air assistance on the 27 March 2016 - at the time this event has been hailed as one of the most important achievements for the Russian-backed Syrian government forces in the entire military operation, a “victory for Assad”<sup>241</sup>. Apart from the symbolical importance of retaking a major historical spot, Palmyra is also strategically located on the road between the capital, Damascus, and the contested eastern city of Deir al-Zour. Since this is seen as one of the key success of the Russian military intervention, the coverage of the event is essential for this timeline.

**S6. 5 May 2016 - Russian orchestra performs in Palmyra (dates in the sample: 2 - 8 May 2016).**

A Russian orchestra, led by the country's most famous conductor Valery Gergiev, performed a concert in the ruins of Palmyra<sup>242</sup> in what was seen as a symbolic show of defiance and soft power that utilised the classical tools of both public diplomacy and propaganda - culture and symbolism, as well as the appeal to emotions through the music. Therefore, studying the coverage of this event will allow us to reveal and analyse the themes and messages and how

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<sup>241</sup> Syria civil war: Assad hails Palmyra recapture from IS - BBC News: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-35906568>

<sup>242</sup> Russia's Valery Gergiev conducts concert in Palmyra ruins - BBC News: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-36211449>



they combine with and utilise the symbolism of this event.

**S7. 1 August 2016 - Russian helicopter shot down in Idlib province, killing five on board (dates in the sample: 1 - 4 August).**

This event is the deadliest incident for the Russian army since its involvement in Syria nearly a year ago in September 2015 - BBC Arab Affairs editor Sebastian Usher said the incident was “the worst single loss of life for Russia since it launched its air offensive in Syria”<sup>243</sup>. Russia announced that the helicopter was shot down by the rebel forces, and was not involved in a military mission, instead delivering humanitarian aid to the besieged city of Aleppo. It is important to include this event as an example of the Russian forces defeat in their military operation as all major events before were instances of the success in the operation - thus we will be able to trace and analyse the changes in the themes and messages depending on the character and interpretation of events. Also analysed within the timeline of this event is the suspected chemical attack that took place in the town of Saraqib in the Idlib province on 2 August<sup>244</sup>.

**S8. 5 – 16 December – Recapturing of Aleppo (dates in the sample: 2 – 19 December 2016).**

The Syrian government troops, backed by the Russian air power and the Iranian-sponsored militias, recaptured Aleppo, the country's largest city, depriving the rebels of their last major urban stronghold - the offensive that led to recapturing has lasted for over a month<sup>245</sup> and the

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<sup>243</sup> Syria war: Russian helicopter shot down, killing five on board - BBC news:  
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-36939137>

<sup>244</sup> Dozens ill after suspected chlorine attack in Syria - The Guardian:  
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/aug/02/chlorine-attack-syria-dozens-ill-saraqeb-idlib>

<sup>245</sup> <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-38288018>

recapture was described as a potential turning point<sup>246</sup> for the Syrian Civil War. The operation also caused a humanitarian disaster as thousands of civilians were forced to flee their homes<sup>247</sup>, and many more were trapped in the city<sup>248</sup>. The scale of the event makes it an essential event for the content analysis. Also analysed within the timeline of this event is the assassination of the Russian ambassador in Turkey which happened on 19 December - even though this event did not take place in Syria, the attacker who shot the ambassador was thought to have been motivated by Russian military involvement in Syria as he was shouting about it at the time of the attack<sup>249</sup> - this makes the event relevant to the study of the coverage of war in Syria.

**S9. 4 April 2017 - Chemical attack on the rebel-held town of Khan Sheikhoun in north-western Syria (dates in the sample: 4 - 7 April 2017).**

More than 80 people were killed<sup>250</sup> in a suspected chemical attack on the rebel-held town of Khan Sheikhoun in north-western Syria on 4 April<sup>251</sup>. The United Nations, the governments of the United States, United Kingdom, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, France, and Israel, as well as Human Rights Watch have attributed the attack to the forces of the Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, while the Syrian government denied the attack, and Moscow suggested that the civilians were poisoned by the rebels<sup>252</sup>. The attack also caused a reaction from the US, with

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<sup>246</sup> Aleppo siege: Syria rebels lose 50% of territory - BBC News: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-38194136>

<sup>247</sup> Aleppo resident: 'Situation is worse than imaginable' - BBC News: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-38146959>

<sup>248</sup> Aleppo Syria battle: Evacuation of rebel-held east - BBC News: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-38329461>

<sup>249</sup> Russian ambassador to Turkey Andrei Karlov shot dead in Ankara - BBC News: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-38369962>

<sup>250</sup> Syria 'chemical attack': What now? - BBC News: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-39496149>

<sup>251</sup> Syria chemical 'attack': What we know - BBC News: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-39500947>

<sup>252</sup> Syria chemical 'attack': Russia faces fury at UN Security Council - BBC News: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-39500319>

U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson quoted as saying "Either Russia has been complicit, or Russia has been simply incompetent"<sup>253</sup>, and the United States launched 59 cruise missiles on Shayrat Airbase, a Syrian airfield near Shayrat, believed to be the base for the aircraft that carried out the chemical attack<sup>254</sup>. The scale of event, with all its controversies and contradictions, makes it essential for the timeline as we will be able to study the themes and messages in RT content as it narrates this complex event from a Russian point of view.

## **Annex 2. Coding schedules & manuals**

### **Quantitative content analysis**

#### **Ukraine coding schedule (in English<sup>255</sup>)**

Instructions:

Where answer options are given please choose the answer number corresponding to the correct answer.

Please note that, unless it is stated otherwise in the question, you can only give one answer.

1. Event code?

- (1) U1
- (2) U2
- (3) U3
- (4) U4
- (5) U5
- (6) U6
- (7) U7

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<sup>253</sup> Tillerson: Russia 'complicit' or 'incompetent' with Syria - ABC News:

<http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/tillerson-russia-complicit-incompetent-syria/story?id=46640880>

<sup>254</sup> Syria war: US launches missile strikes in response to 'chemical attack' - BBC News:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-39523654>

<sup>255</sup> This is the coding schedule that was used by the author of this dissertation and the intercoder reliability coders who speak English. The same coding schedule translated into Russian for the Russian-speaking intercoder reliability coders is presented later in this Annex.

2. Text number?

Please write the number of the text in the following format without the dashes: day-month-year-time of publication' (eg. 010220150015), where two texts are published on the same date and time please distinguish between the texts by adding -1,-2, etc in the end (eg. 010220150015-1).

3. Length of text?

- (1) 100 - 300 words
- (2) 301 - 600 words
- (3) 601 words and longer

4. What is the main topic and news claim of the text?

Please select a maximum of 2 answers

- (1) Military confrontation / clashes, warfare
- (2) International relations and diplomacy
- (3) Internal affairs of a country - please specify country
- (4) Humanitarian issues
- (5) Accident
- (6) Other - please provide details

5. What words are used to describe Ukraine?

6. What words are used to describe the military action in Ukraine?

7. What words are used to describe the insurgents/separatist forces in Ukraine?

8. What words are used to describe Russia?

9. What words are used to describe other countries (not Russia or Ukraine)? Please specify:  
Country - words/phrases.

10. What news sources does the article refer to? Please select all answers that apply.

- (1) Other media publication, TV channel or news agency. Please specify names.
- (2) Own reporter or interview

- (3) Social media
- (4) Russian government officials or military
- (5) Ukrainian government officials or military
- (6) Ukrainian sources not affiliated with the government
- (7) Russian sources not affiliated with the government
- (8) Government officials of other countries - please specify name
- (9) Representatives of international organisations - please specify the name of organisation
- (10) Experts
- (11) Eyewitnesses
- (12) Activists
- (13) Bloggers
- (14) Unspecified or unnamed source
- (15) Other source - please give details

11. What Russian actors are quoted in the text?

Please select all answers that apply.

- (1) President Putin or his spokesman Peskov
- (2) Sergei Lavrov
- (3) Maria Zakharova
- (4) Other Russian government officials
- (5) Representatives of the Russian military
- (6) Representatives of non-government opposition
- (7) Russian experts
- (8) Russian activists
- (9) Others - please specify
- (10) No quoted Russian actors

12. What Russian actors are mentioned in the text?

Please select all answers that apply.

- (1) President Putin or his spokesman Peskov
- (2) Sergei Lavrov
- (3) Maria Zakharova
- (4) Other Russian government officials

- (5) Representatives of the Russian military
- (6) Representatives of non-government opposition
- (7) Russian experts
- (8) Russian activists
- (9) Others - please specify
- (10) No mentioned Russian actors

13. What Ukrainian actors are quoted in the text?

Please select all answers that apply.

- (1) President Poroshenko
- (2) President Yanukovich
- (3) Other government officials
- (4) Representatives of the Ukrainian military
- (5) Insurgents in Eastern Ukraine and Crimea
- (6) Ukrainian experts
- (7) Ukrainian activists
- (8) Eyewitnesses
- (9) Other - please specify
- (10) No quoted Ukrainian actors

14. What Ukrainian actors are mentioned in the text?

Please select all answers that apply.

- (1) President Poroshenko
- (2) President Yanukovich
- (3) Other government officials
- (4) Representatives of the Ukrainian military
- (5) Insurgents in Eastern Ukraine and Crimea
- (6) Ukrainian experts
- (7) Ukrainian activists
- (8) Eyewitnesses
- (9) Other - please specify
- (10) No mentioned Ukrainian actors

15. What foreign actors (not from Russia or Syria) are quoted in the text?

Please select all answers that apply.

- (1) Barak Obama
- (2) Donald Trump
- (3) Marine Le Pen
- (4) Recep Tayyip Erdoğan
- (5) Other foreign government officials and heads of state - please specify name
- (6) Officials and representatives of international organisations
- (7) Foreign experts
- (8) Foreign activists
- (9) Others - Please specify
- (10) No quoted foreign actors

16. What foreign actors (not from Russia or Syria) are mentioned in the text?

Please select all answers that apply.

- (1) Barak Obama
- (2) Donald Trump
- (3) Marine Le Pen
- (4) Recep Tayyip Erdoğan
- (5) Other foreign government officials and heads of state - please specify name
- (6) Officials and representatives of international organisations
- (7) Foreign experts
- (8) Foreign activists
- (9) Others - Please specify
- (10) No mentioned foreign actors

### **Quantitative content analysis**

#### **Ukraine coding schedule (in Russian<sup>256</sup>)**

Инструкция:

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<sup>256</sup> This coding schedule is a direct translation of the corresponding coding schedule in English; it was used by Russian-speaking intercoder reliability coders.

В вопросах, где даны варианты ответов, пожалуйста, записывайте номер правильного варианта ответа.

Пожалуйста, имейте в виду, что на каждый вопрос можно дать только один ответ за исключением вопросов, где указано иначе.

1. Код события?

Пожалуйста укажите код события в формате буква + номер указано в документе.

- (1) U1
- (2) U2
- (3) U3
- (4) U4
- (5) U5
- (6) U6
- (7) U7

2. Номер текста?

Пожалуйста укажите номер текста в следующем формате, но без тире: день-месяц-год-время публикации (например, 010220150015); в случаях, когда два текста были опубликованы в одно время и один день, пожалуйста, укажите в номере -1,-2 и так далее для всех последующих текстов (например, 010220150015-1).

3. Длина текста?

- (1) 100 - 300 слов
- (2) 301 - 600 слов
- (3) 601 слов и длиннее

4. В чем состоит главная тема текста?

Пожалуйста, выберите не больше 2х вариантов ответа

- (1) Военные столкновения / бои
- (2) Международные отношения и дипломатия
- (3) Внутренние дела страны - пожалуйста, укажите страну
- (4) Гуманитарные проблемы
- (5) Авария / непредвиденный случай



- (6) Другое - пожалуйста, укажите детали
5. Какие слова используются для описания Украины?
  6. Какие слова используются для описания военных действий в Украине?
  7. Какие слова используются для описания повстанцев/сепаратистов в Украине?
  8. Какие слова используются для описания России?
  9. Какие слова используются для описания других стран (не Росси и не Украины)?  
Пожалуйста, пишите в формате: страна - слова.
  10. На какие новостные источники ссылается текст?
    - (1) Публикация в других медиа или сообщения информ. агентств. Пожалуйста, укажите название
    - (2) Собственный репортер или интервью
    - (3) Социальные сети
    - (4) Представители российского правительства и армии
    - (5) Представители украинского правительства и армии
    - (6) Российские источники не связанные с правительством
    - (7) Украинские источники не связанные с правительством
    - (8) Государства и чиновники/представители других стран пожалуйста, укажите имя
    - (9) Представители международных организаций - пожалуйста, укажите название
    - (10) Эксперты
    - (11) Очевидцы и свидетели
    - (12) Активисты
    - (13) Блоггеры
    - (14) Неназванный источник
    - (15) Другие источники - пожалуйста, укажите детали

11. Какие российские действующие лица цитируются в тексте?

- (1) Президент Путин или его пресс-секретарь Песков
- (2) Сергей Лавров
- (3) Мария Захарова
- (4) Другие представители российского правительства
- (5) Представители российской армии
- (6) Представители несистемной оппозиции
- (7) Российские эксперты
- (8) Российские активисты
- (9) Другие - пожалуйста, укажите детали
- (10) Нет цитируемых российских действующих лиц

12. Какие российские действующие лица упоминаются в тексте?

- (1) Президент Путин или его пресс-секретарь Песков
- (2) Сергей Лавров
- (3) Мария Захарова
- (4) Другие представители российского правительства
- (5) Представители российской армии
- (6) Представители несистемной оппозиции
- (7) Российские эксперты
- (8) Российские активисты
- (9) Другие - пожалуйста, укажите детали
- (10) Нет упоминаемых российских действующих лиц

13. Какие украинские действующие лица цитируются в тексте?

- (1) Президент Порошенко
- (2) Президент Янукович
- (3) Другие представители украинского правительства
- (4) Представители украинской армии
- (5) Сепаратисты/повстанцы из Восточной Украины
- (6) Украинские эксперты
- (7) Украинские активисты
- (8) Очевидцы и свидетели
- (9) Другие - пожалуйста, укажите детали

(10) Нет цитируемых украинских действующих лиц

14. Какие украинские действующие лица упоминаются в тексте?

- (1) Президент Порошенко
- (2) Президент Янукович
- (3) Другие представители украинского правительства
- (4) Представители украинской армии
- (5) Сепаратисты/повстанцы из Восточной Украины
- (6) Украинские эксперты
- (7) Украинские активисты
- (8) Очевидцы и свидетели
- (9) Другие - пожалуйста, укажите детали
- (10) Нет упоминаемых украинских действующих лиц

15. Какие зарубежные действующие лица (не из России или Сирии) цитируются в тексте?

- (1) Барак Обама
- (2) Дональд Трамп
- (3) Марин Ле Пен
- (4) Реджеп Тайип Эрдоган
- (5) Другие главы государств или представители правительств - пожалуйста, укажите имя
- (6) Члены ИГ
- (7) Представители международных организаций
- (8) Зарубежные эксперты
- (9) Зарубежные активисты
- (10) Другие - пожалуйста, укажите детали
- (11) Нет зарубежных действующих лиц

Какие зарубежные действующие лица (не из России или Сирии) упоминаются в тексте?

- (1) Барак Обама
- (2) Дональд Трамп
- (3) Марин Ле Пен

(4) Реджеп Тайип Эрдоган

(5) Другие главы государств или представители правительств - пожалуйста, укажите имя

(6) Члены ИГ

(7) Представители международных организаций

(8) Эксперты

(9) Активисты

(10) Другие - пожалуйста, укажите детали

(11) Нет зарубежных действующих лиц

### **Quantitative content analysis**

#### **Syria coding schedule (in English<sup>257</sup>)**

Instructions:

Where answer options are given please choose the answer number corresponding to the correct answer.

Please note that, unless it is stated otherwise in the question, you can only give one answer.

1. Event code?

(1) S1

(2) S2

(3) S3

(4) S4

(5) S5

(6) S6

(7) S7

(8) S8

(9) S9

2. Text number?

Please write the number of the text in the following format without the dashes: day-

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<sup>257</sup> This is the coding schedule that was used by the author of this dissertation and the intercoder reliability coders who speak English. The same coding schedule translated into Russian for the Russian-speaking intercoder reliability coders is presented later in this Annex.

month-year-time of publication' (eg. 010220150015), where two texts are published on the same date and time please distinguish between the texts by adding -1,-2, etc in the end (eg. 010220150015-1).

3. Length of text?

- (1) 100 - 300 words
- (2) 301 - 600 words
- (3) 601 words and longer

4. What is the main topic and news claim of the text?

Please select a maximum of 2 answers

- (1) Military confrontation / clashes, warfare
- (2) International relations and diplomacy
- (3) Internal affairs of a country - please specify country
- (4) Humanitarian issues
- (5) Accident
- (6) Other - please provide details

5. What words are used to describe Syria?

6. What words are used to describe the military action in Syria?

7. What words are used to describe the Syrian opposition?

8. What words are used to describe Russia?

9. What words are used to describe other countries (not Russia or Syria)? Please specify:

Country - words/phrases.

10. What words are used to describe IS?

11. What news sources does the article use?

Please select all answers that apply.

- (1) Other media publication, TV channel or news agency. Please specify names.
- (2) Own reporter or interview
- (3) Social media
- (4) Russian government officials or military
- (5) Syrian government officials or military
- (6) Syrian sources not affiliated with the government
- (7) Russian sources not affiliated with the government
- (8) Government officials of other countries - please specify name
- (9) Representatives of international organisations - please specify the name of organisation
- (10) Experts
- (11) Eyewitnesses
- (12) Activists
- (13) Bloggers
- (14) Unspecified or unnamed source
- (15) Other source - please give details

12. What Russian actors are quoted in the text?

Please select all answers that apply.

- (1) President Putin or his spokesman Peskov
- (2) Sergei Lavrov
- (3) Maria Zakharova
- (4) Other Russian government officials
- (5) Representatives of the Russian military
- (6) Representatives of non-government opposition
- (7) Russian experts
- (8) Russian activists
- (9) Others - please specify
- (10) No quoted Russian actors

13. What Russian actors are mentioned in the text?

Please select all answers that apply.

- (1) President Putin or his spokesman Peskov
- (2) Sergei Lavrov

- (3) Maria Zakharova
- (4) Other Russian government officials
- (5) Representatives of the Russian military
- (6) Representatives of non-government opposition
- (7) Russian experts
- (8) Russian activists
- (9) Others - please specify
- (10) No mentioned Russian actors

14. What Syrian actors are quoted in the text?

Please select all answers that apply.

- (1) Bashar al-Assad
- (2) Other Syrian government officials
- (3) Representatives of the Syrian military
- (4) Members of Syrian opposition
- (5) Syrian experts
- (6) Representative White Helmets
- (7) Syrian activists
- (8) Eyewitnesses
- (9) Other - please specify
- (10) No quoted Syrian actors

15. What Syrian actors are mentioned in the text?

Please select all answers that apply.

- (1) Bashar al-Assad
- (2) Other Syrian government officials
- (3) Representatives of the Syrian military
- (4) Members of Syrian opposition
- (5) Syrian experts
- (6) Representative of the White Helmets
- (7) Syrian activists
- (8) Eyewitnesses
- (9) Other - please specify

(10) No mentioned Syrian actors

16. What foreign actors (not from Russia or Syria) are quoted in the text?

Please select all answers that apply.

(1) Barak Obama

(2) Donald Trump

(3) Marine Le Pen

(4) Recep Tayyip Erdoğan

(5) Other foreign government officials and heads of state - please specify name

(6) Members of ISIS

(7) Officials and representatives of international organisations

(8) Foreign experts

(9) Foreign activists

(10) Others - Please specify

(10) No quoted foreign actors

17. What foreign actors (not from Russia or Syria) are mentioned in the text?

Please select all answers that apply.

(1) Barak Obama

(2) Donald Trump

(3) Marine Le Pen

(4) Recep Tayyip Erdoğan

(5) Other foreign government officials and heads of state - please specify name

(6) ISIS

(7) Officials and representatives of international organisations

(8) Foreign experts

(9) Foreign activists

(10) Others - Please specify

(10) No mentioned foreign actors

## **Quantitative content analysis**



## Syria coding schedule (in Russian<sup>258</sup>)

Инструкция:

В вопросах, где даны варианты ответов, пожалуйста, записывайте номер правильного варианта ответа.

Пожалуйста, имейте в виду, что на каждый вопрос можно дать только один ответ за исключением вопросов, где указано иначе.

### 1. Код события?

Пожалуйста укажите код события в формате буква + номер указано в документе.

(1) S1

(2) S2

(3) S3

(4) S4

(5) S5

(6) S6

(7) S7

(8) S8

(9) S9

### 2. Номер текста?

Пожалуйста укажите номер текста в следующем формате, но без тире: день-месяц-год-время публикации (например, 010220150015); в случаях, когда два текста были опубликованы в одно время и один день, пожалуйста, укажите в номере -1,-2 и так далее для всех последующих текстов (например, 010220150015-1).

### 3. Длина текста?

(1) 100 - 300 слов

(2) 301 - 600 слов

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<sup>258</sup> This coding schedule is a direct translation of the corresponding coding schedule in English; it was used by Russian-speaking intercoder reliability coders.

(3) 601 слово и длиннее

4. В чем состоит главная тема текста?

Пожалуйста, выберите не больше 2х вариантов ответа

- (1) Военные столкновения / бои
- (2) Международные отношения и дипломатия
- (3) Внутренние дела страны - пожалуйста, укажите страну
- (4) Гуманитарные проблемы
- (5) Авария / непредвиденный случай
- (6) Другое - пожалуйста, укажите детали

5. Какие слова используются для описания Сирии?

6. Какие слова используются для описания военных действий в Сирии?

7. Какие слова используются для описания сил Сирийской оппозиции?

8. Какие слова используются для описания России?

9. Какие слова используются для описания других стран (не России и не Сирии)?

Пожалуйста, пишите в формате: страна - слова.

10. Какие слова используются для описания ИГ?

11. На какие новостные источники ссылается текст?

- (1) Публикация в других медиа или сообщения информ агентств. Пожалуйста, укажите название
- (2) Собственный репортер или интервью
- (3) Социальные сети
- (4) Представители российского правительства и армии
- (5) Представители сирийского правительства и армии
- (6) Российские источники не связанные с правительством
- (7) Сирийские источники не связанные с правительством
- (8) Государства и чиновники/представители других стран пожалуйста, укажите

имя

(9) Представители международных организаций - пожалуйста, укажите название

(10) Эксперты

(11) Очевидцы и свидетели

(12) Активисты

(13) Блоггеры

(14) Неназванный источник

(15) Другие источники - пожалуйста, укажите детали

12. Какие российские действующие лица цитируются в тексте?

(1) Президент Путин или его пресс-секретарь Песков

(2) Сергей Лавров

(3) Мария Захарова

(4) Другие представители российского правительства

(5) Представители российской армии

(6) Представители несистемной оппозиции

(7) Российские эксперты

(8) Российские активисты

(9) Другие - пожалуйста, укажите детали

(10) Нет цитируемых российских действующих лиц

13. Какие российские действующие лица упоминаются в тексте?

(1) Президент Путин или его пресс-секретарь Песков

(2) Сергей Лавров

(3) Мария Захарова

(4) Другие представители российского правительства

(5) Представители российской армии

(6) Представители несистемной оппозиции

(7) Российские эксперты

(8) Российские активисты

(9) Другие - пожалуйста, укажите детали

(10) Нет упоминаемых российских действующих лиц

14. Какие сирийские действующие лица цитируются в тексте?

- (1) Башар Асад
- (2) Другие представители сирийского правительства
- (3) Представители сирийской армии
- (4) Сирийская оппозиция
- (5) Сирийские эксперты
- (6) Члены Белых Касок
- (7) Сирийские активисты
- (8) Свидетели и очевидцы
- (9) Другие - пожалуйста, укажите детали
- (10) Нет цитируемых сирийских действующих лиц

15. Какие сирийские действующие лица упоминаются в тексте?

- (1) Башар Асад
- (2) Другие представители сирийского правительства
- (3) Представители сирийской армии
- (4) Сирийская оппозиция
- (5) Сирийские эксперты
- (6) Члены Белых Касок
- (7) Сирийские активисты
- (8) Свидетели и очевидцы
- (9) Другие - пожалуйста, укажите детали
- (10) Нет упоминаемых сирийских действующих лиц

16. Какие зарубежные действующие лица (не из России или Сирии) цитируются в тексте?

- (1) Барак Обама
- (2) Дональд Трамп
- (3) Марин Ле Пен
- (4) Реджеп Тайип Эрдоган
- (5) Другие главы государств или представители правительств - пожалуйста, укажите имя
- (6) Члены ИГ
- (7) Представители международных организаций

- (8) Зарубежные эксперты
  - (9) Зарубежные активисты
  - (10) Другие - пожалуйста, укажите детали
  - (11) Нет зарубежных действующих лиц
17. Какие зарубежные действующие лица (не из России или Сирии) упоминаются в тексте?
- (1) Барак Обама
  - (2) Дональд Трамп
  - (3) Марин Ле Пен
  - (4) Реджеп Тайип Эрдоган
  - (5) Другие главы государств или представители правительств - пожалуйста, укажите имя
  - (6) Члены ИГ
  - (7) Представители международных организаций
  - (8) Эксперты
  - (9) Активисты
  - (10) Другие - пожалуйста, укажите детали
  - (11) Нет зарубежных действующих лиц

## **Coding Manuals**

### **CODING MANUAL FOR QUANTITATIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS**

#### **UKRAINE (in English<sup>259</sup>)**

#### **Units of analysis**

While analysing the conflict coverage of RT and studying the themes and messages of the ‘Russian viewpoint on global events’ that the channel claims to be broadcasting, this study uses a sample of 16 events: 7 in the conflict in Ukraine and 9 in the conflict in Syria. The events have been given a letter and number value according to the conflict timeline. These are the events, constructed based on the BBC timeline of the conflicts and BBC reporting (for

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<sup>259</sup> This is the coding manual that was used by the author of this dissertation and the intercoder reliability coders who speak English. The same coding manual translated into Russian for the Russian-speaking intercoder reliability coders is presented later in this Annex.

full descriptions of all events see Annex 1):

**U1.** 18 - 23 February 2014 – Kiev sees worst days of violence at the Euromaidan protests as at least 88 people are killed. President Yanukovich flees the country.

**U2.** 16 March 2014 – Crimean referendum - the region votes to secede from Ukraine and join Russia. Majority of the world countries announce the referendum illegal and consider Crimea joining Russia an annexation.

**U3.** 26-27 May 2014 – Battle for the Donetsk airport. Ukrainian army forces take control of the airport.

**U4.** 17 July 2014 - Malaysian Airlines flight MH17 is shot down over eastern Ukraine. Pro-Russia insurgents deny allegation that it was their rocket that took down the plane.

**U5.** 22 - 26 August 2014 - Russian convoy delivers humanitarian aid to the government-besieged city of Luhansk without Ukrainian permission, marking the first direct involvement of the country in the conflict. Ukraine releases videos of captured Russian paratroopers.

**U6.** The battle of Debaltsevo: 30 January - civilian deaths in the town of Debaltsevo in Donetsk region. Mass civilian evacuations; 12 - 18 February 2015 - fighting intensifies despite the new ceasefire agreement, 'non-stop explosions' are reported in the town before Ukrainian forces start retreat from the area.

**U7.** 29 January - 4 February 2017 - The Battle of Avdiivka, a first military clash after a year of 'frozen conflict'. 46 people (including 14 civilians) were killed, and over 80 injured.

The articles for the analysis are saved from the RT website using the Google Chrome browser application called Save Webpage As Docx, which allows to save html pages as .docx files. The search for articles was conducted with the built-in search engine on the RT websites in Russian and in English within the time scale of each event, specified in the sampling section of Chapter 4. Keywords for the searches consisted of the geographical names of the cities, towns and areas mentioned in each event, as well as any other relevant event-specific words. In the case when no geographical name was mentioned in the event, the personal name (for

example ‘Vladimir Putin’) was used as a keyword. Additional search with keyword ‘Ukraine’ was conducted to check that no articles were missed.

Only news articles 100 words or longer are included in the sample of this study. Articles also have to concentrate on the events in the timeline as primary topics, or Ukrainian political and foreign policy-related events as they fall under the study’s general topic. All articles on other topics (for example the internal politics of the USA and the election campaign) need to mention the country at the centre of the timeline (Ukraine) in the headline or at least twice in the text.

## **DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE CONTENT ANALYSIS UKRAINE CODING SCHEDULE**

### **QUESTIONS 1 - 2 TECHNICAL**

The first two questions are technical and are there to identify the event and text that you are coding.

#### Question 1. Event code?

- (1) S1
- (2) S2
- (3) S3
- (4) S4
- (5) S5
- (6) S6
- (7) S7
- (8) S8
- (9) S9

Please select the event code according to the timeline provided in the Coding Manual.

#### Question 2. Text number?

Please write the number of the text in the following format without the dashes: day-month-year-time of publication’ (eg. 010220150015), where two texts are published on the same

date and time please distinguish between the texts by adding -1,-2, etc in the end (eg. 010220150015-1).

### **QUESTION 3**

#### **DETAIL AND CONTEXT**

The third question looks at the length of the news article. While traditionally in print media the length of text is used to figure out how ‘important’ the topic covered in the article is considered to be for the newspaper (the longer the article the more important the topic is), in the case of a website which, unlike a newspaper, has unlimited space for new articles, the length of text will be used to judge both the importance of the topic and the amount of detail the article offers to the readers in each language. This comes from the logic that longer text offers more detail.

Analysing this question’s data will allow us to address this study’s research question one (1. What is the ‘Russian viewpoint’ that RT is delivering to the world?) through answering the following questions:

How much detail does RT coverage of each event offer to the readers?

Are some events and topics are covered in more detail than others?

#### Question 3. Length of text?

Please check the number of words in the article in Microsoft Word or the Word Count Tools website situated at <https://wordcounttools.com> and code the appropriate answer number.

### **QUESTION 4**

#### **TOPIC**

The fourth question looks at the topic that the article is focused on. While all the articles in the sample are focused on the conflict coverage, each individual news article can cover a variety of topics at a variety of angles. For example, the same event could be reported as a diplomatic issue, as a humanitarian issue, or as military action. This question will help determine which topics and angles RT are prevalent in their coverage of each event, what the channel considers ‘news’ and allow to draw analysis and conclusions from that.



Analysing this question's answer data will allow us to further address this study's research question one (1. What is the 'Russian viewpoint' that RT is delivering to the world?) through answering the following questions:

What new angles are dominant in RT news coverage?

Is there a correlation between a type of event and news angle of the article?

To determine the topic of the text it can be useful to look at the text's headline and lead (a couple of sentences that briefly describe the text before the main part of the article).

Please see below for detailed explanations of each answer option for this question.

Question 4. What is the main topic and news claim of the text?

Please select the main topic discussed in the article. See below for detailed descriptions of all answer options. You can give 2 answers to this question.

**(1) Military confrontation / clashes, warfare** - Please select this answer for reports on military battles and fighting between the sides.

**(2) International relations and diplomacy** – Please select this answer for reports focusing on international politics and international relations. These could include statements from diplomats and senior diplomacy and Ministry of Foreign Affairs officials and meetings between different states representatives on all levels.

**(3) Internal affairs of a country - please specify country** – Please select this answer if the article focuses on internal politics of any country. These could include elections, election campaigns, legislative initiatives and reporting on ongoing day-to-day politics. Please note that any political topics that include other countries should be coded as answer option (2).

Please specify the country that the report focuses on in the following cell.

**(4) Humanitarian issues** - Please select this answer if the article focuses on the humanitarian issues like lack of medication, food or other supplies, civilian deaths in conflict or human rights issues.

**(5) Accident** - Please select this answer if the article is reporting on an accident or other unforeseen event like, for example, terrorist attacks and airplane accidents. Clashes and fighting between armies and military groups should be coded as answer (2) - Ongoing military fighting.

**(6) Other - please provide details** - Please select this answer if none of the other answers apply and please briefly describe the focus of the article (try to use consistent and brief codewords for this – eg. ‘Business’, ‘Arts and culture’, ‘Media’ etc.).

## **QUESTIONS 5 - 6**

### **DESCRIBING UKRAINE**

Questions five to seven look at the ways RT coverage describes various aspects of Ukraine as a country.

As the main focus of this study is to look at the intersection of Russian public diplomacy and journalism in RT news coverage, looking at the channel’s definitions and descriptions of Ukraine will help determine and flesh out the main themes and messages in relation to the country, which will ultimately help determine if and how Russian public diplomacy is channelled through RT’s news coverage. It will do this by continuing to add to answering the first research question (1. What is the ‘Russian viewpoint’ that RT is delivering to the world?). To simplify, the answers to this question will help answer the question “What is the Russian viewpoint on Ukraine that RT is delivering to the world?”. Specifically, the answers to this question will help the study answer the following questions:

How does RT news coverage describe Ukraine as a country?

How do these descriptions connect to Russian official foreign policy?

In all questions dealing with descriptions, please only list adjectives and participles for texts that are in Russian (in Russian participles play the descriptive role similar to adjectives), please do not list any phrases as descriptions.

#### Question 5. What words are used to describe Ukraine?

To answer this question please list all the words that are used in the article to describe Ukraine, Ukrainian people, Ukrainian government, for example ‘fascist’ government, ‘long-suffering’ people etc. Please note that you only need to list descriptive words like adjectives in this question, not phrases or the way the country is identified in the article (ie using ‘Kiev’

instead of 'Ukraine' is not a description; neither is 'Kiev needs to embrace democracy', but where 'Kiev government' is used instead of 'Ukrainian government' it needs to be noted as an answer). Please also note that these descriptions need to only apply to Ukraine as a country, including any descriptions of the current of previous governments, presidents, people, regions and areas of the country, while descriptions of the military action in Ukraine and the separatists and insurgents in Eastern Ukraine need to be coded in question 6 and 7. Please also note that descriptions of Donetsk and Luhansk at the time of insurgency need to be coded in question 7.

Please list both the description and who/what is being described, for example 'Donetsk sieged by Kiev', not just 'sieged by Kiev'.

If there are no descriptions write N/A in the cell.

Question 6. What words are used to describe the military action in Ukraine?

For this question, please list all words that are used to describe the military action in Ukraine - for example 'civil war', 'violent clashes' etc.

If there are no descriptions write N/A in the cell.

**QUESTION 7**

**DESCRIBING INSURGENTS/SEPARATIST FORCES**

This question focuses on the descriptions of the insurgents and separatist movement in Eastern Ukraine.

As Russia is often blamed for supporting the separatist in Eastern Ukraine - both politically and physically with weapons and people, it is important to see how the movement is defined and described in RT news coverage, and if and how RT's message containing the 'Russian viewpoint' is different when concerning official Ukraine and insurgents. It will also be useful to compare the definitions and descriptions of the separatists in Ukraine and Syrian opposition.

Specifically, the answers to this question will help the study answer the following questions:

How does RT news coverage describe separatists and insurgents in Eastern Ukraine and Crimea?

Is RT news coverage of the pro-Russian insurgents positive or sympathetic?

How does RT news coverage define and describe the separatist governments that were set up in Eastern Ukraine and Crimea?

Question 7. What words are used to describe the insurgents/separatist forces in Ukraine?

For this question, please list all words that the article uses to describe insurgents and separatists in Eastern Ukraine, including descriptions of their ‘government’ (eg., ‘anti-government’, ‘self-proclaimed’ etc).

If there are no descriptions write N/A in the cell.

## **QUESTION 8**

### **DESCRIBING RUSSIA**

Question eight looks at how RT coverage describes Russia, the country of origin for the channel and the country whose budget finances its operation. It is important to look at how the channel portrays Russia because the aim of this study is to look at the intersection of Russian public diplomacy and journalism in RT’s news coverage, and an essential part of any country’s public diplomacy is explaining its policies abroad. Therefore, how the channel defines the country in its news coverage is an important part of the process of explaining the policies and positioning the country and interpreting its role in the international relations. Describing self is an integral part of the overall ‘Russian viewpoint on global events’ that is studied in the first research question.

In the case of the Ukrainian conflict these descriptions are of interest because even though Russia did not officially admit to participating in the conflict by way of having troops on the ground in Ukraine, it was undoubtedly involved in a diplomatic conflict that some even branded a diplomatic war, as Chapter 3 explained. Many sources also claim that Russian soldiers were involved in Ukrainian conflict but wore no insignia. This way looking at how Russia is defined and described in coverage of the Ukrainian conflict is looking at public

diplomacy at work as its main goal is explaining the country's foreign policy to the wider public. The answers to this question will help the study answer the following questions:

How does RT news coverage define and describe Russia?

How does RT's definitions and descriptions of Russia connect to the country's wider public diplomacy claims?

What global role does RT assign to Russia in its message of 'Russian viewpoint'?

Question 8. What words are used to describe Russia?

To answer the question please list all words that are used to describe Russia as a country, including its government, cities and companies.

If there are no descriptions write N/A in the cell.

**QUESTION 9**

**DESCRIBING OTHER COUNTRIES**

Looking at the way RT describes other countries' involvement in Ukraine and other countries in general can be as important as looking at the way Russia and Ukraine are described in RT news, because it also contributes to the overall message of the 'Russian viewpoint on global events.'

Specifically, the answers to this question will help the study answer the following questions:

How are other countries described in RT coverage?

What global roles does RT assign to other countries as a part of its 'Russian viewpoint' message?

Question 9. What words are used to describe other countries (not Russia or Ukraine)? Please specify: Country - words/phrases.

For this question, please list all the words that the article uses to describe other countries, governments, politicians, people and companies that are not from Russia or Ukraine. In your answers, please note the country as well as the definition.

If there are no descriptions write N/A in the cell.

## QUESTION 10

### SOURCES

This question looks at the news sources that the news articles refer to in the text. This will allow us to analyse which news sources RT prefers to use in which instances - ranging from own reporters, Russian state news agencies, independent news agencies, the news agencies known as related to the infamous Russian ‘troll factory’ or even unspecified sources. The answers to this question will help the study answer the following questions:

What sources are prevalent in RT news coverage?

What is the correlation between the types of news stories and angles and the sources that RT chooses to feature in their news stories?

Please select the correct answer for the text and, where requested, specify the details. Please note you can select more than one answer for this question for the cases when an article refers to multiple sources.

Please note that in this question you need to ONLY specify the initial source. So, for example, if the article reports the words of Angela Merkel as reported by Die Zeitung, the source is Die Zeitung and NOT Angela Merkel herself, so you need to select the first answer option. If the words of Angela Merkel are reported from an interview, a press conference, on social media or at an event where RT journalists were present then she herself is the source, so you would need to select answer option 8. In other words, officials should be coded as sources when the words were recorded directly from them through any medium – if the words are reported by another media, then the media is the source.

**(1) Other media publication, TV channel or news agency. Please specify names** - Please select this answer if the article refers to another media organisation or a news agency as a source. In the following cell please enter the name of the media.

**(2) Own reporter or interview** - Please select this answer if the article is a Q&A interview conducted by RT, refers to information from an RT journalist or a TV report by the RT broadcast services.

**(3) Social media** - Please select this answer if the article refers to a post on any social media as its source. Please note that posts made on social media by, for example, Russian government officials need to be coded as both this answer and answer (4) Russian government officials.

**(4) Russian government officials or military** - Please select this answer if the article refers to a speech, interview, public appearance or another form of directly published statement by a Russian government official, and RT is reporting their words either as directly said to them or in a public statement (but not through other media - in this case choose answer 1). Unnamed source should also be counted as this answer but also coded as (14) Unspecified/unnamed source.

**(5) Ukrainian government officials or military** - Please select this answer if the article refers to a speech, interview, public appearance or another form of directly published statement by a Ukrainian government official or a military representative, and RT is reporting their words either as directly said to them or in a public statement (but not through other media - in this case choose answer 1). 'Officials' of the insurgent territories in Eastern Ukraine should be coded as answer 6.

**(6) Ukrainian sources not affiliated with the government** - Please select this answer if the source named in the news article is a source from Ukraine who is not a part of the Ukrainian government or a representative of the government, and RT is reporting their words either as directly said to them or in a public statement (but not through other media - in this case choose answer 1). These would include activists, Eastern Ukrainian insurgents, musicians etc.

**(7) Russian sources not affiliated with the government** - Please select this answer if the source named in the news article is a source from Russia who is not a part of the Russian government or a representative of the government, and RT is reporting their words either as directly said to them or in a public statement (but not through other media - in this case choose answer 1). These would include former heads of state, opposition politicians, public figures etc. If the source is an expert or an eyewitness, please select both this answer and the corresponding answer (10) - (13).

**(8) Government officials of other countries - please specify name** - Please select this answer if the article refers to a source in the governments of countries other than Russia and Ukraine, and RT is reporting their words either as directly said to them or in a public statement (but not through other media - in this case choose answer 1).

**(9) Representatives of international organisations - please specify the name of organisation** - Please select this source if the article refers to a source in an international

organisation like the UN, NATO, EU, WHO or other, or a representative of it, and RT is reporting their words either as directly said to them or in a public statement (but not through other media - in this case choose answer 1). Please note that countries' representatives in the UN should be treated as diplomats/ambassadors/envoys, and therefore coded as representatives if their respective governments.

**(10) Experts** - Please select this answer if the article refers to an expert as a source, explicitly identifying the person as 'expert' in the text. If the person is used to provide an expert opinion on the issue but is not called an expert in the text, please code them as 'Other' or another appropriate category.

**(11) Eyewitnesses** - Please select this answer if the article refers to a source who is an eyewitness to the event that is being reported. These could include social media posts by eyewitnesses, or interviews given to RT. If the text is quoting an eyewitness in interview to another media, please select answer option (1) as in that case the media is the source.

**(12) Activists** - Please select this answer if the article refers to an activist as a source of news, only where they are called an activist in the text.

**(13) Bloggers** - Please select this answer if the article refers to a blogger as a source of news, only when they are called bloggers in the text.

**(14) Unspecified or unnamed source** - Please select this answer if no source is identified in the article at all (if the article reports the event without specifying where the information comes from), or if the source is mentioned as an unnamed source (for example 'anonymous source in the government').

**(15) Other source - please give details** - Please select this answer if none of the other answers apply and please briefly note who are the source that the article refers to (eg. 'university professor', 'local', 'American journalist').

## **QUESTIONS 11 - 16**

### **ACTORS**

Questions 13 to 18 focus on the actors that appear in the text - this refers to any people who are mentioned or quoted in the article. Please note that actors are ALWAYS people - countries, government bodies and international organisations do not count as actors. If the text says that 'the UN opposed the decision' without specifying a person who is member or representative of the UN, do not include this instance in these questions.



Analysing this data will allow us to understand whose voices make it into RT coverage, and who gets just mentioned, see if the actors are more quoted or mentioned depending on their country of origin or any other criteria, if the number of actors from certain countries grows or falls depending on the topic or news event that is being reported. The answers to this question will help the study answer the following questions:

Actors from which countries appear in RT conflict coverage most often?

Which actors are the most quoted in RT conflict coverage?

Which actors are the most mentioned but not quoted in RT conflict coverage?

What is the correlation between the choice of actors depending on the news story and angle?

Question 11. What Russian actors are quoted in the text? Please select all answers that apply.

For this question please only select people that are quoted in the text (not through reported speech). Select all answers that apply.

- (1) **President Putin or his spokesman Peskov** - Please select this answer if president Putin or his spokesman/press-secretary Dmitry Peskov are quoted in the text.
- (2) **Sergei Lavrov** - Please select this answer if Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov is quoted in the text.
- (3) **Maria Zakharova** - Please select this answer if the official representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Maria Zakharova is quoted in the text.
- (4) **Other Russian government officials** - Please select this answer if other Russian government officials are quoted in the text.
- (5) **Representatives of the Russian military** - Please select this answer if members, officials or representatives of the Russian military are quoted in the text.
- (6) **Representatives of non-government opposition** - Please select this answer if members Russian non-governmental opposition (ie opposition that is not in office, like Alexey Navalny or Ilya Yashin) are quoted in the text.
- (7) **Russian experts** - Please select this answer if experts from Russia are quoted in the text.
- (8) **Russian activists** - Please select this answer if activists from Russia are quoted in the text.
- (9) **Others - please specify** - Please select this answer if you could not find the corresponding answer above. Please also provide the name of the actor.

**(10) No quoted Russian actors** - Please select this answer if there are no actors from Russia who are quoted in the text.

Question 12. What Russian actors are mentioned in the text?

Please select all answers that apply.

For this question please focus on the people who are mentioned in the text but are not quoted directly. Actors whose speech is reported should also be coded in this question. Select all answers that apply.

**(1) President Putin or his spokesman Peskov** - Please select this answer if president Putin or his spokesman/press-secretary Dmitry Peskov is mentioned in the text.

**(2) Sergei Lavrov** - Please select this answer if Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov is mentioned in the text.

**(3) Maria Zakharova** - Please select this answer if the official representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Maria Zakharova is mentioned in the text.

**(4) Other Russian government officials** - Please select this answer if other Russian government officials are mentioned in the text.

**(5) Representatives of the Russian military** - Please select this answer if members, officials or representatives of the Russian military are mentioned in the text.

**(6) Representatives of non-government opposition** - Please select this answer if members Russian non-governmental opposition (ie opposition that is not in office, like Alexey Navalny or Ilya Yashin) are mentioned in the text.

**(7) Russian experts** - Please select this answer if experts from Russia are mentioned in the text.

**(8) Russian activists** - Please select this answer if activists from Russia are mentioned in the text.

**(9) Others - please specify** - Please select this answer if you could not find the corresponding answer above. Please also provide the name of the actor.

**(10) No mentioned Russian actors** - Please select this answer if there are no actors from Russia who are mentioned in the text.

Question 13. What Ukrainian actors are quoted in the text?

Please select all answers that apply.

For this question please only select people that are quoted in the text (not through reported speech). Select all answers that apply.

- (1) **President Poroshenko** - Please select this answer if president Poroshenko is quoted in the text.
- (2) **President Yanukovich** - Please select this answer if president Yanukovich is quoted in the text.
- (3) **Other government officials** - Please select this answer if other Ukrainian government officials are quoted in the text.
- (4) **Representatives of the Ukrainian military** - Please select this answer if members, officials or representatives of the Ukrainian military are quoted in the text.
- (5) **Insurgents in Eastern Ukraine and Crimea** - Please select this answer Eastern Ukrainian separatists are quoted in the text. In the texts these could be identified as insurgents or separatists, Donetsk People's Republic (DPR or DNR) forces or officials (prime minister, foreign affairs minister etc), Luhansk (or Lugansk) People's Republic (LPR or LNR) forces or officials, or rebels.
- (6) **Ukrainian experts** - Please select this answer if experts from Ukraine are quoted in the text.
- (7) **Ukrainian activists** - Please select this answer if activists from Ukraine are quoted in the text.
- (8) **Eyewitnesses** - Please select this answer if activists from Ukraine are quoted in the text.
- (9) **Other - please specify** - Please select this answer if you could not find the corresponding answer above. Please also provide details.
- (10) **No quoted Ukrainian actors** - Please select this answer if there are no quoted actors from Ukraine in the text.

Question 14. What Ukrainian actors are mentioned in the text?

Please select all answers that apply.

For this question, please focus on the people who are mentioned in the text but are not quoted directly. Actors whose speech is reported should also be coded in this question. Select all answers that apply.

- (1) **President Poroshenko** - Please select this answer if president Poroshenko is mentioned in the text.
- (2) **President Yanukovich** - Please select this answer if president Yanukovich is mentioned in the text.
- (3) **Other government officials** - Please select this answer if other Ukrainian government officials are mentioned in the text.
- (4) **Representatives of the Ukrainian military** - Please select this answer if members, officials or representatives of the Ukrainian military are mentioned in the text.
- (5) **Insurgents in Eastern Ukraine and Crimea** - Please select this answer if Eastern Ukrainian separatists are mentioned in the text. In the texts these could be identified as insurgents or separatists, Donetsk People's Republic (DPR or DNR) forces or officials (prime minister, foreign affairs minister etc), Luhansk (or Lugansk) People's Republic (LPR or LNR) forces or officials, or rebels.
- (6) **Ukrainian experts** - Please select this answer if experts from Ukraine are mentioned in the text.
- (7) **Ukrainian activists** - Please select this answer if activists from Ukraine are mentioned in the text.
- (8) **Eyewitnesses** - Please select this answer if activists from Ukraine are mentioned in the text.
- (9) **Other - please specify** - Please select this answer if you could not find the corresponding answer above. Please also provide details.
- (10) **No mentioned Ukrainian actors** - Please select this answer if there are no mentioned actors from Ukraine in the text.

Question 15. What foreign actors (not from Russia or Ukraine) are quoted in the text?

Please select all answers that apply.

For this question please only select people that are quoted in the text (not through reported speech). Select all answers that apply.

- (1) **Barak Obama** - Please select this answer if President Obama is quoted in the text.
- (2) **Donald Trump** - Please select this answer if President Trump is quoted in the text.
- (3) **Marine Le Pen** - Please select this answer if French politician Marine Le Pen is quoted in the text.

**(4) Recep Tayyip Erdoğan** - Please select this answer if Turkish president Erdoğan is quoted in the text.

**(5) Other foreign government officials and heads of state - please specify name** - Please select this answer if government officials from any country except Russia or Syria are quoted in the text. Please specify country in the next cell.

**(6) IS** - Please select this answer if a member of IS or any communication from the group are quoted in the text.

**(7) Officials and representatives of international organisations** - Please select this answer if a member or representative of international organisation like NATO, WHO, EU or other is quoted in the text. Please note that countries' representatives in the UN should be treated as diplomats/ambassadors/envoys, and official representatives of their respective countries and should be coded as government representatives.

**(8) Foreign experts** - Please select this answer if experts from other countries are quoted in the text.

**(9) Foreign activists** - Please select this answer if activists from other countries are quoted in the text.

**(10) Others - Please specify** - Please select this answer if you could not find the corresponding answer above. Please also provide the name of the actor.

**(10) No quoted foreign actors** - Please select this answer if there are no actors from other countries who are quoted in the text.

Question 16. What foreign actors (not from Russia or Syria) are mentioned in the text?

Please select all answers that apply.

For this question, please focus on the people who are mentioned in the text but are not quoted directly. Actors whose speech is reported should also be coded in this question. Select all answers that apply.

**(1) Barak Obama** - Please select this answer if President Obama is mentioned in the text.

**(2) Donald Trump** - Please select this answer if President Trump is mentioned in the text.

**(3) Marine Le Pen** - Please select this answer if French politician Marine Le Pen is mentioned in the text.

**(4) Recep Tayyip Erdoğan** - Please select this answer if Turkish president Erdoğan is mentioned in the text.

- (5) Other foreign government officials and heads of state - please specify name** - Please select this answer if government officials from any country except Russia or Syria are mentioned in the text. Please specify country in the next cell.
- (6) IS** - Please select this answer if a member of IS or any communication from the group are mentioned in the text.
- (7) Officials and representatives of international organisations** - Please select this answer if a member or representative of international organisation like NATO, WHO, EU or other is mentioned in the text. Please not that countries' representatives in the UN should be treated as diplomats/ambassadors/envoys, and official representatives of their respective countries and should be coded as government representatives.
- (8) Foreign experts** - Please select this answer if experts from other countries are mentioned in the text.
- (9) Foreign activists** - Please select this answer if activists from other countries are mentioned in the text.
- (10) Others - Please specify** - Please select this answer if you could not find the corresponding answer above. Please also provide the name of the actor.
- (10) No mentioned foreign actors** - Please select this answer if there are no actors from other countries who are mentioned in the text.

## **CODING MANUAL FOR QUANTITATIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS**

### **UKRAINE (in Russian<sup>260</sup>)**

#### **Единицы анализа**

При анализе освещения конфликтов и “Российского взгляда на мировые события”, заявленного как одна из целей вещания RT этот научный проект изучит выборку из 16 событий: 7 событий во время конфликта в Украине и 9 во время конфликта в Сирии. Эти события будут обозначены буквами и цифрами. Следующие события были выбраны на основе таймлайна конфликта на сайте ВВС и на основе репортажей на сайте ВВС (полный список событий доступен в Приложении 1):

**U1.** 18 - 23 февраля 2014 – Дни наиболее ожесточенных столкновений во время

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<sup>260</sup> This coding manual is a direct translation of the corresponding coding manual in English; it was used by Russian-speaking intercoder reliability coders.

протестов Евромайдана в Киеве. По крайней мере 88 человек убиты. Президент Янукович покидает страну.

**U2.** 16 марта 2014 – Референдум в Крыму - регион голосует за отделение от Украины и присоединение к России. Большинство стран объявляет референдум нелегальным, не признает присоединение полуострова к России и считает событие аннексией.

**U3.** 26-27 мая 2014 – Битва за аэропорт Донецка. Украинская армия берет контроль над аэропортом.

**U4.** 17 июля 2014 - Рейс MH17 Малазийских авиалиний сбит над Восточной Украиной. Пророссийские повстанцы отвергают обвинения в том, что самолет был сбит ракетой, выпущенной их силами.

**U5.** 22 - 26 августа 2014 - Российский конвой доставляет гуманитарную помощь в город Луганск, осажденный украинской армией - первый раз за конфликт Россия напрямую и открыто вмешивается в конфликт, пересекая границу с Украиной. Украинские военные публикуют видео, в котором показывают захваченных плен в стране российских десантников.

**U6.** Битва за Дебальцево: 30 января - гражданские потери в городе Дебальцево в Донецкой области. Массовая эвакуация гражданского населения; 12 - 18 февраля 2015 - усиление боев несмотря на новое мирное соглашение, распространение репортажей о “непрекращающихся взрывах” в городе, отступление украинской армии.

**U7.** 29 января - 4 февраля 2017 - Битва за Авдеевку, первое военное столкновение после года “замороженного конфликта” между сторонами. 46 человек (включая 14 гражданских) убиты, более 80 человек ранены.

Статьи для анализа были сохранены с сайта RT используя приложение Save Webpage As Docx для браузера Google Chrome, которое позволяет сохранять html страницы как документы формата .docx. Поиск статей был осуществлен с помощью встроенной поисковой системы на сайте RT в соответствии со временными рамками событий и временными ограничениями, установленными научным проектом в главе

Методология. Ключевые слова для поиска состояли из географических названий, связанных с каждым событием. В случае, когда событие не связано с географическим местоположением в качестве ключевого слова для поиска использовались имена собственные (например, “Путин”). Для проверки того, что сохранены все необходимые статьи был проведен дополнительный поиск с ключевым словом “Украина”.

Только новостные статьи, состоящие из 100 слов, или более были включены в выборку для исследования. Также для того, чтобы войти в выборку статьи должны были быть сфокусированы на событиях, выбранном для анализа или на украинской политике (внешней и внутренней). Все статьи на другие темы, которые попали в выдачу поисковой системы, например статья о внутренней политике США и президентских выборах, должны упоминать страну в центре исследования (Украину) или в заголовке или как минимум дважды в тексте.

## **DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS IN RUSSIAN FOR THE CONTENT ANALYSIS**

### **UKRAINE CODING SCHEDULE**

#### **ДЕТАЛЬНАЯ ИНСТРУКЦИЯ ДЛЯ ПРОВЕДЕНИЯ**

#### **КОНТЕНТ АНАЛИЗА**

#### **УКРАИНА**

### **ВОПРОСЫ 1-2**

### **ТЕХНИЧЕСКИЕ ХАРАКТЕРИСТИКИ**

Первые два вопроса описывают технические характеристики текста, их цель в том, чтобы во время анализа можно было определить о каком тексте идет речь и группировать кодированные тексты.

#### Вопрос 1.Код события?

Пожалуйста укажите код события в формате буква + номер указано в документе.

- (1) U1
- (2) U2
- (3) U3
- (4) U4
- (5) U5



(6) U6

(7) U7

(8) U8

(9) U9

Пожалуйста, выберите код события согласно таймлайну, представлену в первой части этой Инструкции.

### Вопрос 2. Номер текста?

Пожалуйста укажите номер текста в следующем формате, но без тире: день-месяц-год-время публикации (например, 010220150015); в случаях, когда два текста были опубликованы в одно время и один день, пожалуйста, укажите в номере -1,-2 и так далее для всех последующих текстов (например, 010220150015-1).

## **ВОПРОС 3**

### **ДЕТАЛИ И КОНТЕКСТ**

Третий вопрос сконцентрирован на длине новостных текстов. В то время как в традиционных печатных медиа длина статьи может использоваться как фактор анализа “важности”, которую теме придает издание (чем длиннее статья, тем важнее тема для издания), в случае анализа текстов из онлайн СМИ, которые обладают неограниченным количеством места (в отличие от, например, газет), длина текста будет использоваться как фактор определения как важности так и количества контекста и деталей, которые статья предлагает читателям. Это вытекает из того что чем длиннее текст тем больше деталей на освещаемую тему он может предложить.

Анализ данных полученных этим вопросом поможет этому научному проекту ответить на часть первого научного вопроса (1. В чем состоит “российская точка зрения” которую RT транслирует в мир?) Более конкретно, ответы на этот вопрос должны дать данные для ответа на следующие вопросы:

Сколько деталей и контекста новостное освещение RT предоставляет своим читателям?

Освещены ли некоторые события с большим количеством деталей чем другие события?

### Вопрос 3. Длина текста?

- (1) 100 - 300 слов
- (2) 301 - 600 слов
- (3) 601 слово и длиннее

Пожалуйста, проверьте количество слов с помощью Microsoft Office или сайта Word Count Tools по адресу <https://wordcounttools.com> и выберите соответствующий вариант ответа.

## **ВОПРОС 4**

### **ТЕМА**

Четвертый вопрос рассматривает тему, на которой сфокусирована статья. В то время как все статьи из выборки фокусируются на освещении конфликте, каждая отдельная статья может подходить к теме по-разному. Например, одно и то же событие может быть освещено с точки зрения дипломатии, гуманитарных проблем или как военные действия. Таким образом, этот вопрос поможет определить какие темы доминируют в новостном освещении RT для каждого события из выборки, понять, какие события телеканал считает новостями (события или что о них говорят политики?), и проанализировать эти тенденции. Анализ данных, полученных этим вопросом поможет этому научному проекту ответить на часть первого научного вопроса (1. В чем состоит “российская точка зрения” которую RT транслирует в мир?). Более конкретно, ответы на этот вопрос должны дать данные для ответа на следующие вопросы:

Какие новостные подходы доминируют в новостном освещении RT?

Есть ли корреляция между типом события и новостным подходом,  
выбранным RT?

Чтобы определить тему текста может быть полезно изучить заголовок статьи и лид (краткое описание текста, несколько предложений перед началом статьи).

### Вопрос 4. В чем состоит главная тема текста?

В этом вопросе вы можете выбрать максимум два варианта ответа. Детальные описания тем доступны далее.

**(1) Военные столкновения** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если статья рассказывает о военных столкновениях, военных операциях и битвах между сторонами конфликта.

**(2) Международные отношения, дипломатия** – Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если статья рассказывает о международных отношениях между странами и международной политике. Например, такие статья могут включать заявления дипломатов, министерств внутренних дел и, встречи между представителями стран на любых уровнях.

**(3) Внутренняя политика стран – укажите страну** – Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если статья фокусируется на внутренней политике и делах любой страны, и укажите название страны в следующей ячейке. Такие статья могут, например, рассказывать о выборах и предвыборных программах, законодательных инициативах или докладывать о течении политической жизни в стране. Пожалуйста, помните, что политические вопросы, в которые вовлечено больше одной страны, должны быть кодированы как ответ 2.

**(4) Гуманитарные проблемы** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если статья концентрируется на гуманитарных проблемах, например нехватке медикаментов, продовольствия или других запасов, гражданских смертях в войне или проблемах с правами человека.

**(5) Чрезвычайное происшествие/авария** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если статья рассказывает об аварии или другом непредвиденном/несчастном случае, например о теракте или авиакатастрофе. Столкновения и бои между армиями и военными группировками должны быть отмечены как вопрос 1.

**(6) Другое - Пожалуйста, укажите подробности** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если другие ответы не подходят для описания темы и новостного подхода текста. Пожалуйста, кратко укажите в чем состоит тема текста (попытайтесь использовать схожие формулировки для схожих тем и использовать кодовые слова, например «бизнес», «культура и искусство», «СМИ» и так далее).

## ВОПРОСЫ 5 - 6

## ОПИСАНИЯ УКРАИНЫ

Вопросы 5 и 6 рассматривают то, как тексты RT описывают Украину и различные аспекты этой страны.

Так как главная цель этого научного проекта в том, чтобы изучить пересечение публичной дипломатии и журналистике в новостном освещении RT, изучение того, как канал описывает и определяют Украину как страну позволит определить и понять, какие роли и нарративы RT приписывает этой стране, что в свою очередь поможет понять как российская публичная демократия транслируется через новостное освещение RT. Анализ данных, полученных этим вопросом поможет этому научному проекту ответить на часть первого научного вопроса (1. В чем состоит “российская точка зрения” которую RT транслирует в мир? или, грубо говоря, в чем состоит “российская точка зрения” на Украину).

Более конкретно, ответы на этот вопрос должны дать данные для ответа на следующие вопросы:

Как новостное освещение RT описывает Украину как страну?

Как эти определения и описания соотносятся с российской внешней политикой?

### Вопрос 5. Какие слова используются для описания Украины?

Для ответа на этот вопрос, пожалуйста, запишите все слова, которые используются в тексте для описания Украины как страны, ее народа, а также украинского правительства, например “фашистское” правительство, «страдающий» народ и т.д. Пожалуйста, помните, что в ответах на этот вопрос надо указывать только слова, описывающие Украину – прилагательные и причастия. Фразы или сочетания слов указывать не нужно, также не нужно указывать то, как страна определяется в тексте (например, когда для отсылки к правительству или стране вместо слова «Украина» используется слово «Киев»; в то же время «киевский» как прилагательное, описывающее правительства надо указывать). Прилагательные, указываемые в этом вопросе, должны описывать Украину, в том числе текущие или бывшие правительства, президентов, народ, регионы и территории страны. Описания повстанцев на востоке

Украины и описания боевых действий указываются в вопросах 6 и 7. Описания повстанческих «правительств» в Донецке и Луганске указываются в вопросе 7.

Пожалуйста, указывайте прилагательное и существительное, которое им описывается (например, «Донецк, осаждаемый Киевом»).

Если в тексте нет описаний, то напишите НЕТ.

#### Вопрос 6. Какие слова используются для описания военных действий в Украине?

Для ответа на этот вопрос, пожалуйста, запишите все слова и фразу, которые описывают военные действия в Украине, например “жестокое столкновение”, “восстание” и “гражданская война”.

Если в тексте нет описаний, то напишите НЕТ.

### **ВОПРОС 7**

#### **ОПИСАНИЯ ПОВСТАНЦЕВ/СЕПАРАТИСТОВ**

Этот вопрос фокусируется на определениях и описаниях повстанцев на востоке Украины.

Поскольку Россия часто обвиняется в поддержке сепаратистов на востоке Украины - в политическом смысле и в смысле физической поддержки оружием, военной техникой и поставкой солдат, важно проследить как RT определяет и описывает участников сепаратистского движения (и само движение). Как и ответы на предыдущий вопрос, эти ответы помогут расширить понимание “российской точки зрения” на Украину и пророссийских сепаратистов в этой стране. Также полезно будет сравнить определения и описания украинских сепаратистов и сирийской оппозиции, которая исследуется параллельно в этом научном проекте. Анализ данных, полученных этим вопросом, поможет этому научному проекту ответить на часть первого научного вопроса (1. В чем состоит “российская точка зрения” которую RT транслирует в мир?).

Более конкретно, ответы на этот вопрос должны дать данные для ответа на следующие вопросы:

Как новостное освещение RT описывает сепаратистов и повстанцев на востоке Украины и в Крыму?

Является ли новостное освещение RT позитивным или симпатизирующим по отношению к повстанцам?

Как новостное освещение RT определяет и описывает сепаратистские правительства, установленные в восточной Украине и Крыму?

Вопрос 7. Какие слова и/или фразы используются для определения и описания повстанцев или сепаратистов в Украине?

Для ответа на этот вопрос, пожалуйста, перечислите все прилагательные и причастия, используемые в тексте для описания повстанцев и сепаратистов в восточной Украине, в том числе их «правительств» (например, «антиправительственные» и «самопровозглашенные»). Если в тексте нет описаний, то напишите НЕТ.

## **ВОПРОС 8 ОПИСАНИЯ РОССИИ**

Вопрос 8 рассматривает как новостное освещение RT определяет и описывает Россию, страну в которой основан канал, и которая его спонсирует финансово. Поскольку цель данного научного проекта состоит в том, чтобы изучить пересечение публичной дипломатии и журналистике на примере новостного освещения RT, важно изучить также как канал описывает Россию, поскольку объяснение политических решений страны за границей это одна из основных целей публичной дипломатии. То, как страна определяется и описывается, таким образом, может быть важной частью публичной дипломатии как процесс объяснения политических решений, позиционирования страны и объяснение ее роли в международных отношениях. “Само-описание” России через RT это важная часть “российской точки зрения на мировые события”, которую изучает первый научный вопрос этого проекта.

В случае с конфликтом в Украине эти определения и описания важны для проекта, потому что несмотря на то, что Россия отрицала свое фактическое участие в конфликте

(то есть утверждала, что не имеет солдат на территории Украины), ее дипломатическое участие в конфликте неоспоримо, и некоторые даже называют ситуацию “дипломатической войной”. Многие источники утверждают, что российские солдаты присутствовали на территории Украины без опознавательных знаков на форме. Таким образом изучение того, как Россия определяется и описывается в случае Украинского конфликта это изучение того, как страна использует публичную дипломатию для объяснения внешней политики миру. Более конкретно, ответы на этот вопрос должны дать данные для ответа на следующие вопросы:

Как новостное освещение RT определяет и описывает Россию?

Как определения и описания России в текстах RT связаны с публичной дипломатией страны?

Какую глобальную роль RT приписывает России как часть “русской точки зрения”?

#### Вопрос 8. Какие слова используются для описания России?

Для ответа на этот вопрос, пожалуйста, перечислите прилагательные и причастия, которые используются в тексте для описания России как страны, включая описания ее правительства, городов и компаний.

Если в тексте нет описаний, то напишите НЕТ.

### **ВОПРОС 9**

#### **ОПИСАНИЯ ДРУГИХ СТРАН**

Изучение того, как RT определяет и описывает другие страны и их вовлеченность в конфликт в Украине и мировой порядок может быть не менее важным, чем изучение того, как RT определяет и описывает Россию и Украину, так как тоже дополняет и детализирует общий месседж, которое несет “русская точка зрения на мировые события”, расставляя “игроков на карте”. Более конкретно, ответы на этот вопрос должны дать данные для ответа на следующие вопросы:

Как другие страны определяются и описываются в новостном освещении RT?

Какие глобальные роли RT приписывает другим странам через свою “российскую точку зрения”?

Вопрос 9. Какие слова используются для описания других стран (не России и не Украины)? Пожалуйста, пишите в формате: страна - слова.

Для ответа на этот вопрос, пожалуйста, перечислите все слова, которые в тексте используются для описания других стран за исключением России и Украины, включая правительства, политиков и компании. Пожалуйста, указывает также страну, которая описывается этими словами.

Если в тексте нет описаний, то напишите НЕТ.

## **ВОПРОС 10**

### **НОВОСТНЫЕ ИСТОЧНИКИ**

Этот вопрос изучает новостные источники, которые указаны в текстах статей. Ответы на этот вопрос позволят проекту изучить, какие новостные источники использует RT (собственных корреспондентов, российские государственные СМИ, независимые информ. агентства, «фабрику троллей», или же анонимные источники), и как эти источники меняются в зависимости от ситуации. Более конкретно, ответы на этот вопрос должны дать данные для ответа на следующие вопросы:

Какие новостные источники чаще всего встречаются в новостном освещении RT?

Есть ли корреляция между типом новостей и источником, используемым каналом, и в чем она состоит?

Пожалуйста, выберите правильный ответ из списка, и укажите дополнительную информацию, где это необходимо. Пожалуйста имейте в виду, что в этом вопросе вы можете выбрать более одного варианта ответа в тех случаях, когда статья называет несколько источников информации.

Пожалуйста, имейте в виду что при ответе на этот вопрос надо указывать ТОЛЬКО основной источник. Так, например, если статья передает слова Ангелы Меркель,



которые она сказала в репортаже Die Zeitung, то источником в данном случае является Die Zeitung и НЕ Ангела Меркель, так что надо выбрать первый вариант ответа. Если слова Ангелы Меркель переданы с ее официальной пресс-конференции, интервью с RT, или поста в соц.сетях то только в этом случае она сама является источником, и в таком случае надо выбрать вариант ответа 8. Иными словами, политики являются источниками только в тех случаях, когда из слова передаются от них самих (через любой медиум) – если слова приведены со слов других СМИ, то источник являются эти СМИ.

**(1) Публикация в других медиа или сообщения информ. агентств. Пожалуйста, укажите название** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот вариант ответа если источником статьи являются другие медиа - телеканалы, газеты или сайты, или

новостные/информационные агентства. Во второй ячейке укажите название СМИ

**(2) Собственный репортер или интервью** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот вариант ответа если источником статьи является интервью, проведенное RT, или если статья ссылается на телевизионные репортаж RT или слова теле-корреспондента RT.

**(3) Социальные сети** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если текст ссылается как на источник на посты или комментарии в соц.сетях. Также обратите внимание, что посты в соц.сетях от лица, например, российских политиков, должны быть отмечены как этот ответ и **(4) Представители российского правительства и армии.**

**(4) Представители российского правительства и армии** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если текст ссылается как на новостной источник на речь, интервью, публичное выступление или другую форму коммуникации от лица членов российского правительства и армии и их представителей, и RT приводит эту информацию из официального заявления, полученного каналом (не из других СМИ), или из интервью. Если текст ссылается на анонимный источник, то пожалуйста, выбирайте этот вариант ответа и ответ (14) Неназванный источник.

**(5) Представители украинского правительства и армии** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если текст ссылается как на новостной источник на речь, интервью, публичное выступление или другую форму коммуникации от лица членов украинского правительства и армии и их представителей, и RT приводит эту информацию из официального заявления, полученного каналом (не из других СМИ), или из интервью. Представители повстанцев должны отмечаться как ответ 6.

**(6) Украинские источники, не связанные с правительством** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если текст ссылается на украинский источник, не связанный с действующим правительством. Кроме политиков, не занимающих официальный пост, сюда также входят сепаратисты и повстанцы, представители сепаратистских правительств ДНР и ЛНР, активисты, очевидцы событий, эксперты и т.д.

**(7) Российские источники, не связанные с правительством** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если текст ссылается на российский источник, не связанный с действующим правительством. Сюда также входят члены оппозиции, активисты, эксперты и т.д.

**(8) Государства и чиновники/представители других стран пожалуйста, укажите имя** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если текст ссылается на источник в правительстве других стран, кроме России и Украины, и RT приводит эту информацию из официального заявления, полученного каналом (не из других СМИ), или из интервью.

**(9) Представители международных организаций - пожалуйста, укажите название** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если текст ссылается на источник в международной организации, например НАТО, ООН, ЕС, ВОЗ и так далее. Посланники и представители стран при этих организациях, тем не менее, должны быть отмечены как представители правительств этих стран (варианты ответа 4,5,8).

**(10) Эксперты** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если текст ссылается на эксперта (интервью, заявление и так далее) как на источник информации. Для этого ответа экспертами можно считать только тех, кто обозначен в тексте как “эксперт” или “политолог”. Если человек используется в тексте в роли “эксперта” но при этом представлен иначе пожалуйста, выбирайте вариант ответа 15 (Другое) или другой подходящий ответ.

**(11) Очевидцы и свидетели** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если текст ссылается на очевидцев и свидетелей как источник информации в тексте, если информация получена RT в интервью или заявлении или через соц.сети. Информация из других СМИ кодируется как ответ 1.

**(12) Активисты** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если текст ссылается на активистов как источник информации в тексте. Активистами можно считать только тех, кого так определяет текст статьи.

**(13) Блоггеры** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если текст ссылается на блоггеров как на источник информации. Блоггерами можно считать только тех, кого так определяет текст статьи.

**(14) Неназванный источник** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте не указан источник вообще, или если он идентифицирован как “неназванный” или “анонимный” источник.

**(15) Другие источники - пожалуйста, укажите детали** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если другие ответы не подходят и кратко объясните, на какие источники ссылается текст (например, «профессор университета Х», «американский журналист», «местный житель»).

## **ВОПРОСЫ 11 - 16**

### **ДЕЙСТВУЮЩИЕ ЛИЦА**

Вопросы с 11 по 16 изучают действующие лица, которые появляются в тексте - то есть людей, которые упоминаются или цитируются в тексте. Пожалуйста, обратите внимание, что действующие лица - ВСЕГДА люди; страны, правительственные и международные организации не считаются действующими лицами в этом вопросе. Если в тексте сказано: “ООН противостояло решению” не указывая персонально человека, являющегося представителем или членом ООН, то этот пример не надо указывать в этом вопросе. Анализ ответов на этот вопрос поможет проекту понять, чьим голосам есть место в новостном освещении RT, а кого всего лишь упоминают, понять, действующие лица из каких стран чаще всего цитируются, а какие упоминаются, а также как количества действующих лиц разного происхождения меняется в зависимости от событий или темы текста. Более конкретно, ответы на этот вопрос должны дать данные для ответа на следующие вопросы:

Действующие лица из каких стран чаще всего появляются в новостном освещении RT?

Какие действующие лица чаще всего цитируются в новостном освещении RT?

Какие действующие лица чаще всего упоминаются, но не цитируются в новостном вещании RT?

Как выбор действующих лиц меняется в зависимости от новости и темы текста?

Вопрос 11. Какие российские действующие лица цитируются в тексте?

Пожалуйста, для ответа на этот вопрос указывайте только тех людей, кто напрямую цитируется в тексте в кавычках (не косвенная речь). Выберите все подходящие ответы.

- (1) **Президент Путин или его пресс-секретарь Песков** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте цитируется Владимир Путин или его пресс-секретарь Дмитрий Песков.
- (2) **Сергей Лавров** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте цитируется министр иностранных дел Сергей Лавров.
- (3) **Мария Захарова** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте цитируется официальный представитель Министерства иностранных дел РФ Мария Захарова.
- (4) **Другие представители российского правительства** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте цитируются другие члены или представители российского правительства.
- (5) **Представители российской армии** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте цитируются российские военные и армия.
- (6) **Представители несистемной оппозиции** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте цитируются члены и представители российской несистемной оппозиции, то есть оппозиции которая не занимает правящих должностей.
- (7) **Российские эксперты** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте цитируются российские эксперты.
- (8) **Российские активисты** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте цитируются российские активисты.
- (9) **Другие - пожалуйста, укажите детали** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если вы не нашли подходящий ответ из предложенных выше и укажите детали (имя или должность).
- (10) **Нет цитируемых российских действующих лиц** - Пожалуйста выберите этот ответ если в тексте нет цитируемых действующих лиц из России.

Вопрос 12. Какие российские действующие лица упоминаются в тексте?

Для ответа на этот вопрос, пожалуйста, укажите всех действующих лиц, упоминающихся в тексте, но не цитируемых напрямую. Также тут указываются те действующие лица, речь которых приводится косвенно.

- (1) **Президент Путин или его пресс-секретарь Песков** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте упоминается Владимир Путин или его пресс-секретарь Дмитрий Песков.
- (2) **Сергей Лавров** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте упоминается министр иностранных дел Сергей Лавров.
- (3) **Мария Захарова** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте упоминается официальный представитель Министерства иностранных дел РФ Мария Захарова.
- (4) **Другие представители российского правительства** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте упоминаются другие члены или представители российского правительства.
- (5) **Представители российской армии** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте упоминаются российские военные и армия.
- (6) **Представители несистемной оппозиции** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте упоминаются члены и представители российской несистемной оппозиции, то есть оппозиции которая не занимает правящих должностей (например Алексей Навальный или Илья Яшин).
- (7) **Российские эксперты** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте упоминаются российские эксперты.
- (8) **Российские активисты** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте упоминаются российские активисты.
- (9) **Другие - пожалуйста, укажите детали** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если вы не нашли подходящий ответ из предложенных выше и укажите детали (имя или должность).
- (10) **Нет упоминаемых российских действующих лиц** - Пожалуйста выберите этот ответ если в тексте нет упоминаемых действующих лиц из России.

Вопрос 12. Какие украинские действующие лица цитируются в тексте?

Пожалуйста, для ответа на этот вопрос указывайте только тех людей, кто напрямую цитируется в тексте в кавычках (не косвенная речь). Выберите все подходящие ответы.

- (1) **Президент Порошенко** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте цитируется Петр Порошенко.

- (2) **Президент Янукович** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте цитируется Виктор Янукович.
- (3) **Другие представители украинского правительства** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте цитируются другие члены или представители украинского правительства.
- (4) **Представители украинской армии** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте цитируются украинские военные и армия.
- (5) **Сепаратисты/повстанцы из Восточной Украины** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте цитируются сепаратисты и повстанцы из восточной Украины или Крыма. Сепаратисты или повстанцы могут быть идентифицированы в статье как просто сепаратисты или повстанцы, Донецкая Народная Республика (ДНР) или Луганская Народная Республика (ЛНР) или их вооруженные силы.
- (6) **Украинские эксперты** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте цитируются украинские эксперты.
- (7) **Украинские активисты** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте цитируются украинские активисты.
- (8) **Свидетели и очевидцы** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте цитируются очевидцы и свидетели событий о которых рассказывает текст.
- (9) **Другие - пожалуйста, укажите детали** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если вы не нашли подходящий ответ из предложенных выше и укажите детали (имя или должность)
- (10) **Нет цитируемых украинских действующих лиц** - Пожалуйста выберите этот ответ если в тексте нет цитируемых действующих лиц из Украины.

Вопрос 14. Какие украинские действующие лица упоминаются в тексте?

Для ответа на этот вопрос, пожалуйста, укажите всех действующих лиц, упоминающихся в тексте, но не цитируемых напрямую. Также тут указываются те действующие лица, речь которых приводится косвенно. Выберите все подходящие ответы.

- (1) **Президент Порошенко** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте упоминается Петр Порошенко.
- (2) **Президент Янукович** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте

упоминается Виктор Янукович.

**(3) Другие представители украинского правительства** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте упоминаются другие члены или представители украинского правительства.

**(4) Представители украинской армии** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте упоминаются украинские военные и армия.

**(5) Сепаратисты/повстанцы из Восточной Украины** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте упоминаются сепаратисты и повстанцы из восточной Украины или Крыма. Сепаратисты или повстанцы могут быть идентифицированы в статье как просто сепаратисты или повстанцы, Донецкая Народная Республика (ДНР) или Луганская Народная Республика (ЛНР) или их вооруженные силы.

**(6) Украинские эксперты** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте упоминаются украинские эксперты.

**(7) Украинские активисты** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте упоминаются украинские активисты.

**(8) Свидетели и очевидцы** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте упоминаются очевидцы и свидетели событий о которых рассказывает текст.

**(9) Другие - пожалуйста, укажите детали** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если вы не нашли подходящий ответ из предложенных выше и укажите детали (имя или должность)

**(10) Нет упоминаемых украинских действующих лиц** - Пожалуйста выберите этот ответ если в тексте нет упоминаемых действующих лиц из Украины.

Вопрос 15. Какие зарубежные действующие лица (не из России или Украины) цитируются в тексте?

Пожалуйста, для ответа на этот вопрос указывайте только тех людей, кто напрямую цитируется в тексте в кавычках (не косвенная речь). Выберите все подходящие ответы.

**(1) Барак Обама** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте цитируется Барак Обама.

**(2) Дональд Трамп** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте цитируется Дональд Трамп.

**(3) Марин Ле Пен** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте цитируется Марин

Ле Пен.

**(4) Реджеп Тайип Эрдоган** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте цитируется Реджеп Тайип Эрдоган.

**(5) Другие главы государств или представители правительств - пожалуйста, укажите имя** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте цитируются главы других государств кроме России и Украины. Пожалуйста, укажите имя.

**(6) Члены ИГ** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте цитируются члены и представители Исламского государства.

**(7) Представители международных организаций** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте цитируются представители или члены международных организаций, выступающие от лица организации, например ООН, НАТО, ВОЗ и так далее.

Посланники и представители стран при таких организациях, тем не менее, должны быть отмечены как представители правительств этих стран, то есть ответ 4 или соответствующие ответы в вопросах 13 и 14.

**(8) Зарубежные эксперты** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте цитируются эксперты не из России или Украины. Пожалуйста, укажите страну.

**(9) Зарубежные активисты** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте цитируются активисты не из России или Украины. Пожалуйста, укажите страну.

**(10) Другие - пожалуйста, укажите детали** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если вы не нашли подходящий ответ из предложенных выше и укажите детали (имя или должность).

**(11) Нет цитируемых зарубежных действующих лиц** - Пожалуйста выберите этот ответ если в тексте нет цитируемых действующих лиц из зарубежных стран.

Вопрос 18. Какие зарубежные действующие лица (не из России или Украины) упоминаются в тексте?

Для ответа на этот вопрос, пожалуйста, укажите всех действующих лиц, упоминающихся в тексте, но не цитируемых напрямую. Также тут указываются те действующие лица, речь которых приводится косвенно. Укажите все подходящие варианты ответа.

**(1) Барак Обама** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте упоминается Барак Обама.



- (2) **Дональд Трамп** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте упоминается Дональд Трамп.
- (3) **Марин Ле Пен** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте упоминается Марин Ле Пен.
- (4) **Реджеп Тайип Эрдоган** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте упоминается Реджеп Тайип Эрдоган.
- (5) **Другие главы государств или представители правительств - пожалуйста, укажите имя** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте упоминаются главы других государств кроме России и Украины. Пожалуйста, укажите имя.
- (6) **Члены ИГ** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте упоминаются члены и представители Исламского государства.
- (7) **Представители международных организаций** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте упоминаются представители или члены международных организаций, выступающие от лица организации, например ООН, НАТО, ВОЗ и так далее. Посланники и представители стран при таких организациях, тем не менее, должны быть отмечены как представители правительств этих стран, то есть ответ 4 или соответствующие ответы в вопросах 13 и 14.
- (8) **Зарубежные эксперты** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте упоминаются эксперты не из России или Украины. Пожалуйста, укажите страну.
- (9) **Зарубежные активисты** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте упоминаются активисты не из России или Украины. Пожалуйста, укажите страну.
- (10) **Другие - пожалуйста, укажите детали** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если вы не нашли подходящий ответ из предложенных выше и укажите детали (имя или должность).
- (11) **Нет упоминаемых зарубежных действующих лиц** - Пожалуйста выберите этот ответ если в тексте нет упоминаемых действующих лиц из зарубежных стран.

## CODING MANUAL FOR QUANTITATIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS

### SYRIA (in English<sup>261</sup>)

#### Units of analysis

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<sup>261</sup> This is the coding manual that was used by the author of this dissertation and the intercoder reliability coders who speak English. The same coding manual translated into Russian for the Russian-speaking intercoder reliability coders is presented later in this Annex.

While analysing the conflict coverage of RT and studying the themes messages of the 'Russian viewpoint on global events' that the channel claims to be broadcasting, this study uses a sample of 16 events: 7 in the conflict in Ukraine and 9 in the conflict in Syria. The events have been given a letter and number value according to the conflict timeline. These are the events of the Syria sample, constructed based on the BBC timeline of the conflicts and BBC reporting (detailed descriptions of all events is available in Annex 1):

**S1.** 30 September 2015 - First Russian airstrikes in Syria.

**S2.** 11 December 2015 - In a televised meeting president Putin vows 'extremely tough' action on Syria threats, orders all threats to Russian forces in Syria to be 'immediately destroyed'. Misunderstanding ensues as it is assumed Russia will be supporting the Free Syrian Army. Russian-Turkish conflict as Turkey downs Russian destroyer plane on Turkish-Syrian border.

**S3.** 24 January 2015 - Capture of the towns of Rabia and Salma in Latakia, one of the first big successes for the Syrian army since Russian air force joined the conflict.

**S4.** 14 March 2016 - Russian president Vladimir Putin announced Syrian mission accomplished.

**S5.** 27 March 2016 - Syrian government forces retake Palmyra from Islamic State with Russian air assistance, hailed as one of the most important achievements for the Russian-backed Syrian government forces in the entire military operation.

**S6.** 5 May 2016 - Russian orchestra led by the country's most famous conductor and friend of Vladimir Putin Valery Gergiev, performs in Palmyra in a symbolic act.

**S7.** 1 August 2016 - Russian helicopter delivering humanitarian aid is shot down in Idlib province, killing five on board. Chemical attack in Aleppo.

**S8.** 5 – 16 December – Recapturing of Aleppo. Gunman shouting about Syria and Aleppo kills Russian ambassador in Ankara, Turkey.

**S9.** 4 April 2017 - Chemical attack on the rebel-held town of Khan Sheikhoun in north-western Syria, more than 80 people are killed. The United States launched 59 cruise missiles on Shayrat Airbase, a Syrian airfield near Shayrat, believed to be the base for the aircraft that carried out the chemical attack.

The articles for the analysis are saved from the RT website using the Google Chrome browser application called Save Webpage As Docx, which allows to save html pages as .docx files. The search for articles was conducted with the built-in search engine on the RT websites in Russian and in English within the time scale of each event, specified in the Sampling section of the Methodology chapter. Keywords for the searches consisted of the geographical names of the cities, towns and areas mentioned in each event. In the case when no geographical name was mentioned in the event, the personal name (for example 'Vladimir Putin') was used as a keyword

Additional searches with keywords 'Syria' were conducted to check that no articles were missed.

Only news articles 100 words or longer are included in the sample. Articles also have to concentrate on the events in the timeline as primary topics, and all articles on other topics (for example the internal politics of the USA and the election campaign) that mention 'Syria' just once in the end as a way to explain the presidential candidate's views on the conflict were excluded from the sample.

## **DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE CONTENT ANALYSIS SYRIA CODING SCHEDULE**

### **QUESTIONS 1 - 2**

#### **TECHNICAL**

The first two questions are technical and are there to identify the event and text that you are coding.

Question 1. Event code?

(1) S1

(2) S2

- (3) S3
- (4) S4
- (5) S5
- (6) S6
- (7) S7
- (8) S8
- (9) S9

Please select the event code according to the timeline provided in the first section of this Coding Manual.

Question 2. Text number?

Please write the number of the text in the following format without the dashes: day-month-year-time of publication' (eg. 010220150015), where two texts are published on the same date and time please distinguish between the texts by adding -1,-2, etc in the end (eg. 010220150015-1).

**QUESTION 3**  
**DETAIL AND CONTEXT**

The third question looks at the length of the news article. While traditionally in print media the length of text is used to figure out how 'important' the topic covered in the article is considered to be for the newspaper (the longer the article the more important the topic is), in the case of a website which, unlike a newspaper, has unlimited space for new articles, the length of text will be used to judge both the importance of the topic and the amount of detail the article offers to the readers in each language. This comes from the logic that longer text offers more detail.

Analysing this question's data will allow us to address this study's research question one (1. What is the 'Russian viewpoint' that RT is delivering to the world?) through answering the following questions:

- How much detail does RT coverage of each event offer to the readers?
- Are some events and topics are covered in more detail than others?

### Question 3. Length of text?

Please check the number of words in the article in Microsoft Word or the Word Count Tools website situated at <https://wordcounttools.com> and code the appropriate answer number.

## **QUESTION 4**

### **TOPIC**

The fourth question looks at the topic that the article is focused on. While all the articles in the sample are focused on the conflict coverage, each individual news article can cover a variety of topics at a variety of angles. For example, the same event could be reported as a diplomatic issue, as a humanitarian issue, or as military action. This question will help determine which topics and angles RT are prevalent in their coverage of each event, what the channel considers 'news' and allow to draw analysis and conclusions from that.

Analysing this question's answer data will allow us to further address this study's research question one (1. What is the 'Russian viewpoint' that RT is delivering to the world?) through answering the following questions:

What new angles are dominant in RT news coverage?

Is there a correlation between a type of event and news angle of the article?

To determine the topic of the text it can be useful to look at the text's headline and lead (a couple of sentences that briefly describe the text before the main part of the article).

Please see below for detailed explanations of each answer option for this question.

Question 4. What is the main topic and news claim of the text?

Please select the main topic discussed in the article. See below for detailed descriptions of all answer options. You can give 2 answers to this question.

**(1) Military confrontation / clashes, warfare** - Please select this answer for reports on military battles and fighting between the sides.

**(2) International relations and diplomacy** – Please select this answer for reports focusing on international politics and international relations. These could include statements from diplomats and senior diplomacy and Ministry of Foreign Affairs officials and meetings between different states representatives on all levels.

**(3) Internal affairs of a country - please specify country** – Please select this answer if the article focuses on internal politics of any country. These could include elections, election campaigns, legislative initiatives and reporting on ongoing day-to-day politics. Please note that any political topics that include other countries should be coded as answer option (2). Please specify the country that the report focuses on in the following cell.

**(4) Humanitarian issues** - Please select this answer if the article focuses on the humanitarian issues like lack of medication, food or other supplies, civilian deaths in conflict or human rights issues.

**(5) Accident** - Please select this answer if the article is reporting on an accident or other unforeseen event like, for example, terrorist attacks and airplane accidents. Clashes and fighting between armies and military groups should be coded as answer (2) - Ongoing military fighting.

**(6) Other - please provide details** - Please select this answer if none of the other answers apply and please briefly describe the focus of the article (try to use consistent and brief codewords for this – eg. ‘Business’, ‘Arts and culture’, ‘Media’ etc.).

## **QUESTIONS 5 - 7**

### **DESCRIBING SYRIA**

Questions five to seven look at the ways RT coverage describes Syria as a country.

As the main focus of this study is to look at the intersection of Russian public diplomacy and journalism in RT news coverage, looking at the channel’s definitions and descriptions of Syria will help determine and flesh out the main themes and messages in relation to the country, which will ultimately help determine if and how Russian public diplomacy is channelled through RT’s news coverage. It will do this by continuing to add to answering the first research question (1. What is the 'Russian viewpoint' that RT is delivering to the world?). To simplify, the answers to this question will help answer the question “What is the Russian viewpoint on Syria that RT is delivering to the world?”. Specifically, the answers to this question will help the study answer the following questions:

How does RT news coverage describe Syria as a country?

How do these descriptions connect to Russian official foreign policy?

In all questions dealing with descriptions, please only list adjectives and participles for texts that are in Russian (in Russian participles play the descriptive role similar to adjectives), please do not list any phrases as descriptions.

Question 5. What words are used to describe Syria?

To answer this question please list all the words that are used in the article to describe Syria, Syrian people, Syrian government, for example 'war-torn' country, 'long-suffering' people etc. Please note that you only need to list descriptive words like adjectives in this question, not phrases or the way the country is identified in the article (ie using 'Damascus' instead of 'Syria' is not a description, neither is 'Syria needs an independent government'; but where 'Damascus government' is used instead of 'Syrian government' it needs to be noted as an answer). Please also note that these descriptions need to only apply to Syria as a country, including any descriptions of the Syrian government, Damascus and other cities and regions, while descriptions of the military action in Syria and Syrian opposition need to be coded in questions 6 and 7 accordingly. Please list both the description and the word itself, for example 'rebel-stronghold Aleppo'.

If there are no descriptions write N/A in the cell.

Question 6. What words are used to describe the military action in Syria?

To answer this question please list all the words and phrases that are used in the text to describe the military action in Syria, for example 'long-developing civil war'.

If there are no descriptions write N/A in the cell.

Question 7. What words are used to describe Syrian opposition?

To answer this question please list all the words and phrases that are used in the text to

describe the Syrian opposition. These include but are not limited to all widely recognised opposition to the current Syrian government (with the exception of the Islamic State) and include both political and military opposition: Free Syrian Army, Syrian Revolutionaries Front, Al-Nusra Front (also known as Jabhat Fateh al-Sham, Jabhat al-Nusra and recently Tahrir al-Sham), Jaysh al-Islam, Army of Conquest (Jaish al-Fatah or JaF), Ahrar al-Sham, Ansar al-Sham, Suqour al-Sham Brigades (the Sham Falcons Brigades), Ajnad al-Sham (Soldiers of the Levant), Nour al-Din al-Zenki Movement, Jaysh al-Sunna, Liwa al-Haqq, Sham Legion (Faylaq al-Sham), Muslim Brotherhood of Syria, Fastaqim Kama Umirt Union, Levant Front (Jabhat al-Shamiyah), Northern Storm Brigade (Liwa Asifat al-Shamal), Fatah Halab (Conquest of Aleppo), Army of Revolutionaries (also known as Jaysh al-Thuwar), Syrian Democratic Forces, People's Protection Units (YPG), Women's Protection Units (YPJ), Seljuk Brigade, Guardians of Religion Organization (Tanzim Hurras al-Deen) and others. Please list both the name of the opposition (if available) and the definition/description, for example: "Al-Nusra Front - the so-called 'mild opposition'".

If there are no descriptions write N/A in the cell.

## **QUESTION 8**

### **DESCRIBING RUSSIA**

Question eight looks at how RT coverage describes Russia, the country of origin for the channel and the country whose budget finances its operation. It is important to look at how the channel portrays Russia because the aim of this study is to look at the intersection of Russian public diplomacy and journalism in RT's news coverage, and an essential part of any country's public diplomacy is explaining its policies abroad. Therefore, how the channel defines the country in its news coverage is an important part of the process of explaining the policies and positioning the country and interpreting its role in the international relations. Describing self is an integral part of the overall 'Russian viewpoint on global events' that is studied in the first research question.

Looking at these descriptions of the Russian operation in Syria is important because it is Russian foreign policy at work, and that is something that public diplomacy aims to explain for the wider public. The answers to this question will help the study answer the following questions:



How does RT news coverage define and describe Russia?

How does RT's definitions and descriptions of Russia connect to the country's wider public diplomacy claims?

What global role does RT assign to Russia in its message of 'Russian viewpoint'?

Question 8. What words are used to describe Russia?

To answer the question please list all words that are used to describe Russia as a country, including its government, cities and companies.

If there are no descriptions write N/A in the cell.

**QUESTION 9  
DESCRIBING OTHER COUNTRIES**

Looking at the way RT describes other countries' involvement in Syria and other countries in general can be as important as looking at the way Russia and Syria are described in RT news, because it also contributes to the overall message of the 'Russian viewpoint on global events.'

Specifically, the answers to this question will help the study answer the following questions:

How are other countries described in RT coverage?

What global roles does RT assign to other countries as a part of its 'Russian viewpoint' message?

Question 9. What words are used to describe other countries (not Russia or Syria)? Please specify: Country - words/phrases.

For this question, please list all the words that the article uses to describe other countries, governments, politicians, people and companies that are not from Russia or Syria. In your answers, please note the country as well as the definition.

If there are no descriptions write N/A in the cell.

### **QUESTION 10**

#### **DESCRIBING IS**

This question looks at how RT describes the terrorist group IS. Similar to the logic of previous questions, looking at how IS is described will add to the understanding of how RT defines and describes Russia and other countries and their role in the world and conflict in Syria - 'the Russian viewpoint' on it.

Question 11. What words are used to describe IS?

Please list all words that the article uses to describe the Islamic State, which can be named as Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, or ISIL, Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, ISIS or Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham, IS and by its Arabic language acronym Daesh.

If there are no descriptions write N/A in the cell.

### **QUESTION 11**

#### **SOURCES**

This question looks at the news sources that the news articles refer to in the text. This will allow us to analyse which news sources RT prefers to use in which instances - ranging from own reporters, Russian state news agencies, independent news agencies, the news agencies known as related to the infamous Russian 'troll factory' or even unspecified sources. The answers to this question will help the study answer the following questions:

What sources are prevalent in RT news coverage?

What is the correlation between the types of news stories and angles and the sources that RT chooses to feature in their news stories?

Please select the correct answer for the text and, where requested, specify the details. Please note you can select more than one answer for this question for the cases when an article refers to multiple sources.

Please note that in this question you need to ONLY specify the initial source. So, for example, if the article reports the words of Angela Merkel as reported by Die Zeitung, the source is Die Zeitung and NOT Angela Merkel herself, so you need to select the first answer option. If the words of Angela Merkel are reported from an interview, a press conference, on social media or at an event where RT journalists were present then she herself is the source, so you would need to select answer option 8. In other words, officials should be coded as sources when the words were recorded directly from them through any medium – if the words are reported by another media, then the media is the source.

**(1) Other media publication, TV channel or news agency. Please specify names** - Please select this answer if the article refers to another media organisation or a news agency as a source. In the following cell please enter the name of the media.

**(2) Own reporter or interview** - Please select this answer if the article is a Q&A interview conducted by RT, refers to information from an RT journalist or a TV report by the RT broadcast services.

**(3) Social media** - Please select this answer if the article refers to a post on any social media as its source. Please note that posts made on social media by, for example, Russian government officials need to be coded as both this answer and answer (4) Russian government officials.

**(4) Russian government officials or military** - Please select this answer if the article refers to a speech, interview, public appearance or another form of directly published statement by a Russian government official, and RT is reporting their words either as directly said to them or in a public statement (but not through other media - in this case choose answer 1). Unnamed source should also be counted as this answer but also coded as (14) Unspecified/unnamed source.

**(5) Syrian government officials or military** - Please select this answer if the article refers to a speech, interview, public appearance or another form of directly published statement by a Syrian government official, and RT is reporting their words either as directly said to them or in a public statement (but not through other media - in this case choose answer 1).

**(6) Syrian sources not affiliated with the government** - Please select this answer if the source named in the news article is a source from Syria who is not a part of the Syrian government or a representative of the government, and RT is reporting their words either as directly said to them or in a public statement (but not through other media - in this case choose answer 1). These would include activists, members of the Syrian opposition, etc.

**(7) Russian sources not affiliated with the government** - Please select this answer if the source named in the news article is a source from Russia who is not a part of the Russian government or a representative of the government, and RT is reporting their words either as directly said to them or in a public statement (but not through other media - in this case choose answer 1). These would include former heads of state, opposition politicians, public figures etc. If the source is an expert or an eyewitness, please select both this answer and the corresponding answer (10) - (13).

**(8) Government officials of other countries - please specify name** - Please select this answer if the article refers to a source in the governments of countries other than Russia and Syria, and RT is reporting their words either as directly said to them or in a public statement (but not through other media - in this case choose answer 1).

**(9) Representatives of international organisations - please specify the name of organisation** - Please select this source if the article refers to a source in an international organisation like the UN, NATO, EU, WHO or other, or a representative of it, and RT is reporting their words either as directly said to them or in a public statement (but not through other media - in this case choose answer 1). Please not that countries' representatives in the UN should be treated as diplomats/ambassadors/envoys, and therefore coded as representatives of their respective governments.

**(10) Experts** - Please select this answer if the article refers to an expert as a source, explicitly identifying the person as 'expert' in the text. If the person is used to provide an expert opinion on the issue but is not called an expert in the text, please code them as 'Other' or another appropriate category.

**(11) Eyewitnesses** - Please select this answer if the article refers to a source who is an eyewitness to the event that is being reported. These could include social media posts by eyewitnesses, or interviews given to RT. If the text is quoting an eyewitness in interview to another media, please select answer option (1) as in that case the media is the source.

**(12) Activists** - Please select this answer if the article refers to an activist as a source of news, only where they are called an activist in the text.

**(13) Bloggers** - Please select this answer if the article refers to a blogger as a source of news, only when they called bloggers in the text.

**(14) Unspecified or unnamed source** - Please select this answer if no source is identified in the article at all (if the article reports the event without specifying where the information comes from), or if the source is mentioned as an unnamed source (for example 'anonymous source in the government').

**(15) Other source - please give details** - Please select this answer if none of the other answers apply and please briefly note who are the source that the article refers to (eg. 'university professor', 'local', 'American journalist').

## QUESTIONS 12-17

### ACTORS

Questions 13 to 18 focus on the actors that appear in the text - this refers to any people who are mentioned or quoted in the article. Please note that actors are ALWAYS people - countries, government bodies and international organisations do not count as actors. If the text says that 'the UN opposed the decision' without specifying a person who is member or representative of the UN, do not include this instance in these questions.

Analysing this data will allow us to understand whose voices make it into RT coverage, and who gets just mentioned, see if the actors are more quoted or mentioned depending on their country of origin or any other criteria, if the number of actors from certain countries grows or falls depending on the topic or news event that is being reported. The answers to this question will help the study answer the following questions:

Actors from which countries appear in RT conflict coverage most often?

Which actors are the most quoted in RT conflict coverage?

Which actors are the most mentioned but not quoted in RT conflict coverage?

What is the correlation between the choice of actors depending on the news story and angle?

Question 12. What Russian actors are quoted in the text? Please select all answers that apply.

For this question please only select people that are quoted in the text (not through reported speech). Select all answers that apply.

**(1) President Putin or his spokesman Peskov** - Please select this answer if president Putin or his spokesman/press-secretary Dmitry Peskov are quoted in the text.

**(2) Sergei Lavrov** - Please select this answer if Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov is quoted in the text.

**(3) Maria Zakharova** - Please select this answer if the official representative of the Ministry

of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Maria Zakharova is quoted in the text.

**(4) Other Russian government officials** - Please select this answer if other Russian government officials are quoted in the text.

**(5) Representatives of the Russian military** - Please select this answer if members, officials or representatives of the Russian military are quoted in the text.

**(6) Representatives of non-government opposition** - Please select this answer if members Russian non-governmental opposition (ie opposition that is not in office) are quoted in the text.

**(7) Russian experts** - Please select this answer if experts from Russia are quoted in the text.

**(8) Russian activists** - Please select this answer if activists from Russia are quoted in the text.

**(9) Others - please specify** - Please select this answer if you could not find the corresponding answer above. Please also provide the name of the actor.

**(10) No quoted Russian actors** - Please select this answer if there are no actors from Russia who are quoted in the text.

Question 13. What Russian actors are mentioned in the text?

Please select all answers that apply.

For this question please focus on the people who are mentioned in the text but are not quoted directly. Actors whose speech is reported should also be coded in this question. Select all answers that apply.

**(1) President Putin or his spokesman Peskov** - Please select this answer if president Putin or his spokesman/press-secretary Dmitry Peskov is mentioned in the text.

**(2) Sergei Lavrov** - Please select this answer if Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov is mentioned in the text.

**(3) Maria Zakharova** - Please select this answer if the official representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Maria Zakharova is mentioned in the text.

**(4) Other Russian government officials** - Please select this answer if other Russian government officials are mentioned in the text.

**(5) Representatives of the Russian military** - Please select this answer if members, officials or representatives of the Russian military are mentioned in the text.

**(6) Representatives of non-government opposition** - Please select this answer if members

Russian non-governmental opposition (ie opposition that is not in office) are mentioned in the text.

**(7) Russian experts** - Please select this answer if experts from Russia are mentioned in the text.

**(8) Russian activists** - Please select this answer if activists from Russia are mentioned in the text.

**(9) Others - please specify** - Please select this answer if you could not find the corresponding answer above. Please also provide the name of the actor.

**(10) No mentioned Russian actors** - Please select this answer if there are no actors from Russia who are mentioned in the text.

Question 14. What Syrian actors are quoted in the text?

Please select all answers that apply.

For this question please only select people that are quoted in the text (not through reported speech). Select all answers that apply.

**(1) Bashar Assad** - Please select this answer if president Assad is quoted in the text.

**(2) Other Syrian government officials** - Please select this answer if other Syrian government officials are quoted in the text.

**(3) Representatives of the Syrian military** - Please select this answer if members, officials or representatives of the Syrian military are quoted in the text.

**(4) Members of Syrian opposition** - Please select this answer if members Syrian opposition are quoted in the text. These include but are not limited to all the widely recognised opposition to the current Syrian government (with the exception of the Islamic State) and include both political and military opposition: Free Syrian Army, Syrian Revolutionaries Front, Al-Nusra Front (also known as Jabhat Fateh al-Sham, Jabhat al-Nusra and recently Tahrir al-Sham), Jaysh al-Islam, Army of Conquest (Jaish al-Fatah or JaF), Ahrar al-Sham, Ansar al-Sham, Suqour al-Sham Brigades (the Sham Falcons Brigades), Ajnad al-Sham (Soldiers of the Levant), Nour al-Din al-Zenki Movement, Jaysh al-Sunna, Liwa al-Haqq, Sham Legion (Faylaq al-Sham), Muslim Brotherhood of Syria, Fastaqim Kama Umirt Union, Levant Front (Jabhat al-Shamiyah), Northern Storm Brigade (Liwa Asifat al-Shamal), Fatah Halab (Conquest of Aleppo), Army of Revolutionaries (also known as Jaysh al-Thuwar), Syrian Democratic Forces, People's Protection Units (YPG), Women's Protection Units

(YPJ), Seljuk Brigade, Guardians of Religion Organization (Tanzim Hurras al-Deen) and others. If the article simply states ‘Syrian opposition forces’ without specifying the name please also choose this answer.

**(5) Syrian experts** - Please select this answer if experts from Syria are quoted in the text.

**(6) Representative of the White Helmets** - Please select this answer if a representative or member of the White Helmets is quoted in the text.

**(7) Syrian activists** - Please select this answer if activists from Syria are quoted or mentioned in the text.

**(8) Eyewitnesses** - Please select this answer if activists from Syria are quoted in the text.

**(9) Other - please specify** - Please select this answer if you could not find the corresponding answer above. Please also provide the name of the actor.

**(10) No quoted Syrian actors** - Please select this answer if there are no actors from Syria who are quoted in the text.

Question 15. What Syrian actors are mentioned in the text?

Please select all answers that apply.

For this question, please focus on the people who are mentioned in the text but are not quoted directly. Actors whose speech is reported should also be coded in this question. Select all answers that apply.

**(1) Bashar Assad** - Please select this answer if president Assad is mentioned in the text.

**(2) Other Syrian government officials** - Please select this answer if other Syrian government officials are mentioned in the text.

**(3) Representatives of the Syrian military** - Please select this answer if members, officials or representatives of the Syrian military are mentioned in the text.

**(4) Members of Syrian opposition** - Please select this answer if members Syrian opposition are mentioned in the text. These include but are not limited to all the widely recognised opposition to the current Syrian government (with the exception of the Islamic State) and include both political and military opposition: Free Syrian Army, Syrian Revolutionaries Front, Al-Nusra Front (also known as Jabhat Fateh al-Sham, Jabhat al-Nusra and recently Tahrir al-Sham), Jaysh al-Islam, Army of Conquest (Jaish al-Fatah or JaF), Ahrar al-Sham, Ansar al-Sham, Suqour al-Sham Brigades (the Sham Falcons Brigades), Ajnad al-Sham (Soldiers of the Levant), Nour al-Din al-Zenki Movement, Jaysh al-Sunna, Liwa al-Haqq,



Sham Legion (Faylaq al-Sham), Muslim Brotherhood of Syria, Fastaqim Kama Umirt Union, Levant Front (Jabhat al-Shamiyah), Northern Storm Brigade (Liwa Asifat al-Shamal), Fatah Halab (Conquest of Aleppo), Army of Revolutionaries (also known as Jaysh al-Thuwar), Syrian Democratic Forces, People's Protection Units (YPG), Women's Protection Units (YPJ), Seljuk Brigade, Guardians of Religion Organization (Tanzim Hurras al-Deen) and others. If the article simply states 'Syrian opposition forces' without specifying the name please also choose this answer.

**(5) Syrian experts** - Please select this answer if experts from Syria are mentioned in the text.

**(6) Representative of the White Helmets** - Please select this answer if a representative or member of the White Helmets is mentioned in the text.

**(7) Syrian activists** - Please select this answer if activists from Syria are quoted or mentioned in the text.

**(8) Eyewitnesses** - Please select this answer if activists from Syria are mentioned in the text.

**(9) Other - please specify** - Please select this answer if you could not find the corresponding answer above. Please also provide the name of the actor.

**(10) No mentioned Syrian actors** - Please select this answer if there are no actors from Syria who are mentioned in the text.

Question 15. What foreign actors (not from Russia or Ukraine) are quoted in the text?

Please select all answers that apply.

For this question please only select people that are quoted in the text (not through reported speech). Select all answers that apply.

**(1) Barak Obama** - Please select this answer if President Obama is quoted in the text.

**(2) Donald Trump** - Please select this answer if President Trump is quoted in the text.

**(3) Marine Le Pen** - Please select this answer if French politician Marine Le Pen is quoted in the text.

**(4) Recep Tayyip Erdoğan** - Please select this answer if Turkish president Erdoğan is quoted in the text.

**(5) Other foreign government officials and heads of state - please specify name** - Please select this answer if government officials from any country except Russia or Syria are quoted in the text. Please specify country in the next cell.

**(6) IS** - Please select this answer if a member of IS or any communication from the group are

quoted in the text.

**(7) Officials and representatives of international organisations** - Please select this answer if a member or representative of international organisation like NATO, WHO, EU or other is quoted in the text. Please not that countries' representatives in the UN should be treated as diplomats/ambassadors/envoys, and official representatives of their respective countries and should be coded as government representatives.

**(8) Foreign experts** - Please select this answer if experts from other countries are quoted in the text.

**(9) Foreign activists** - Please select this answer if activists from other countries are quoted in the text.

**(10) Others - Please specify** - Please select this answer if you could not find the corresponding answer above. Please also provide the name of the actor.

**(10) No quoted foreign actors** - Please select this answer if there are no actors from other countries who are quoted in the text.

Question 16. What foreign actors (not from Russia or Syria) are mentioned in the text?

Please select all answers that apply.

For this question, please focus on the people who are mentioned in the text but are not quoted directly. Actors whose speech is reported should also be coded in this question. Select all answers that apply.

**(1) Barak Obama** - Please select this answer if President Obama is mentioned in the text.

**(2) Donald Trump** - Please select this answer if President Trump is mentioned in the text.

**(3) Marine Le Pen** - Please select this answer if French politician Marine Le Pen is mentioned in the text.

**(4) Recep Tayyip Erdoğan** - Please select this answer if Turkish president Erdoğan is mentioned in the text.

**(5) Other foreign government officials and heads of state - please specify name** - Please select this answer if government officials from any country except Russia or Syria are mentioned in the text. Please specify country in the next cell.

**(6) IS** - Please select this answer if a member of IS or any communication from the group are mentioned in the text.

**(7) Officials and representatives of international organisations** - Please select this answer

if a member or representative of international organisation like NATO, WHO, EU or other is mentioned in the text. Please note that countries' representatives in the UN should be treated as diplomats/ambassadors/envoys, and official representatives of their respective countries and should be coded as government representatives.

**(8) Foreign experts** - Please select this answer if experts from other countries are mentioned in the text.

**(9) Foreign activists** - Please select this answer if activists from other countries are mentioned in the text.

**(10) Others - Please specify** - Please select this answer if you could not find the corresponding answer above. Please also provide the name of the actor.

**(10) No mentioned foreign actors** - Please select this answer if there are no actors from other countries who are mentioned in the text.

## CODING MANUAL FOR QUANTITATIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS

### SYRIA (in Russian<sup>262</sup>)

#### Единицы анализа

При анализе освещения конфликтов и “Российского взгляда на мировые события”, заявленного как одна из целей вещания RT этот научный проект изучит выборку из 16 событий: 7 событий во время конфликта в Украине и 9 во время конфликта в Сирии. Эти события будут обозначены буквами и цифрами. Следующие события были выбраны на основе таймлайна конфликта на сайте BBC и на основе репортажей на сайте BBC (детальное описание всех событий доступно в Приложении 1):

**S1.** 30 сентября 2015 - Первые российские авиаудары по Сирии.

**S2.** 11 декабря 2015 - Президент Путин во время теле-совещания обещает “жестокие” действия в Сирии, приказывает “немедленно уничтожить” все угрозы российским силам в Сирии. Речь вызывает недопонимание, что Россия будет поддерживать свободную сирийскую армию. Разгорается конфликт между Россией и Турцией, когда

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<sup>262</sup> This coding manual is a direct translation of the corresponding coding manual in English; it was used by Russian-speaking intercoder reliability coders.

Турция сбивает российский истребитель на сирийско-турецкой границе.

**S3.** 24 января 2015 - Захват городов Рабия и Латакия - первый крупномасштабный успех сирийской армии с тех пор, как российские воздушные войска присоединились к конфликту.

**S4.** 14 марта 2016 - Российский президент Владимир Путин объявил, что миссия России в Сирии завершена.

**S5.** 27 марта 2016 - Сирийские правительственные войска захватывают Пальмиру у ИГ с помощью российских воздушных сил, что объявляется самым важным достижением коалиции России и Сирии в конфликте.

**S6.** 5 мая 2016 - Российский оркестр под управлением известного дирижера и друга Владимира Путина Валерия Гергиева проводит в Пальмире символическое выступление.

**S7.** 1 августа 2016 - Российский вертолет, доставлявший гуманитарную помощь, сбит в провинции Идлиб. Химическая атака в Алеппо.

**S8.** 5 – 16 декабря 2016 – Захват Алеппо сирийскими правительственными войсками. В Анкаре застрелен российский посол в Турции, нападавший кричал о Сирии и Алеппо.

**S9.** 4 апреля 2017 - Химическая атака в городе Хан-Шейхун, находившемся под контролем сирийских повстанцев. Более 80 человек убито. США выпускает 59 ракет по авиабазе Эш-Шайрат, с которой, как предполагается, была проведена химическая атака.

Статьи для анализа были сохранены с сайта RT используя приложение Save Webpage As Docx для браузера Google Chrome, которое позволяет сохранять html страницы как документы формата .docx. Поиск статей был осуществлен с помощью встроенной поисковой системы на сайте RT в соответствии со временными рамками событий и временными ограничениями, установленными научным проектом в главе Методология. Ключевые слова для поиска состояли из географических названий,

связанных с каждым событием. В случае, когда событие не связано с географическим местоположением в качестве ключевого слова для поиска использовались имена собственные (например, “Путин”). Для проверки того, что сохранены все необходимые статьи был проведен дополнительный поиск с ключевым словом “Украина”.

Только новостные статьи, состоящие из 100 слов, или более были включены в выборку для исследования. Также для того, чтобы войти в выборку статьи должны были быть сфокусированы на событии, выбранном для анализа или на украинской политике (внешней и внутренней). Все статьи на другие темы, которые попали в выдачу поисковой системы, например статья о внутренней политике США и президентских выборах, должны упоминать страну в центре исследования (Украину) или в заголовке или как минимум дважды в тексте.

## **DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE CONTENT ANALYSIS**

### **UKRAINE CODING SCHEDULE**

#### **ДЕТАЛЬНАЯ ИНСТРУКЦИЯ ДЛЯ ПРОВЕДЕНИЯ**

#### **КОНТЕНТ АНАЛИЗА**

#### **СИРИЯ**

### **ВОПРОСЫ 1-2**

#### **ТЕХНИЧЕСКИЕ ХАРАКТЕРИСТИКИ**

Первые два вопроса описывают технические характеристики текста, их цель в том, чтобы во время анализа можно было определить о каком тексте идет речь.

#### Вопрос 1.Код события?

Пожалуйста укажите код события в формате буква + номер указано в документе.

- (1) S1
- (2) S2
- (3) S3
- (4) S4
- (5) S5
- (6) S6

(7) S7

(8) S8

(9) S9

Пожалуйста, выберите код события согласно таймлайну, представлену в первой части этой Инструкции.

### Вопрос 2. Номер текста?

Пожалуйста укажите номер текста в следующем формате, но без тире: день-месяц-год-время публикации (например, 010220150015); в случаях, когда два текста были опубликованы в одно время и один день, пожалуйста, укажите в номере -1,-2 и так далее для всех последующих текстов (например, 010220150015-1).

## **ВОПРОС 3**

### **ДЕТАЛИ И КОНТЕКСТ**

Третий вопрос сконцентрирован на длине новостных текстов. В то время как в традиционных печатных медиа длина статьи может использоваться как фактор анализа “важности”, которую теме придает издание (чем длиннее статья, тем важнее тема для издания), в случае анализа текстов из онлайн СМИ, которые обладают неограниченным количеством места (в отличие от, например, газет), длина текста будет использоваться как фактор определения как важности так и количества контекста и деталей, которые статья предлагает читателям. Это вытекает из того что чем длиннее текст тем больше деталей на освещаемую тему он может предложить.

Анализ данных полученных этим вопросом поможет этому научному проекту ответить на часть первого научного вопроса (1. В чем состоит “российская точка зрения” которую RT транслирует в мир?) Более конкретно, ответы на этот вопрос должны дать данные для ответа на следующие вопросы:

Сколько деталей и контекста новостное освещение RT предоставляет своим читателям?

Освещены ли некоторые события с большим количеством деталей чем другие события?

### Вопрос 3. Длина текста?

- (1) 100 - 300 слов
- (2) 301 - 600 слов
- (3) 601 слово и длиннее

Пожалуйста, проверьте количество слов с помощью Microsoft Office или сайта Word Count Tools по адресу <https://wordcounttools.com> и выберите соответствующий вариант ответа.

## **ВОПРОС 4**

### **ТЕМА**

Четвертый вопрос рассматривает тему, на которой сфокусирована статья. В то время как все статьи из выборки фокусируются на освещении конфликте, каждая отдельная статья может подходить к теме по-разному. Например, одно и то же событие может быть освещено с точки зрения дипломатии, гуманитарных проблем или как военные действия. Таким образом, этот вопрос поможет определить какие темы доминируют в новостном освещении RT для каждого события из выборки, понять, какие события телеканал считает новостями (события или что о них говорят политики?), и проанализировать эти тенденции. Анализ данных, полученных этим вопросом поможет этому научному проекту ответить на часть первого научного вопроса (1. В чем состоит “российская точка зрения” которую RT транслирует в мир?). Более конкретно, ответы на этот вопрос должны дать данные для ответа на следующие вопросы:

Какие новостные подходы доминируют в новостном освещении RT?

Есть ли корреляция между типом события и новостным подходом,  
выбранным RT?

Чтобы определить тему текста может быть полезно изучить заголовок статьи и лид (краткое описание текста, несколько предложений перед началом статьи).

### Вопрос 4. В чем состоит главная тема текста?

В этом вопросе вы можете выбрать максимум два варианта ответа. Детальные описания тем доступны далее.

**(1) Военные столкновения** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если статья рассказывает о военных столкновениях, военных операциях и битвах между сторонами конфликта.

**(2) Международные отношения, дипломатия** – Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если статья рассказывает о международных отношениях между странами и международной политике. Например, такие статья могут включать заявления дипломатов, министерств внутренних дел и, встречи между представителями стран на любых уровнях.

**(3) Внутренняя политика стран – укажите страну** – Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если статья фокусируется на внутренней политике и делах любой страны, и укажите название страны в следующей ячейке. Такие статья могут, например, рассказывать о выборах и предвыборных программах, законодательных инициативах или докладывать о течении политической жизни в стране. Пожалуйста, помните, что политические вопросы, в которые вовлечено больше одной страны, должны быть кодированы как ответ 2.

**(4) Гуманитарные проблемы** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если статья концентрируется на гуманитарных проблемах, например нехватке медикаментов, продовольствия или других запасов, гражданских смертях в войне или проблемах с правами человека.

**(5) Чрезвычайное происшествие/авария** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если статья рассказывает об аварии или другом непредвиденном/несчастном случае, например о теракте или авиакатастрофе. Столкновения и бои между армиями и военными группировками должны быть отмечены как вопрос 1.

**(6) Другое** - Пожалуйста, укажите подробности - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если другие ответы не подходят для описания темы и новостного подхода текста. Пожалуйста, кратко укажите в чем состоит тема текста (попытайтесь использовать схожие формулировки для схожих тем и использовать кодовые слова, например «бизнес», «культура и искусство», «СМИ» и так далее).

## **ВОПРОСЫ 5 - 7**

### **ОПИСАНИЯ СИРИИ**



Вопросы 5 - 7 рассматривают то, как тексты RT описывают Сирию и различные аспекты этой страны.

Так как главная цель этого научного проекта в том, чтобы изучить пересечение публичной дипломатии и журналистике в новостном освещении RT, изучение того, как канал описывает и определяют Сирию как страну позволит определить и понять, какие роли и нарративы RT приписывает этой стране, что в свою очередь поможет понять как российская публичная демократия транслируется через новостное освещение RT. Анализ данных, полученных этим вопросом поможет этому научному проекту ответить на часть первого научного вопроса (1. В чем состоит “российская точка зрения” которую RT транслирует в мир? или, грубо говоря, в чем состоит “российская точка зрения” на Украину).

Более конкретно, ответы на этот вопрос должны дать данные для ответа на следующие вопросы:

Как новостное освещение RT описывает Сирию как страну?

Как эти определения и описания соотносятся с российской внешней политикой?

#### Вопрос 5. Какие слова используются для описания Сирии?

Для ответа на этот вопрос, пожалуйста, запишите все слова, которые используются в тексте для описания Сирии как страны, ее народа, а также сирийского правительства, например “законно избранное” правительство, “раздираемая войной” страна, и т. д. Пожалуйста, помните, что в ответах на этот вопрос надо указывать только слова, описывающие Сирию – прилагательные и причастия. Фразы или сочетания слов указывать не нужно, также не нужно указывать то, как страна определяется в тексте (например, когда для отсылки к правительству или стране вместо слова «Сирия» используется слово «Дамаск»; в то же время «дамасский» как прилагательное, описывающее правительства надо указывать). Прилагательные, указываемые в этом вопросе, должны описывать Сирию, в том числе текущие или бывшие правительства, президентов, народ, регионы и территории страны. Описания сирийской оппозиции и

описания боевых действий указываются в вопросах 6 и 7. Описания повстанческих «правительств» в Донецке и Луганске указываются в вопросе 7.

Пожалуйста, указывайте прилагательное и существительное, которое им описывается (например, «оппозиционный Алеппо»).

Если в тексте нет описаний, то напишите НЕТ.

#### Вопрос 6. Какие слова используются для описания военных действий в Сирии?

Для ответа на этот вопрос, пожалуйста, запишите все слова которые описывают военные действия в Сирии, например “жестокая гражданская война” и тд.

Если в тексте нет описаний, то напишите НЕТ.

#### Вопрос 7. Какие слова используются для описания Сирийской оппозиции?

Для ответа на этот вопрос, пожалуйста, запишите все слова и фразы, которые используются в тексте для определения и описания сирийской оппозиции. Оппозиция включает в себя но не ограничивается следующими организациями: Свободная Сирийская Армия, Сирийский революционный фронт, фронт Ан-Нусра (также известен как Джабхат ан-Нусра, Джабхат фатх аш-Шам и, с недавних пор, Тахрир аш-Шам), Джайш аль-Ислам, “армия завоевания” (Джайш аль-фатх или ДжаФ), Ахрар аш-Шам (Свободные люди Леванта), Ансар аль-Шам, Сукур аш-Шам (или Сколобы Леванта), Айнад аш-Шам (солдаты Леванта), Нур-ад-Дин аз-Зинки, Джайш аш-Сунна, Лива аль-Хак, Файлак аш-Шам, Братья-мусульмане в Сирии, союз Фастаким, фронт Леванта (Джабхат аль-Шамия), Бригада Северный Шторм, Фатах Халеб (“Освобождение Алеппо”), Джейш аль-Тувар (армия революции), Сирийские Демократические Силы/Войска, Отряды Народной Самообороны (YPG), Отряды Женской Самообороны (YPJ), Бригада Сельджука, Танзим Хуррас аль-Дин и другие. Если текст указывает на просто “сирийскую оппозицию” без указания названия группировки, описания ее также надо указать в этом ответе.

Пожалуйста, обратите внимание, что в ответе на данный вопрос надо перечислять

только описательные слова (прилагательные и причастия), но не фразы.

Если в тексте нет описаний, то напишите НЕТ.

## **ВОПРОСЫ 8-9**

### **ОПИСАНИЯ РОССИИ**

Вопрос 8 рассматривает как новостное освещение RT определяет и описывает Россию, страну в которой основан канал, и которая его спонсирует финансово. Поскольку цель данного научного проекта состоит в том, чтобы изучить пересечение публичной дипломатии и журналистике на примере новостного освещения RT, важно изучить также как канал описывает Россию, поскольку объяснение политических решений страны за границей это одна из основных целей публичной дипломатии. То, как страна определяется и описывается, таким образом, может быть важной частью публичной дипломатии как процесс объяснения политических решений, позиционирования страны и объяснение ее роли в международных отношениях. “Само-описание” России через RT это важная часть “российской точки зрения на мировые события”, которую изучает первый научный вопрос этого проекта.

Особенно важно изучить определения и описания России в контексте Сирийского конфликта поскольку Россия, как участник конфликта, заинтересована в объяснении своей политики и решений широкой публике. Таким образом, изучение того, как Россия определяется и описывается в случае Украинского конфликта это изучение того, как страна использует публичную дипломатию для объяснения внешней политики миру. Более конкретно, ответы на этот вопрос должны дать данные для ответа на следующие вопросы:

Как новостное освещение RT определяет и описывает Россию?

Как определения и описания России в текстах RT связаны с публичной дипломатией страны?

Какую глобальную роль RT приписывает России как часть “российской точки зрения”?

Вопрос 8. Какие слова используются для описания России?

Для ответа на этот вопрос, пожалуйста, перечислите прилагательные и причастия, которые используются в тексте для описания России как страны, включая описания ее правительства, городов и компаний.

Если в тексте нет описаний, то напишите НЕТ.

## **ВОПРОС 10**

### **ОПИСАНИЯ ДРУГИХ СТРАН**

Изучение того, как RT определяет и описывает другие страны и их вовлеченность в конфликт в Украине и мировой порядок может быть не менее важным, чем изучение того, как канала определяет и описывает Россию и Украину, так как тоже дополняет и детализирует общий месседж, которое несет “российская точка зрения на мировые события”, расставляя “игроков на карте”. Более конкретно, ответы на этот вопрос должны дать данные для ответа на следующие вопросы:

Как другие страны определяются и описываются в новостном освещении RT?

Какие глобальные роли RT приписывает другим странам через свою “российскую точку зрения”?

Вопрос 10. Какие слова используются для описания других стран (не России и не Сирии)? Пожалуйста, пишите в формате: страна - слова.

Для ответа на этот вопрос, пожалуйста, перечислите все слова, которые в тексте используются для описания других стран за исключением России и Украины, включая правительства, политиков и компании. Пожалуйста, указывает также страну, которая описывается этими словами.

Если в тексте нет описаний, то напишите НЕТ.

## **ВОПРОС 11**

### **ОПИСАНИЯ ИГ**

По логике предыдущих вопросов, ответы на этот вопрос помогут понять как RT

определяет и описывает мир и роли различных стран и групп в нем, в первую очередь роль России через призму “российской точки зрения на мировые события”.

#### Вопрос 11. Какие слова используются для описания ИГ?

Для ответа на этот вопрос, пожалуйста, перечислите все слова, которые в тексте используются для описания Исламского государства. Организация может быть идентифицирована в тексте как ИГИЛ, ИС, ИГ, Исламское государство, Даеш и тд.

Если в тексте нет описаний, то напишите НЕТ.

### **ВОПРОС 12**

#### **НОВОСТНЫЕ ИСТОЧНИКИ**

Этот вопрос изучает новостные источники, которые указаны в текстах статей. Ответы на этот вопрос позволят проекту изучить, какие новостные источники использует RT (собственных корреспондентов, российские государственные СМИ, независимые информ. агентства, «фабрику троллей», или же анонимные источники), и как эти источники меняются в зависимости от ситуации. Более конкретно, ответы на этот вопрос должны дать данные для ответа на следующие вопросы:

Какие новостные источники чаще всего встречаются в новостном освещении RT?

Есть ли корреляция между типом новостей и источником, используемым каналом, и в чем она состоит?

Пожалуйста, выберите правильный ответ из списка, и укажите дополнительную информацию, где это необходимо. Пожалуйста имейте в виду, что в этом вопросе вы можете выбрать более одного варианта ответа в тех случаях, когда статья называет несколько источников информации.

Пожалуйста, имейте в виду что при ответе на этот вопрос надо указывать ТОЛЬКО основной источник. Так, например, если статья передает слова Ангелы Меркель, которые она сказала в репортаже Die Zeitung, то источником в данном случае является Die Zeitung и НЕ Ангела Меркель, так что надо выбрать первый вариант ответа. Если

слова Ангелы Меркель переданы с ее официальной пресс-конференции, интервью с RT, или поста в соц.сетях то только в этом случае она сама является источником, и в таком случае надо выбрать вариант ответа 8. Иными словами, политики являются источниками только в тех случаях, когда из слова передаются от них самих (через любой медиум) – если слова приведены со слов других СМИ, то источник являются эти СМИ.

**(1) Публикация в других медиа или сообщения информ. агентств. Пожалуйста, укажите название** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот вариант ответа если источником статьи являются другие медиа - телеканалы, газеты или сайты, или

новостные/информационные агентства. Во второй ячейке укажите название СМИ

**(2) Собственный репортер или интервью** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот вариант ответа если источником статьи является интервью, проведенное RT, или если статья ссылается на телевизионные репортаж RT или слова теле-корреспондента RT.

**(3) Социальные сети** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если текст ссылается как на источник на посты или комментарии в соц.сетях. Также обратите внимание, что посты в соц.сетях от лица, например, российских политиков, должны быть отмечены как этот ответ и **(4) Представители российского правительства и армии.**

**(4) Представители российского правительства и армии** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если текст ссылается как на новостной источник на речь, интервью, публичное выступление или другую форму коммуникации от лица членов российского правительства и армии и их представителей, и RT приводит эту информацию из официального заявления, полученного каналом (не из других СМИ), или из интервью. Если текст ссылается на анонимный источник, то пожалуйста, выберите этот вариант ответа и ответ (14) Неназванный источник.

**(5) Представители сирийского правительства и армии** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если текст ссылается как на новостной источник на речь, интервью, публичное выступление или другую форму коммуникации от лица членов сирийского правительства и армии и их представителей, и RT приводит эту информацию из официального заявления, полученного каналом (не из других СМИ), или из интервью. Представители оппозиции должны отмечаться как ответ 6.

**(6) Сирийские источники не связанные с правительством** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если текст ссылается на сирийский источник, не связанный с действующим правительством. Кроме политиков, не занимающих официальный пост, сюда также

входят члены и представители сирийской оппозиции, активисты, очевидцы событий и эксперты и т.д.

**(7) Российские источники, не связанные с правительством** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если текст ссылается на российский источник, не связанный с действующим правительством. Сюда также входят члены оппозиции, активисты, эксперты и т.д.

**(8) Государства и чиновники/представители других стран пожалуйста, укажите имя** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если текст ссылается на источник в правительстве других стран, кроме России и Украины, и RT приводит эту информацию из официального заявления, полученного каналом (не из других СМИ), или из интервью.

**(9) Представители международных организаций - пожалуйста, укажите название** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если текст ссылается на источник в международной организации, например НАТО, ООН, ЕС, ВОЗ и так далее. Посланники и представители стран при этих организациях, тем не менее, должны быть отмечены как представители правительств этих стран (варианты ответа 4,5,8).

**(10) Эксперты** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если текст ссылается на эксперта (интервью, заявление и так далее) как на источник информации. Для этого ответа экспертами можно считать только тех, кто обозначен в тексте как “эксперт” или “политолог”. Если человек используется в тексте в роли “эксперта” но при этом представлен иначе пожалуйста, выбирайте вариант ответа 15 (Другое) или другой подходящий ответ.

**(11) Очевидцы и свидетели** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если текст ссылается на очевидцев и свидетелей как источник информации в тексте, если информация получена RT в интервью или заявлении или через соц.сети. Информация из других СМИ кодируется как ответ 1.

**(12) Активисты** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если текст ссылается на активистов как источник информации в тексте. Активистами можно считать только тех, кого так определяет текст статьи.

**(13) Блоггеры** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если текст ссылается на блоггеров как на источник информации. Блоггерами можно считать только тех, кого так определяет текст статьи.

**(14) Неназванный источник** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте не указан источник вообще, или если он идентифицирован как “неназванный” или “анонимный” источник.

**(15) Другие источники - пожалуйста, укажите детали** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если другие ответы не подходят и кратко объясните, на какие источники ссылается текст (например, «профессор университета Х», «американский журналист», «местный житель»).

## **ВОПРОСЫ 13 - 18**

### **ДЕЙСТВУЮЩИЕ ЛИЦА**

Вопросы с 13 по 18 изучают действующие лица, которые появляются в тексте - то есть людей, которые упоминаются или цитируются в тексте. Пожалуйста, обратите внимание, что действующие лица - ВСЕГДА люди; страны, правительственные и международные организации не считаются действующими лицами в этом вопросе. Если в тексте сказано: “ООН противостояло решению” не указывая персонально человека, являющегося представителем или членом ООН, то этот пример не надо указывать в этом вопросе. Анализ ответов на этот вопрос поможет проекту понять, чьим голосам есть место в новостном освещении RT, а кого всего лишь упоминают, понять, действующие лица из каких стран чаще всего цитируются, а какие упоминаются, а также как количества действующих лиц разного происхождения меняется в зависимости от событий или темы текста. Более конкретно, ответы на этот вопрос должны дать данные для ответа на следующие вопросы:

Действующие лица из каких стран чаще всего появляются в новостном освещении RT?

Какие действующие лица чаще всего цитируются в новостном освещении RT?

Какие действующие лица чаще всего упоминаются, но не цитируются в новостном вещании RT?

Как выбор действующих лиц меняется в зависимости от новости и темы текста?

#### Вопрос 13. Какие российские действующие лица цитируются в тексте?

Пожалуйста, для ответа на этот вопрос указывайте только тех людей, кто напрямую цитируется в тексте в кавычках (не косвенная речь). Выберите все подходящие ответы.



- (1) **Президент Путин или его пресс-секретарь Песков** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте цитируется Владимир Путин или его пресс-секретарь Дмитрий Песков.
- (2) **Сергей Лавров** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте цитируется министр иностранных дел Сергей Лавров.
- (3) **Мария Захарова** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте цитируется официальный представитель Министерства иностранных дел РФ Мария Захарова.
- (4) **Другие представители российского правительства** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте цитируются другие члены или представители российского правительства.
- (5) **Представители российской армии** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте цитируются российские военные и армия.
- (6) **Представители несистемной оппозиции** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте цитируются члены и представители российской несистемной оппозиции, то есть оппозиции которая не занимает правящих должностей.
- (7) **Российские эксперты** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте цитируются российские эксперты.
- (8) **Российские активисты** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте цитируются российские активисты.
- (9) **Другие - пожалуйста, укажите детали** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если вы не нашли подходящий ответ из предложенных выше и укажите детали (имя или должность).
- (10) **Нет цитируемых российских действующих лиц** - Пожалуйста выберите этот ответ если в тексте нет цитируемых действующих лиц из России.

Вопрос 14. Какие российские действующие лица упоминаются в тексте?

Для ответа на этот вопрос, пожалуйста, укажите всех действующих лиц, упоминающихся в тексте, но не цитируемых напрямую. Также тут указываются те действующие лица, речь которых приводится косвенно.

- (1) **Президент Путин или его пресс-секретарь Песков** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте упоминается Владимир Путин или его пресс-секретарь Дмитрий Песков.

- (2) **Сергей Лавров** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте упоминается министр иностранных дел Сергей Лавров.
- (3) **Мария Захарова** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте упоминается официальный представитель Министерства иностранных дел РФ Мария Захарова.
- (4) **Другие представители российского правительства** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте упоминаются другие члены или представители российского правительства.
- (5) **Представители российской армии** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте упоминаются российские военные и армия.
- (6) **Представители несистемной оппозиции** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте упоминаются члены и представители российской несистемной оппозиции, то есть оппозиции которая не занимает правящих должностей (например Алексей Навальный или Илья Яшин).
- (7) **Российские эксперты** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте упоминаются российские эксперты.
- (8) **Российские активисты** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте упоминаются российские активисты.
- (9) **Другие - пожалуйста, укажите детали** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если вы не нашли подходящий ответ из предложенных выше и укажите детали (имя или должность).
- (10) **Нет упоминаемых российских действующих лиц** - Пожалуйста выберите этот ответ если в тексте нет упоминаемых действующих лиц из России.

Вопрос 15. Какие сирийские действующие лица цитируются в тексте?

Пожалуйста, для ответа на этот вопрос указывайте только тех людей, кто напрямую цитируется в тексте в кавычках (не косвенная речь). Выберите все подходящие ответы.

- (1) **Башар Асад** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте цитируется Башар Асад.
- (2) **Другие представители сирийского правительства** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте цитируются члены или представители сирийского правительства.
- (3) **Представители сирийской армии** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте цитируются сирийские военные и армия.

- (4) **Сирийская оппозиция** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте цитируются члены и представители сирийской оппозиции.
- (5) **Сирийские эксперты** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте цитируются сирийские эксперты.
- (6) **Члены Белых Касок** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте цитируются члены или представители организации Белые каски, также известной как Сирийская Гражданская Оборона.
- (7) **Сирийские активисты** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте цитируются сирийские активисты.
- (8) **Свидетели и очевидцы** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте цитируются очевидцы и свидетели событий о которых рассказывает текст.
- (9) **Другие - пожалуйста, укажите детали** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если вы не нашли подходящий ответ из предложенных выше и укажите детали (имя или должность)
- (10) **Нет цитируемых сирийских действующих лиц** - Пожалуйста выберите этот ответ если в тексте нет цитируемых действующих лиц из Сирии.

Вопрос 16. Какие сирийские действующие лица упоминаются в тексте?

Для ответа на этот вопрос, пожалуйста, укажите всех действующих лиц, упоминающихся в тексте, но не цитируемых напрямую. Также тут указываются те действующие лица, речь которых приводится косвенно. Выберите все подходящие ответы.

- (1) **Башар Асад** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте упоминается Башар Асад.
- (2) **Другие представители сирийского правительства** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте упоминаются члены или представители сирийского правительства.
- (3) **Представители сирийской армии** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте упоминаются сирийские военные и армия.
- (4) **Сирийская оппозиция** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте упоминаются члены и представители сирийской оппозиции.
- (5) **Сирийские эксперты** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте упоминаются сирийские эксперты.

**(6) Члены Белых Касок** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте упоминаются члены или представители организации Белые каски, также известной как Сирийская Гражданская Оборона.

**(7) Сирийские активисты** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте упоминаются сирийские активисты.

**(8) Свидетели и очевидцы** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте упоминаются очевидцы и свидетели событий о которых рассказывает текст.

**(9) Другие - пожалуйста, укажите детали** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если вы не нашли подходящий ответ из предложенных выше и укажите детали (имя или должность)

**(10) Нет упоминаемых сирийских действующих лиц** - Пожалуйста выберите этот ответ если в тексте нет упоминаемых действующих лиц из Сирии.

Вопрос 17. Какие зарубежные действующие лица (не из России или Сирии) цитируются в тексте?

Пожалуйста, для ответа на этот вопрос указывайте только тех людей, кто напрямую цитируется в тексте в кавычках (не косвенная речь). Выберите все подходящие ответы.

**(1) Барак Обама** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте цитируется Барак Обама.

**(2) Дональд Трамп** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте цитируется Дональд Трамп.

**(3) Марин Ле Пен** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте цитируется Марин Ле Пен.

**(4) Реджеп Тайип Эрдоган** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте цитируется Реджеп Тайип Эрдоган.

**(5) Другие главы государств или представители правительств - пожалуйста, укажите имя** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте цитируются главы других государств кроме России и Украины. Пожалуйста, укажите имя.

**(6) Члены ИГ** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте цитируются члены и представители Исламского государства.

**(7) Представители международных организаций** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте цитируются представители или члены международных организаций,

выступающие от лица организации, например ООН, НАТО, ВОЗ и так далее.

Посланники и представители стран при таких организациях, тем не менее, должны быть отмечены как представители правительств этих стран, то есть ответ 4 или соответствующие ответы в вопросах 13 и 14.

**(8) Зарубежные эксперты** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте цитируются эксперты не из России или Украины. Пожалуйста, укажите страну.

**(9) Зарубежные активисты** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте цитируются активисты не из России или Украины. Пожалуйста, укажите страну.

**(10) Другие - пожалуйста, укажите детали** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если вы не нашли подходящий ответ из предложенных выше и укажите детали (имя или должность).

**(11) Нет цитируемых зарубежных действующих лиц** - Пожалуйста выберите этот ответ если в тексте нет цитируемых действующих лиц из зарубежных стран.

Вопрос 18. Какие зарубежные действующие лица (не из России или Сирии) упоминаются в тексте?

Для ответа на этот вопрос, пожалуйста, укажите всех действующих лиц, упоминающихся в тексте, но не цитируемых напрямую. Также тут указываются те действующие лица, речь которых приводится косвенно. Укажите все подходящие варианты ответа.

**(1) Барак Обама** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте упоминается Барак Обама.

**(2) Дональд Трамп** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте упоминается Дональд Трамп.

**(3) Марин Ле Пен** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте упоминается Марин Ле Пен.

**(4) Реджеп Тайип Эрдоган** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте упоминается Реджеп Тайип Эрдоган.

**(5) Другие главы государств или представители правительств - пожалуйста, укажите имя** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте упоминаются главы других государств кроме России и Украины. Пожалуйста, укажите имя.

**(6) Члены ИГ** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте упоминаются члены и

представители Исламского государства.

**(7) Представители международных организаций** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте упоминаются представители или члены международных организаций, выступающие от лица организации, например ООН, НАТО, ВОЗ и так далее.

Посланники и представители стран при таких организациях, тем не менее, должны быть отмечены как представители правительств этих стран, то есть ответ 4 или соответствующие ответы в вопросах 13 и 14.

**(8) Зарубежные эксперты** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте упоминаются эксперты не из России или Украины. Пожалуйста, укажите страну.

**(9) Зарубежные активисты** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если в тексте упоминаются активисты не из России или Украины. Пожалуйста, укажите страну.

**(10) Другие - пожалуйста, укажите детали** - Пожалуйста, выберите этот ответ если вы не нашли подходящий ответ из предложенных выше и укажите детали (имя или должность).

**(11) Нет упоминаемых зарубежных действующих лиц** - Пожалуйста выберите этот ответ если в тексте нет упоминаемых действующих лиц из зарубежных стран.

### **Annex 3. Full numeric findings by event.**

#### **Full data collected during content analysis, presented by event.**

##### **U1**

**Kiev sees worst days of violence at the Euromaidan protests as at least 88 people are killed. President Yanukovich flees the country.**

**Date of the event: 18 - 23 February 2014.**

Articles in English: 129

Articles in Russian: 36

*Length of text*

#### **Length of text – U1**

<b>Adjectives</b>	<b>English sample (cases), % N=36</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N=129</b>
100-300 words	(3) 8.3%	(97) 75.2%
300-600 words	(13) 36.1%	(32) 24.8%
601 words and more	(20) 55.6%	-

Table U1-1: Length of texts in U1.

*Topic*

## Topics – U1

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % [percent of cases] N=44	Russian sample (cases), % [percent of cases] N=148
Military confrontation/clashes, warfare	(16) 36.4% [44.4%]	(39) 26.4% [30.2%]
International relations/diplomacy	(6) 13.6% [16.7%]	(33) 22.3% [25.6%]
Internal affairs of a country (specify)	(17) 38.6% [47.2%]	(62) 41.9% [48.1%]
Humanitarian issues	(5) 11.4% [13.9%]	(11) 7.4% [8.5%]
Accident	-	(3) 2% [2.3%]

Table U1-2: Topics in U1. (N in this table refers to the overall number of topics selected for the texts in each sample. N is higher than number or articles because up to two topics were allowed to be selected per each article. The total percent sum of percent of cases is higher than 100% for the same reason.)

‘Internal affairs of a country’ in the English sample: all Ukraine was the country discussed in ‘Internal affairs of a country’ in the English sample: Ukraine in 96.8% of the cases (60 articles) and Russia in 3.2% of the cases (2 articles).

### Descriptions of Ukraine

#### Descriptions of Ukraine

	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	36	(35) 97.2%	(1) 2.8%	100%
Russian sample	129	(75) 58.1%	(54) 41.9%	100%

Table U1-3: Articles in English and Russian samples with and without descriptions of Ukraine.

#### Descriptions of Viktor Yanukovich and his government – U1

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=32	Russian sample (cases), % N=24
Ukrainian <i>Украинский</i>	(10) 31.3%	(13) 54.2%
Legitimate <i>Легитимный</i>	(3) 9.4%	(2) 8.3%
Legal/lawful (-ly elected) <i>Законный (-но избранный)</i>	(2) 6.3%	(6) 25%
Acting <i>Действующий</i>	(4) 12.5%	(2) 8.3%
Ruling	(9) 28.1%	-
Embattled	(1) 3.1%	-

Official	(1) 3.1%	-
Yanukovich's	(1) 3.1%	-
Kiev	(1) 3.1%	-
Responsible of putting through orders that lead to political repressions and human rights abuses <i>Ответственные за приказы, ведущие к нарушению прав человека и политическим репрессиям</i>	-	(1) 4.2%

Table U1-4: Descriptions of president Yanukovich and his government in U1. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions of president Yanukovich and his government)

### Descriptions of the Ukrainian political opposition – U1

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=13	Russian sample (cases), % N=22
Ukrainian <i>Украинский</i>	(2) 15.4%	(11) 50%
Oppositional <i>Оппозиционный</i>	(1) 7.7%	(4) 18.2%
Largest <i>Самая крупная</i>	-	(1) 4.5%
United	(1) 7.7%	-
Non-factional <i>Внефракционный</i>	-	(2) 9.1%
Guilty of violence <i>Виновные в насилии</i>	-	(1) 4.5%
Nationalist	(3) 23.1%	-
Far-right	(3) 23.1%	-
Radical, extremist <i>Радикальная</i>	(2) 15.4%	(1) 4.5%
Liable for organizing unlawful extremist and terrorist activities <i>Виновные в организации противоправных экстремистских и террористических действий</i>	(1) 7.7%	(1) 4.5%
So-called <i>Так называемый</i>	-	(1) 4.5%

Table U1-5: Descriptions of Ukrainian political opposition in U1. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions of opposition political parties and MPs)

### Descriptions of the interim government in Ukraine – U1

Adjectives	English sample	Russian sample
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	(cases), % N=11	(cases), % N=15
Ukrainian <i>Украинский</i>	(3) 27.3%	(7) 46.7%
Acting <i>Исполняющий обязанности</i>	(2) 18.2%	(2) 13.3%
New <i>Новый</i>	(2) 18.2%	(3) 20%
Legitimate	(1) 9.1%	-
Opposition- controlled/enforced	(2) 18.2%	-
Moderate	(1) 9.1%	-
Temporary	-	(1) 6.7%
Non-factional <i>Внефракционный</i>	-	(1) 6.7%
Weakened <i>Ослабленный</i>	-	(1) 6.7%

Table U1-6: Descriptions of Ukrainian interim government in U1. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions of the interim government)

### Descriptions of Right Sector – U1

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=11	Russian sample (cases), % N=7
Radical, extremist <i>Радикальный</i>	(2) 18.2%	(6) 85.7%
Nationalist <i>Национал-</i>	(3) 27.3%	(1) 14.3%
Notorious	(1) 9.1%	-
Far-right	(3) 27.3%	-
So-called	(1) 9.1%	-
Kalashnikov-wielding	(1) 9.1%	-

Table U1-7: Descriptions of Right Sector in U1. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions of Right Sector)

### Descriptions of Ukraine – U1

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=25	Russian sample (cases), % N=12
Southern/Eastern/Western (all combinations) <i>Южный/восточный/западный (и комбинации)</i>	(16) 64%	(3) 25%
Friendly <i>Дружественный</i>	-	(2) 16.7%
Fraternal	-	(2) 16.7%

Братский		
Strong Сильный	-	(1) 8.3%
Democratic Демократический	-	(1) 8.3%
United Объединенный	-	(1) 8.3%
Robbed Ограбленный	-	(1) 8.3%
Lied to Обманутый	-	(1) 8.3%
Volatile, turbulent	(2) 8%	-
Former Soviet	(1) 4%	-
Divided	(1) 4%	-
Gripped by protests	(1) 4%	-
Pro-government, loyal to the government	(2) 8%	-
Peaceful	(2) 8%	-

Table U1-8: Descriptions of Ukraine in U1. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions of Ukraine as a country)

#### Descriptions of military action in Ukraine

#### Descriptions of protests in Ukraine – U1

	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	36	(23) 63.9%	(13) 36.1%	100%
Russian sample	129	(33) 25.6%	(96) 74.4%	100%

Table U1-9: Articles in English and Russian samples with and without descriptions of protests in Ukraine in U1.

#### Descriptions of protests in Ukraine – U1

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=43	Russian sample (cases), % N=53
Violent, brutal, fierce <i>Ожесточенный, силовой</i>	(17) 39.5%	(10) 18.9%
Bloody <i>Кровавый, кровопролитный</i>	(5) 11.6%	(6) 11.3%
Street <i>Уличный</i>	(1) 2.3%	(8) 15.1%
Peaceful	(2) 4.7%	-
Deadliest	(4) 9.3%	-
Anti-government	(1) 2.3%	-
Large-scale, mass <i>Масштабные, массовые</i>	(3) 7%	(16) 30.2%
Escalating	(1) 2.3%	-
Ukrainian	(1) 2.3%	-

Worst	(2) 4.7%	-
So-called peaceful, 'peaceful' <i>Так называемый мирный марш, «мирный марш»</i>	(1) 2.3%	(2) 3.8%
Continuing <i>Продолжающийся</i>	(2) 4.7%	(2) 3.8%
Armed <i>Вооруженный</i>	-	(2) 3.8%
'Brown' <i>«Коричневый»</i>	(1) 2.3%	(1) 1.9%
Civil	(1) 2.3%	-
Organised	(1) 2.3%	-
Tense <i>Напряженный</i>	-	(1) 1.9%
Civilisational <i>Цивилизационный</i>	-	(1) 1.9%
Geopolitical <i>Геополитический</i>	-	(1) 1.9%
Anti-terrorist <i>Антитеррористический</i>	-	(1) 1.9%
Dramatic <i>Драматический</i>	-	(1) 1.9%
Crisis <i>Кризисный</i>	-	(1) 1.9%

Table U1-10: Descriptions of protests in Ukraine in U1. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions of protests. It is different from the overall number of articles that feature descriptions because some articles contain more than 1 description.)

### *Descriptions of the insurgents in Ukraine*

For the purposes of analysing this event the content analysis coding manual stated that insurgents should be understood as Euromaidan protesters for this event only.

### **Descriptions of protesters in Ukraine – U1**

	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	36	(26) 72.2%	(10) 27.8%	100%
Russian sample	129	(40) 31%	(89) 69%	100%

Table U1-11: Articles in English and Russian samples with and without descriptions of protesters in Ukraine in U1.

### **Descriptions of protesters in Ukraine – U1**

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=74	Russian sample (cases), % N=54
Armed <i>Вооруженный</i>	(7) 9.5%	(7) 13%
Illegal	(1) 1.4%	(1) 1.9%

<i>Незаконный</i>		
Extremist, radical, radicalised <i>Радикальный, радикально-настроенный, экстремистский</i>	(22) 29.7%	(21) 38.9%
Aggressive, raging, enraged, violent <i>Дерзкие, агрессивный, агрессивно-настроенный</i>	(5) 6.8% (2) 2.7%	(11) 20.4%
Oppositional Оппозиционный	(4) 5.4%	(1) 1.9%
Peaceful <i>Мирный</i>	(1) 1.4%	(3) 5.6%
“Peaceful” «Мирные»	(1) 1.4%	(1) 1.9%
Ukrainian	(2) 2.7%	-
Masked	(6) 8.1%	-
Well-equipped, well-organised, well-trained, well-paid <i>Хорошо обученные, хорошо оплачиваемые, организованные</i>	(5) 6.8%	(3) 5.6%
Far right, right wing	(3) 4.1%	-
Young	(3) 4.1%	-
So-called <i>Так называемый</i>	(2) 2.7%	(1) 1.9%
Neonazi <i>Неонацистский</i>	-	(1) 1.9%
Mass, large	(3) 4.1%	-
Anti-government	(1) 1.4%	-
Detained <i>Задержанный</i>	-	(1) 1.9%
Foreign <i>Иностранный</i>	-	(1) 1.9%
Rioting <i>Бесчинствующий</i>	(1) 1.4%	(1) 1.9%
Yanukovich-bashing	(1) 1.4%	-
Flag-waiving	(1) 1.4%	-
Smiling	(1) 1.4%	-
Brave	(1) 1.4%	-
Frontline	(1) 1.4%	-

Table U1-12: Descriptions of protesters in Ukraine in U1. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions of protesters. It is different from the overall number of articles that feature descriptions because some articles contain more than 1 description.)

### *Descriptions of Russia*

### **Descriptions of Russia – U1**

	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	36	(3) 8.3%	(33) 91.7%	100%
Russian sample	129	(4) 3.2%	(125) 96.8%	100%

Table U1-13: Articles in English and Russian samples with and without descriptions of Russia in U1.

### Descriptions of Russia – U1

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=11	Russian sample (cases), % N=4
Russian, Russia's <i>Российский</i>	(2) 66.7%	(4) 100%
Leading	(1) 33.3%	-

Table U1-14: Descriptions of Russia in U1. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions of Russia).

### Descriptions of other countries

#### Descriptions of other countries– U1

	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	36	-	(36) 100%	100%
Russian sample	129	(3) 2.3%	(126) 97.7%	100%

Table U1-15: Articles in English and Russian samples in U1 with and without descriptions of countries other than Russia and Ukraine.

### Descriptions of other countries – U1

Adjectives	Russian sample (cases), % N=3
Country-based adjectives (American, Polish) <i>Американский, польский (прилагательные отсылающие к странам)</i>	(3) 100%

Table U1-16: Descriptions of countries other than Ukraine and Russia in U1. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions of Russia).

### Sources

#### Sources – U1

Sources	English sample (cases), %, [% of cases] N=66	Russian sample (cases), %, [% of cases] N=186
Other media or news agencies (specify)	(26) 39.4% [72.2%]	(98) 52.7% [76%]

Own correspondent or interview	(6) 9.1% [16.7%]	(8) 4.3% [6.2%]
Social media	(10) 15.2% [27.8%]	(12) 6.5% [9.3%]
Russian army or government	-	(5) 2.7% [3.9%]
Ukrainian army or government	(12) 18.2% [33.3%]	(47) 25.3% [36.4%]
Russian sources not affiliated with the government	-	-
Ukrainian sources not affiliated with the government	(1) 1.5% [2.8%]	(1) 0.5% [0.8%]
Other countries' officials (specify)	(1) 1.5% [2.8%]	(5) 2.7% [3.9%]
International organisations (specify)	(1) 1.5% [2.8%]	-
Experts	-	(5) 2.7% [3.9%]
Eyewitnesses	(1) 1.5% [2.8%]	-
Activists	-	-
Bloggers	-	-
No specified sources	(5) 7.6% [13.9%]	(2) 1.1% [1.6%]
Other (specify)	(3) 4.5% [8.3%]	(3) 1.6% [2.3%]

Table U1-17: Sources in U1. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of sources appearing in the articles. Some articles referred to more than one source thus the percent of cases is higher than 100%).

### Other media as sources – U1

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=54	Russian sample (cases), % N=159
Russian	(26) 29.6%	(118) 74.2%
Ukrainian	(21) 44.4%	(33) 20.8%
International	(11) 20.4%	(5) 3.1%
Other RT platforms	(3) 5.6%	(3) 1.9%

Table U1-18: Other media sources by ownership in U1. (“N in this table refers to the number of media outlets mentioned in the articles. It is higher than the number of ‘Other media’ sources specified in the previous table because that counted the number of articles that referred to other media as sources, not all instances of these references, of which there were often more than one in articles).

### Sources per article – U1

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=36	Russian sample (cases), % N=129
Single source	(14) 38.9%	(77) 59.7%
Two or more sources	(22) 61.1%	(52) 40.3%

Table U1-19: Articles that refer to one or two or more sources in U1.

### Articles that refer to one source – U1

<b>Adjectives</b>	<b>English sample (cases), % N=14</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N=77</b>
Other media & news agencies	(7) 50%	(55) 70.4%
Own reporter or interview	(1) 7.1%	(4) 5.2%
Social media	(1) 7.1%	(1) 1.3%
Russian government and army	-	(5) 6.5%
Ukrainian government and army	(1) 7.1%	(8) 10.4%
Expert	-	(2) 2.6%
No specified sources	(4) 28.6%	(2) 2.6%

Table U1-20: Sources in articles that refer to one source.

### *Russian actors*

#### **Russian actors in articles – U1**

	<b>English sample (cases), % N=36</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N=129</b>
Articles that quote Russian actors	(13) 36.1%	(24) 18.6%
Articles that mention Russian actors	(10) 27.8%	(13) 10.1%

Table U1-21: Presence of quoted and mentioned Russian actors in articles in U1.

#### **Russian actors – U1**

<b>Actors</b>	<b>English sample</b>		<b>Russian sample</b>	
	<b>Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 16</b>	<b>Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 17</b>	<b>Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 26</b>	<b>Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 17</b>
President Putin and spokesman Peskov	(2) 12.5% [15.4%]	(4) 23.5% [36.4%]	(5) 19.2% [20.8%]	(6) 35.3% [40%]
Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergei Lavrov	(4) 25% [30.8%]	-	(5) 19.2% [20.8%]	(2) 11.8% [13.3%]
Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokeswoman Maria Zakharova	-	-	-	-
Other government officials	(8) 50% [61.5%]	(6) 35.3% [54.5%]	(13) 50% [54.2%]	(3) 17.6% [20%]
Military	-	(2) 11.8%	-	-

		[18.2%]		
Non-government opposition	-	-	-	-
Experts	-	-	(1) 3.8% [4.2%]	-
Activists	-	-	-	-
Other	(2) 12.5% [15.4%]	(5) 29.4% [45.5%]	(2) 7.7% [8.3%]	(6) 35.3% [40%]

Table U1-22: Quoted and mentioned Russian actors in U1. (N in this table refers to the number of actors quoted or mentioned in each group. The number is different from the number of articles in the previous table because some articles quote and mention more than one actor. Percent of cases adds up to a number higher than 100% because more than one actor can be quoted and mentioned in one article.)

Quoted ‘Other’ Russian actors category in Russian: RT journalists (who were only coded as actors when they were a part of the story, not just reporting it, for example in an article that reported on an attack on RT journalists); representative of the Russian tourism industry association

Quoted ‘Other’ Russian actors category English: RT journalists (who were only coded as actors when they were a part of the story, not just reporting it, for example in an article that reported on an attack on RT journalists); head of the Russian think tank Institute of Foreign Policy Research and Initiative.

Mentioned ‘Other’ actors include Chechen separatist leader Dzhokhar Dudayev (mentioned once in both samples), RT journalists (mentioned once in both samples), Russian people as a general public (mentioned twice in the Russian sample), Russian riot police and Russian journalists (both mentioned once in the English sample).

### *Ukrainian actors*

#### **Ukrainian actors in articles – U1**

	<b>English sample (cases), % N=36</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N=129</b>
Articles that quote Ukrainian actors	(23) 63.9%	(70) 54.3%
Articles that mention Ukrainian actors	(36) 100%	(123) 95.3%

Table U1-23: Presence of quoted and mentioned Ukrainian actors in articles in U1.

#### **Ukrainian actors – U1**

<b>Actors</b>	<b>English sample</b>		<b>Russian sample</b>	
	<b>Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 36</b>	<b>Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 120</b>	<b>Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 80</b>	<b>Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 294</b>
President Poroshenko <sup>263</sup>	-	-	(2) 2.5% [2.9%]	(2) 0.7% [1.6%]

<sup>263</sup> Including before his election as a president and times as an MP.



President Yanukovich	(6) 16.7% [25%]	(23) 19.2% [63.9%]	(3) 3.8% [4.3%]	(47) 16% [37.6%]
Other government officials (specify)	(15) 41.7% [62.5%]	(33) 27.5% [91.7%]	(56) 70% [80%]	(81) 27.6% [64.8%]
Military	-	(4) 3.3% [11.1%]	(1) 1.3% [1.4%]	(7) 2.4% [5.6%]
Insurgents in Eastern Ukraine and Crimea <sup>264</sup>	(3) 8.3% [12.5%]	(28) 23.3% [77.8%]	(6) 7.5% [8.6%]	(80) 27.2% [64%]
Experts	(1) 2.8% [4.2%]	(32) 26.7% [88.9%]	(2) 2.5% [2.9%]	-
Activists	(1) 2.8% [4.2%]	-	(1) 1.3% [1.4%]	(10) 3.4% [8%]
Other (specify)	(10) 27.8% [41.7%]	(5) 29.4% [45.5%]	(9) 11.3% [12.9%]	(67) 22.8% [53.6%]

Table U1-24: Quoted and mentioned Ukrainian actors in U1. (N in this table refers to the number of actors quoted or mentioned in each group. The number is different from the number of articles in the previous table because some articles quote and mention more than one actor. Percent of cases adds up to a number higher than 100% because more than one actor can be quoted and mentioned in one article.)

In the coding schedule there was an additional answer that prompted the coder to specify the name and/or the job title of the ‘Other’ Ukrainian government officials. This was done because there is a significant amount of pluralism within the Ukrainian parliament and government and is meant to register exactly which officials are mentioned and which ones get to speak without adding any more answer options to this question. The following table specifies which government officials were quoted/mentioned while dividing them according to their general political views: pro-Russian Yanukovich government officials (included here are Yanukovich administration representatives, Party of Regions politicians and those who were in coalition with them), and opposition (leaders of the opposition identified by names, the word ‘opposition’, and those belonging to the Svoboda and Batkivschyna parties), as well as ‘unspecified’ – a group for categorising officials who were not identified with a name or those who are neutral by definition, for example the Ukrainian Central Election Committee officials.

#### Other Ukrainian government officials – U1

Actors	English sample		Russian sample	
	Quoted (cases), %, N = 31	Mentioned (cases), %, N = 98	Quoted (cases), %, N = 63	Mentioned (cases), %, N = 141
Yanukovich’s pro-Russian government	(14) 45.2%	(14) 14.2%	(26) 41.3%	(36) 25.6%
Opposition	(6) 19.6%	(31) 31.7%	(22) 34.9%	(88) 62.4%
No specification of name/party	(11) 35.4%	(53) 54.1%	(15) 23.8%	(17) 12%

<sup>264</sup> In this event Euromaidan protesters were coded in this category

Table U1-25: Quoted and mentioned Ukrainian government officials in English and Russian samples in U1. (N here stands for the overall amount of quoted and mentioned actors in each group. This number is different from the number of ‘Other government officials’ counted in table U1 – 26 because that table counted texts that quote and mention this actor group while this table counts the individual actors, which are often quoted and mentioned more than once in one text.)

Further the coding schedule allowed for input of additional information in the ‘Other’ Ukrainian actors category. Because of the large number of actors recorded in this category the answers were again coded into the following groups: police, public figures, religious leaders, activists, journalists, Right Sector members, general public / civilians (including people identified by location, interests and profession not mentioned on this list).

### Other Ukrainian actors – U1

Actors	English sample		Russian sample	
	Quoted (cases), %, N = 14	Mentioned (cases), %, N = 80	Quoted (cases), %, N = 9	Mentioned (cases), %, N = 82
General public	(3) 21.4%	(36) 45%	(1) 11.1%	(15) 18.3%
Police	(3) 21.4%	(23) 28.7%	(1) 11.1%	(56) 68.3%
Public figures	(2) 14.3%	(7) 8.8%	(4) 44.4%	(9) 11%
Journalists	(1) 7.1%	(2) 2.5%	-	-
Right Sector	(4) 28.6%	(9) 11.3%	-	(1) 1.2%
Religious leaders	(1) 7.1%	-	(2) 22.2%	(1) 1.2%
Activists	-	(3) 3.8%	(1) 11.1%	-

Table U1-26: Quoted and mentioned ‘other’ Ukrainian actors in English and Russian samples in U1. (N here stands for the overall amount of quoted and mentioned actors in each group. This number is different from the number of ‘Other Ukrainian actors’ category counted in table U1 – 26 because that table counted texts that quote and mention this actor group while this table counts the individual actors, which are often quoted and mentioned more than once in one text.)

### Foreign Actors

### Foreign actors in articles – U1

	English sample (cases), % N= 36	Russian sample (cases), % N= 129
Articles that quote foreign actors	(12) 33.3%	(21) 16.3%
Articles that mention foreign actors	(16) 44.4%	(31) 24%

Table U1-27: Presence of quoted and mentioned foreign actors in articles in U1. The coding manual specifies that all actors not from Ukraine or Russia are considered ‘foreign’ for the purposes of this analysis.

### Foreign actors – U1

Actors	English sample		Russian sample	
	Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases]	Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases]	Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases]	Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases]

	<b>N = 19</b>	<b>N =18</b>	<b>N = 22</b>	<b>N = 34</b>
Barack Obama	(3) 15.8% [25%]	-	-	(6) 17.6% [19.4%]
Donald Trump	-	-	-	-
Marine Le Pen	-	-	-	-
Recep Erdogan	-	-	-	-
Other foreign officials (specify)	(8) 42.1% [66.7%]	(13) 72.2% [81.3%]	(15) 68.2% [78.9%]	(21) 61.8% [67.7%]
IS	-	-	-	-
International organisations (specify)	(5) 26.3% [41.7%]	(3) 16.7% [18.8%]	(3) 13.6% [15.8%]	(2) 5.9% [6.5%]
Experts	-	-	(3) 13.6% [15.8%]	(2) 5.9% [6.5%]
Activists	-	-	-	-
Other (specify)	(3) 15.8% [25%]	(2) 11.1% [12.5%]	(1) 4.5% [5.3%]	(3) 8.8% [9.7%]

Table U1-28: Quoted and mentioned foreign actors in U1. (N in this table refers to the number of actors quoted or mentioned in each group. The number is different from the number of articles in the previous table because some articles quote and mention more than one actor. Percent of cases adds up to a number higher than 100% because more than one actor can be quoted and mentioned in one article.)

### Other foreign officials – U1

Actors	English sample		Russian sample	
	Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 13	Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N =31	Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 23	Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 51
US	(5) 38.5%	(10) 32.3%	(11) 47.8%	(3) 5.9%
Angela Merkel	(1) 7.7%	-	(1) 4.3%	(6) 11.8%
Germany	-	(7) 22.6%	(3) 13%	(10) 19.6%
Poland	(2) 15.4%	(4) 12.9%	(2) 8.7%	(11) 21.6%
France	-	(6) 19.4%	(3) 13%	(11) 21.6%
Canada	-	(1) 3.2%	(1) 4.3%	-
Lithuania	-	-	(1) 4.3%	(1) 2%
Estonia	-	-	(1) 4.3%	-
UK	(4) 30.8%	(1) 3.2%	-	(2) 3.9%
Iraq	-	-	-	(1) 2%
Ireland	-	-	-	(1) 2%
Netherlands	-	-	-	(1) 2%
Georgia	-	(1) 3.2%	-	-
EU	(1) 7.7%	-	-	(2) 3.9%
‘European’	-	-	-	(2) 3.9%
‘Western’	-	(1) 3.2%	-	-

Table U1-29: Quoted and mentioned foreign officials in U1. (N in this table refers to the number of actors quoted or mentioned in each group. The number is different from the number of articles in the previous table because some articles quote and mention more than one actor.)

When it comes to ‘Other’ foreign actors the quoted actors included an anonymous source in Poland (in the Russian sample), a journalist, a geopolitical analyst Eric Draitser and a University of Paris lecturer Bruno Drweski (in the English sample). Mentioned ‘Other’ actors include Americans as a group, Western ambassadors as a group and an official from the unrecognised republic of Transnistria (in the Russian sample) and Saddam Hussein, Iraqi people as a group and Nazi forces twice (in the English sample).

## U2

**Crimean referendum. The region votes to secede from Ukraine and join Russia. Date of event: 16 March; analysed period: 13 - 19 March 2014.**

Articles in English: 61

Articles in Russian: 178

*Length of text*

### Length of text – U2

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=61	Russian sample (cases), % N=178
100-300 words	(8) 13.1%	(108) 60.7%
300-600 words	(31) 50.8%	(62) 34.8%
601 words and more	(22) 36.1%	(8) 4.5%

Table U2-1: Length of texts in U2

*Topic*

### Topics – U2

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % [percent of cases] N=74	Russian sample (cases), % [percent of cases] N=193
Military confrontation/clashes, warfare	-	(1) 0.5% [0.6%]
International relations/diplomacy	(37) 50% [60.7%]	(107) 55.4% [60.5%]
Internal affairs of a country (specify)	(21) 28.4% [34.4%]	(33) 17.1% [18.6%]
Humanitarian issues	(1) 1.4% [1.6%]	(4) 2.1% [2.3%]
Accident	(2) 2.7% [3.3%]	(1) 0.5% [0.6%]
Other (specify)	(13) 17.6% [21.3%]	(47) 24.4% [26.6%]

Table U1-2: Topics in U2. (N in this table refers to the overall number of topics selected for the texts in each sample. N is higher than number or articles because up to two topics were allowed to be selected per each article. The total percent sum of percent of cases is higher than 100% for the same reason.)

Where topic was selected as ‘Internal affairs of a country’ in the English sample additional answers specified Ukraine was the country discussed in 70% of the articles (14 articles) and

Russia was discussed in 30% of the texts (6 articles). In the Russian sample the answers specified Ukraine was the country discussed in the articles in 75.8% of the cases (25 articles) and Russia was discussed in 24.2% of the cases (8 articles). Where topic was selected as ‘Other’ additional answers in both samples were coded as ‘Crimean referendum’ for articles discussing the process and results of the referendum and ‘Crimean transition’ for articles discussing specificities of the region’s debated secession from Ukraine and joining of Russia. These articles were coded as ‘Other’ topics and not as international relations because of the lack of international involvement in the process. The articles that discussed international reactions to and implications of the referendum were coded as ‘International relations/diplomacy’. In the English sample 84.6% of the articles coded as ‘Other’ topic discussed the Crimean referendum (11 articles), and 13.6% (2 articles) discuss Crimean transition. In the Russian sample 53.1% of the articles coded as ‘Other’ topic discussed the Crimean referendum (25 articles) and 46.9% (22 articles) discuss Crimean transition.

### *Descriptions of Ukraine*

#### **Descriptions of Ukraine – U2**

	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	61	(51) 83.6%	(10) 16.4%	100%
Russian sample	178	(130) 73%	(48) 27%	100%

Table U2-3: Articles in English and Russian samples with and without descriptions of Ukraine in U2.

#### **Descriptions of Viktor Yanukovich– U2**

<b>Adjectives</b>	<b>English sample (cases), % N=5</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N=28</b>
Democratically/lawfully elected <i>Демократически/законно избранный</i>	(1) 20%	(17) 60.7%
Removed/ousted from power <i>Отстраненный от власти</i>	(2) 40%	(8) 28.6%
Legitimate <i>Легитимный</i>	(1) 20%	(3) 10.7%
Corrupt	(1) 20%	-

Table U2-4: Descriptions of president Yanukovich in U2. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions of president Yanukovich.)

#### **Descriptions of interim government– U2**

<b>Adjectives</b>	<b>English sample (cases), % N=64</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N=127</b>
Illegitimate, coup-appointed/ coup-imposed, ‘who seized the power’	(21) 32.8%	(6) 4.7%

Нелегитимный, пришедший к власти в результате переворота		
Ukrainian <i>Украинский</i>	(9) 14.1%	(14) 11%
Kiev <i>Киевский</i>	(5) 7.8%	(15) 11.8%
New <i>Новый</i>	(5) 7.8%	(21) 16.5%
Today's, current <i>Нынешний, сегодняшний</i>	(5) 7.8%	(4) 3.1%
Self-proclaimed, self-imposed <i>Самопровозглашенный</i>	(4) 6.3%	(11) 8.7%
So-called, 'calling themselves' <i>Так называемый, называющий себя (властью)</i>	(1) 1.6%	(10) 7.9%
Fascist/Neonazi/Neo-fascist <i>Фашистский, неонацистский, неофашистский</i>	(3) 4.7%	(5) 3.9%
Radical/extremist <i>Радикальный, экстремистский, радикально настроенный</i>	(3) 4.7%	(6) 4.7%
Right wing, far right <i>Правый</i>	(2) 3.1%	(2) 1.6%
Nationalist <i>Националистический</i>	(1) 1.6%	(3) 2.4%
Acting, incumbent <i>Действующий</i>	(1) 1.6%	(5) 3.9%
Seized <i>Захваченный, захвативший</i>	-	(6) 4.7%
Illegal <i>Незаконный, назначенный в нарушение конституционных процедур</i>	-	(2) 1.6%
Unreliable <i>Ненадежный</i>	-	(1) 0.8%
Pro-democratic <i>Про-демократический, выступающий за демократию</i>	-	(2) 1.6%
Opaque <i>Непрозрачный</i>	-	(1) 0.8%
Disengaged <i>Разобщенный</i>	-	(1) 0.8%

Controlled by Right Sector/radical nationalists <i>Подотчетный/подконтрольный Правому Сектору</i>	(1) 1.6%	(2) 1.6%
Armed <i>Вооруженный</i>	-	(1) 0.8%
“Revolutionary” <i>«Революционный»</i>	-	(1) 0.8%
Undemocratic <i>Стремившийся не к демократии</i>	-	(1) 0.8%
Undesirable <i>Нежелательный</i>	-	(1) 0.8%
Local <i>Местный</i>	(1) 1.6%	(1) 0.8%
‘Who subjugated the Rada’ <i>Подчинившие себе Раду</i>	-	(1) 0.8%
Ambitious <i>Претендующий на занятие высокой должности</i>	-	(1) 0.8%
Responsible for fear and lawlessness <i>Ответственный за страх и беззаконие</i>	-	(1) 0.8%
“Brave” <i>«Мужественный»</i>	-	(1) 0.8%
Appointed by the Rada <i>Назначенный Радой</i>	-	(1) 0.8%
Interim	(1) 1.6%	
Gangster	(1) 1.6%	

Table U2-5: Descriptions of Ukrainian interim government in U2. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions.)

### Descriptions of Ukrainian people– U2

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=13	Russian sample (cases), % N=9
Fraternal, brotherly <i>Братский</i>	(2) 15.4%	(2) 22.2%
Russian-speaking, ethnically Russian <i>Русскоязычный, русскоговорящий</i>	(9) 69.2%	(3) 33.3%
Ukrainian <i>Украинский</i>	(1) 7.7%	(4) 44.4%
Multiethnic	(1) 7.7%	-

Table U2-5: Descriptions of Ukrainian people in U2. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions.)

### Descriptions of people in Crimea – U2

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=11	Russian sample (cases), % N=9
Crimean <i>Крымский</i>	(2) 18.2%	(2) 22.2%
Russian-speaking, ethnically Russian <i>Русскоязычный, русскоговорящий</i>	(9) 81.8%	(3) 33.3%
Long-suffering <i>Многострадальный</i>	-	(4) 44.4%

Table U2-6: Descriptions of people in Crimea in U2. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions.)

In addition, the coverage of the event featured descriptions of forces in Crimea that were not identified as either Ukrainian or Russian forces. Other media emphasised that the soldiers' equipment was similar to that of Russian army, even though the soldiers did not wear any insignia and Russian TV referred to them as 'polite men' and 'little green men'<sup>265</sup>. RT's coverage description of these formally indetified soldiers is presented in the following table U2-7.

### Descriptions of unidentified forces in Crimea – U2

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=15	Russian sample (cases), % N=2
Local <i>Местный</i>	-	(1) 50%
Self-defence	(9) 60%	-
Well-organised <i>Хорошо организованная</i>	-	(1) 50%
Crimean	(4) 26.7%	-
Former Ukrainian, former and current Ukrainian	(2) 13.3%	-

Table U2-7: Descriptions of formally unidentified forces in Crimea in U2. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions.)

### Descriptions of the Crimean government – U2

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=23	Russian sample (cases), % N=29
Crimean <i>Крымский</i>	(10) 43.5%	(28) 96.6%
Lawful	-	(1) 3.4%

<sup>265</sup> "Little green men" or "Russian invaders"? – BBC News: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-26532154>



<i>Законный</i>		
Occupied	(2) 8.7%	-
Independent, sovereign, autonomous	(6) 26.1%	-
Regional, local	(2) 8.7%	-
Ukrainian	(1) 4.3%	-
Illegitimate	(1) 4.3%	-
Acting	(1) 4.3%	-

Table U2-7: Descriptions of Crimean government in U2. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions.)

### Descriptions of Ukraine – U2

<b>Adjectives</b>	<b>English sample (cases), % N=18</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N=15</b>
Southern/Eastern/Western (all combinations) <i>Южный/восточный/западный (и комбинации)</i>	(13) 72.2%	(3) 20%
Independent, sovereign <i>Суверенный</i>	(2) 11%	(1) 6.7%
Post-coup	(1) 5.6%	-
Former Soviet	(1) 5.6%	-
Crisis-torn	(1) 5.6%	-
Peaceful <i>Мирный</i>	-	(1) 6.7%
Stable <i>Стабильный</i>	-	(1) 6.7%
Modern <i>Современный</i>	-	(1) 6.7%
Adjectives that emphasise Russian connection <i>Близкий, стратегический, дружественный</i>	-	(4) 26.7%
Tragic <i>Несчастливая</i>	-	(1) 6.7%
Ukrainian <i>Украинский</i>	-	(1) 6.7%
Gripped by anarchy <i>Охваченный анархией</i>	-	(1) 6.7%
Great <i>Великий</i>	-	(1) 6.7%

Table U2-8: Descriptions of Ukraine and Ukrainian regions in U2. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions.)

### Descriptions of Right Sector – U2

<b>Adjectives</b>	<b>English sample (cases), %</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), %</b>
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	<b>N=26</b>	<b>N=17</b>
Nationalist <i>Националистический</i>	(8) 30.8%	(6) 35.3%
Far right, right wing <i>Законный</i>	(3) 11.5%	(2) 11.8%
Ukrainian <i>Украинский</i>	-	(3) 17.6%
Radical, extremist <i>Радикальный</i>	(6) 23.1%	(3) 17.6%
Neofascist, neo-Nazi <i>Неонацистский, разжигаящий межэтническую ненависть</i>	(2) 7.7%	(2) 11.8%
Largest <i>Крупнейший</i>	-	(1) 5.9%
Violent, bellicose, warmongering, firey	(5) 19.2%	-
Notorious	(1) 3.8%	-
Armed	(1) 3.8%	-

Table U2-8: Descriptions of Right Sector in U2. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions.)

### Descriptions of the Ukrainian army – U2

<b>Adjectives</b>	<b>English sample (cases), % N=10</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N=16</b>
Ukrainian <i>Украинский</i>	(8) 80%	(14) 87.5%
Stationed in Crimea <i>Дислоцированный в Крыму</i>	-	(2) 12.5%
Kiev	(1) 10%	-
Unarmed	(1) 10%	-

Table U2-9: Descriptions of the Ukrainian in U2. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions.)

### *Descriptions of military action*

As there was no military confrontation at any time during the referendum process and preparation for it, the focus of this question was the same as the previous event, where this was an opportunity to look at the descriptions of the riots on Kiev's Independence square, which were the focus of the previous event U1.

### Descriptions of protests in Ukraine – U2

	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	61	(10) 16.4%	(51) 83.6%	100%
Russian sample	178	(34) 19.1%	(144) 80.9%	100%

Table U2-10: Articles in English and Russian samples with and without descriptions of protesters in Ukraine in U2.

### Descriptions of protests in Ukraine – U2

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=10	Russian sample (cases), % N=38
Violent <i>Насильственный</i>	(3) 30%	(13) 34.2%
Bloody	(2) 20%	-
Illegal, unconstitutional <i>Противозаконный, имеющий признаки гос. переворота, противоправный</i>	(2) 20%	(18) 47.4%
Nationalist, neo-Nazi <i>Неонацистский</i>	(1) 10%	(1) 2.6%
Illegitimate <i>Нелегитимный</i>	-	(1) 2.6%
Armed <i>Вооруженный</i>	(2) 20%	(1) 2.6%
Supported by the US <i>Осуществленный при поддержке США</i>	-	(2) 5.3%
Latest in a series <i>Очередной</i>	-	(1) 2.6%
Internal Ukrainian <i>Внутриукраинский</i>	-	(1) 2.6%

Table U2-11: Descriptions of protests in Ukraine in U2. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions of protests. It is different from the overall number of articles that feature descriptions because some articles contain more than 1 description.)

#### Descriptions of insurgents

The descriptions that were coded in this question were of rioters, similar to the previous event. Crimean government and separatists were instead coded in the previous question that looked at descriptions of Ukraine and Ukrainian people - this was decided for several reasons:

1. That the main figures who could be seen as insurgents were elected officials in the Crimean government;
2. The actual secession from Ukraine only happened in the last days of the coverage, so for the most part of the material analysed the Crimean government was in its formal role as a part of Ukraine
3. The referendum and secession were formally peaceful events without any riots or military confrontation, even if they are internationally considered to have happened with political pressure and possible covert military support from Russia, while insurgency implies forceful, violent actions.

Therefore, it was decided that it is more fitting to look at the descriptions of Crimean actors in their governmental and political roles rather than as insurgents, and in this question to continue exploring the descriptions of the rioters in Kiev' Independence Square.

### Descriptions of protesters in Ukraine – U2

	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	61	(6) 9.8%	(55) 90.2%	100%
Russian sample	178	(13) 7.3%	(165) 92.7%	100%

Table U2-12: Articles in English and Russian samples with and without descriptions of protesters in Ukraine in U2.

In the English sample the protesters were described as Maidan self-defence in two instances and radical in three instances, as well as deceitful and nationalist (both appearing once). In the Russian sample the protesters were described as ‘radical<sup>266</sup>’ and ‘extremist<sup>267</sup>’ (counted as one category - 41.2%), ‘armed<sup>268</sup>’ (35.3%) and ‘nationalist<sup>269</sup>’ (23.5%), as well as fascist<sup>270</sup>, storm squads<sup>271</sup>, aggressive<sup>272</sup>, destabilising<sup>273</sup>, terrorising<sup>274</sup>, ungirdled<sup>275</sup> (with the meaning insolent), provocational<sup>276</sup>, specially trained<sup>277</sup> and militarised<sup>278</sup> (all appearing just once).

#### *Descriptions of Russia*

### Descriptions of Russia – U2

	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	61	(21) 44.3%	(34) 55.7%	100%
Russian sample	178	(77) 43.3%	(101) 56.7%	100%

Table U2-13: Articles in English and Russian samples with and without descriptions of Russia in U2.

In both languages Russia and Russian politicians were overwhelmingly described simply as Russian. Table below differentiates between two Russian words that translate into English as ‘Russian’ – ‘rossiyskiy’ which carries a civic meaning and used to refer to Russian citizens and state institutions, and ‘russkiy’, which carries an ethnic connotation and is often used to refer to ethnic Russians. In the English sample it is impossible to observe such a distinction with the exception of cases where ethnic Russianness is described using the word ‘ethnic’. Therefore since these two categories don’t exist in the English sample all uses of ‘Russian’ in it will be categorised in the ‘civic’ category.

### Descriptions of Russia – U2

<sup>266</sup> Радикальные

<sup>267</sup> Экстремистские

<sup>268</sup> Вооруженные

<sup>269</sup> Националистические, ультранационалистические, ультраправые

<sup>270</sup> Фашиствующие

<sup>271</sup> Штурмовые

<sup>272</sup> Агрессивные

<sup>273</sup> Дестабилизирующие

<sup>274</sup> Терроризирующие

<sup>275</sup> Распоясавшиеся (наглые)

<sup>276</sup> Провокационные

<sup>277</sup> Специально обученные

<sup>278</sup> Военизированный

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=37	Russian sample (cases), % N97
Russian, Russia's (civic) <i>Российский</i>	(24) 64.9%	(76) 78.4%
Russian (ethnic) <i>Русский</i>	-	(3) 3.1%
Other descriptions appearing once	(13) 35.1%	(18) 18.6%

Table U2-14: Descriptions of Russia in U1. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions of Russia).

The 'Other' category in his table consists of a number of descriptions that all only appear once. Among these are: Russian politicians described as 'Russian top politicians and businessmen'<sup>279</sup>, in the Russian sample; in the English sample the country in general was twice described as an active participant in the international affairs, and twice as independent, once Russian political opposition was described as disparate, once Russian forces were mentioned as 'alleged' and 'mighty', Russian as a nation were described as brotherly (in relation to Ukrainians); and in the Russian sample, all appearing once: Vladimir Putin described as a 'strong leader'<sup>280</sup>, Russia as a country described as 'involuntarily involved into the Ukrainian crisis'<sup>281</sup>, as 'EU's big economic partner'<sup>282</sup>, 'the biggest client of the European automobile market'<sup>283</sup> and a 'nuclear superpower'<sup>284</sup>, 'crazy aggressor'<sup>285</sup>, (ironic) and Russian people described as 'the largest most divided people [ethnicity] in the world'<sup>286</sup> and 'non-native'<sup>287</sup> in Ukraine (in a quote by a Ukrainian politician).

#### *Descriptions of other countries*

#### Descriptions of other countries – U2

	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	61	(9) 14.8%	(52) 85.2%	100%
Russian sample	178	(39) 21.9%	(139) 78.1%	100%

Table U2-15: Articles in English and Russian samples in U1 with and without descriptions of countries other than Russia and Ukraine.

#### Descriptions of other countries – U2

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N= 12	Russian sample (cases), % N=58
Country-based adjectives	(8) 66.7%	(38) 65%

<sup>279</sup> Российские высокопоставленные политики и бизнесмены

<sup>280</sup> Сильный лидер

<sup>281</sup> Невольно вовлечена в украинский кризис

<sup>282</sup> Крупный экономический партнер ЕС

<sup>283</sup> Крупнейший клиент европейского авторыннка

<sup>284</sup> Ядерная держава

<sup>285</sup> Сумасшедший агрессор

<sup>286</sup> Самый большой разделенный народ мира

<sup>287</sup> Некоренной

<i>Прилагательные отсылающие к странам)</i>		
Other	(4) 33.3%	(20) 34.5%

Table U2-16: Descriptions of countries other than Ukraine and Russia in U1. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions of Russia).

The ‘Other’ category in his table consists of a number of descriptions that all only appear once. In the English sample the descriptions in this group include description of South Sudan as a fledgling nation, a group description of Germany, US, France and Japan as economic heavyweights, Venice as Italy’s ‘biggest and wealthiest’ province, and John McCain as ‘America’s hawk number one’.

In the Russian sample this category includes the following descriptions: German media as ‘controlled from Washington<sup>288</sup>’; American businesses as ‘striving for Russia’s oil and gas resources<sup>289</sup>’, American politicians as ‘too confident<sup>290</sup>’, ‘actively supporting new Ukrainian authorities<sup>291</sup>’, as ‘the most bellicose American politicians<sup>292</sup>’, and thinking of themselves as ‘an exceptional nation<sup>293</sup>’. The EU is described as the ‘Russia’s main investment, economic and trade partner<sup>294</sup>’; the Falklands are described as ‘disputed territory<sup>295</sup>’, and Iraq as ‘occupied by American forces<sup>296</sup>’ (in a historical reference). The unrecognised republics of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, that came into existence after the 2008 Russo-Georgian war and only recognised by a handful of countries including Russia is described as ‘the more attractive country<sup>297</sup>’, and a ‘small but accomplished state<sup>298</sup>’, and the unrecognised state of Transnistria is described as ‘unrecognised’. In the discussion of separatist movements in the US Texas is described as ‘independent’. Mikhail Saakashvili, the former president of Georgia is described as ‘former Georgian loser-president<sup>299</sup>’ and ‘despised and discredited everywhere<sup>300</sup>’.

### Sources

#### Sources – U2

Sources	English sample (cases), %, [ % of cases] N=98	Russian sample (cases), %, [ % of cases] N=223
Other media or news agencies (specify)	(42) 42.9% [70%]	(110) 49.3% [62.1%]

<sup>288</sup> Направляемая из Вашингтона

<sup>289</sup> Рвущиеся к российским нефтегазовым ресурсам

<sup>290</sup> Слишком самоуверенны

<sup>291</sup> Активно поддерживающие новые украинские власти

<sup>292</sup> Самые воинственные американские политики

<sup>293</sup> Исключительная нация

<sup>294</sup> Основной инвестиционный, экономический и торговый партнер РФ

<sup>295</sup> Спорная территория

<sup>296</sup> Оккупированный американскими войсками

<sup>297</sup> Более привлекательная страна

<sup>298</sup> Небольшое но состоявшееся государство

<sup>299</sup> Бывший грузинский горе-президент

<sup>300</sup> Дискредитированный и презираемый повсюду

Own correspondent or interview	(11) 11.2% [18.3%]	(21) 9.4% [11.9%]
Social media	(4) 4.1% [6.7%]	(7) 3.1% [4%]
Russian army or government	(7) 7.1% [11.7%]	(28) 12.6% [15.8%]
Ukrainian army or government	(4) 4.1% [6.7%]	(5) 2.2% [2.8%]
Russian sources not affiliated with the government	-	-
Ukrainian sources not affiliated with the government	(2) 2% [3.3%]	(4) 1.8% [2.3%]
Other countries' officials (specify)	(6) 6.1% [10%]	(6) 2.7% [3.4%]
International organisations (specify)	(2) 2% [3.3%]	-
Experts	-	(14) 6.3% [7.9%]
Eyewitnesses	-	(1) 0.4% [0.6%]
Activists	-	(1) 0.4% [0.6%]
Bloggers	-	(1) 0.4% [0.6%]
No specified sources	(11) 11.2% [18.3%]	(9) 4% [5.1%]
Other (specify)	(9) 9.2% [15%]	(16) 7.2% [9%]

Table U2-17: Sources in U2. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of sources appearing in the articles. Some articles referred to more than one source thus the percent of cases is higher than 100%).

### Other media as sources – U2

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=69	Russian sample (cases), % N=135
Russian	(45) 65.2%	(106) 78.5%
Ukrainian	(4) 5.8%	(3) 2.2%
International	(16) 23.2%	(17) 12.6%
Crimean media	(4) 5.8%	(5) 3.7%
Other RT platforms	-	(4) 3%

Table U1-18: Other media sources by ownership in U1. (“N in this table refers to the number of media outlets mentioned in the articles as sources. It is higher than the number of ‘Other media’ sources specified in the previous table because that counted the number of articles that referred to other media as sources, not all instances of these references, of which there were often more than one in articles).

### Sources per article – U2

<b>Adjectives</b>	<b>English sample (cases), % N=61</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N=178</b>
Single source	(37) 60.7%	(145) 81.5%
Two or more sources	(24) 39.3%	(33) 18.5%

Table U2-19: Articles that refer to one or two or more sources in U2.

### Articles that refer to one source – U2

<b>Adjectives</b>	<b>English sample (cases), % N=37</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N=145</b>
Other media & news agencies	(22) 59.5%	(88) 60.7%
Own reporter or interview	-	(11) 7.6%
Social media	-	-
Russian government and army	(1) 2.7%	(18) 12.4%
Ukrainian government and army	(1) 2.7%	(2) 1.4%
Other country officials	(1) 2.7%	(3) 2.1%
International organisation representative	(1) 2.7%	-
Expert	-	(7) 4.8%
No specified sources	(11) 29.8%	(8) 5.5%
Other		(8) 5.5%

Table U2-20: Sources in articles that refer to one source. N in this table refers to the number of articles that only refer to one source.

### *Russian actors*

### Russian actors in articles – U2

	<b>English sample (cases), % N=61</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N=178</b>
Articles that quote Russian actors	(37) 60.7%	(69) 38.8%
Articles that mention Russian actors	(49) 80.3%	(103) 57.9%

Table U2-21: Presence of quoted and mentioned Russian actors in articles in U2.

### Russian actors – U2

<b>Actors</b>	<b>English sample</b>		<b>Russian sample</b>	
	<b>Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 48</b>	<b>Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 80</b>	<b>Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 77</b>	<b>Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 142</b>



President Putin and spokesman Peskov	(6) 12.5% [16.7%]	(20) 25% [40%]	(11) 14.3% [15.9%]	(31) 21.8% [29%]
Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergei Lavrov	(4) 8.3% [11.1%]	(4) 5% [8%]	(3) 3.9% [4.3%]	(7) 4.9% [6.5%]
Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokeswoman Maria Zakharova	-	-	-	-
Other government officials	(27) 56.3% [75%]	(23) 28.7% [46%]	(43) 55.8% [62.3%]	(56) 39.4% [52.3%]
Military	(2) 4.2% [5.6%]	(17) 21.3% [34%]	(3) 3.9% [4.3%]	(18) 12.7% [16.8%]
Non-government opposition	(1) 2.1% [2.8%]	(2) 2.5% [4%]	-	-
Experts	-	-	(6) 7.8% [8.7%]	(1) 0.7% [0.9%]
Activists	(1) 2.1% [2.8%]	(1) 1.3% [2%]	-	-
Other (specify)	(7) 14.6% [19.4%]	(13) 16.3% [26%]	(11) 14.3% [15.9%]	(29) 20.4% [27.1%]

Table U2-22: Quoted and mentioned Russian actors in U1. (N in this table refers to the number of actors quoted or mentioned in each group. The number is different from the number of articles in the previous table because some articles quote and mention more than one actor. Percent of cases adds up to a number higher than 100% because more than one actor can be quoted and mentioned in one article.)

Further the coding schedule allowed for input of additional information in the ‘Other’ Russian actors category. Actors in this category the answers were again coded into the following groups: police, public figures, general public, religious leaders, and Russians as a nation.

#### Other Russian actors – U2

Actors	English sample		Russian sample	
	Quoted (cases), %, N = 7	Mentioned (cases), %, N = 18	Quoted (cases), %, N = 11	Mentioned (cases), %, N = 37
General public	-	-	(6) 54.5%	(3) 8.1%
Police	-	-	(1) 9.1%	-
Public figures	(4) 57.1%	(7) 38.9%	(4) 36.4%	(10) 27%
Journalists	(3) 42.9%	(1) 5.6%	-	(2) 5.4%
Russians as a nation	-	(6) 33.3%	-	(15) 40.5%
Religious leaders	-	-	-	(2) 5.4%
Historical figures	-	(4) 22.2%	-	(5) 13.5%

Table U2-23: Quoted and mentioned ‘other’ Russian actors in English and Russian samples in U2. (N here stands for the overall amount of quoted and mentioned actors in each group. This number is different from the number of ‘Other Russian actors’ category counted in table U2 because that table counted texts that quote and mention this actor group while this table counts the individual actors, which are often quoted and mentioned more than once in one text.)

In the ‘Other’ Russian actors category the quoted actors included RT journalists (who were only coded as actors when they were a part of the story, not just reporting it, for example in an article that reported on an attack on RT journalists) in both the Russian and English samples, a representative of the Russian tourism industry association in the Russian sample and head of the Russian think tank called Institute of Foreign Policy Research and Initiative in the English sample<sup>301</sup>. Mentioned ‘Other’ actors include Chechen separatist leader Dzhokhar Dudayev (mentioned once in both samples), RT journalists (mentioned once in both samples), Russian people as a general public (mentioned twice in the Russian sample), Russian riot police and Russian journalists (both mentioned once in the English sample).  
*Ukrainian actors*

### Ukrainian actors in articles – U2

	<b>English sample (cases), % N=61</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N=178</b>
Articles that quote Ukrainian actors	(19) 31.1%	(39) 21.9%
Articles that mention Ukrainian actors	(57) 93.4%	(155) 87.1%

Table U2-24: Presence of quoted and mentioned Ukrainian actors in articles in U2.

### Ukrainian actors – U2

<b>Actors</b>	<b>English sample</b>		<b>Russian sample</b>	
	<b>Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 22</b>	<b>Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N =121</b>	<b>Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 40</b>	<b>Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N =310</b>
President Poroshenko <sup>302</sup>	-	-	-	-
President Yanukovich	-	(15) 12.4% [26.8%]	-	(34) 11% [21.8%]
Other government officials (specify)	(11) 50% [64.7%]	(39) 32.2% [69.6%]	(32) 80% [84.2%]	(116) 37.4% [74.4%]
Military	-	(12) 9.9% [21.4%]	-	(18) 5.8% [11.5%]

<sup>301</sup> They were not coded as experts because the coding manual specifies that only people identified in the text with the word ‘expert’ should be coded as such

<sup>302</sup> Including before his election as a president and times as an MP.

Insurgents in Eastern Ukraine <sup>303</sup>	-	(8) 6.6% [14.3%]	(1) 2.5% [2.6%]	(21) 6.8% [13.5%]
Experts	(1) 4.5% [5.9%]	-	-	-
Activists	(3) 13.6% [17.6%]	(1) 0.8% [1.8%]	-	(3) 1% [1.9%]
Eyewitnesses	-	(1) 0.8% [1.8%]	-	(1) 0.3% [0.6%]
Other (specify)	(7) 31.8% [41.2%]	(45) 37.2% [80.4%]	(7) 17.5% [18.4%]	(117) 37.7% [75%]

Table U2-25: Quoted and mentioned Ukrainian actors in U2. (N in this table refers to the number of actors quoted or mentioned in each group. The number is different from the number of articles in the previous table because some articles quote and mention more than one actor. Percent of cases adds up to a number higher than 100% because more than one actor can be quoted and mentioned in one article.)

In the coding schedule there was an additional answer that prompted the coder to specify the name and/or the job title of the 'Other' Ukrainian government officials. In this event the categories inside this group were different and concentrated on whether the government officials mentioned and quoted were from the local Crimean or the Ukrainian governments. While Crimean government is a part of the Ukrainian government this distinction is useful because the local government in Crimea was in support of the referendum.

#### Other Ukrainian government officials – U2

Actors	English sample		Russian sample	
	Quoted (cases), %, N = 17	Mentioned (cases), %, N = 93	Quoted (cases), %, N = 41	Mentioned (cases), %, N = 250
Ukrainian government	(8) 47%	(52) 56%	(8) 19.5%	(131) 52.4%
Local Crimean government	(9) 53%	(41) 44%	(33) 80.5%	(119) 47.6%

Table U2-26: Quoted and mentioned Ukrainian government officials in English and Russian samples in U1. (N here stands for the overall amount of quoted and mentioned actors in each group. This number is different from the number of 'Other government officials' counted in table U2 because that table counted texts that quote and mention this actor group while this table counts the individual actors, which are often quoted and mentioned more than once in one text.)

Further the coding schedule allowed for input of additional information in the 'Other' Ukrainian actors category. Because of the large number of actors recorded in this category the answers were again coded into groups.

#### Other Ukrainian actors – U2

Actors	English sample		Russian sample	
	Quoted (cases), %, N = 9	Mentioned (cases), %, N = 83	Quoted (cases), %, N = 7	Mentioned (cases), %, N = 187

<sup>303</sup> In this event Euromaidan protesters were coded in this category

People in Crimea	(2) 22.2%	(32) 38.6%	(1) 14.3%	(88) 47.1%
Ukrainian people	(2) 22.2%	(23) 27.7%	(2) 28.6%	(31) 16.6%
Crimean Tatars	-	(4) 4.8%	(1) 14.3%	(7) 3.7%
Public figures	(1) 11.1%	(3) 3.6%	-	(3) 1.6%
Unidentified 'self-defence' in Crimea	(1) 11.1%	(11) 13.3%	-	(14) 7.5%
Police	(1) 11.1%	-	-	(14) 7.5%
Right Sector, nationalists	(2) 22.2%	(8) 9.6%	(1) 14.3%	(15) 8%
Religious leaders	-	-	(1) 14.3%	(2) 1.1%
Representatives of businesses and NGOs	-	-	-	(6) 3.2%
Crimean sniper, armed attackers	-	-	-	(4) 2.1%
Historical figures	-	(2) 2.4%	-	(1) 0.5%
Hackers	-	-	-	(2) 1.1%
Anonymous sources	-	-	(1) 14.3%	-

Table U2-27: Quoted and mentioned 'other' Ukrainian actors in English and Russian samples in U1. (N here stands for the overall amount of quoted and mentioned actors in each group. This number is different from the number of 'Other Ukrainian actors' category counted in table U2 because that table counted texts that quote and mention this actor group while this table counts the individual actors, which are often quoted and mentioned more than once in one text.)

### *Foreign Actors*

#### **Foreign actors in articles – U2**

	<b>English sample (cases), % N= 61</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N= 178</b>
Articles that quote foreign actors	(30) 49.2%	(65) 36.5%
Articles that mention foreign actors	(36) 59%	(81) 45.5%

Table U2-28: Presence of quoted and mentioned foreign actors in articles in U1. The coding manual specifies that all actors not from Ukraine or Russia are considered 'foreign' for the purposes of this analysis.

#### **Foreign actors – U2**

<b>Actors</b>	<b>English sample</b>		<b>Russian sample</b>	
	<b>Quoted (cases), %, [ % of cases] N = 44</b>	<b>Mentioned (cases), %, [ % of cases] N = 53</b>	<b>Quoted (cases), %, [ % of cases] N = 22</b>	<b>Mentioned (cases), %, [ % of cases] N = 34</b>
Barack Obama	(5) 11.4% [17.2%]	(6) 11.3%	-	(6) 17.6% [19.4%]
Donald Trump	-	-	-	-

Marine Le Pen	-	(1) 1.9%	-	-
Recep Erdogan	-	-	-	-
Other foreign officials (specify)	(21) 47.7% [72.4%]	(17) 32.1% [48.6%]	(15) 68.2% [78.9%]	(21) 61.8% [67.7%]
IS	-	-	-	-
International organisations (specify)	(9) 20.5% [31%]	(14) 26.4% [40%]	(3) 13.6% [15.8%]	(2) 5.9% [6.5%]
Experts	-	-	(3) 13.6% [15.8%]	(2) 5.9% [6.5%]
Activists	(1) 2.3% [3.4%]	-	-	-
Other (specify)	(8) 18.2% [27.6%]	(15) 28.3% [42.9%]	(1) 4.5% [5.3%]	(3) 8.8% [9.7%]

Table U2-29: Quoted and mentioned foreign actors in U2. (N in this table refers to the number of actors quoted or mentioned in each group. The number is different from the number of articles in the previous table because some articles quote and mention more than one actor. Percent of cases adds up to a number higher than 100% because more than one actor can be quoted and mentioned in one article.)

### Other foreign officials – U2

Actors	English sample		Russian sample	
	Quoted (cases), %, N = 43	Mentioned (cases), %, N = 31	Quoted (cases), %, N = 54	Mentioned (cases), %, N = 67
US	(18) 41.9%	(12) 38.7%	(15) 27.8%	(27) 40.3%
Angela Merkel	(4) 9.3%	-	(1) 1.9%	(3) 4.5%
Germany	(2) 4.7%	(3) 9.7%	(3) 5.6%	(12) 17.9%
Poland	(7) 16.3%	(3) 9.7%	(5) 9.3%	(1) 1.5%
France	(3) 7%	(1) 3.2%	(2) 3.7%	(1) 1.5%
Canada	(1) 2.3%	(1) 3.2%	-	(1) 1.5%
Lithuania	-	(1) 3.2%	(2) 3.7%	(1) 1.5%
Estonia	-	(1) 3.2%	(1) 1.9%	-
UK	(2) 4.7%	(3) 9.7%	(6) 11.1%	(6) 9%
EU	-	-	(1) 1.9%	-
'European'	-	-	-	(1) 1.5%
'Western'	-	(1) 3.2%	-	(2) 3%
Argentina	(1) 2.3%	-	(3) 5.6%	(1) 1.5%
Venezuela	(1) 2.3%	-	(1) 1.9%	-
Czech Republic	-	-	(1) 1.9%	-
Italy	-	(2) 6.5%	(1) 1.9%	(1) 1.5%
Latvia	(1) 2.3%	(1) 3.2%	(1) 1.9%	-
China	(1) 2.3%	(1) 3.2%	(2) 3.7%	(2) 3%
Austria	-	-	(2) 3.7%	-
Spain	-	-	(2) 3.7%	(1) 1.5%
Switzerland	-	-	(2) 3.7%	(1) 1.5%
Belgium	-	-	(1) 1.9%	-
Japan	-	-	(1) 1.9%	-

Abkhazia (unrecognised state)	-	-	(1) 1.9%	(1) 1.5%
Kosovo	-	-	-	(2) 3%
Norway	-	-	-	(2) 3%
Hungary	-	-	-	(1) 1.5%
Serbia	(1) 2.3%	-	-	-
Belarus	(1) 2.3%	(1) 3.2%	-	-
Egypt	-	(1) 3.2%	-	-

Table U2-30: Quoted and mentioned foreign officials in U2. (N in this table refers to the number of actors quoted or mentioned in each group. The number is different from the number of articles in the previous table because some articles quote and mention more than one actor.)

### Other foreign actors – U2

Actors	English sample		Russian sample	
	Quoted (cases), %, N = 11	Mentioned (cases), %, N = 33	Quoted (cases), %, N = 19	Mentioned (cases), %, N = 39
Public figures	(2) 18.2%	(3) 9%	(2) 10.6%	(1) 2.6%
Military forces / leaders	(1) 9%	(10) 30.3%	-	(4) 10.3%
Representatives of businesses and NGOs	(2) 18.2%	-	(3) 15.8%	(5) 12.8%
General public	-	(9) 27.3%	(1) 5.2%	(6) 15.4%
Journalists	(4) 36.4%	-	(10) 52.6%	(3) 7.7%
Analysts, specialists <sup>304</sup>	(2) 18.2%	-	(1) 5.2%	-
Referendum observers	-	(1) 3%	(2) 10.6%	(7) 17.9%
General public from countries with recent territorial disputes / prominent separatist movements	-	(10) 30.3%	-	(8) 20.5%
Historical figures	-	-	-	(3) 7.7%
Religious leaders	-	-	-	(2) 5.1%

Table U2-31: Quoted and mentioned ‘other’ Ukrainian actors in English and Russian samples in U1. (N here stands for the overall amount of quoted and mentioned actors in each group. This number is different from the number of ‘Other Ukrainian actors’ category counted in table U2 because that table counted texts that quote and mention this actor group while this table counts the individual actors, which are often quoted and mentioned more than once in one text.)

### U3 Battle for the Donetsk airport.

<sup>304</sup> Not referred to in the text as experts.

**Date of event: 26 - 27 May; analysed period: 26-30 May 2014.**

Articles in English: 15

Articles in Russian: 24

*Length of text*

### Length of text – U3

<b>Adjectives</b>	<b>English sample (cases), % N=15</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N=24</b>
100-300 words	(1) 6.7%	(10) 41.7%
300-600 words	(9) 60%	(13) 54.2%
601 words and more	(5) 33.3%	(1) 4.2%

Table U3-1: Length of texts in U3.

*Topic*

### Topics – U3

<b>Adjectives</b>	<b>English sample (cases), % [percent of cases] N=21</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % [percent of cases] N=33</b>
Military confrontation/clashes, warfare	(11) 52.4% [73.3%]	(18) 54.5% [75%]
International relations/diplomacy	(2) 9.5% [13.3%]	(3) 9.1% [12.5%]
Internal affairs of a country (specify)	(1) 4.8% [6.7%]	(3) 9.1% [12.5%]
Humanitarian issues	(5) 23.8% [33.3%]	(9) 27.3% [37.5%]
Accident	(1) 4.8% [6.7%]	-
Other (specify)	(1) 4.8% [6.7%]	-

Table U3-2: Topics in U2. (N in this table refers to the overall number of topics selected for the texts in each sample. N is higher than number or articles because up to two topics were allowed to be selected per each article. The total percent sum of percent of cases is higher than 100% for the same reason.)

Where topic was selected as ‘Internal affairs of a country’ additional answer specified Ukraine was the country discussed in all the answers in both English and Russian samples. Where topic was selected as ‘Other’ in the English sample additional answer specified the topic discussed was culture/media (it focused on a news anchor moved to tears by children’s song).

*Descriptions of Ukraine*

### Descriptions of Ukraine – U3

	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	15	(15) 8100%	-	100%
Russian sample	24	(23) 95.8%	(1) 4.2%	100%

Table U3-3: Articles in English and Russian samples with and without descriptions of Ukraine in U3.

### Descriptions of Ukrainian government– U3

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=12	Russian sample (cases), % N=16
Ukrainian <i>Украинский</i>	-	(2) 12.5%
Kiev <i>Киевский</i>	(4) 33.3%	(8) 50%
New <i>Новый</i>	-	(2) 12.5%
Elected <i>Избранный, не вступивший в должность</i>	-	(2) 12.5%
Appointed by the Rada <i>Назначенный Верховной Радой</i>	-	(1) 6.3%
Interim <i>Временный</i>	-	(1) 6.3%
Acting	(2) 16.7%	-
Billionaire	(3) 25%	-
Fascist	(1) 8.3%	-
Coup-imposed	(1) 8.3%	-
Likely	(1) 8.3%	-

Table U3-4: Descriptions of the Ukrainian government in U3. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions.)

### Descriptions of Ukrainian army– U3

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=19	Russian sample (cases), % N=21
Ukrainian <i>Украинский</i>	(6) 28.6%	(17) 81%
Kiev <i>Подконтрольный Киеву</i>	(9) 42.9%	(3) 14.3%
Especially violent <i>Отличающийся особой жестокостью</i>		(1) 4.7%
Government	(3) 15.8%	-
Assault	(1) 4.8%	-
Valorous	(1) 4.8%	
Demoralised	(1) 4.8%	



Table U3-5: Descriptions of Ukrainian army in U3. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions.)

### Descriptions of Eastern Ukraine– U3

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=19	Russian sample (cases), % N=3
Eastern / South-eastern	(9) 47.4%	-
Restive, volatile, troubled	(5) 26.3%	-
Industrial	(3) 15.8%	-
Besieged by Ukrainian army <i>Осажденный украинской армией</i>	(1) 5.3%	(1) 33.3%
Largely Russian speaking	(1) 5.3%	-
Depressive <i>Депрессивный</i>	-	(1) 33.3%
Proclaimed Donetsk and Lugansk People' Republic <i>Провозглашенный Донецкой и Луганской Народными Республиками</i>	-	(1) 33.3%

Table U3-6: Descriptions of Eastern Ukraine in U3. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions.)

#### Descriptions of military action

This is the first event where the military action that is being described is an actual military confrontation - between the Ukrainian army and the armed separatist forces, taking place in the eastern regions of Ukraine, where separatist forces have proclaimed that they are independent republics - Donetsk People's Republic and Lugansk people's Republic.

### Descriptions of military action – U3

	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	15	(13) 86.7%	(2) 13.3%	100%
Russian sample	24	(15) 62.5%	(9) 37.5%	100%

Table U3-7: Articles in English and Russian samples with and without descriptions of military action in U3.

### Descriptions of military action – U3

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=27	Russian sample (cases), % N=24
Violent <i>Ожесточенный, силовой,</i>	-	(9) 37.5%
Military, army <i>Армейский, военный, восковой</i>	(6) 22.2%	(3) 12.5%

Punitive <i>Карательный</i>	(2) 7.4%	(7) 29.2%
Armed <i>Вооруженный</i>	-	(3) 12.5%
Anti-terrorist, counterterrorist <i>Антитеррористический</i>	(3) 11.1%	(1) 2.6%
So-called anti-terrorist Так называемый антитеррористический	(3) 11.1%	(1) 2.6%
Ongoing	(2) 7.4%	
Kiev's	(6) 22.2%	
Massive, full scale	(5) 18.5%	

Table U3-8: Descriptions of military action in U3. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions of protests. It is different from the overall number of articles that feature descriptions because some articles contain more than 1 description.)

In Russian the military operation is also described as ‘armed<sup>305</sup>’ (12.5%) and ‘violent<sup>306</sup>’ (37.5%), while in English a significant amount of sample (22.2%) describes it with words that attribute the responsibility for the military action to Kiev (with words like Kiev’s and Kiev). In the English sample it is also described as being of a big scale (with words like massive, full-scale, major and intensive) in 18.5% of the sample, and as ongoing in 7.4% of the sample.

In general descriptions of the military action is present in 86.7% of the English-language articles and 62.5% of the Russian-language ones.

#### *Descriptions of insurgents*

In this event the descriptions are of actual insurgents in the east of Ukraine - and the descriptions were separated into the descriptions of the fighters and militia, and those of DPR and LPR as ‘states’ and their ‘authorities’ - the people who control the army and carry out separatist governing functions in the region.

#### **Descriptions of insurgents – U3**

	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	15	(13) 86.7%	(2) 13.3%	100%
Russian sample	24	(7) 29.2%	(17) 70.8%	100%

Table U3-9: Articles in English and Russian samples with and without descriptions of insurgents in U3.

#### **Descriptions of insurgents – U3**

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=17	Russian sample (cases), % N=10
Formed in reaction to a coup	-	(2) 20%

<sup>305</sup> Вооруженный

<sup>306</sup> Ожесточенная, силовая

<i>Возникший как реакция на госпереворот</i>		
Pro-Russian <i>Пророссийский</i>	-	(1) 10%
Recently formed (new) <i>Только что сформированный</i>	-	(1) 10%
Anti-Kiev <i>Антикиевский</i>	(3) 17.6%	(1) 10%
Self-defence	(10) 58.8%	-
Anti-government <i>Антиправительственный</i>	(1) 5.9%	(1) 10%
People's <i>Народный</i>	(1) 5.9%	(1) 10%
Injured <i>Раненные</i>	(1) 5.9%	(1) 10%
Armed <i>Вооруженный</i>	(1) 5.9%	(1) 10%

Table U3-10: Descriptions of insurgents in U3. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions of insurgents. It is different from the overall number of articles that feature descriptions because some articles contain more than 1 description.)

### Descriptions of insurgent ‘states’ and authorities– U3

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=10	Russian sample (cases), % N=3
Self-proclaimed <i>Самопровозглашённый</i>	10 (100%)	(2) 40%
Proclaimed	-	(1) 20%
Independent <i>Независимый</i>	-	(2) 40%

Table U3-11: Descriptions of insurgent ‘states’ and their authorities in Eastern Ukraine in U3. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions.)

### Descriptions of Russia

#### Descriptions of Russia – U3

	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	15	(2) 13.3%	(13) 86.7%	100%
Russian sample	24	(6) 25%	(18) 75%	100%

Table U3-12: Articles in English and Russian samples with and without descriptions of Russia in U3.

In the Russian language sample 66.6% (4) of the descriptions of Russia simply describe Russia and Russian politicians as ‘Russian’, while 16.7%(1) described Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov as ‘having organised negotiations to free the hostages’, and 16.7%(1) describes Russia as a ‘negative example for the USA’. In English in two cases with descriptions of Russia of the overall three Russia is described as ‘Russian’ and in one instance it is described as ‘Ukraine’s biggest neighbour’.

*Descriptions of other countries*

**Descriptions of other countries – U3**

	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	15	-	(15) 100 %	100%
Russian sample	24	(3) 12.5%	(21) 87.5%	100%

Table U3-13: Articles in English and Russian samples with and without descriptions of other countries in U3.

In the three articles in the Russian sample that feature descriptions of other countries there are five descriptions. Four of them the description is an adjective referring to the country ('Latvian, Canadian<sup>307</sup>'), and in one instance there is a description of the Syrian opposition as 'irreconcilable<sup>308</sup>'.

*Sources*

**Sources – U3**

Sources	English sample (cases), %, [% of cases] N=36	Russian sample (cases), %, [% of cases] N=57
Other media or news agencies (specify)	(11) 30.6% [73.3%]	(17) 29.8% [70.8%]
Own correspondent or interview	(5) 13.9% [33.3%]	(12) 21.1% [50%]
Social media	(4) 11.1% [26.7%]	(4) 7% [16.7%]
Russian army or government	(1) 2.8% [6.7%]	(2) 3.5% [8.3%]
Ukrainian army or government	(3) 8.3% [20%]	-
Russian sources not affiliated with the government	-	(3) 5.3% [12.5%]
Ukrainian sources not affiliated with the government	(4) 11.1% [26.7%]	(5) 8.8% [20.8%]

<sup>307</sup> Латвийская, канадские

<sup>308</sup> Непримируемая

Other countries' officials (specify)	-	-
International organisations (specify)	-	(1) 1.8% [4.2%]
Experts	-	-
Eyewitnesses	(2) 5.6% [13.3%]	(6) 10.5% [25%]
Activists	-	-
Bloggers	-	-
No specified sources	(5) 13.9% [33.3%]	(1) 1.8% [4.2%]
Other (specify)	(1) 2.8% [6.7%]	(6) 10.5% [25%]

Table U3-14: Sources in U3. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of sources appearing in the articles. Some articles referred to more than one source thus the percent of cases is higher than 100%).

The ‘Other’ source in the English sample is a website of a local church in eastern Ukraine. Among the six ‘Other’ sources in the Russian sample are three journalists of RIA-Novosti<sup>309</sup>, political commentator Bruno Dreweski, a wife of a detained eastern Ukrainian blogger and the woman responsible for organising an evacuation of children from the town of Slaviansk. The international organisation referred to as a source in the Russian sample is Human Rights Watch.

#### Other media as sources – U3

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=24	Russian sample (cases), % N=31
Russian	(19) 79.2%	(20) 64.5%
Ukrainian	(3) 12.5%	(4) 12.9%
International	(2) 8.3%	(3) 9.7%
Other RT platforms		(2) 6.5%
Unspecified <sup>310</sup>		(2) 6.5%

Table U3-15: Other media sources by ownership in U1. (\*N in this table refers to the number of media outlets mentioned in the articles as sources. It is higher than the number of ‘Other media’ sources specified in the previous table because that counted the number of articles that referred to other media as sources, not all instances of these references, of which there were often more than one in articles).

#### Sources per article – U3

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=15	Russian sample (cases), % N=24
Single source	(5) 33.3%	(9) 37.5%
Two or more sources	(10) 66.7%	(15) 62.5%

<sup>309</sup> In these cases the articles did not refer to RIA-Novosti as sources but rather to the journalists’ who were talking about their own observations and experiences.

<sup>310</sup> Other media sources were coded in the ‘unspecified’ category when articles referred to other media in general without specifying the outlet’s name or country where it works, for example in sentences like ‘According to the news agencies/newspapers’.

Table U3-16: Articles that refer to one or two or more sources in U3.

**Articles that refer to one source – U3**

<b>Adjectives</b>	<b>English sample (cases), % N=5</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N=9</b>
Other media & news agencies	(4) 80%	(7) 77.7%
Own reporter or interview	-	(1) 11.1%
Ukrainian non government sources	(1) 20%	-
No specified sources	-	(1) 11.1%

Table U3-17: Sources in articles that refer to one source. N in this table refers to the number of articles that only refer to one source.

*Russian actors*

**Russian actors in articles – U3**

	<b>English sample (cases), % N=15</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N=24</b>
Articles that quote Russian actors	(4) 26.7%	(8) 33.3%
Articles that mention Russian actors	(2) 13.3%	(9) 37.5%

Table U3-18: Presence of quoted and mentioned Russian actors in articles in U3.

**Russian actors – U3**

<b>Actors</b>	<b>English sample</b>		<b>Russian sample</b>	
	<b>Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 7</b>	<b>Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 5</b>	<b>Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 9</b>	<b>Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 12</b>
President Putin and spokesman Peskov	(1) 14.3% [16.7%]	(2) 40% [66.7%]	-	-
Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergei Lavrov	(1) 14.3% [16.7%]	-	-	-
Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokeswoman Maria Zakharova	-	-	-	-
Other government officials	(4) 57.1% [66.7%]	(2) 40% [66.7%]	(4) 44.4% [50%]	(3) 25% [30%]

Military	-	-	(1) 11.1% [12.5%]	(3) 25% [30%]
Non-government opposition	-	-	-	-
Experts	-	-	-	(1) 8.3% [10%]
Activists	-	-	-	-
Other	(1) 14.3% [16.7%]	(1) 20% [33.3%]	(4) 44.4% [50%]	(5) 41.7% [50%]

Table U3-19: Quoted and mentioned Russian actors in U3. (N in this table refers to the number of actors quoted or mentioned in each group. The number is different from the number of articles in the previous table because some articles quote and mention more than one actor. Percent of cases adds up to a number higher than 100% because more than one actor can be quoted and mentioned in one article.)

In the English sample the quoted Other Russian actor was a Chechen fighter who has gone to fight on the side of insurgents in eastern Ukraine; the mentioned Other Russian actor is a Russian interpreter who was killed in eastern Ukraine. In the Russian sample the quoted Other Russian actors are journalists (4) and a doctor in Russia who is treating a Russian journalist injured in eastern Ukraine; the mentioned Other actors are journalists (3), the wife of an injured Russian journalist, Russian human rights activist and journalist Andrei Mironov and anonymous Russians.

#### *Ukrainian actors*

#### **Ukrainian actors in articles – U3**

	<b>English sample (cases), % N=15</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N=24</b>
Articles that quote Ukrainian actors	(13) 86.7%	(13) 54.2%
Articles that mention Ukrainian actors	(15) 100%	(23) 95.8%

Table U3-20: Presence of quoted and mentioned Ukrainian actors in articles in U3.

#### **Ukrainian actors – U3**

Actors	English sample		Russian sample	
	Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 26	Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 47	Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 16	Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 82
President Poroshenko <sup>311</sup>	(5) 19.2% [41.7%]	(2) 4.3% [13.3%]	-	(4) 4.9% [17.4%]
President Yanukovich	-	-	-	-
Other government	(6) 23.1% [50%]	(8) 17% [53.3%]	(2) 12.5% [15.4%]	(13) 15.9% [56.5%]

<sup>311</sup> Including before his election as a president and times as an MP.

officials (specify)				
Military	(1) 3.8% [8.3%]	(11) 23.4% [73.3%]	(3) 18.8% [23.1%]	(21) 25.6% [91.3%]
Insurgents in Eastern Ukraine	(7) 26.9% [58.3%]	(12) 25.5% [80%]	(7) 43.8% [53.8%]	(21) 25.6% [91.3%]
Experts	-	-	-	-
Activists	-	-	-	(2) 2.4% [8.7%]
Eyewitnesses	(4) 15.4% [33.3%]	(1) 2.1% [6.7%]	(2) 12.5% [15.4%]	(3) 3.7% [13%]
Other (specify)	(3) 11.5% [25%]	(13) 27.7% [86.7%]	(2) 12.5% [15.4%]	(18) 22% [78.3%]

Table U3-21: Quoted and mentioned Ukrainian actors in U3. (N in this table refers to the number of actors quoted or mentioned in each group. The number is different from the number of articles in the previous table because some articles quote and mention more than one actor. Percent of cases adds up to a number higher than 100% because more than one actor can be quoted and mentioned in one article.)

In the coding schedule there was an additional answer that prompted the coder to specify the name and/or the job title of the 'Other' Ukrainian government officials. In this event all Ukrainian officials can be seen as united in the sense that even the pro-Russian officials are against the war in eastern Ukraine and do not side with the insurgents. Thus this group was not categorised further. Further the coding schedule allowed for input of additional information in the 'Other' Ukrainian actors category.

### Other Ukrainian actors – U3

Actors	English sample		Russian sample	
	Quoted (cases), %, N = 3	Mentioned (cases), %, N = 25	Quoted (cases), %, N = 2	Mentioned (cases), %, N = 25
General public	(3) 100%	(15) 60%	(1) 50%	(15) 60%
Victims of military action	-	(6) 24%	-	(4) 16%
Right Sector leaders and members	-	(1) 4%	-	(2) 8%
Public figures	-	(1) 4%	-	-
Journalists	-	(2) 8%	-	-
Representatives of businesses and NGOs	-	-	(1) 50%	(4) 16%

Table U3-22: Quoted and mentioned 'other' Ukrainian actors in English and Russian samples in U3. (N here stands for the overall amount of quoted and mentioned actors in each group. This number is different from the number of 'Other Ukrainian actors' category counted in table U3-21 because that table counted texts that quote and mention this actor group while this table counts the individual actors, which are often quoted and mentioned more than once in one text.)

### Foreign actors

### Foreign actors in articles – U3



	<b>English sample (cases), % N= 15</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N= 24</b>
Articles that quote foreign actors	(4) 26.7%	(5) 20.8%
Articles that mention foreign actors	(4) 26.7%	(9) 37.5%

Table U3-23: Presence of quoted and mentioned foreign actors in articles in U3. The coding manual specifies that all actors not from Ukraine or Russia are considered ‘foreign’ for the purposes of this analysis.

### Foreign actors – U3

<b>Actors</b>	<b>English sample</b>		<b>Russian sample</b>	
	<b>Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 4</b>	<b>Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N =5</b>	<b>Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 6</b>	<b>Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 10</b>
Barack Obama	-	-	-	-
Donald Trump	-	-	-	-
Marine Le Pen	-	-	-	-
Recep Erdogan	-	-	-	-
Other foreign officials (specify)	-	(1) 20% [25%]	(2) 33.3% [40%]	(2) 20% [22.2%]
IS	-	-	-	-
International organisations	(2) 50% [50%]	(2) 40% [50%]	(2) 33.3% [40%]	(3) 30% [33.3%]
Experts	-	-	-	-
Activists	-	-	-	-
Other (specify)	(2) 50% [50%]	(2) 40% [50%]	(2) 33.3% [40%]	(5) 50% [55.6%]

Table U3-24: Quoted and mentioned foreign actors in U3. (N in this table refers to the number of actors quoted or mentioned in each group. The number is different from the number of articles in the previous table because some articles quote and mention more than one actor. Percent of cases adds up to a number higher than 100% because more than one actor can be quoted and mentioned in one article.)

Additional answers in the English sample specify that the ‘Other’ quoted actors were a journalist and an analyst Daniel Patrick Welch, and the mentioned ‘Other foreign official’ was a representative of the US State Department and mentioned ‘Other’ actor were two journalists. In the Russian sample the quoted ‘Other foreign officials’ were a UK’s UN Ambassador and the prime minister of Canada, and the quoted ‘Other’ actors were the political commentator Bruno Dreweski, a representative of the private military company called Academi (former Blackwater), and an employee of the company. Further mentioned ‘Other foreign officials’ in the Russian sample were US’ and China’s UN ambassadors and Bashar Assad and mentioned ‘Other’ actors were private military companies’ employees and representatives (4 instances), Syrian opposition groups, an Italian journalist and Canadian military.

**Malaysian Airlines flight MH17 is shot down over eastern Ukraine.  
Date of event: 17 July 2014; period analysed: 17 - 20 July 2014.**

Articles in English: 26  
Articles in Russian: 62

*Length of text*

**Length of text – U4**

<b>Adjectives</b>	<b>English sample (cases), % N=26</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N=62</b>
100-300 words	(2) 7.7%	(36) 58.1%
300-600 words	(15) 57.7%	(25) 40.3%
601 words and more	(9) 34.6%	(1) 1.6%

Table U4-1: Length of texts in U4.

*Topic*

**Topics – U4**

<b>Adjectives</b>	<b>English sample (cases), % [percent of cases] N=38</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % [percent of cases] N=95</b>
Military confrontation/clashes, warfare	(1) 2.6% [3.8%]	(10) 10.5% [16.1%]
International relations/diplomacy	(10) 26.3% [38.5%]	(17) 17.9% [27.4%]
Internal affairs of a country (specify)	-	-
Humanitarian issues	(2) 5.3% [7.7%]	(7) 7.4% [11.3%]
Accident	(25) 65.8% [96.2%]	(59) 62.1% [95.2%]
Other (specify)	-	(2) 2.1% [3.2%]

Table U4-2: Topics in U4. (N in this table refers to the overall number of topics selected for the texts in each sample. N is higher than number or articles because up to two topics were allowed to be selected per each article. The total percent sum of percent of cases is higher than 100% for the same reason.)

In the Russian sample articles coded as ‘Other’ topics focused on the accidental ‘survivors’ of the MH17 crash – people who missed the flight or decided not to fly last minute – a format that can be seen as human interest.

*Descriptions of Ukraine*

**Descriptions of Ukraine – U4**

	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	26	(23) 88.5%	(3) 11.5%	100%
Russian sample	62	(39) 62.6%	(23) 37.1%	100%

Table U4-3: Articles in English and Russian samples with and without descriptions of Ukraine in U4.

#### Descriptions of Ukrainian government– U4

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=13	Russian sample (cases), % N=25
Ukrainian <i>Украинский</i>	(8) 61.5%	(9) 36%
Kiev <i>Киевский</i>	(5) 38.5%	(13) 52%
Acting <i>Действующий</i>	-	(2) 8%
Led by Western countries/ USA <i>Ведомый западными странами / США</i>	-	(1) 4%

Table U4-4: Descriptions of the Ukrainian government in U4. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions.)

#### Descriptions of Ukrainian army – U4

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=11	Russian sample (cases), % N=20
Ukrainian <i>Украинский</i>	(6) 54.6%	(15) 75%
Unqualified <i>Малоквалифицированный, не умеющий обращаться с оружиемб не очень профессиональный</i>	(2) 18.1%	(3) 15%
Government <i>Правительственный</i>	(1) 9.1%	(1) 5%
Located in Avdiivka <i>Дислоцированный в Авдеевке</i>	-	(1) 5:
Kiev	(2) 18.1%	

Table U4-5: Descriptions of Ukrainian army in U4. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions.)

#### Descriptions of eastern Ukraine – U4

Adjectives	English sample (cases), %	Russian sample (cases), %
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	<b>N=22</b>	<b>N=8</b>
Eastern/south-eastern <i>Восточная, юго-восточная</i>	(15) 65.3%	(4) 50%
Rebel-controlled, militia-controlled <i>Контролируемая ополченцами, находящаяся под контролем ополченцев</i>	(2) 8.7%	(3) 37.5%
Russian-controlled	(1) 4.3%	-
Large <i>Обширная</i>	-	(1) 12.5%
Conflict-gripped, war-torn	(4) 17.4%	-
Restricted	(1) 4.3%	-

Table U4-6: Descriptions of eastern Ukraine in U4. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions.)

In addition, articles in the Russian sample have 8 descriptions of Ukrainian air traffic officers, in 6 cases they are described as ‘Ukrainian’<sup>312</sup> and in 2 as ‘local’<sup>313</sup>. There were no descriptions of them in the English sample.

#### *Descriptions of military action*

#### **Descriptions of military action – U4**

	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	26	(11) 42.3%	(15) 57.7%	100%
Russian sample	62	(20) 32.2%	(42) 67.7%	100%

Table U4-7: Articles in English and Russian samples with and without descriptions of military action in U4.

#### **Descriptions of military action – U4**

<b>Adjectives</b>	<b>English sample (cases), % N=11</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N=22</b>
Military, using military force <i>Боевой, силовой, военный</i>	-	(11) 50%
Ukrainian <i>Украинский</i>	-	(2) 9.1%
Punitive <i>Карательный</i>	(1) 9.1%	(2) 9.1%
Armed <i>Вооруженный</i>	(1) 9.1%	(1) 4.5%
Anti-terrorist, counterterrorist <i>Антитеррористический</i>	(2) 18.2%	(1) 4.5%
So-called anti-terrorist	(2) 18.2%	(1) 4.5%

<sup>312</sup> In Russian: украинские

<sup>313</sup> In Russian: местные

<i>Так называемый антитеррористический</i>		
Heavy	(5) 45.4%	-
Started by Kiev <i>Развязанный Киевом</i>	--	-
Non-stop <i>Непрекращающийся</i>	-	(1) 4.5%
Civil (conflict) Гражданский	-	(1) 4.5%

Table U3-8: Descriptions of military action in U3. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions of protests. It is different from the overall number of articles that feature descriptions because some articles contain more than 1 description.)

### Descriptions of insurgents

#### Descriptions of insurgents – U4

	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	26	(22) 84.6%	(4) 15.4%	100%
Russian sample	62	(11) 17.7%	(51) 82.3%	100%

Table U4-9: Articles in English and Russian samples with and without descriptions of insurgents in U4.

#### Descriptions of insurgents – U4

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=34	Russian sample (cases), % N=10
Self-defence	(14) 41.2%	-
Russian-backed, pro-Russian <i>Поддерживаемый Россией, пророссийский</i>	(3) 8.9%	(4) 40%
Anti-Kiev	(3) 8.9%	-
Local	(5) 14.6%	-
Ukrainian, eastern Ukrainian <i>Украинский</i>	(2) 5.9%	(2) 20%
Donetsk	(2) 5.9%	-
Opposition	(1) 2.9%	-
Anti-government	(1) 2.9%	-
Militia	(1) 2.9%	
Over-vigilant	(2) 5.9%	
Armed <i>Вооруженный</i>		(2) 20%
People's <i>Народный</i>		(1) 10%
'In control of the territory' <i>Контролирующий территорию</i>		(1) 10%

Table U4-10: Descriptions of insurgents in U4. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions of insurgents. It is different from the overall number of articles that feature descriptions because some articles contain more than 1 description.)

*Descriptions of Russia*

	Descriptions of Russia – U4			Total %
	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	
English sample	26	(12) 46.2%	(14) 53.8%	100%
Russian sample	62	(15) 24.2%	(47) 75.8%	100%

Table U4-11: Articles in English and Russian samples with and without descriptions of Russia in U4.

**Descriptions of Russia – U4**

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=12	Russian sample (cases), % N=16
Russian, Russia's (civic) <i>Российский</i>	(12) 100%	(13) 81.3%
Bordering with Ukraine <i>Граничащие/ приграничные с Украиной</i>	-	(2) 12.5%
Shot down by Ukraine <sup>314</sup> <i>Сбитый Украиной</i>	-	(1) 6.2%

Table U4-12: Descriptions of Russia in U4. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions of insurgents. It is different from the overall number of articles that feature descriptions because some articles contain more than 1 description.)

*Descriptions of other countries*

**Descriptions of other countries – U4**

	Descriptions of other countries – U4			Total %
	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	
English sample	26	(5) 19.2%	(21) 80.8%	100%
Russian sample	62	(16) 25.8%	(46) 74.2%	100%

Table U4-13: Articles in English and Russian samples in U4 with and without descriptions of countries other than Russia and Ukraine.

**Descriptions of other countries – U4**

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N= 6	Russian sample (cases), % N=26
Country-based adjectives <i>Прилагательные отсылающие к странам)</i>	(4) 66.7%	(18) 69.3%

<sup>314</sup> This description refers to a Russian plane shot down by the Ukrainian military in 2001.

Other	(2) 33.3%	(8) 30.7%
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Table U4 -14: Descriptions of countries other than Ukraine and Russia in U4. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions of Russia).

The ‘Other’ category in his table consists of a number of descriptions that all only appear once. In the English sample the descriptions in this group include description of insurgents in Iraq as ‘islamist’ and of Asustralia as a ‘self-respecting’ country. In the Russian sample among the other descriptions are: description of Angela Merkel as ‘in no way a pro-Russian politician<sup>315</sup>’ and ‘deeply cynical<sup>316</sup>’, description of Iraqi government as ‘acting<sup>317</sup>’, description of the bodies of the crash victims as ‘disfigured’<sup>318</sup>, description of a man as an ‘allegedly Spanish’ air traffic control officer, and three descriptions of victims by age and family status.

### Sources

#### Sources – U4

Sources	English sample (cases), %, [% of cases] N=47	Russian sample (cases), %, [% of cases] N=85
Other media or news agencies (specify)	(16) 34% [61.5%]	(36) 42.4% [58.1%]
Own correspondent or interview	(8) 17% [30.8%]	(18) 21.2% [29%]
Social media	(6) 12.8% [23.1%]	(4) 4.7% [6.5%]
Russian army or government	(1) 2.1% [3.8%]	-
Ukrainian army or government	-	(1) 1.2% [1.6%]
Russian sources not affiliated with the government	-	-
Ukrainian sources not affiliated with the government	(2) 4.3% [7.7%]	(6) 7.1% [9.7%]
Other countries’ officials (specify)	(3) 6.4% [11.5%]	(1) 1.2% [1.6%]
International organisations (specify)	-	(3) 3.5% [4.8%]
Experts	(1) 2.1% [3.8%]	(3) 3.5% [4.8%]
Eyewitnesses	(1) 2.1% [3.8%]	(2) 2.4% [3.2%]
Activists	-	-

<sup>315</sup> In Russian: Абсолютно не пророссийский политик

<sup>316</sup> In Russian: Глубоко циничный человек

<sup>317</sup> In Russian: действующее

<sup>318</sup> In Russian: обезображенные

Bloggers	-	-
No specified sources	(5) 10.6% [19.2%]	(8) 9.4% [12.9%]
Other (specify)	(4) 8.5% [15.4%]	(3) 3.5% [4.8%]

Table U4-15: Sources in U4. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of sources appearing in the articles. Some articles referred to more than one source thus the percent of cases is higher than 100%).

‘Other foreign officials’ sources in the English sample were the Australian prime minister, Malaysian prime minister and Barack Obama. ‘Other’ sources in the English sample were the flight-tracking website Flightradar24, EU traffic control regulator Eurocontrol, statement from Malaysian Airlines, blogger and writer Neil Clark and a person called Patrick Lancaster, who was described as being ‘at the site of the jet crash’, though his role or circumstances were not explained.

In the Russian sample the ‘Other foreign officials’ source was the government of Malaysia, the ‘International organisation’ sources were OSCE and Interstate Aviation Committee, which is a CIS (Commonwealth of the Independent States) organisation. The ‘Other’ sources were the personal website of a cyclist who was due to fly on the MH17 but cancelled, relatives and friends of the victims of the crash and a Spanish air traffic controller.

#### Other media as sources – U4

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=36	Russian sample (cases), % N=45
Russian	(18) 50%	(27) 60%
Ukrainian	-	(3) 6.7%
International	(17) 47.2%	(13) 28.9%
Unspecified <sup>319</sup>	-	(1) 2.2%
Other RT platforms	(1) 2.8%	(1) 2.2%

Table U4-16: Other media sources by ownership in U4. (“N in this table refers to the number of media outlets mentioned in the articles as sources. It is higher than the number of ‘Other media’ sources specified in the previous table because that counted the number of articles that referred to other media as sources, not all instances of these references, of which there were often more than one in articles).

#### Sources per article – U4

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=26	Russian sample (cases), % N=62
Single source	(15) 57.7%	(44) 71%
Two or more sources	(11) 42.3%	(18) 29%

Table U4-17: Articles that refer to one or two or more sources in U4.

#### Articles that refer to one source – U4

Adjectives	English sample	Russian sample
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<sup>319</sup> Other media sources were coded in the ‘unspecified’ category when articles referred to other media in general without specifying the outlet’s name or country where it works, for example in sentences like ‘According to the news agencies/newspapers’.



	(cases), % N=15	(cases), % N=44
Other media & news agencies	(8) 53.3%	(29) 65.9%
Own reporter or interview	-	(5) 11.4%
Social media	(2) 13.3%	(1) 2.3%
Other country officials	-	(1) 2.3%
No specified sources	(5) 33.3%	(8) 18.1%

Table U4-18: Sources in articles that refer to one source. N in this table refers to the number of articles that only refer to one source.

### Russian actors

#### Russian actors in articles – U4

	English sample (cases), % N=26	Russian sample (cases), % N=62
Articles that quote Russian actors	(12) 46.2%	(20) 32.3%
Articles that mention Russian actors	(12) 46.2%	(20) 32.3%

Table U4-19: Presence of quoted and mentioned Russian actors in articles in U4.

#### Russian actors – U4

Actors	English sample		Russian sample	
	Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 19	Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 19	Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 22	Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 28
President Putin and spokesman Peskov	(3) 15.8% [25%]	(2) 10.5% [15.4%]	(3) 13.6% [15%]	(7) 25% [33.3%]
Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergei Lavrov	(3) 15.8% [25%]	-	(3) 13.6% [15%]	(2) 7.1% [9.5%]
Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokeswoman Maria Zakharova	(1) 5.3% [8.3%]	-	-	-
Other government officials	(8) 42.1% [66.7%]	(6) 31.6% [46.2%]	(10) 45.5% [50%]	(5) 17.9% [23.8%]
Military	-	(8) 42.1% [61.5%]	-	(5) 17.9% [23.8%]
Non-government opposition	-	-	-	-
Experts	(2) 10.5%	-	(3) 13.6%	(1) 3.6%

	[16.7%]		[15%]	[4.8%]
Activists	-	-	-	-
Other	(2) 10.5% [16.7%]	(3) 15.8% [23.1%]	(3) 13.6% [15%]	(8) 28.6% [38.1%]

Table U4-20: Quoted and mentioned Russian actors in 43. (N in this table refers to the number of actors quoted or mentioned in each group. The number is different from the number of articles in the previous table because some articles quote and mention more than one actor).

In the English sample the quoted Other Russian actor was an anonymous source in the aviation industry, quoted in two articles; the mentioned Other Russian actors were airline representatives (2 times) and Russian victims of a 2001 plane crash. In the Russian sample the quoted Other Russian actors are journalists (2) and head of the Interstate Aviation Committee<sup>320</sup>, who was mentioned twice. Mentioned ‘Other’ actors in the Russian sample were airlines representatives (3 times), general Russian public (2 times), Russian aviation specialists (2), airline representatives (2 times) and ‘KGB and FSB agents’.

#### *Ukrainian actors*

#### **Ukrainian actors in articles – U4**

	<b>English sample (cases), % N=26</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N=62</b>
Articles that quote Ukrainian actors	(14) 53.8%	(12) 19.4%
Articles that mention Ukrainian actors	(23) 88.5%	(44) 71%

Table U4-21: Presence of quoted and mentioned Ukrainian actors in articles in U4.

#### **Ukrainian actors – U4**

<b>Actors</b>	<b>English sample</b>		<b>Russian sample</b>	
	<b>Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 18</b>	<b>Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 59</b>	<b>Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 13</b>	<b>Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 94</b>
President Poroshenko <sup>321</sup>	(2) 11.1% [14.3%]	(3) 5.1% [13%]	-	(4) 4.3% [18.9%]
President Yanukovich	-	-	-	-
Other government officials (specify)	(3) 16.7% [21.4%]	(15) 25.4% [65.2%]	(6) 46.2% [50%]	(27) 28.7% [60%]
Military	-	(11) 18.6% [47.8%]	-	(14) 14.9% [31.1%]
Insurgents in Eastern Ukraine	(10) 55.6% [61.4%]	(19) 32.2% [82.6%]	(5) 38.5% [41.7%]	(32) 34% [71.1%]

<sup>320</sup> This actor was coded here in the Russian actors as it is a Russian citizen heading a CIS-wide organisation.

<sup>321</sup> Including before his election as a president and times as an MP.

Experts	-	-	-	(1) 1.1% [2.2%]
Activists	-	-	-	-
Eyewitnesses	(2) 11.1% [14.3%]	-	(2) 15.4% [16.7%]	-
Other (specify)	(1) 5.6% [7.1%]	(11) 18.6% [47.8%]	-	(16) 17% [35.6%]

Table U4-22: Quoted and mentioned Ukrainian actors in U4. (N in this table refers to the number of actors quoted or mentioned in each group. The number is different from the number of articles in the previous table because some articles quote and mention more than one actor)

In the coding schedule there was an additional answer that prompted the coder to specify the name and/or the job title of the 'Other' Ukrainian government officials. In this event all Ukrainian officials can be seen as united in the sense that even the pro-Russian officials are against the war in eastern Ukraine and do not side with the insurgents. Thus, this group was not categorised further. Further the coding schedule allowed for input of additional information in the 'Other' Ukrainian actors category.

#### Other Ukrainian actors – U4

Actors	English sample		Russian sample	
	Quoted (cases), %, N = 1	Mentioned (cases), %, N = 11	Quoted (cases), %, N = 0	Mentioned (cases), %, N = 22
General public	(1) 100%	(2) 18.2%	-	(2) 9.1%
Emergency services	-	(4) 36.3	-	(3) 13.7%
Air traffic controllers	-	(3) 27.3%	-	(10) 45.5%
Investigators	-	(2) 18.2%	-	(2) 9.1%
Victims of conflict in eastern Ukraine	-	(2) 8%	-	(1) 4.5%
Public figures	-	-	-	(1) 4.5%
Ukrainian aviation authority	-	-	-	(2) 9.1%
Right Sector	-	-	-	(1) 4.5%

Table U4-23: Quoted and mentioned 'other' Ukrainian actors in English and Russian samples in U3. (N here stands for the overall amount of quoted and mentioned actors in each group. This number is different from the number of 'Other Ukrainian actors' category counted in table U4-22 because that table counted texts that quote and mention this actor group while this table counts the individual actors, which are often quoted and mentioned more than once in one text.)

#### Foreign actors

#### Foreign actors in articles – U4

	English sample (cases), % N = 26	Russian sample (cases), % N = 62

Articles that quote foreign actors	(13) 50%	(25) 40.3%
Articles that mention foreign actors	(24) 92.3%	(52) 83.9%

Table U4-24: Presence of quoted and mentioned foreign actors in articles in U4. The coding manual specifies that all actors not from Ukraine or Russia are considered 'foreign' for the purposes of this analysis.

### Foreign actors – U4

Actors	English sample		Russian sample	
	Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 19	Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 39	Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 31	Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 88
Barack Obama	(1) 5% [7.7%]	(2) 5.1% [8.3%]	(3) 9.7% [11.5%]	(1) 1.1% [1.9%]
Donald Trump	-	-	-	-
Marine Le Pen	-	-	-	-
Recep Erdogan	-	-	-	-
Other foreign officials (specify)	(5) 30% [46.2%]	(5) 12.8% [20.8%]	(12) 38.7% [46.2%]	(20) 22.7% [38.5%]
IS	-	(1) 2.6% [4.2%]	-	-
International organisations	(3) 15% [23.1%]	(8) 20.5% [33.3%]	(2) 6.5% [7.7%]	(11) 12.5% [21.2%]
Experts	(1) 5% [7.7%]	-	(1) 3.2% [3.8%]	(10) 11.4% [19.2%]
Activists	-	-	-	-
Other (specify)	(9) 45% [69.2%]	(23) 59% [95.8%]	(13) 41.9% [50%]	(46) 52.3% [88.5%]

Table U4-25: Quoted and mentioned foreign actors in U4. (N in this table refers to the number of actors quoted or mentioned in each group. The number is different from the number of articles in the previous table because some articles quote and mention more than one actor)

### Other foreign officials – U4

Actors	English sample		Russian sample	
	Quoted (cases), %, N = 5	Mentioned (cases), %, N = 8	Quoted (cases), %, N = 13	Mentioned (cases), %, N = 41
US	(2) 28.6%	(4) 50%	(5) 38.5%	(13) 31.7%
Angela Merkel	-	-	-	(2) 4.9%
Germany	-	-	-	(1) 2.4%
Netherlands	-	(3) 37.5%	(1) 7.7%	(5) 12.2%
France	-	-	(1) 7.7%	(2) 4.9%
Poland	-	-	(1) 7.7%	-
Lithuania	-	-	-	(1) 2.4%
UK	-	-	(1) 7.7%	(3) 7.3%
Argentina	-	-	-	(1) 2.4%

China	(1) 14.3%	-	-	(1) 2.4%
Malaysia	(1) 14.3%	-	(3) 23.1%	(6) 14.6%
Australia	(1) 14.3%	(1) 12.5%	(1) 7.7%	(4) 9.8%
Nigeria	-	-	-	(1) 2.4%
Iraq	-	-	-	(1) 2.4%

Table U4-25: Quoted and mentioned foreign officials in U4. (N in this table refers to the number of actors quoted or mentioned in each group. The number is different from the number of articles in the previous table because some articles quote and mention more than one actor.)

### Other foreign actors – U4

Actors	English sample		Russian sample	
	Quoted (cases), %, N = 11	Mentioned (cases), %, N = 40	Quoted (cases), %, N = 14	Mentioned (cases), %, N = 78
Victims <sup>322</sup>	(1) 9.1%	(22) 55%	-	(43) 55.1%
Victim' relatives and friends	(1) 9.1%	(8) 20%	(3) 21.4%	(16) 20.5%
Malaysia Airlines	(1) 9.1%	-	(3) 21.4%	(7) 9%
Other airlines	(1) 9.1%	(3) 7.5%	-	(3) 3.8%
Public figures	(1) 9.1%	-	(2) 14.3%	(1) 1.3%
Specialists on the topic <sup>323</sup>	(2) 18.2%	(3) 7.5%	(1) 7.1%	(3) 3.8%
General public	(3) 27.3%	(1) 3%	(2) 14.3%	(1) 1.3%
Regulators	(1) 9.1%	(1) 2.5%	-	(1) 1.3%
Military	-	(2) 5%	-	(2) 2.6%
Journalists	-	(1) 2.5%	(3) 21.4%	(1) 1.3%

Table U4-26: Quoted and mentioned 'other' foreign actors in English and Russian samples in U4. (N here stands for the overall amount of quoted and mentioned actors in each group. This number is different from the number of 'Other foreign actors' category counted in table U4-25 because that table counted texts that quote and mention this actor group while this table counts the individual actors, which are often quoted and mentioned more than once in one text.)

### U5

#### **Russian convoy delivers humanitarian aid to the government-besieged city of Luhansk without Ukrainian permission. Ukraine releases videos of captured Russian paratroopers.**

**Dates of events: 22 - 26 August 2014; period analysed: 22 - 29 August 2014.**

Articles in English: 37

Articles in Russian: 56

*Length of text*

### Length of text – U5

<sup>322</sup> Where victims are marked as quoted their words are quoted in the article from their social media posts.

<sup>323</sup> Not referred to in the text as experts.

<b>Adjectives</b>	<b>English sample (cases), % N=37</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N=56</b>
100-300 words	(1) 2.7%	(24) 42.9%
300-600 words	(21) 56.8%	(27) 48.2%
601 words and more	(15) 40.5%	(5) 8.9%

Table U5-1: Length of texts in U5.

### Topic

#### Topics – U5

<b>Adjectives</b>	<b>English sample (cases), % [percent of cases] N=48</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % [percent of cases] N=90</b>
Military confrontation/clashes, warfare	(11) 22.9% [29.7%]	(7) 7.8% [12.5%]
International relations/diplomacy	(22) 45.8% [59.5%]	(49) 54.4% [87.5%]
Internal affairs of a country (specify)	(5) 10.4% [13.5%]	-
Humanitarian issues	(10) 20.8% [27%]	(34) 37.8% [60.7%]
Accident	-	-
Other (specify)	-	-

Table U5-2: Topics in U5. (N in this table refers to the overall number of topics selected for the texts in each sample. N is higher than number or articles because up to two topics were allowed to be selected per each article. The total percent sum of percent of cases is higher than 100% for the same reason.)

Among the English sample articles coded as ‘Internal affairs of a country’ three focused on Ukraine and two focused on Russia.

### Descriptions of Ukraine

#### Descriptions of Ukraine – U5

	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	37	(37) 100%	-	100%
Russian sample	56	(51) 91.1%	(5) 8.9%	100%

Table U5-3: Articles in English and Russian samples with and without descriptions of Ukraine in U5.

#### Descriptions of Ukrainian government– U5

<b>Adjectives</b>	<b>English sample (cases), % N=41</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N=31</b>
Ukrainian <i>Украинский</i>	(15) 36.6%	(20) 64.5%

Kiev <i>Киевский</i>	(8) 19.5%	(9) 29%
Today's <i>Нынешний</i>	-	(1) 3.2%
New, recently elected	(8) 19.5%	
Puppet <i>Марионеточный</i>	-	(1) 3.2%
Coup-imposed	(7) 17.1%	
So-called	(1) 2.4%	
Ruling	(1) 2.4%	
Nationalist	(1) 2.4%	

Table U5-4: Descriptions of the Ukrainian government in U5. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions.)

### Descriptions of Ukrainian army – U5

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=39	Russian sample (cases), % N=26
Ukrainian <i>Украинский</i>	(11) 28.2%	(18) 69.2%
Kiev <i>Киевский</i>	(19) 48.7%	(1) 3.9%
Government <i>Правительственный</i>	(4) 10.2%	(3) 11.5%
Surrounded <i>Окруженный, оказавшийся в окружении</i>	(2) 5.1%	(2) 7.6%
Punitive	(2) 5.1%	-
Enemy	(1) 2.7%	-
Captured <i>Взятый в плен</i>		(1) 3.9%
'Forced to participate in war' <i>Участвующий не по своей воле</i>		(1) 3.9%

Table U5-5: Descriptions of Ukrainian army in U5. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions.)

### Descriptions of eastern Ukraine – U5

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=45	Russian sample (cases), % N=22
Eastern/ south-eastern <i>Восточный/ юго- восточный</i>	(31) 68.9%	(3) 13.6%
War-torn, restive <i>Охваченный войной/ конфликтом, раздираемый войной</i>	(4) 8.9%	(3) 13.6%

Native <i>Родной</i>	-	(2) 9.1%
Surrounded by Ukrainian army/ beseiged <i>Окруженный украинскими войсками, осажденный</i>	(3) 6.7%	(4) 18.2%
Destroyed <sup>324</sup> <i>Разрушенный, брошенный, охваченные поля/земля, изрытые снарядами дороги</i>	(2) 4.5%	(6) 27.2%
Rebel-controlled, 'taken by rebels' <i>Занятые ополченцами</i>	(1) 2.2%	(1) 4.6%
Freed <i>Освобожденный</i>	-	(1) 4.6%
Ukrainian <i>Украинский</i>	(1) 2.2%	(2) 9.1%
Residential	(1) 2.2%	
Peaceful	(1) 2.2%	
Catastrophic	(1) 2.2%	

Table U5-6: Descriptions of eastern Ukraine in U5. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions.)

### Descriptions of population of eastern Ukraine – U5

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=5	Russian sample (cases), % N=27
Devastated, sobbing	(2) 40%	-
Russian-speaking	(2) 40%	(1) 3.7%
Peaceful <i>Мирный</i>	(1) 20%	(11) 40.7%:
Local <i>Местный</i>	(3) 6.7%	(1) 3.7%
Hungry, starving, suffering from humanitarian catastrophe <i>Пострадавший, голодный, голодающий, страдающий от голода и жажды, нуждающийся, страдающий от</i>	(1) 2.2%	(10) 37%

<sup>324</sup> 'Destroyed' is a group reference for a category of adjectives that describe the destruction of eastern Ukraine by referencing the burned-out farmland and fields and roads destroyed by missiles in Russian, as well as using words like 'destroyed' and 'abandoned'. In English this category includes words like 'damaged' and 'destroyed'.



<i>гуманитарной катастрофы</i>		
Few <i>Немногочисленный, оставшийся,</i>	-	(2) 7.4%
Reference to young age <i>Семилетний, четырехлетний</i>	-	(2) 7.4%

Table U5-7: Descriptions of the population in eastern Ukraine in U5. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions.)

### Descriptions of military action

#### Descriptions of military action – U5

	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	37	(25) 67.6%	(12) 32.4%	100%
Russian sample	56	(29) 51.8%	(27) 48.2%	100%

Table U5-8: Articles in English and Russian samples with and without descriptions of military action in U5.

#### Descriptions of military action – U4

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=42	Russian sample (cases), % N=43
Military, using military force <i>Боевой, силовой, военный</i>	-	(17) 39.5%
Kiev's	(5) 11.9%	-
Punitive <i>Карательный</i>		(1) 2.3%
Armed <i>Вооруженный</i>		(5) 11.6%
Bloody, deadly <i>Кровопролитный, представляющий смертельную опасность</i>		(2) 4.7%
Internal (conflict), civil (war) Внутренний, внутриукраинский	(20) 47.6%	(3) 7%
Anti-terrorist	(2) 4.8%	
So-called anti-terrorist <i>Так называемый антитеррористический</i>	(4) 9.5%	(3) 7%
Intensive <i>Интенсивный, активизирующийся</i>		(2) 4.7%
Violent, heavy <i>Ожесточенный</i>	(5) 11.9%	(3) 7%
Third (world war)	--	(1) 2.3%

<i>Третья (мировая война)</i>		
Terrorist <i>Террористический</i>	-	(1) 2.3%
Artillery <i>Артиллерийский</i>	-	(1) 2.3%
Constant, ongoing <i>Непрекращающийся, продолжающийся</i>	(6) 14.3%	(4) 9.3%

Table U5-9: Descriptions of military action in U5. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions of protests. It is different from the overall number of articles that feature descriptions because some articles contain more than 1 description.)

### Descriptions of insurgents

#### Descriptions of insurgents – U5

	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	37	(20) 54.1%	(17) 45.9%	100%
Russian sample	56	(10) 17.9%	(46) 82.1%	100%

Table U5-10 Articles in English and Russian samples with and without descriptions of insurgents in U5.

#### Descriptions of insurgents – U5

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=34	Russian sample (cases), % N=10
Self-defence	(14) 41.2%	-
Pro-Russian	(1) 2.9%	
Anti-Kiev	(7) 20.7%	-
Local	(1) 2.9%	-
Federalist	(2) 5.8%	-
Anti-government	(5) 14.7%	(4) 40%
Militia	(1) 2.9%	
Former professional (military) <i>Бывший кадровый (военный)</i>	-	(1)
Rebel	(3) 8.9%	
Mighty <i>Мощный</i>	-	(1)
‘Taking over new towns’ <i>Занимающий (населенные пункты)</i>	-	(1)
Pessimistic <i>Пессимистичный</i>	-	(1)
‘Able to win over Ukrainian army’ <i>Способный победить украинскую армию</i>	-	(1)

Table U5-11: Descriptions of insurgents in U5. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions of insurgents. It is different from the overall number of articles that feature descriptions because some articles contain more than 1 description.)

### Descriptions of insurgent ‘states’ and authorities– U5

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=12	Russian sample (cases), % N=4
Self-proclaimed <i>Самопровозглашённый</i>	(9) 75%	(2) 50%
Unrecognised <i>Непризнанный</i>	-	(2) 50%
Independent <i>Независимый</i>	-	-
Local	(1) 8.3%	-
Independent	(1) 8.3%	-
Separatist	(1) 8.3%	-

Table U5-12: Descriptions of insurgent ‘states’ and their authorities in Eastern Ukraine in U5. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions.)

### Descriptions of Russia

#### Descriptions of Russia – U5

	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	37	(19) 51.4%	(18) 48.6%	100%
Russian sample	56	(35) 62.5%	(21) 37.5%	100%

Table U5-13: Articles in English and Russian samples with and without descriptions of Russia in U5.

#### Descriptions of Russia – U4

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=26	Russian sample (cases), % N=29
Russian, Russia’s (civic) <i>Российский</i>	(24) 92.3%	(21) 72.4%
Other descriptions mentioned once	(2) 7.7%	(8) 27.6%

Table U5-14: Descriptions of Russia in U5. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions of insurgents. It is different from the overall number of articles that feature descriptions because some articles contain more than 1 description.)

The ‘Other’ category in his table consists of a number of descriptions that all only appear once. In the English sample the descriptions in this group include description of Russian nation as ‘ex-Soviet’, and description of a Russian veteran organisation Forgotten Regiment as ‘low-profile’. In the Russian sample this category includes the following descriptions:

‘responsible for the escalation of the conflict in Ukraine<sup>325</sup>, ‘reliable gas supplier<sup>326</sup>, ‘not interested in confrontation<sup>327</sup>, ‘interested in strengthening of international law<sup>328</sup>, ‘strengthened by non-provocative behaviour<sup>329</sup>, ‘assured<sup>330</sup>, ‘accidentally on another state’s territory<sup>331</sup>, ‘the only country to officially submit data on MH17<sup>332</sup>’

### Descriptions of other countries

#### Descriptions of other countries – U5

	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	37	(8) 21.6%	(29) 78.4%	100%
Russian sample	56	(10) 17.9%	(46) 82.1%	100%

Table U5-15: Articles in English and Russian samples in U5 with and without descriptions of countries other than Russia and Ukraine.

#### Descriptions of other countries – U5

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N= 11	Russian sample (cases), % N=23
Country-based adjectives <i>Прилагательные отсылающие к странам)</i>	(10) 90.9%	(18) 78.3%
Other	(1) 9.1%	(6) 21.7%

Table U5-16: Descriptions of countries other than Ukraine and Russia in U5. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions of Russia).

The ‘Other’ category in his table consists of a number of descriptions that all only appear once. In the English sample the description ins ‘ex-Soviet’ in relation to Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. In the Russian sample among the other descriptions are: description of Western countries as ‘supporting of Kiev’s military operation<sup>333</sup>, description of British soldiers as ‘abashed<sup>334</sup>, description of Georgia as ‘widely diplomatically recognised<sup>335</sup>, description of the Georgian army as ‘trained by American and Israeli instructors<sup>336</sup>, б description of the American ambassador in Kiev as ‘corrupt<sup>337</sup>’.

### Sources

<sup>325</sup> In Russian: ответственная за эскалацию конфликта на Украине

<sup>326</sup> In Russian: надежный поставщик газа

<sup>327</sup> In Russian: не заинтересованная в конфронтации

<sup>328</sup> In Russian: заинтересованная в укреплении международного права

<sup>329</sup> In Russian: подкрепленная непровокационным поведением

<sup>330</sup> In Russian: уверенный

<sup>331</sup> In Russian: случайно оказавшиеся на территории другого гос-ва

<sup>332</sup> In Russian: единственная страна официально предоставившая международному сообществу данные в связи с крушением MH17

<sup>333</sup> In Russian: Поддерживающие военную операцию Киева

<sup>334</sup> In Russian: Сконфуженные

<sup>335</sup> In Russian: Добившаяся широкого дипломатического признания

<sup>336</sup> In Russian: Обученная американцами и израильянами

<sup>337</sup> In Russian: Корумпированный

## Sources – U5

<b>Sources</b>	<b>English sample (cases), %, [ % of cases] N=74</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), %, [ % of cases] N=73</b>
Other media or news agencies (specify)	(16) 21% [43.2%]	(24) 32.9% [42.9%]
Own correspondent or interview	(9) 12.2% [24.3%]	(10) 13.7% [17.9%]
Social media	(5) 6.8% [13.5%]	(4) 5.5% [7.1%]
Russian army or government	(8) 10.8% [21.6%]	(12) 16.4% [21.4%]
Ukrainian army or government	(4) 5.4% [10.8%]	(1) 1.4% [1.8%]
Russian sources not affiliated with the government	--	-
Ukrainian sources not affiliated with the government	(10) 13.5% [27%]	(5) 6.8% [8.9%]
Other countries' officials (specify)	-	(1) 1.4% [1.8%]
International organisations (specify)	(12) 16.2%	(3) 4.1% [5.4%]
Experts	-	(1) 1.4% [1.8%]
Eyewitnesses	(1) 1.4% [2.7%]	(2) 2.7% [3.6%]
Activists	-	-
Bloggers	-	-
No specified sources	(4) 5.4% [19.2%]	(9) 12.3% [16.1%]
Other (specify)	(5) 6.8% [13.5%]	(1) 1.4% [1.8%]

Table U5-17: Sources in U5. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of sources appearing in the articles. Some articles referred to more than one source thus the percent of cases is higher than 100%).

'Other countries' officials' source in the Russian sample was Canadian NATO delegation. International organisations sources in the English sample were UN (8 times), Red Cross (3 times), NATO and Collective Security Treaty Organisation, and in the Russian sample international organisations referenced as sources were UN, Red Cross, European commission and NATO. 'Other' sources in the English sample were a former American official and contributing editor of the American Conservative magazine James W Carden, former state secretary to the German minister of defence Willy Wimmer, Russian sociological survey company VCIOM, political commentator Alexander Nekrassov, and Lugansk residents (2 times). 'Other' source in the Russian sample was the editor-in-chief of the Politics First magazine Marcus Papadopoulos.

### Other media as sources – U5

<b>Adjectives</b>	<b>English sample (cases), % N=32</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N=25</b>
Russian	(23) 71.9%	(21) 84%
Ukrainian	(3) 9.4%	-
International	(4) 12.5%	(2) 8%
Eastern Ukrainian <sup>338</sup>	(2) 6.3%	-
Other RT platforms	-	(2) 8%

Table U5-18: Other media sources by ownership in U5. (\*N in this table refers to the number of media outlets mentioned in the articles as sources. It is higher than the number of 'Other media' sources specified in the previous table because that counted the number of articles that referred to other media as sources, not all instances of these references, of which there were often more than one in articles).

### Sources per article – U5

<b>Adjectives</b>	<b>English sample (cases), % N=37</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N=56</b>
Single source	(13) 35.1%	(45) 80.4%
Two or more sources	(24) 64.9%	(11) 19.6%

Table U5-19: Articles that refer to one or two or more sources in U5.

### Articles that refer to one source – U5

<b>Adjectives</b>	<b>English sample (cases), % N=13</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N=45</b>
Other media & news agencies	(4) 30.8%	(21) 46.7%
Own reporter or interview	-	(4) 8.8%
Russian army or government	(3) 23%	(7) 15.6%
Ukrainian sources not affiliated with the government	-	(2) 4.5%
International organisations	(1) 7.7%	(1) 2.2%
Other	(1) 7.7%	(1) 2.2%
No specified sources	(4) 30.8%	(9) 20%

Table U5-20: Sources in articles that refer to one source. N in this table refers to the number of articles that only refer to one source.

### *Russian actors*

### Russian actors in articles – U5

	<b>English sample (cases), % N=37</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N=56</b>

<sup>338</sup> Media coded as Eastern Ukrainian are new pro-separatist media founded in eastern Ukraine since the start of the conflict, for example the official insurgent 'Novorossiya' news agency.

Articles that quote Russian actors	(22) 59.5%	(32) 57.1%
Articles that mention Russian actors	(23) 62.2%	(25) 44.6%

Table U5-21: Presence of quoted and mentioned Russian actors in articles in U5.

### Russian actors – U5

Actors	English sample		Russian sample	
	Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 28	Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N =33	Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 34	Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N =42
President Putin and spokesman Peskov	(7) 25% [31.8%]	(6) 18.2% [26.1%]	(5) 14.7% [15.6%]	(13) 31% [52%]
Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergei Lavrov	(5) 17.9% [22.7%]	(3) 9.1% [13%]	(4) 11.8% [12.5%]	(3) 7.1% [12%]
Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokeswoman Maria Zakharova	-	-	-	-
Other government officials	(9) 32.1% [40.9%]	(4) 12.1% [17.4%]	(21) 61.8% [65.6%]	(8) 19% [32%]
Military	(1) 3.6% [4.5%]	(9) 27.3% [39.1%]	-	(12) 28.6% [48%]
Non-government opposition	-	-	-	-
Experts	-	-	-	-
Activists	(1) 3.6% [4.5%]	-	-	-
Other (specify)	(5) 17.9% [22.7%]	(11) 33.3% [47.8%]	(4) 11.8% [12.5%]	(6) 14.3% [24%]

Table U5-22: Quoted and mentioned Russian actors in U5. (N in this table refers to the number of actors quoted or mentioned in each group. The number is different from the number of articles in the previous table because some articles quote and mention more than one actor)

In the English sample the quoted Other Russian actors were: Russian Red Cross (2 times), sociological survey company VTSIOM, political commentator Alexander Nekrassov, and the Collective Security Treaty Organisation. The mentioned Other Russian actors in the English sample were: the humanitarian aid convoy (4 times), Russian volunteers fighting on the side of the insurgents in eastern Ukraine (3 times), general public (2 times), VTSIOM, Russian Red Cross, Russian border guards, Russian NATO mission, and head of the Russian Public Diplomacy Foundation Aleksey Kochetkov. In the Russian sample the quoted Other Russian actors were: Russian Red Cross (2 times), Russian Customs representative and the Collective Security Treaty Organisation. The mentioned Other Russian actors in the Russian sample

were: Russian volunteers fighting on the side of the insurgents in eastern Ukraine (3 times), Russian journalists, the humanitarian convoy and the Russian Red Cross.

*Ukrainian actors*

**Ukrainian actors in articles – U5**

	<b>English sample (cases), % N=37</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N=56</b>
Articles that quote Ukrainian actors	(22) 59.5%	(10) 17.9%
Articles that mention Ukrainian actors	(37) 100%	(52) 92.9%

Table U5-23: Presence of quoted and mentioned Ukrainian actors in articles in U5.

**Ukrainian actors – U5**

<b>Actors</b>	<b>English sample</b>		<b>Russian sample</b>	
	<b>Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 31</b>	<b>Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N =108</b>	<b>Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 15</b>	<b>Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N =132</b>
President Poroshenko <sup>339</sup>	(7) 22.6% [31.8%]	(9) 8.3% [24.3%]	(2) 13.3% [20%]	(12) 9.1% [23.1%]
President Yanukovich	-	(2) 1.9% [5.4%]	-	-
Other government officials (specify)	(6) 19.4% [27.3%]	(25) 23.1% [67.6%]	(2) 13.3% [20%]	(28) 21.2% [53.8%]
Military	(1) 3.2% [4.5%]	(22) 20.4% [59.5%]	-	(19) 14.4% [36.5%]
Insurgents in Eastern Ukraine	(11) 35.5% [50%]	(19) 17.6% [51.4%]	(6) 40% [60%]	(28) 21.2% [53.8%]
Experts	-	-	-	-
Activists	-	-	-	-
Eyewitnesses	(2) 6.5% [9.1%]	-	(2) 13.3% [20%]	-
Other (specify)	(4) 12.9% [18.2%]	(31) 28.7% [83.8%]	(3) 20% [30%]	(45) 34.1% [86.5%]

Table U5-24: Quoted and mentioned Ukrainian actors in U5. (N in this table refers to the number of actors quoted or mentioned in each group. The number is different from the number of articles in the previous table because some articles quote and mention more than one actor)

In the coding schedule there was an additional answer that prompted the coder to specify the name and/or the job title of the ‘Other’ Ukrainian government officials. In this event all Ukrainian officials can be seen as united in the sense that even the pro-Russian officials are

<sup>339</sup> Including before his election as a president and times as an MP.



against the war in eastern Ukraine and do not side with the insurgents. Thus, this group was not categorised further. Further the coding schedule allowed for input of additional information in the ‘Other’ Ukrainian actors category.

### Other Ukrainian actors – U5

Actors	English sample		Russian sample	
	Quoted (cases), %, N = 7	Mentioned (cases), %, N = 78	Quoted (cases), %, N = 4	Mentioned (cases), %, N = 74
General public	(4) 57.1%	(32) 41%	(4) 100%	(35) 47.3%
Relatives of Ukrainian soldiers	(2) 28.6%	(1) 1.3%	-	(5) 6.8%
Air traffic controllers	-	(1) 1.3%	-	(2) 2.7%
Religious leaders	(1) 14.3%	(1) 1.3%	-	-
Victims of conflict, injured & killed civilians	-	(21) 26.9%	-	(15) 20.3%
Ukrainian refugees	-	(16) 20.5	-	(12) 16.2%
Right Sector	-	(3) 3.8%	-	(1) 1.4%
Russian-speaking minority	-	(2) 2.6%	-	-
Ukrainian border guards & customs	-	(1) 1.3%	-	(3) 4.1%
Oligarchs	-	-	-	(1) 1.4%

Table U5-25: Quoted and mentioned ‘other’ Ukrainian actors in English and Russian samples in U5. (N here stands for the overall amount of quoted and mentioned actors in each group. This number is different from the number of ‘Other Ukrainian actors’ category counted in table U5-24 because that table counted texts that quote and mention this actor group while this table counts the individual actors, which are often quoted and mentioned more than once in one text.)

### Foreign actors

### Foreign actors in articles – U5

	English sample (cases), % N= 37	Russian sample (cases), % N= 56
Articles that quote foreign actors	(15) 40.5%	(18) 32.1%
Articles that mention foreign actors	(22) 59.5%	(38) 67.9%

Table U5-26: Presence of quoted and mentioned foreign actors in articles in U5. The coding manual specifies that all actors not from Ukraine or Russia are considered ‘foreign’ for the purposes of this analysis.

### Foreign actors – U5

Actors	English sample		Russian sample	
	Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 17	Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N =33	Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 20	Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 58
Barack Obama	-	(2) 6.1% [9.1%]	-	(4) 6.9% [10.5%]
Donald Trump	-	-	-	-
Marine Le Pen	-	-	-	-
Recep Erdogan	-	-	-	-
Other foreign officials (specify)	(6) 35.3% [40%]	(10) 30.3% [45.5%]	(5) 25% [27.8%]	(16) 27.6% [42.1%]
IS	-	-	-	-
International organisations	(9) 52.9% [60%]	(12) 42.4% [63.3%]	(9) 45% [50%]	(29) 50% [76.3%]
Experts	-	-	(3) 15% [16.7%]	-
Activists	-	-	-	-
Other (specify)	(2) 11.8% [13.3%]	(7) 21.2% [31.8%]	(3) 15% [16.7%]	(9) 15.5% [23.7%]

Table U5-27: Quoted and mentioned foreign actors in U5. (N in this table refers to the number of actors quoted or mentioned in each group. The number is different from the number of articles in the previous table because some articles quote and mention more than one actor)

### Other foreign officials – U5

Actors	English sample		Russian sample	
	Quoted (cases), %, N = 9	Mentioned (cases), %, N =15	Quoted (cases), %, N = 10	Mentioned (cases), %, N = 29
US	(2) 22.2%	(5) 33.3%	(6) 60%	(8) 27.6%
Angela Merkel	(1) 11.1%	(5) 33.3%	-	(4) 13.8%
Germany	(1) 11.1%	-	(1) 10%	(2) 6.9%
'Foreign'	-	-	-	(1) 3.4%
France	-	(2) 13.3%	-	(1) 3.4%
Lithuania	(1) 11.1%	(1) 6.7%	(1) 10%	(2) 6.9%
UK	-	-	(2) 20%	(1) 3.4%
Iran	-	-	-	(1) 3.4%
Belarus	(2) 22.2%	-	-	(4) 13.8%
Kazakhstan	(2) 22.2%	-	-	(3) 10.3%
Canada	-	(1) 6.7%	-	-
Syria	-	(1) 6.7%	-	(1) 3.4%

Table U5-28: Quoted and mentioned foreign officials in U5. (N in this table refers to the number of actors quoted or mentioned in each group. The number is different from the number of articles in the previous table because some articles quote and mention more than one actor.)

### Other foreign actors – U5

Actors	English sample		Russian sample	
	Quoted (cases), %, N = 2	Mentioned (cases), %, N = 10	Quoted (cases), %, N = 3	Mentioned (cases), %, N = 14
Journalists	-	(1) 10%	(1) 33.3%	(5) 35.8%
Former CIA analyst Ray McGovern	-	-	(1) 33.3%	-
Foreign volunteer fighters in eastern Ukraine	-	-	(1) 33.3%	-
Former politician	(2) 100%	-	-	-
International observers	-	-	-	(1) 7.1%
Military	-	(3) 30%	-	(4) 28.7%
Hamas	-	-	-	(1) 7.1%
MH17 pilots	-	-	-	(1) 7.1%
American consultants/advisors	-	(1) 10%	-	(1) 7.1%
General public	-	(2) 20%	-	(1) 7.1%
Peacekeepers	-	(1) 10%	-	-
Historical figures	-	(2) 20%	-	-

Table U5-29: Quoted and mentioned ‘other’ foreign actors in English and Russian samples in U5. (N here stands for the overall amount of quoted and mentioned actors in each group. This number is different from the number of ‘Other foreign actors’ category counted in table U5-27 because that table counted texts that quote and mention this actor group while this table counts the individual actors, which are often quoted and mentioned more than once in one text.)

### U6

#### The battle of Debaltsevo.

**Dates of event: 30 January 2015, 12 February 2015, 16 February 2015; 18 February 2015; analysed period: 30 January - 2 February 2015, 9 - 15 February 2015, 16 - 21 February 2015.**

Articles in English: 23

Articles in Russian: 58

*Length of text*

#### Length of text – U6

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=23	Russian sample (cases), % N=58
100-300 words	-	(28) 48.3%
300-600 words	(9) 39.1%	(24) 41.4%
601 words and more	(14) 60.9%	(6) 10.3%

Table U6-1: Length of texts in U6.

Topic

Topics – U6

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % [percent of cases] N=26	Russian sample (cases), % [percent of cases] N=72
Military confrontation/clashes, warfare	(8) 30.8% [34.8%]	(20) 27.8% [34.5%]
International relations/diplomacy	(12) 46.2% [52.2%]	(16) 22.2% [27.6%]
Internal affairs of a country (specify)	(1) 3.8% [4.3%]	(10) 13.9% [17.2%]
Humanitarian issues	-	(6) 8.3% [10.3%]
Accident	-	-
Other (specify)	(5) 19.2% [21.7%]	(20) 27.8% [34.5%]

Table U6-2: Topics in U6. (N in this table refers to the overall number of topics selected for the texts in each sample. N is higher than number or articles because up to two topics were allowed to be selected per each article. The total percent sum of percent of cases is higher than 100% for the same reason.)

In both samples additional answers on ‘Internal affairs’ specified the focus was Ukraine in all instances. In addition, all of the instances of the Other topics in both samples were coded as ‘truce’.

Descriptions of Ukraine

Descriptions of Ukraine – U6

	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	23	(22) 95.7%	(1) 4.3%	100%
Russian sample	58	(50) 86.2%	(8) 13.8%	100%

Table U6-3: Articles in English and Russian samples with and without descriptions of Ukraine in U6.

Descriptions of Ukrainian government– U6

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=9	Russian sample (cases), % N=25
Ukrainian <i>Украинский</i>	(4) 44.4%	(13) 52%
Kiev <i>Киевский</i>	(1) 11.1%	(6) 24%
Today’s <i>Нынешний</i>	(1) 11.1%	(1) 4%
New <i>Новый</i>	-	(2) 8%

Official <i>Официальный</i>	-	(1) 4%
Central <i>Центральный</i>	-	(1) 4%
Incapable <i>Недееспособный</i>	-	(1) 4%
Coup-imposed	(2) 22.2%	
Pro-military	(1) 11.1%	-

Table U6-4: Descriptions of the Ukrainian government in U6. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions.)

### Descriptions of Ukrainian army – U6

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=42	Russian sample (cases), % N=94
Ukrainian <i>Украинский</i>	(12) 28.6%	(40) 42.5%
Kiev <i>Киевский</i>	(14) 33.3%	(9) 9.6%
Government <i>Правительственный</i>	(1) 2.4%	(6) 6.4%
Surrounded <i>Окруженный, оказавшийся в окружении</i>	(8) 19%	(7) 7.4%
Injured, heavily injured <i>Тяжелораненый</i>	(1) 2.4%	(3) 3.1%
Regular	(2) 4.7%	
Captured <i>Взятый в плен</i>	-	(7) 7.4%
Demoralised <i>Деморализованный</i>	-	(9) 9.6%
Retreating <i>Отступающий</i>	-	(1) 1%
Disorganised <i>Дезорганизованный</i>	-	(1) 1%
Well-organised <i>Хорошо организованный</i>	-	(2) 2%
Angry <i>Разозленный</i>	-	(1) 1%
Brave <i>Отважный</i>	-	(1) 1%
Supported by Washington <i>Поддерживаемая Вашингтоном</i>	-	(1) 1%
Returning from the frontline <i>Возвращающийся с фронта</i>	-	(1) 1%
Armed, well-armed <i>Вооруженный, отлично вооруженный</i>	-	(2) 2%

Drafted <i>Набранные</i>	-	(1) 1%
Highly professional <i>Высокопрофессиональный</i>	-	(1) 1%
Adjectives describing inappropriate behaviour (drunk, not paying taxi drivers) <i>Пьяный, не оплачивающий такси</i>	-	(2) 2%
Enemy	(1) 2.4%	-
Illegal	(1) 2.4%	-
Armed	(1) 2.4%	-
Republican	(1) 2.4%	-

Table U6-5: Descriptions of Ukrainian army in U5. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions.)

### Descriptions of eastern Ukraine – U5

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=44	Russian sample (cases), % N=20
Eastern/ south-eastern <i>Восточный/ юго-восточный</i>	(18) 40.8%	-
War-torn <i>Охваченный войной/ конфликтом, раздираемый войной</i>	(2) 4.6%	-
Kiev-held	(4) 9%	-
Surrounded by Ukrainian army/ besieged/encircled <i>Окруженный украинскими войсками, осажденный</i>	(5) 11.3%	-
Dissenting	(2) 4.6%	-
Rebel-held/controlled, militia-held	(7) 15.8%	-
Contested	(3) 6.9%	-
Abandoned by Ukrainian forces	(1) 2.3%	-
Strategical, key	(1) 2.3%	(3) 15%
Temporarily occupied	(1) 2.3%	-
Largest (railroad knot) <i>Крупнейший (ж/д узел)</i>	-	(9) 45%
Destroyed <i>Разрушенный</i>	-	(1) 5%
Adjectives relating to geographic location	-	(4) 20%

<i>Связывающий (Донецк и Луганск), Расположенный (на дороге)</i>		
Ukrainian <i>Украинский</i>	-	(1) 5%
Frontline <i>Прифронтовой</i>	-	(1) 5%
Infamous <i>Печально известный</i>	-	(1) 5%

Table U6-6: Descriptions of eastern Ukraine in U6. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions.)

In addition, there were descriptions of Right Sector in the Russian sample. The organisation was described as: ‘radical/extremist<sup>340</sup>’ (5 times), as nationalist<sup>341</sup> (3 times), as ultra-nationalist<sup>342</sup>, as ‘out of control of the government<sup>343</sup>’ and as ‘supported by the government<sup>344</sup>’. There were no descriptions of Right Sector in the English sample.

#### *Descriptions of military action*

#### **Descriptions of military action – U6**

	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	23	(8) 34.8%	(15) 65.2%	100%
Russian sample	58	(22) 37.9%	(36) 62.1%	100%

Table U6-7: Articles in English and Russian samples with and without descriptions of military action in U6.

#### **Descriptions of military action – U4**

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=14	Russian sample (cases), % N=27
Military, using military force <i>Боевой, силовой, военный</i>	-	(6) 22.2%
Armed	(1) 7.1%	-
Street <i>Уличный</i>	-	(2) 7.4%
Civil, internecine, internal <i>Внутрирежимный</i>	(5) 35.8%	(1) 3.7%
Anti-terrorist, counterterrorist <i>Антитеррористический, контртеррористический</i>	(2) 4.8%	(2) 7.4%
Local <i>Локальный</i>	-	(1) 3.7%
Intense	(2) 14.2%	-

<sup>340</sup> In Russian: радикальный, экстремистский

<sup>341</sup> In Russian: националистический

<sup>342</sup> In Russian: ультранационалистический

<sup>343</sup> In Russian: неподконтрольный правительству

<sup>344</sup> In Russian: поддерживаемый правительством

Violent <i>Ожесточенный</i>	(1) 7.1%	(9) 33.3%
Ukrainian <i>Третья (мировая война)</i>	(3) 21.4%	(1) 3.7%
Fratricidal <i>Братоубийственный</i>	-	(1) 3.7%
Artillery <i>Артиллерийский</i>		(1) 3.7%
Continued/-ing, lingering <i>Непрекращающийся, продолжающийся</i>	(2) 14.3%	(3) 11.1%

Table U6-8: Descriptions of military action in U6. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions of protests. It is different from the overall number of articles that feature descriptions because some articles contain more than 1 description.)

### Descriptions of insurgents

#### Descriptions of insurgents – U6

	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	23	(17) 73.9%	(6) 26.1%	100%
Russian sample	58	(17) 29.3%	(41) 70.7%	100%

Table U6-9. Articles in English and Russian samples with and without descriptions of insurgents in U5.

#### Descriptions of insurgents – U6

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=27	Russian sample (cases), % N=10
Self-defence	(3) 11.1%	-
Russia-backed, pro-Russian <i>Пророссийский, поддерживаемый Россией</i>	(1) 3.7%	(5) 33.3%
Anti-Kiev	(2) 7.4%	-
Local	(2) 7.4%	-
Ukrainian	(4) 14.8%	-
Anti-government <i>Антиправительственный</i>	(10) 37%	(2) 13.3%
Militia	(1) 3.7%	-
Donbass	(1) 3.7%	-
Rebel	(3) 11.1%	-
Strong <i>Сильный</i>	-	(3) 20%
People's <i>Народный</i>		(2) 13.3%
Armed <i>Вооруженный</i>	-	(1) 6.6%
Injured <i>Раненый</i>	-	(1) 6.6%



‘Yesterday’s miners and tractor drivers’ <i>Вчерашние шахтеры и трактористы</i>	-	(1) 6.6%
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Table U6-10: Descriptions of insurgents in U6. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions of insurgents. It is different from the overall number of articles that feature descriptions because some articles contain more than 1 description.)

In addition, the self-proclaimed states in eastern Ukraine – Donetsk people’s Republic (DPR) and Luhansk People’s Republic (LPR) are described in all cases as ‘self-proclaimed’ in both samples.

### *Descriptions of Russia*

#### **Descriptions of Russia – U6**

	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	23	(5) 21.7%	(18) 78.3%	100%
Russian sample	58	(8) 13.8%	(50) 86.2%	100%

Table U6-11: Articles in English and Russian samples with and without descriptions of Russia in U6.

#### **Descriptions of Russia – U6**

<b>Adjectives</b>	<b>English sample (cases), % N=5</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N=12</b>
Russian, Russia’s (civic) <i>Российский</i>	(5) 100%	(8) 66.6%
Supposedly Russian <i>Якобы российские</i>	-	(2) 16.6%
Chechen	-	(2) 16.6%

Table U6-12: Descriptions of Russia in U6. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions of insurgents. It is different from the overall number of articles that feature descriptions because some articles contain more than 1 description.)

### *Descriptions of other countries*

#### **Descriptions of other countries – U6**

	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	23	(3) 12%	(20) 87%	100%
Russian sample	58	(6) 10.3%	(52) 89.7%	100%

Table U6-13: Articles in English and Russian samples in U6 with and without descriptions of countries other than Russia and Ukraine.

#### **Descriptions of other countries – U6**

<b>Adjectives</b>	<b>English sample</b>	<b>Russian sample</b>
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	(cases), % N=3	(cases), % N= 6
Country-based adjectives <i>Прилагательные отсылающие к странам)</i>	(1) 33.3%	(6) 100%
Other	(2) 66.6%	-

Table U6-14: Descriptions of countries other than Ukraine and Russia in U6. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions of Russia).

The ‘Other’ category in his table consists of a number of descriptions that all only appear once. In the English sample it contains the description of a US senator as ‘high-ranking’ and description of Washington as ‘unconstructive’.

### Sources

#### Sources – U6

Sources	English sample (cases), %, [% of cases] N=47	Russian sample (cases), %, [% of cases] N=79
Other media or news agencies (specify)	(14) 29.8% [60.9%]	(38) 48.1% [65.5%]
Own correspondent or interview	(8) 17% [34.8%]	(12) 15.2% [20.7%]
Social media	(6) 12.8% [26.1%]	(3) 3.8% [5.2%]
Russian army or government	(4) 8.5% [17.4%]	(2) 2.5% [3.4%]
Ukrainian army or government	(2) 4.3% [8.7%]	(3) 3.8% [5.2%]
Russian sources not affiliated with the government	-	-
Ukrainian sources not affiliated with the government	(4) 8.5% [17.4%]	(6) 7.6% [10.3%]
Other countries’ officials (specify)	(2) 4.3% [8.7%]	-
International organisations (specify)	(1) 2.1% [4.3]	(2) 2.5% [3.4%]
Experts	-	(2) 2.5% [3.4%]
Eyewitnesses	(1) 2.1% [4.3]	(2) 2.7% [3.6%]
Activists	-	-
Bloggers	-	-
No specified sources	(2) 4.3% [8.7%]	(7) 8.9% [12.1%]
Other (specify)	(3) 6.4%	(2) 2.5%

	[13%]	[3.4%]
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Table U6-15: Sources in U6. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of sources appearing in the articles. Some articles referred to more than one source thus the percent of cases is higher than 100%).

‘Other countries’ officials’ sources in the English sample were the US ambassador in Ukraine and a statement from the government of France and Germany released by the Elysees palace. International organisations source in the English sample was UN, and in the Russian sample OSCE and NATO. ‘Other’ source in the English sample were Ukrainian ‘hactivist’ website Cyber Berkut, a man fleeing Ukraine’s army draft, and political analyst Alexander Clackson, and in the Russian sample ‘Other’ sources were Ukrainian ‘hactivist’ website Cyber Berkut and Donbass Water company.

### Other media as sources – U6

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=36	Russian sample (cases), % N=50
Russian	(19) 52.8%	(37) 74%
Ukrainian	(3) 8.3%	(7) 14%
International	(12) 33.3%	(2) 4%
Eastern Ukrainian <sup>345</sup>	(2) 5.6%	(1) 2%
Other RT platforms	-	(3) 6%

Table U6-16: Other media sources by ownership in U6. (“N in this table refers to the number of media outlets mentioned in the articles as sources. It is higher than the number of ‘Other media’ sources specified in the previous table because that counted the number of articles that referred to other media as sources, not all instances of these references, of which there were often more than one in articles).

### Sources per article – U6

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=23	Russian sample (cases), % N=58
Single source	(9) 39.1%	(44) 75.9%
Two or more sources	(14) 60.9%	(14) 24.1%

Table U6-17: Articles that refer to one or two or more sources in U6.

### Articles that refer to one source – U6

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=9	Russian sample (cases), % N=44
Other media & news agencies	(6) 66.6%	(31) 70.4%
Own reporter or interview	(1) 11.1%	(4) 9%
Social media	-	(1) 2.3%
Expert	-	(1) 2.3%
Other	-	(1) 2.3%
No specified sources	(2) 22.2%	(6) 13.6%

<sup>345</sup> Media coded as Eastern Ukrainian are new pro-separatist media founded in eastern Ukraine since the start of the conflict, for example the official insurgent ‘Novorossiya’ news agency.

Table U6-18: Sources in articles that refer to one source. N in this table refers to the number of articles that only refer to one source.

*Russian actors*

**Russian actors in articles – U6**

	<b>English sample (cases), % N=23</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N=56</b>
Articles that quote Russian actors	(19) 82.6%	(16) 72.4%
Articles that mention Russian actors	(15) 65.2%	(21) 36.2%

Table U6-19: Presence of quoted and mentioned Russian actors in articles in U6.

**Russian actors – U6**

<b>Actors</b>	<b>English sample</b>		<b>Russian sample</b>	
	<b>Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 23</b>	<b>Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N =22</b>	<b>Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 17</b>	<b>Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N =29</b>
President Putin and spokesman Peskov	(5) 21.7% [26.3%]	(6) 18.2% [26.1%]	(3) 17.6% [18.8%]	(8) 27.6% [38.1%]
Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergei Lavrov	(3) 13% [15.8%]	(3) 13.6% [20%]	(1) 5.9% [6.3%]	(1) 3.4% [4.8%]
Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokeswoman Maria Zakharova	-	-	-	-
Other government officials	(14) 60.9% [73.7%]	(4) 18.2% [26.7%]	(8) 47.1% [50%]	(5) 17.2% [23.8%]
Military	-	(2) 9.1% [13.3%]	-	(9) 31% [42.9%]
Non-government opposition	-	-	-	-
Experts	-	-	(4) 23.5% [25%]	(2) 6.9% [9.5%]
Activists	-	-	-	-
Other (specify)	(1) 4.3% [5.3%]	(1) 4.5% [6.7%]	(1) 5.9% [6.3%]	(4) 13.8% [19%]

Table U6-20: Quoted and mentioned Russian actors in U6. (N in this table refers to the number of actors quoted or mentioned in each group. The number is different from the number of articles in the previous table because some articles quote and mention more than one actor)

In the English sample the quoted Other Russian actor was RT reporter Murad Gadziev, in the Russian sample it was Chechen fighter Isa Munayev. The mentioned Other actor in the English sample were Russian journalists and Russian people as a group, and in the Russian sample they were RT journalists, Russian gas company Gazprom, Chechen fighters, Russian volunteers fighting in eastern Ukraine and Russians kidnapped in Sudan.

*Ukrainian actors*

**Ukrainian actors in articles – U6**

	<b>English sample (cases), % N=23</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N=58</b>
Articles that quote Ukrainian actors	(15) 65.2%	(35) 60.3%
Articles that mention Ukrainian actors	(23) 100%	(55) 94.8%

Table U6-21: Presence of quoted and mentioned Ukrainian actors in articles in U6.

**Ukrainian actors – U6**

<b>Actors</b>	<b>English sample</b>		<b>Russian sample</b>	
	<b>Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 29</b>	<b>Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N =70</b>	<b>Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 50</b>	<b>Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N =155</b>
President Poroshenko <sup>346</sup>	(4) 13.8% [26.7%]	(10) 14.3% [43.5%]	(4) 8% [11.4%]	(20) 12.9% [36.4%]
President Yanukovich	-	-	-	-
Other government officials (specify)	(5) 17.2% [33.3%]	(13) 18.6% [56.5%]	(10) 20% [28.6%]	(22) 14.2% [40%]
Military	(5) 17.2% [33.3%]	(13) 18.6% [56.5%]	(9) 18% [25.7%]	(48) 31% [87.3%]
Insurgents in Eastern Ukraine	(11) 37.9% [73.3%]	(18) 25.7% [78.3%]	(20) 40% [57.1%]	(37) 23.9% [67.3%]
Experts	-	-	-	(1) 0.6% [1.8%]
Activists	-	-	-	-
Eyewitnesses	(1) 3.4% [6.7%]	(1) 1.4% [4.3%]	(2) 4% [5.7%]	-
Other (specify)	(3) 10.3% [20%]	(15) 21.4% [65.2%]	(5) 10% [14.3%]	(27) 17.4% [49.1%]

Table U6-22: Quoted and mentioned Ukrainian actors in U5. (N in this table refers to the number of actors quoted or mentioned in each group. The number is different from the number of articles in the previous table because some articles quote and mention more than one actor)

<sup>346</sup> Including before his election as a president and times as an MP.

In the coding schedule there was an additional answer that prompted the coder to specify the name and/or the job title of the ‘Other’ Ukrainian government officials. In this event all Ukrainian officials can be seen as united in the sense that even the pro-Russian officials are against the war in eastern Ukraine and do not side with the insurgents. Thus, this group was not categorised further. Further the coding schedule allowed for input of additional information in the ‘Other’ Ukrainian actors category.

### Other Ukrainian actors – U6

Actors	English sample		Russian sample	
	Quoted (cases), %, N = 4	Mentioned (cases), %, N = 31	Quoted (cases), %, N = 6	Mentioned (cases), %, N = 35
General public	(1) 25%	(11) 35.5%	(2) 33.3%	(14) 40%
Relatives of Ukrainian soldiers	-	(3) 9.7%	(1) 16.7%	(5) 14.3%
Journalists	-	(2) 6.5%	-	-
Public figures	(1) 25%	(2) 6.5%	-	-
Victims of conflict, injured & killed civilians	-	(6) 19.4%	-	(6) 17.1%
Ukrainian refugees	-	(1) 3.2%	-	(1) 2.9%
Right Sector	(1) 25%	-	(2) 33.3%	(7) 20%
Volunteer battalions	-	(4) 12.9%	-	(2) 5.7%
Police, border guards	-	(2) 6.5%	-	-
Specialists on the topic <sup>347</sup>	(1) 25%	-	-	-
Business representatives			(1) 16.7%	-

Table U6-23: Quoted and mentioned ‘other’ Ukrainian actors in English and Russian samples in U6. (N here stands for the overall amount of quoted and mentioned actors in each group. This number is different from the number of ‘Other Ukrainian actors’ category counted in table U6-22 because that table counted texts that quote and mention this actor group while this table counts the individual actors, which are often quoted and mentioned more than once in one text.)

### Foreign actors

### Foreign actors in articles – U6

	English sample (cases), % N= 23	Russian sample (cases), % N= 58

<sup>347</sup> Not referred to in the text as experts.

Articles that quote foreign actors	(13) 56.5%	(17) 29.3%
Articles that mention foreign actors	(17) 73.9%	(26) 44.8%

Table U6-24: Presence of quoted and mentioned foreign actors in articles in U6. The coding manual specifies that all actors not from Ukraine or Russia are considered 'foreign' for the purposes of this analysis.

### Foreign actors – U6

Actors	English sample		Russian sample	
	Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 17	Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 32	Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 17	Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 34
Barack Obama	-	(2) 9.4% [17.6%]	-	(2) 5.9% [7.7%]
Donald Trump	-	-	-	-
Marine Le Pen	-	-	-	-
Recep Erdogan	-	-	-	-
Other foreign officials (specify)	(7) 41.2% [53.8%]	(14) 43.8% [82.4%]	(8) 47.1% [47.1%]	(12) 35.3% [46.2%]
IS	-	(1) 3.1% [5.9%]	-	-
International organisations	(4) 23.5% [30.8%]	(9) 28.1% [52.9%]	(6) 35.3% [35.3%]	(14) 41.2% [53.8%]
Experts	-	-	(2) 11.8% [11.8%]	-
Activists	-	-	-	-
Other (specify)	(4) 23.5% [30.8%]	(5) 15.6% [29.4%]	(1) 5.9% [5.9%]	(6) 17.6% [23.1%]

Table U6-25: Quoted and mentioned foreign actors in U6. (N in this table refers to the number of actors quoted or mentioned in each group. The number is different from the number of articles in the previous table because some articles quote and mention more than one actor)

### Other foreign officials – U6

Actors	English sample		Russian sample	
	Quoted (cases), %, N = 10	Mentioned (cases), %, N = 31	Quoted (cases), %, N = 11	Mentioned (cases), %, N = 19
US	(6) 60%	(7) 22.6%	(6) 54.5%	(4) 21.1%
Angela Merkel	(1) 10%	(10) 32.3%	-	(5) 26.3%
Germany	(1) 10%	-	-	-
France	(1) 10%	(9) 29%	(1) 9.1%	(5) 26.3%
Latvia	-	(1) 3.2%	-	-
UK	(1) 10%	(2) 6.5%	(3) 27.3%	(1) 5.3%
Sudan	-	-	-	(2) 10.5%
South Ossetia	-	-	-	(1) 5.3%
Kazakhstan	-	-	(1) 9.1%	-

Hungary	-	(1) 3.2%	-	(1) 5.3%
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Table U6-26: Quoted and mentioned foreign officials in U6. (N in this table refers to the number of actors quoted or mentioned in each group. The number is different from the number of articles in the previous table because some articles quote and mention more than one actor.)

Among quoted ‘Other’ actors in the English sample is German media watchdog, journalists, former MI6 chief John Sawers, and political analyst Alexander Clackson, and in the Russian sample quoted ‘Other’ actor is a journalist. Among mentioned ‘Other’ actors in the English sample are American intelligence services, journalists (2 times), Russian-speaking minorities in foreign countries, and foreign mercenaries, and in the Russian sample mentioned ‘Other’ actors are journalists, peacekeepers (2 times), foreign military instructors, foreign military, business representatives, leaders of tribes in Sudan, and the Dutch media regulator.

## U7

### The Battle of Avdiivka.

**Date of event: 29 January - 4 February 2017; analysed period: 26 January 2017 – 7 February 2017.**

Articles in English: 11

Articles in Russian: 51

#### *Length of text*

#### Length of text – U7

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=11	Russian sample (cases), % N=51
100-300 words	-	(44) 86.3%
300-600 words	(6) 54.5%	(2) 3.9%
601 words and more	(5) 45.5%	(5) 9.8%

Table U7-1: Length of texts in U7.

#### *Topic*

#### Topics – U7

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % [percent of cases] N=12	Russian sample (cases), % [percent of cases] N=62
Military confrontation/clashes, warfare	(8) 66.7% [72.7%]	(27) 43.5% [52.9%]
International relations/diplomacy	(3) 25% [27.3%]	(21) 33.9% [41.2%]
Internal affairs of a country (specify)	-	(6) 9.7% [17.2%]
Humanitarian issues	(1) 8.3%	(5) 8.1% [9.8%]
Accident	-	-



Other (specify)	-	(3) 4.8% [5.9%]
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Table U7-2: Topics in U7. (N in this table refers to the overall number of topics selected for the texts in each sample. N is higher than number of articles because up to two topics were allowed to be selected per each article. The total percent sum of percent of cases is higher than 100% for the same reason.)

In the Russian sample articles coded as Internal affairs were all focused on Ukraine. Articles coded as 'Other' were focused on truce negotiations.

### *Descriptions of Ukraine*

#### **Descriptions of Ukraine – U7**

	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	11	(11) 100%	-	100%
Russian sample	51	(37) 72.5%	(14) 27.5%	100%

Table U7-3: Articles in English and Russian samples with and without descriptions of Ukraine in U7.

#### **Descriptions of Ukrainian government– U7**

<b>Adjectives</b>	<b>English sample (cases), % N=20</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N=20</b>
Ukrainian <i>Украинский</i>	(8) 40%	(14) 70%
Kiev <i>Киевский</i>	(4) 20%	(4) 20%
Today's, current <i>Нынешний</i>	(2) 10%	(2) 10%
New <i>Новый</i>	(4) 20%	-
Poroshenko's	(2) 10%	-

Table U7-4: Descriptions of the Ukrainian government in U7. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions.)

#### **Descriptions of Ukrainian army – U7**

<b>Adjectives</b>	<b>English sample (cases), % N=18</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N=21</b>
Ukrainian <i>Украинский</i>	(10) 55.5%	(18) 85.7%
Kiev <i>Киевский</i>	(6) 33.3%	-
Government <i>Правительственный</i>	(2) 11.11%	-
Mighty <i>Мощный</i>	-	(1) 4.7%
Modern	-	(1) 4.7%

<i>Современный</i>		
Controlled by Poroshenko <i>Подконтрольный</i> ( <i>Порошенко</i> )	-	(1) 4.7%

Table U7-5: Descriptions of Ukrainian army in U7. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions.)

### Descriptions of eastern Ukraine – U7

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=20	Russian sample (cases), % N=7
Eastern/ south-eastern <i>Восточный/ юго-восточный</i>	(11) 55%	-
Rebel-controlled <i>Охваченный войной/ конфликтом, раздираемый войной</i>	(2) 10%	-
Rebellious	(2) 10%	
Controlled by Kiev/Ukrainian forces, Kiev-held <i>Контролируемый киевскими властями/ украинскими силами</i>	(3) 15%	(5) 71.4%
Controlled by self-proclaimed republic <i>Находящийся под контролем самопровозглашенной республики</i>	-	(2) 28.6%
Ukrainian	(1) 5%	
Embattled	(1) 5%	

Table U7-6: Descriptions of eastern Ukraine in U7. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions.)

### Descriptions of military action

#### Descriptions of military action – U7

	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	11	(8) 72.7%	(3) 27.3%	100%
Russian sample	51	(9) 17.6%	(42) 82.4%	100%

Table U7-7: Articles in English and Russian samples with and without descriptions of military action in U7.

#### Descriptions of military action – U7

Adjectives	English sample (cases), %	Russian sample (cases), %
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	<b>N=9</b>	<b>N=15</b>
Massive, full scale <i>Массовый, массированный, полномасштабный</i>	-	(3) 20%
Armed	-	(1) 6.6%
Street <i>Уличный</i>	-	(1) 6.6%
Sharp (dangerous) <i>Острый, обострившийся</i>	-	(3) 20%
So-called anti-terrorist Так называемый антитеррористический	-	(1) 6.6%
Military <i>Военный, боевой</i>	-	(3) 20%
Bloody	(4) 44.4%	-
Intense, intensified <i>Ожесточенный</i>	(2) 22.2%	-
Ukrainian	(3) 33.3%	-
Small but not victorious <i>Маленький пусть и не победоносный</i>	-	(1) 6.6%
Crazy <i>Сумасшедший</i>		(1) 6.6%
Drawn-out, long Продолжительный	-	(1) 6.6%

Table U7-8: Descriptions of military action in U7. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions of protests. It is different from the overall number of articles that feature descriptions because some articles contain more than 1 description.)

In addition, the Euromaidan protests of 2014 were described in this event's English sample as armed (4 times) and nationalist-driven (2 times).

#### *Descriptions of insurgents*

##### **Descriptions of insurgents – U7**

	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	11	(10) 90.9%	(1) 9.1%	100%
Russian sample	51	(20) 39.2%	(31) 60.8%	100%

Table U7-9. Articles in English and Russian samples with and without descriptions of insurgents in U7.

There were no descriptions of insurgents as force in the Russian sample, however, there were plenty of descriptions of the insurgent 'states' of DPR and LPR, available in the table U7-11.

##### **Descriptions of insurgents – U7**

<b>Adjectives</b>	<b>English sample (cases), %</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), %</b>

	<b>N=recount everything &amp; percent</b>	<b>N=22</b>
Anti-Kiev	(5) 50%	-
Local	(2) 20%	-
Anti-government	(2) 20%	-
Rebel	(1) 10%	-
Unrecognised Непризнанный	-	(2) 9.1%
Self-proclaimed Самопровозглашённый	(3)	(20) 90.9%

Table U7-10: Descriptions of insurgents in U6. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions of insurgents. It is different from the overall number of articles that feature descriptions because some articles contain more than 1 description.)

### Descriptions of insurgent ‘states’ – U7

<b>Adjectives</b>	<b>English sample (cases), % N=3</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N=23</b>
Self-proclaimed <i>Самопровозглашённый</i>	(3) 100%	(20) 86.9%
Unrecognised <i>Непризнанный</i>	-	(2) 8.6%
People’s <i>Народный</i>	-	(1) 4.5%

Table U7-11: Descriptions of insurgent ‘states’ and their authorities in Eastern Ukraine in U7. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions.)

### Descriptions of Russia

#### Descriptions of Russia – U7

	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	11	(1) 9.1%	(10) 90.9%	100%
Russian sample	51	-	(51) 100%	100%

Table U7-12: Articles in English and Russian samples with and without descriptions of Russia in U7.

The only description of Russia in this event, in the English sample, is ‘Russian’.

### Descriptions of other countries

#### Descriptions of other countries – U7

	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	11	(1) 9.1%	(10) 90.9%	100%
Russian sample	51	(6) 11.8%	(45) 88.2%	100%

Table U7-13: Articles in English and Russian samples in U7 with and without descriptions of countries other than Russia and Ukraine.

In the English sample there is a description of the German press as biased. In the Russian sample there are 2 country-based descriptions, a description of the Trump administration and of a US Un ambassadors as ‘new<sup>348</sup>’, description of an American Ukrainian community as ‘anti-Soviet<sup>349</sup>’, description of some American politicians as ‘working to bring attention to the hardships of Ukraine<sup>350</sup>’, descriptions of US senators as ‘connected to the Ukrainian lobby<sup>351</sup>’ (2 times), description of an American congressman as ‘promoting strengthening of the relationship with Ukraine<sup>352</sup>’, description of the UK as the ‘main ally of the US<sup>353</sup>’.

### Sources

#### Sources – U7

Sources	English sample (cases), %, [% of cases] N=21	Russian sample (cases), %, [% of cases] N=73
Other media or news agencies (specify)	(6) 28.6% [54.5%]	(31) 42.5% [60.8%]
Own correspondent or interview	(5) 23.8% [45.5%]	(10) 13.7% [19.6%]
Social media	(2) 9.5% [18.2%]	(7) 9.6% [13.7%]
Russian army or government	(3) 14.3% [27.3%]	(2) 2.7% [3.9%]
Ukrainian army or government	(1) 4.8% [9.1%]	(10) 13.7% [19.6%]
Russian sources not affiliated with the government	-	-
Ukrainian sources not affiliated with the government	-	(4) 5.5% [7.8%]
Other countries’ officials (specify)	-	(1) 1.4% [2%]
International organisations (specify)	(2) 9.5% [18.2%]	(1) 1.4% [2%]
Experts	-	(2) 2.7% [3.9%]
Eyewitnesses	(1) 4.8% [9.1%]	-
Activists	-	-
Bloggers	-	-
No specified sources	(1) 4.8% [9.1%]	(2) 2.7% [3.9%]

<sup>348</sup> In Russian: новый

<sup>349</sup> In Russian: антисоветский

<sup>350</sup> In Russian: не жалевший сил для привлечения внимания к трудному положению Украины

<sup>351</sup> In Russian: связанный с украинским лобби

<sup>352</sup> In Russian: выступающий за усиление связей с Украиной

<sup>353</sup> In Russian: основной союзник США

Other (specify)	-	(3) 4.1% [5.9%]
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Table U7-14: Sources in U7. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of sources appearing in the articles. Some articles referred to more than one source thus the percent of cases is higher than 100%).

‘Other countries’ officials’ sources in the Russian sample was a State Department representative. ‘International organisations’ source in the English sample was OSCE (2 times), which was also referenced in the Russian sample once. ‘Other’ sources in the Russian sample were journalists (2 times) and a Ukrainian family.

#### Other media as sources – U7

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=12	Russian sample (cases), % N=43
Russian	(8) 66.7%	(25) 58.1%
Ukrainian	(2) 16.7%	(12) 27.9%
International	(1) 8.3%	(4) 9.3%
Eastern Ukrainian <sup>354</sup>	(1) 8.3%	(1) 2.3%
Other RT platforms	-	1) 2.3%

Table U7-15: Other media sources by ownership in U7. (“N in this table refers to the number of media outlets mentioned in the articles as sources. It is higher than the number of ‘Other media’ sources specified in the previous table because that counted the number of articles that referred to other media as sources, not all instances of these references, of which there were often more than one in articles).

#### Sources per article – U7

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=11	Russian sample (cases), % N=51
Single source	(5) 45.5%	(37) 72.5%
Two or more sources	(6) 54.5%	(14) 27.5%

Table U7-16: Articles that refer to one or two or more sources in U7.

#### Articles that refer to one source – U7

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=5	Russian sample (cases), % N=37
Other media & news agencies	(3) 60%	(28) 75.6%
Own reporter or interview	(1) 30%	(2) 5.4%
Social media	-	(1) 2.7%
Other countries’ officials		(1) 2.7%
Ukrainian government or military	-	(2) 5.4%
International organisation	-	(1) 2.7%
No specified sources	(1) 30%	(2) 5.4%

<sup>354</sup> Media coded as Eastern Ukrainian are new pro-separatist media founded in eastern Ukraine since the start of the conflict, for example the official insurgent ‘Novorossiya’ news agency.

Table U7-17: Sources in articles that refer to one source. N in this table refers to the number of articles that only refer to one source.

*Russian actors*

**Russian actors in articles – U7**

	<b>English sample (cases), % N=11</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N=51</b>
Articles that quote Russian actors	(7) 63.6%	(13) 25.5%
Articles that mention Russian actors	(5) 54.5%	(14) 27.5%

Table U7-18: Presence of quoted and mentioned Russian actors in articles in U7.

**Russian actors – U7**

<b>Actors</b>	<b>English sample</b>		<b>Russian sample</b>	
	<b>Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 12</b>	<b>Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 6</b>	<b>Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 14</b>	<b>Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 29</b>
President Putin and spokesman Peskov	(3) 25% [42.9%]	(2) 33.3% [40%]	(3) 21.4% [23.1%]	(7) 46.7% [50%]
Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergei Lavrov	(1) 8.3% [14.3%]	-	-	(1) 6.7% [7.1%]
Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokeswoman Maria Zakharova	(1) 8.3% [14.3%]	-	-	(1) 6.7% [7.1%]
Other government officials	(4) 33.3% [57.1%]	(1) 16.7% [20%]	(8) 57.1% [61.5%]	(3) 20% [21.4%]
Military	(1) 8.3% [14.3%]	-	-	(1) 6.7% [7.1%]
Non-government opposition	-	-	-	-
Experts	-	-	(3) 21.4% [23.1%]	-
Activists	-	-	-	-
Other (specify)	(2) 16.7% [28.6%]	(3) 50% [60%]	-	(2) 13.3% [14.3%]

Table U7-19: Quoted and mentioned Russian actors in U7. (N in this table refers to the number of actors quoted or mentioned in each group. The number is different from the number of articles in the previous table because some articles quote and mention more than one actor.)

In the English sample the quoted Other Russian actors were a gas and oil company and a journalist. The mentioned Other Russian actors were journalists in all cases in both samples.

*Ukrainian actors*

**Ukrainian actors in articles – U7**

	<b>English sample (cases), % N=11</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N=51</b>
Articles that quote Ukrainian actors	(7) 63.6%	(33) 64.7%
Articles that mention Ukrainian actors	(11) 100%	(47) 92.2%

Table U7-20: Presence of quoted and mentioned Ukrainian actors in articles in U7.

**Ukrainian actors – U7**

<b>Actors</b>	<b>English sample</b>		<b>Russian sample</b>	
	<b>Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 8</b>	<b>Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N =48</b>	<b>Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 40</b>	<b>Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N =93</b>
President Poroshenko <sup>355</sup>	-	(6) 12.5% [54.5%]	(4) 10% [12.1%]	(18) 19.4% [38.3%]
President Yanukovich	-	(3) 6.3% [27.3]	-	-
Other government officials (specify)	(4) 50% [57.1%]	(10) 20.8% [90.9%]	(10) 25% [30.3%]	(10) 10.8% [21.3%]
Military	(2) 25% [28.6%]	(10) 20.8% [90.9%]	(5) 12.5% [15.2%]	(29) 31.2% [61.7%]
Insurgents in Eastern Ukraine	(1) 12.5% [14.3%]	(10) 20.8% [90.9%]	(17) 42.5% [51.5%]	(14) 15.1% [29.8%]
Experts	-	-	-	-
Activists	-	-	-	-
Eyewitnesses	(1) 12.5% [14.3%]	-	(1) 2.5% [3%]	-
Other (specify)	-	(9) 18.8% [81.8%]	(3) 7.5% [9.1%]	(22) 23.7% [46.8%]

Table U7-21: Quoted and mentioned Ukrainian actors in U7. (N in this table refers to the number of actors quoted or mentioned in each group. The number is different from the number of articles in the previous table because some articles quote and mention more than one actor)

In the coding schedule there was an additional answer that prompted the coder to specify the name and/or the job title of the ‘Other’ Ukrainian government officials. In this event all Ukrainian officials can be seen as united in the sense that even the pro-Russian officials are

<sup>355</sup> Including before his election as a president and times as an MP.



against the war in eastern Ukraine and do not side with the insurgents. Thus, this group was not categorised further. Further the coding schedule allowed for input of additional information in the ‘Other’ Ukrainian actors category.

### Other Ukrainian actors – U6

Actors	English sample		Russian sample	
	Quoted (cases), %, N = 0	Mentioned (cases), %, N = 17	Quoted (cases), %, N = 4	Mentioned (cases), %, N = 37
General public	-	(7) 41.2%	(2) 50%	(23) 62.2%
Journalists	-	-	(2) 50%	-
Victims of conflict, injured & killed civilians	-	(4) 23.5%	-	(9) 24.3%
Ukrainian refugees	-	-	-	(2) 5.4%
Right Sector	-	-	(2) 33.3%	(2) 5.4%
Volunteer battalions	-	(5) 29.4%	-	(1) 2.7%
Oligarchs	-	(1) 5.9%	-	-

Table U7-22: Quoted and mentioned ‘other’ Ukrainian actors in English and Russian samples in U7. (N here stands for the overall amount of quoted and mentioned actors in each group. This number is different from the number of ‘Other Ukrainian actors’ category counted in table U7-21 because that table counted texts that quote and mention this actor group while this table counts the individual actors, which are often quoted and mentioned more than once in one text.)

### Foreign actors

### Foreign actors in articles – U7

	English sample (cases), % N= 11	Russian sample (cases), % N= 51
Articles that quote foreign actors	(4) 36.4%	(10) 19.6%
Articles that mention foreign actors	(6) 54.5%	(24) 47.1%

Table U7-23: Presence of quoted and mentioned foreign actors in articles in U7. The coding manual specifies that all actors not from Ukraine or Russia are considered ‘foreign’ for the purposes of this analysis.

### Foreign actors – U7

Actors	English sample		Russian sample	
	Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 5	Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 13	Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 11	Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 40
Barack Obama	-	-	-	(1) 2.5% [4.2%]

Donald Trump	-	(3) 23.1% [50%]	(1) 9.1% [10%]	(8) 20% [33.3%]
Marine Le Pen	-	-	-	-
Recep Erdogan	-	-	-	-
Other foreign officials (specify)	-	(3) 23.1% [50%]	(5) 45.5% [50%]	(11) 27.5% [45.8%]
IS	-	-	-	(1) 2.5% [4.2%]
International organisations	(4) 80% [100%]	(4) 30.8% [66.7%]	(3) 27.3% [30%]	(13) 32.5% [54.2%]
Experts	-	-	-	-
Activists	-	-	-	-
Other (specify)	(1) 20% [25%]	(3) 23.1% [50%]	(2) 18.2% [20%]	(6) 15% [25%]

Table U7-24: Quoted and mentioned foreign actors in U7. (N in this table refers to the number of actors quoted or mentioned in each group. The number is different from the number of articles in the previous table because some articles quote and mention more than one actor)

### Other foreign officials – U7

Actors	English sample		Russian sample	
	Quoted (cases), %, N = 0	Mentioned (cases), %, N = 5	Quoted (cases), %, N = 6	Mentioned (cases), %, N = 14
US	-	(1) 20%	(4) 66.6%	(9) 64.4%
Angela Merkel	-	(1) 20%	(1) 16.6%	(2) 14.2%
Germany	-	(1) 20%		(2) 14.2%
France	-	(1) 20%	-	-
UK	-	-	(1) 16.6%	(1) 7.1%
Hungary	-	(1) 20%	-	-

Table U7-15: Quoted and mentioned foreign officials in U7. (N in this table refers to the number of actors quoted or mentioned in each group. The number is different from the number of articles in the previous table because some articles quote and mention more than one actor.)

## Syria

### S1

#### First Russian airstrikes in Syria.

Date of event: 30 September; period analysed: 27 September - 3 October 2015.

Articles in English: 29

Articles in Russian: 71

*Length of text*

### Length of text – S1

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=29	Russian sample (cases), % N=71

100-300 words	(6) 20.7%	(32) 45.1%
300-600 words	(15) 51.7%	(31) 43.7%
601 words and more	(8) 27.6%	(8) 11.3%

Table S1-1: Length of texts in S1.

*Topic*

**Topics – S1**

<b>Adjectives</b>	<b>English sample (cases), % [percent of cases] N=38</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % [percent of cases] N=79</b>
Military confrontation/clashes, warfare	(17) 44.7% [58.6%]	(19) 24.1% [26.8%]
International relations/diplomacy	(12) 31.6% [41.4%]	(53) 67.1% [74.6%]
Internal affairs of a country (specify)	(3) 7.9% [10.3%]	-
Humanitarian issues	(4) 10.5% [13.8%]	(3) 3.8% [4.2%]
Accident	-	-
Other (specify)	(2) 5.3% [6.9%]	(4) 5.1% [5.6%]

Table S1-2: Topics in S1. (N in this table refers to the overall number of topics selected for the texts in each sample. N is higher than number or articles because up to two topics were allowed to be selected per each article. The total percent sum of percent of cases is higher than 100% for the same reason.)

In the English sample articles coded as ‘Internal affairs’ focused on Syria in two instances and on Russia in one instance. Of the articles coded as ‘Other’ in the English sample one focused on media news and another was a short human-interest story in which small children explained what war means. In the Russian sample of the ‘Other’ articles two focused on Russian weapon characteristics, one focused on business/economy news and one provided background details on IS.

*Description of Syria*

**Descriptions of Syria – S1**

	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	29	(19) 65.5 %	(10) 34.5%	100%
Russian sample	71	(37) 52.11 %	(44) 47.9%	100%

Table S1-3: Articles in English and Russian samples with and without descriptions of Syria in S1.

**Descriptions of Syrian government– S1**

<b>Adjectives</b>	<b>English sample (cases), % N=17</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N=40</b>
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Syrian <i>Сирийский</i>	(12) 70.6%	(26) 65%
Legitimate, legal <i>Легитимный, легальный, законный</i>	(4) 23.5%	(10) 25%
Damascus	(1) 5.9%	-
Official <i>Официальный</i>	-	(2) 5%
Today's <i>Нынешний</i>	-	(2) 5%

Table S1-4: Descriptions of Syrian government in S1. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions.)

### Descriptions of president Assad– S1

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=6	Russian sample (cases), % N=14
Syrian <i>Сирийский</i>	(5) 83.3%	(7) 50%
Legitimate, democratically elected <i>Избранный демократическим процессом</i>	(1) 16.7%	(3) 21.5%
'Bad' <i>«Плохой»</i>	-	(1) 7.1%
Weakening <i>Слабеющий</i>	-	(1) 7.1%
Today's <i>Нынешний</i>	-	(2) 14.3%

Table S1-5: Descriptions of president Bashar Assad in S1. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions.)

### Descriptions of Syrian army – S1

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=21	Russian sample (cases), % N=46
Syrian <i>Сирийский</i>	(9) 42.9%	(24) 52.1%
'The only controllable military structure' <i>Единственная управляемая военная структура</i>	-	(1) 2.2%
Government <i>Правительственный</i>	(2) 9.6%	(19) 41.3%
Legitimate, the only legal <i>Легитимный</i>	(1) 4.7%	(2) 4.4%
National	(3) 14.2%	-

Regular	(1) 4.7%	-
Struggling	(3) 14.2%	-
President Assad's	(2) 9.6%	-

Table S1-6: Descriptions of Syrian army in S1. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions.)

Among other descriptions appearing once are the descriptions of the White Helmets group, which is described in the Russian sample as 'the biggest NGO in Syria<sup>356</sup>'. In the English language sample this event sees the first appearance and descriptions of the Syrian Observatory for Human rights (SOHR), which is described as 'London-based' (2 times), 'shady', 'unsourced' and the founder described as 'distressed'.

### *Description of military action*

#### **Descriptions of military action – S1**

	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	29	(21) 72.4%	(8) 27.6 %	100%
Russian sample	71	(22) 30.9%	(49) 69.1%	100%

Table S1-7: Articles in English and Russian samples with and without descriptions of military action in S1.

#### **Descriptions of military action – S1**

<b>Adjectives</b>	<b>English sample (cases), % N=23</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N=30</b>
Russian <sup>357</sup> <i>Российский</i>	(9) 39.2%	(3) 10%
Precise, pointed <sup>358</sup> <i>Точечный</i>	-	(2) 6.6%
Anti-terrorist	(8) 34.7%	-
Coordinated with Damascus <sup>359</sup>	(1) 4.3%	-
Requested by Syrian authorities <sup>360</sup>	(1) 4.3%	-
Civil (war) <i>Гражданская (война)</i>	(2) 8.8%	(4) 13.3%
Unilateral <sup>361</sup>	(1) 4.3%	-
Illegal <sup>362</sup> <i>Незаконный</i>	-	(2) 6.6%
Syrian <i>Сирийский</i>	(1) 4.3%	(13) 43.3%

<sup>356</sup> In Russian: крупнейших неправительственных организаций

<sup>357</sup> These particular adjectives are used in relation to the Russia's campaign in Syria

<sup>358</sup> These particular adjectives are used in relation to the Russia's campaign in Syria

<sup>359</sup> These particular adjectives are used in relation to the Russia's campaign in Syria

<sup>360</sup> These particular adjectives are used in relation to the Russia's campaign in Syria

<sup>361</sup> These particular adjectives are used in relation to the Western coalition's campaign in Syria

<sup>362</sup> These particular adjectives are used in relation to the Western coalition's campaign in Syria

Tragic, bloody, violent <i>Трагический, ожесточенный, кровавый</i>	-	(5) 16.6%
Middle Eastern <i>Ближневосточный</i>	-	(1) 3.3%

Table S1-8: Descriptions of military action in S1. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions of protests. It is different from the overall number of articles that feature descriptions because some articles contain more than 1 description.)

### Description of Syrian opposition

#### Descriptions of Syrian opposition – S1

	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	29	(20) 69%	(9) 31%	100%
Russian sample	71	(20) 28.1%	(51) 71.9%	100%

Table S1-7: Articles in English and Russian samples with and without descriptions of military action in S1.

#### Descriptions of Syrian opposition – S1

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=33	Russian sample (cases), % N=36
Syrian <i>Сирийский</i>	(6) 18.2%	(11) 30.6%
Terrorist, extremist <i>Террористический, экстремистский</i>	(3) 9%	(7) 19.5%
So-called opposition/ So-called moderate opposition <i>Так называемая оппозиция, так называемая умеренная оппозиция</i>	(4) 12.2%	(9) 25%
Al Qaeda affiliated	(4) 12.1%	
Adjectives connecting opposition to the West <sup>363</sup>	(2) 66.1%	(2) 5.5%
Patriotic <i>Патриотическая</i>	-	(2) 5.5%
Illegitimate, illegal <i>Нелегитимный</i>	(1) 3%	(1) 2.7%
Armed <i>Вооруженный</i>	-	(1) 2.7%
Moderate <i>Умеренный</i>	(3) 9%	(1) 2.7%
Local <i>Местный</i>	-	(1) 2.7%

<sup>363</sup> Such as ‘trained by the US<sup>363</sup>’ ‘Western-backed’ and ‘prepared by American instructors. In Russian: подготовленный американскими инструкторами, обученный США.

Democratic <i>Демократическая</i>	(1) 3%	(1) 2.7%
Rebel	(6) 18.1%	-
Oppositional	(2) 6.1%	-
Militant	(1) 3%	-

Table S1-8: Descriptions of Syrian opposition groups in S1. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions of protests. It is different from the overall number of articles that feature descriptions because some articles contain more than 1 description.)

### Description of Russia

#### Descriptions of Russia – S1

	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	29	(24) 82.7%	(5) 17.3%	100%
Russian sample	71	(32) 45%	(39) 55%	100%

Table S1-9: Articles in English and Russian samples with and without descriptions of Russia in S1.

#### Descriptions of Russia – S1

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=81	Russian sample (cases), % N=91
Russian <i>Российский</i>	(79) 97.5%	(88) 96.7%
Тор <sup>364</sup> Точечный	(1) 1.2%	-
Modern	(1) 1.2%	-
“Key player” (of international relations) <i>Ключевой</i>	-	(2) 2.2%
‘Only’ (country that coordinates with the Syrian army) <i>Единственная (страна, координирующая действия с сирийской армией)</i>	-	(1) 1.1%

Table S1-10: Descriptions of Russia in S1. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions of protests. It is different from the overall number of articles that feature descriptions because some articles contain more than 1 description.)

### Description of other countries

#### Descriptions of other countries – S1

	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	29	(19) 65.5%	(10) 34.5%	100%

<sup>364</sup> These particular adjectives are used in relation to an armed forces official

Russian sample	71	(30) 42.2%	(41) 57.8%	100%
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Table S1-11: Articles in English and Russian samples in S1 with and without descriptions of countries other than Russia and Syria.

### Descriptions of other countries – S1

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=18	Russian sample (cases), % N= 18
Country-based adjectives <i>Прилагательные отсылающие к странам)</i>	(14) 77.7%	(17) 94.4%
Other	(4) 22.2%	(1) 5.6%

Table S1-12: Descriptions of countries other than Syria and Russia in S1. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions of Russia).

“Other” descriptions in the table above have all appeared once in the sample. In the Russian sample this description is ‘weakened<sup>365</sup>’ referring to Barack Obama. In the English sample the ‘Other’ descriptions referred to ‘peaceful London’, ‘War-torn Donetsk’, ‘well-known journalist’ and ‘quaint British neighbourhood’.

### Description of IS

#### Descriptions of IS – S1

	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	29	(13) 44.8%	(16) 55.2%	100%
Russian sample	71	(33) 46.4%	(38) 53.6%	100%

Table S1-11: Articles in English and Russian samples in S1 with and without descriptions of IS.

#### Descriptions of IS – S1

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=16	Russian sample (cases), % N= 60
Terrorist, radical <i>Террористический</i>	(10) 62.5%	(52) 86.6%
International <i>Международный</i>	-	(2) 3.3%
Adjectives identifying a connection to Islam (islamist, jihadist)	(4) 25%	(1) 1.6%
Well-equipped, armed	(1) 6.2%	(1) 1.6%
So-called	(1) 6.2%	-
Banned in Russia <i>Запрещенный в России</i>		(1) 1.6%
Richest		(1) 1.6%

<sup>365</sup> A word that in Russian refers to exhaustion and loss of all strengths. In Russian: обессиленный.



Богатейший		
Anti-government АНТИПРАВИТЕЛЬСТВЕННЫЙ		(1) 1.6%
Equipped with American weapons <i>Оснащенный американским оружием</i>		(1) 1.6%

Table S1-12: Descriptions of IS in S1. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions of Russia).

### Sources

#### Sources – S1

Sources	English sample (cases), %, [% of cases] N=44	Russian sample (cases), %, [% of cases] N=90
Other media or news agencies (specify)	(9) 20.5% [31%]	(22) 24.4% [31%]
Own correspondent or interview	(8) 18.2% [27.6%]	(24) 26.7% [33.8%]
Social media	(1) 2.3% [3.4%]	(2) 2.2% [2.8%]
Russian army or government	(12) 27.3% [41.4%]	(11) 12.2% [15.5%]
Syrian army or government	(2) 4.5% [6.9%]	(5) 5.6% [17%]
Russian sources not affiliated with the government	-	(1) 1.1% [1.4%]
Syrian sources not affiliated with the government	(1) 2.3% [3.4%]	(1) 1.1% [1.4%]
Other countries' officials (specify)	(1) 2.3% [3.4%]	(2) 2.2% [2.8%]
International organisations (specify)	-	(3) 3.3% [4.2%]
Experts	-	(4) 4.4% [5.6%]
Eyewitnesses	-	-
Activists	-	-
Bloggers	-	-
No specified sources	(4) 9.1% [13.8%]	(12) 13.3% [16.9%]
Other (specify)	(6) 13.6% [20.7%]	(3) 3.3% [4.2%]

Table S1-13: Sources in S1. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of sources appearing in the articles. Some articles referred to more than one source thus the percent of cases is higher than 100%).

'Other countries' officials' sources in the Russian sample were officials from Iraq and France, and in the English sample an official from Greece. 'Other' sources in the Russian sample were public figures (2 times) and religious leader, and in the English sample they

were political analysts (3 times), an NGO, general public, a specialist in the topic (not presented as an expert), founder of the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, and a former CIA officer.

### Other media as sources – S1

<b>Adjectives</b>	<b>English sample (cases), % N=19</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N=23</b>
Russian	(6) 31.6%	(13) 56.5%
Syrian	(2) 10.5%	-
International	(11) 57.9%	(6) 26.1%
Other RT platforms	-	(4) 17.4%

Table S1-14: Other media sources by ownership in S1 (“N in this table refers to the number of media outlets mentioned in the articles as sources. It is higher than the number of ‘Other media’ sources specified in the previous table because that counted the number of articles that referred to other media as sources, not all instances of these references, of which there were often more than one in articles).

### Sources per article – S1

<b>Adjectives</b>	<b>English sample (cases), % N=29</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N=71</b>
Single source	(18) 62%	(56) 78.8%
Two or more sources	(11) 38%	(15) 21.2%

Table S1-15: Articles that refer to one or two or more sources in S1.

### Articles that refer to one source – S1

<b>Adjectives</b>	<b>English sample (cases), % N=18</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N=56</b>
Other media & news agencies	(6) 33.3%	(18) 32.1%
Own reporter or interview	-	(6) 10.7%
Social media	-	(6) 10.7%
Russian government or military	(7) 38.3%	(7) 12.5%
Syrian government or military		(1) 1.7%
Other countries’ officials	(1) 5.5%	-
Expert	-	(4) 7.1%
No specified sources	(4) 22.2%	(12) 21.4%
Other	-	(2) 3.5%

Table S1-16: Sources in articles that refer to one source. N in this table refers to the number of articles that only refer to one source.

### *Russian actors*

### Russian actors in articles – S1

	<b>English sample (cases), % N=29</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N=71</b>
Articles that quote Russian actors	(20) 69%	(33) 46.5%
Articles that mention Russian actors	(23) 79.3%	(57) 80.3%

Table S1-17: Presence of quoted and mentioned Russian actors in articles in S1.

### Russian actors – S1

<b>Actors</b>	<b>English sample</b>		<b>Russian sample</b>	
	<b>Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 26</b>	<b>Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N =43</b>	<b>Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 36</b>	<b>Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N =86</b>
President Putin and spokesman Peskov	(10) 38.5% [50%]	(7) 16.3% [30.4%]	(10) 27.8% [30.3%]	(26) 30.2% [45.6%]
Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergei Lavrov	(2) 7.7% [10%]	(4) 9.3% [17.4%]	(6) 16.7% [18.2%]	(9) 10.5% [15.8%]
Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokeswoman Maria Zakharova	(3) 11.5% [15%]	-	(3) 8.3% [9.1%]	-
Other government officials	(8) 30.8% [40%]	(8) 18.6% [34.8%]	(13) 36.1% [39.4%]	(15) 17.4% [26.3%]
Military	(3) 11.5% [15%]	(20) 46.5%	(1) 2.8% [3%]	(35) 40.7% [61.4%]
Non-government opposition	-	-	-	-
Experts	-	-	(2) 5.6% [6.1%]	-
Activists	-	-	-	-
Other (specify)	-	(4) 9.3% [17.4%]	(1) 2.8% [3%]	(1) 1.2% [1.8%]

Table S1-18: Quoted and mentioned Russian actors in S1. (N in this table refers to the number of actors quoted or mentioned in each group. The number is different from the number of articles in the previous table because some articles quote and mention more than one actor)

In the Russian sample the quoted Other Russian actor was a religious leader. The mentioned Other Russian actors in the English sample were Russian IS recruits (3 times), Russian police and Russian Federal Penitentiary Service, and Russian peacekeepers. The mentioned Other actor in the Russian sample were Russian people as a nation.

### *Syrian actors*

### Syrian actors in articles – S1

	<b>English sample (cases), % N=29</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N=71</b>
Articles that quote Syrian actors	(8) 27.6%	(5) 7%
Articles that mention Syrian actors	(22) 75.9%	(56) 78.9%

Table S1-19: Presence of quoted and mentioned Syrian actors in articles in S1.

### Syrian actors –S1

<b>Actors</b>	<b>English sample</b>		<b>Russian sample</b>	
	<b>Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 8</b>	<b>Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N =63</b>	<b>Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 5</b>	<b>Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N =125</b>
President Bashar Assad	-	(14) 22.2% [63.6%]	(1) 20% [20%]	(29) 23.2% [51.8%]
Other government officials	(2) 25% [25%]	(11) 17.5% [50%]	(4) 80% [80%]	(31) 24.8% [55.4%]
Military	(1) 12.5% [12.5%]	(13) 20.6% [59.1%]	-	(20) 16% [35.7%]
Syrian opposition	(1) 12.5% [12.5%]	(13) 20.6% [59.1%]	-	(23) 18.4% [41.1%]
Experts	(1) 12.5% [12.5%]	-	-	-
White Helmets	(1) 12.5% [12.5%]	-	-	(2) 1.6% [3.6%]
Activists	-	-	-	-
Eyewitnesses	-	-	-	-
Other (specify)	(2) 25% [25%]	(12) 19% [54.5%]	-	(20) 16% [35.7%]

Table S1-20: Quoted and mentioned Syrian actors in S1. (N in this table refers to the number of actors quoted or mentioned in each group. The number is different from the number of articles in the previous table because some articles quote and mention more than one actor. Percent of cases adds up to a number higher than 100% because more than one actor can be quoted and mentioned in one article.)

### Other Syrian actors – S1

<b>Actors</b>	<b>English sample</b>		<b>Russian sample</b>	
	<b>Quoted (cases), %, N = 2</b>	<b>Mentioned (cases), %, N = 13</b>	<b>Quoted (cases), %, N =0</b>	<b>Mentioned (cases), %, N =20</b>
General public	(1) 50%	(11) 84.6%	-	(16) 80%

Syrian Observatory for Human rights	(1) 50%	(1) 7.7%	-	-
Refugees	-	(1) 7.7%	-	(4) 20%

Table S1-21: Quoted and mentioned ‘other’ Syrian actors in English and Russian samples in S1. (N here stands for the overall amount of quoted and mentioned actors in each group. This number is different from the number of ‘Other Ukrainian actors’ category counted in table S1-20 because that table counted texts that quote and mention this actor group while this table counts the individual actors, which are often quoted and mentioned more than once in one text.)

*Foreign actors*

**Foreign actors in articles – S1**

	<b>English sample (cases), % N= 29</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N= 71</b>
Articles that quote foreign actors	(9) 69%	(26) 36.6%
Articles that mention foreign actors	(28) 96.6%	(68) 95.8%

Table S1-22: Presence of quoted and mentioned foreign actors in articles in S1. The coding manual specifies that all actors not from Syria or Russia are considered ‘foreign’ for the purposes of this analysis.

**Foreign actors – S1**

<b>Actors</b>	<b>English sample</b>		<b>Russian sample</b>	
	<b>Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 12</b>	<b>Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N =63</b>	<b>Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 29</b>	<b>Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 118</b>
Barack Obama	(1) 8.3% [11.1%]	(5) 7.9% [17.9%]	(2) 6.9% [7.7%]	(14) 11.9% [20.6%]
Donald Trump	-	-	-	-
Marine Le Pen	-	-	(1) 3.4% [3.8%]	-
Recep Erdogan	-	(2) 3.2% [7.1%]	-	(1) 0.8% [1.5%]
Other foreign officials (specify)	(6) 50% [66.7%]	(13) 20.6% [46.4%]	(9) 31% [34.6%]	(26) 22% [38.2%]
IS	-	(22) 34.9% [78.6%]	-	(65) 52.5% [91.2%]
International organisations	-	(7) 11.1% [25%]	(5) 17.2% [19.2%]	(2) 1.7% [2.9%]
Experts	-	(1) 1.6% [3.6%]	(3) 10.3% [11.5%]	-
Activists	-	(1) 1.6% [3.6%]	-	-
Other (specify)	(5) 41.7% [55.6%]	(12) 19% [42.9%]	(9) 31% [34.6%]	(13) 11% [19.1%]

Table S1-23: Quoted and mentioned foreign actors in S1. (N in this table refers to the number of actors quoted or mentioned in each group. The number is different from the number of articles in the previous table because some articles quote and mention more than one actor)

### Other foreign officials – S1

Actors	English sample		Russian sample	
	Quoted (cases), %, N = 7	Mentioned (cases), %, N =19	Quoted (cases), %, N = 13	Mentioned (cases), %, N =47
US	(4) 57.1%	(10) 52.6%	(5) 38.5%	(13) 27.7%
Angela Merkel	-	-	-	(4) 8.5%
Germany	-	-	-	-
France	(2) 28.6%	(3) 15.8%	(2) 15.4%	(7) 14.9%
UK	-	-	(4) 30.8%	(5) 10.6%
Greece	(1) 14.3%	(1) 5.3%	-	-
Australia	-	(1) 5.3%	(1) 7.7%	(1) 2.1%
Ukraine	-	(1) 5.3%	-	(1) 2.1%
Jordan	-	(1) 5.3%	-	(1) 2.1%
Saudi Arabia	-	(1) 5.3%	-	(1) 2.1%
Iraq	-	(1) 5.3%	(1) 7.7%	(8) 17%
Venezuela	-	-	-	(1) 2.1%
Iran	-	-	-	(1) 2.1%
Brazil	-	-	-	(1) 2.1%
Libya	-	-	-	(1) 2.1%
Hezbollah	-	-	-	(1) 2.1%

Table S1-24: Quoted and mentioned foreign officials in S1. (N in this table refers to the number of actors quoted or mentioned in each group. The number is different from the number of articles in the previous table because some articles quote and mention more than one actor.)

### Other foreign actors – S1

Actors	English sample		Russian sample	
	Quoted (cases), %, N = 8	Mentioned (cases), %, N = 22	Quoted (cases), %, N =9	Mentioned (cases), %, N = 19
Journalists	(1) 12.5%	(1) 4.5%	(2) 22.2%	(1) 10.5%
Refugees <sup>366</sup>	-	(4) 18.2%	(1) 11.1%	-
General public	(1) 12.5%	(1) 4.5%		(1) 5.3%
Public figures		-	(3) 33.3%	(1) 5.3%
Specialists on the topic <sup>367</sup>	(6) 75%	(1) 4.5%	(3) 33.3%	-
Military	-	(5) 22.7%	-	(9) 47.4%
International military coalition in Syria	-	(8) 36.4%	-	(3) 15.8%

<sup>366</sup> Actors coded as refugees in the foreign actor section are refugees that were in the text referenced in general, or specified as being from other countries and not Syria. Syrian refugees are coded as Other Syrian actors.

<sup>367</sup> Not referred to in the text as experts. This group includes academics, professionals, think tank representatives, researchers and other people presented in the text as relevant figures to share their knowledge.

Muammar Gaddafi	-	(1) 4.5%	-	(1) 5.3%
Saddam Hussein	-	(1) 4.5%	-	(1) 5.3%
Other terrorist groups <sup>368</sup>	-	-	-	(1) 5.3%

Table S1-25: Quoted and mentioned 'other' foreign actors in English and Russian samples in S1. (N here stands for the overall amount of quoted and mentioned actors in each group. This number is different from the number of 'Other foreign actors' category counted in table S1-24 because that table counted texts that quote and mention this actor group while this table counts the individual actors, which are often quoted and mentioned more than once in one text.)

## S2

**In a televised meeting president Putin vows 'extremely tough' action on Syria threats.**

**Date of event: 11 December; period analysed: 8 - 14 December 2015.**

Articles in English: 42

Articles in Russian: 37

*Length of text*

### Length of text – S2

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=42	Russian sample (cases), % N=37
100-300 words	(6) 14.3%	(19) 51.4%
300-600 words	(27) 64.3%	(15) 40.5%
601 words and more	(9) 21.4%	(3) 8.1%

Table S2-1: Length of texts in S2.

*Topic*

### Topics – S2

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % [percent of cases] N=52	Russian sample (cases), % [percent of cases] N=51
Military confrontation/clashes, warfare	(15) 28.8% [35.7%]	(12) 23.5% [32.4%]
International relations/diplomacy	(29) 55.8% [69%]	(30) 58.8% [81.1%]
Internal affairs of a country (specify)	(3) 5.8% [7.1%]	(5) 9.8% [13.5%]
Humanitarian issues	(5) 9.6% [11.9%]	(1) 2% [2.7%]
Accident	-	(1) 2% [2.7%]
Other (specify)	-	(2) 3.9%

<sup>368</sup> Actors coded as Other terrorist groups include Al Qaeda and all groups that are referred to as terrorist in the text, with the exception of IS (coded separately in the Foreign Actors question), any Syrian opposition groups that are referred to as terrorist (coded as Syrian actors).

	[5.4%]
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Table S-2: Topics in S2. (N in this table refers to the overall number of topics selected for the texts in each sample. N is higher than number or articles because up to two topics were allowed to be selected per each article. The total percent sum of percent of cases is higher than 100% for the same reason.)

Where topics were coded as Internal affairs in the English sample the article focused on Syria (2 times) and on the UK. In the Russian sample these articles also focused on Syria (2 times), on Russia, on the UK, and on the US. Where topics were coded as Other in the Russian sample the topics were specified as background information on IS.

### Description of Syria

	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	42	(27) 64.2 %	(15) 35.8%	100%
Russian sample	37	(18) 48.6 %	(19) 51.4%	100%

Table S2-3: Articles in English and Russian samples with and without descriptions of Syria in S2.

### Descriptions of Syrian government– S2

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=13	Russian sample (cases), % N=11
Syrian <i>Сирийский</i>	(12) 92.3%	(10) 90.9%
Legal <i>Законный</i>	-	(1) 9.1%
Local	(1) 7.7%	-

Table S2-4: Descriptions of Syrian government in S2. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions.)

### Descriptions of president Assad– S2

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=4	Russian sample (cases), % N=2
Syrian <i>Сирийский</i>	(4) 100%	(2) 100%

Table S2-5: Descriptions of president Bashar Assad in S2. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions.)

### Descriptions of Syrian army – S2

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N= 14	Russian sample (cases), % N=29
Syrian <i>Сирийский</i>	(7) 50%	(11) 38%
Government, pro-government	(7) 50%	(18) 62%



<i>Правительственный</i>		
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Table S2-6: Descriptions of Syrian army in S2. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions.)

*Description of military action*

**Descriptions of military action – S2**

	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	42	(14) 33.3%	(28) 66.7 %	100%
Russian sample	37	(6) 16.2%	(31) 83.8%	100%

Table S2-7: Articles in English and Russian samples with and without descriptions of military action in S2.

**Descriptions of military action – S2**

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=10	Russian sample (cases), % N=6
Yet another armed conflict	(1) 10%	-
Successful <sup>369</sup>	(1) 10%	-
Anti-terrorist <sup>370</sup>	(2) 20%	-
Anti-ISIS <sup>371</sup>	(3) 30%	-
Civil (war)	(1) 10%	-
Syrian <i>Сирийский</i>	(2) 20%	(6) 100%

Table S2-8: Descriptions of military action in S2. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions of protests. It is different from the overall number of articles that feature descriptions because some articles contain more than 1 description.)

In the English sample there were also 4 instances of descriptions of Turkey shooting down the Russian plane – all 4 described the event as ‘despicable’ and ‘treacherous’.

*Description of Syrian opposition*

**Descriptions of Syrian opposition – S2**

	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	42	(16) 38%	(26) 62%	100%
Russian sample	37	(11) 29.7%	(26) 70.3%	100%

Table S2-7: Articles in English and Russian samples with and without descriptions of military action in S2.

**Descriptions of Syrian opposition – S2**

Adjectives	English sample (cases), %	Russian sample (cases), %

<sup>369</sup> These particular adjectives are used in relation to the UK strikes in Syria

<sup>370</sup> These particular adjectives are used in relation to the Russian campaign in Syria

<sup>371</sup> These particular adjectives are used in relation to the coalition efforts in Syria

	<b>N= 26</b>	<b>N= 14</b>
Syrian <i>Сирийский</i>	(4) 15.4%	(3) 21.5%
Terrorist, extremist <i>Террористический, экстремистский</i>	(3) 11.7%	(3) 21.5%
So-called moderate opposition/ 'moderate' opposition <i>Так называемая умеренная оппозиция, «умеренная»</i>	(4) 15.4%	(4) 28.6
Adjectives identifying a connection to Islam (islamist, jihadist)	(2) 7.7%	(1) 7.1%
Adjectives connecting opposition to the West <sup>372</sup>	(2) 7.7%	-
Uncoordinated <i>Разрозненный</i>	-	(1) 7.1%
Adjectives identifying Al Qaeda connection <sup>373</sup>	(2) 7.7%	-
Armed	(2) 7.7%	-
Moderate <i>Умеренный</i>	-	(1) 7.1%
Patriotic	(1) 3.8%	-
Anti-government, anti-Assad <i>Противостоящий правительству</i>	(1) 3.8%	(1) 7.1%
Rebel	(2) 7.7%	-
Oppositional	(1) 3.8%	-
Militant	(1) 3.8%	-
Self-defence	(1) 3.8%	-

Table S2-8: Descriptions of Syrian opposition groups in S2. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions of protests. It is different from the overall number of articles that feature descriptions because some articles contain more than 1 description.)

### *Description of Russia*

#### **Descriptions of Russia – S2**

	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	42	(26) 61.9%	(16) 38.1%	100%
Russian sample	37	(18) 48.6%	(19) 51.4%	100%

Table S2-9: Articles in English and Russian samples with and without descriptions of Russia in S2.

<sup>372</sup> Such as 'trained by the US<sup>372</sup>', 'Western-backed' and 'prepared by American instructors', and 'foreign'. In Russian: подготовленный американскими инструкторами, обученный США.

<sup>373</sup> These adjectives particularly refer to Al Nusra front.

### Descriptions of Russia – S2

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=92	Russian sample (cases), % N=25
Russian <i>Российский</i>	(91) 98.9	(23) 92%
Negligent <sup>374</sup>	(1) 1.1%	-
Good <i>Хороший</i>	-	(1) 4%
“Key player” (of international relations) <i>Ключевой</i>	-	-
‘Only’ (country that is acting in Syria on a legal basis) <i>Единственная (страна, действующая в Сирии легально)</i>	-	(1) 4%

Table S2-10: Descriptions of Russia in S2. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions of protests. It is different from the overall number of articles that feature descriptions because some articles contain more than 1 description.)

#### Description of other countries

### Descriptions of other countries – S2

	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	42	(31) 73.8%	(11) 26.2%	100%
Russian sample	37	(29) 78.3%	(8) 21.7%	100%

Table S2-11: Articles in English and Russian samples in S2 with and without descriptions of countries other than Russia and Syria.

### Descriptions of other countries – S2

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=61	Russian sample (cases), % N= 38
Country-based adjectives <i>Прилагательные, отсылающие к странам)</i>	(17) 27.9%	(25) 65.8%
Other	(12) 19.7%	(9) 23.7%
(Coalition) Antiterrorist, Anti-IS	(8) 13.1%	-
(Coalition) US-led	(21) 34.5%	(3) 7.9%
(Coalition) Western	(2) 3.2%	-
(Coalition) International	(1) 1.6%	-
(Coalition) American	-	(1) 2.6%

Table S2-12: Descriptions of countries other than Syria and Russia in S2. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions of Russia).

<sup>374</sup> These particular adjective is used in relation to the Russian pilot of a plane downed on Turkish-Syrian border

“Other” descriptions in the table above have all appeared once in the sample. In the Russian sample these descriptions were: ‘strange<sup>375</sup>’ (appearing 2 times in relation to Barack Obama), ‘magical<sup>376</sup>’ (in relation to Barack Obama), ‘unpredictable<sup>377</sup>’, ‘hot head<sup>378</sup>’, and ‘that shot down Russian plane<sup>379</sup>’ (all in relation to Turkey), ‘armed by Washington<sup>380</sup>’ and ‘government<sup>381</sup>’ (both in relation to Iraqi army), ‘largest terrorist<sup>382</sup>’ (in relation to Taliban). In the English sample ‘Other’ descriptions were: war-torn (appearing 2 times in relation to Libya), oil-rich (in relation to Libya), legitimate (in relation to Libyan government), north-African (in relation to Libya), unpredictable (appearing 2 times in relation to Turkey), treacherous and reckless (both in relation to Turkey), and aggressive and formerly considered friendly (both appearing 2 times in relation to Turkey).

### Description of IS

#### Descriptions of IS – S2

	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	42	(15) 35.7%	(27) 64.3%	100%
Russian sample	37	(12) 32.4%	(25) 67.6%	100%

Table S2-13: Articles in English and Russian samples in S2 with and without descriptions of IS.

#### Descriptions of IS – S2

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N= 10	Russian sample (cases), % N= 22
Terrorist, radical <i>Террористический</i>	(5) 50%	(20) 91%
Active in the region <i>Действующие в регионе</i>	-	(1) 4.5%
Adjectives identifying a connection to Islam (islamist, jihadist)	(1) 10%	(1) 4.5%
Armed	(1) 10%	-

Table S2-14: Descriptions of IS in S2. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions of Russia).

### Sources

#### Sources – S2

<sup>375</sup> In Russian: странный

<sup>376</sup> In Russian: волшебный

<sup>377</sup> In Russian: непредсказуемый

<sup>378</sup> In Russian: горячие головы

<sup>379</sup> In Russian: сбившая российский истребитель

<sup>380</sup> In Russian: вооруженная Вашингтоном

<sup>381</sup> In Russian: правительственная

<sup>382</sup> In Russian: крупнейшая террористическая

Sources	English sample (cases), %, [% of cases] N=57	Russian sample (cases), %, [% of cases] N=47
Other media or news agencies (specify)	(24) 42.1% [51.7%]	(14) 29.8% [37.8%]
Own correspondent or interview	(7) 12.3% [16.7%]	(12) 25.5% [32.4%]
Social media	(1) 1.8% [2.4%]	-
Russian army or government	(7) 12.3% [16.7%]	(6) 12.8% [16.2%]
Syrian army or government	(1) 1.8% [2.4%]	-
Russian sources not affiliated with the government	(1) 1.8% [2.4%]	-
Syrian sources not affiliated with the government	-	(1) 2.1% [2.7%]
Other countries' officials (specify)	(1) 1.8% [2.4%]	(2) 4.3% [5.4%]
International organisations (specify)	(2) 3.5% [4.8%]	(2) 4.3% [5.4%]
Experts	-	(3) 6.4% [8.1%]
Eyewitnesses	-	-
Activists	-	-
Bloggers	-	-
No specified sources	(8) 14% [19%]	(3) 6.4% [8.1%]
Other (specify)	(5) 8.8% [11.9%]	(4) 8.5% [10.8%]

Table S2-15: Sources in S2. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of sources appearing in the articles. Some articles referred to more than one source thus the percent of cases is higher than 100%).

'Other countries' officials' source in the English sample if Turkey, and in the Russian sample Turkey and the US. 'Other' sources in the English sample are journalists (2 times), a Russian oil company, topic specialists<sup>383</sup> (2 times), Michael Flynn, and HIS Conflict Monitor, and in the Russian sample a YouGov poll, a blogger, Michael Flynn and the LSE student union general secretary.

#### Other media as sources – S2

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=41	Russian sample (cases), % N=14
Russian	(8) 19.5%	(12) 85.7%
Syrian	(3) 7.3%	-

<sup>383</sup> People with knowledge on the topic not referred to as experts

International	(30) 73.2%	(1) 7.1%
Other RT platforms	-	(1) 7.1%

Table S2-16: Other media sources by ownership in S2 (“N in this table refers to the number of media outlets mentioned in the articles as sources. It is higher than the number of ‘Other media’ sources specified in the previous table because that counted the number of articles that referred to other media as sources, not all instances of these references, of which there were often more than one in articles).

### Sources per article – S2

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=42	Russian sample (cases), % N=37
Single source	(32) 76.1%	(29) 78.3%
Two or more sources	(10) 23.9%	(8) 21.7%

Table S2-17: Articles that refer to one or two or more sources in S2.

### Articles that refer to one source – S2

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=32	Russian sample (cases), % N=29
Other media & news agencies	(19) 59.4%	(14) 48.3%
Own reporter or interview	-	(4) 13.8%
Social media	-	-
Russian government or military	(4) 12.5%	(4) 13.8%
Other countries’ officials	-	(1) 3.4%
Expert	-	(1) 3.4%
International organisations	(1) 3.1%	(1) 3.4%
No specified sources	(8) 25%	(3) 10.5%
Other	-	(1) 3.4%

Table S2-18: Sources in articles that refer to one source. N in this table refers to the number of articles that only refer to one source.

### Russian actors

### Russian actors in articles – S2

	English sample (cases), % N=42	Russian sample (cases), % N=37
Articles that quote Russian actors	(19) 54.8%	(17) 45.9%
Articles that mention Russian actors	(20) 47.6%	(15) 40.5%

Table S2-19: Presence of quoted and mentioned Russian actors in articles in S2.

### Russian actors – S2

Actors	English sample	Russian sample
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	<b>Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 24</b>	<b>Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N =33</b>	<b>Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 17</b>	<b>Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N =23</b>
President Putin and spokesman Peskov	(4) 16.7% [21.1%]	(6) 18.2% [30%]	(2) 11.8% [11.8%]	(5) 21.7% [33.3%]
Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergei Lavrov	(2) 8.3% [10.5%]	(1) 3% [5%]	(3) 17.6% [17.6%]	(1) 4.3% [6.7%]
Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokeswoman Maria Zakharova	(1) 4.2% [5.3%]	-	-	-
Other government officials	(14) 58.3% [73.7%]	(10) 30.3% [50%]	(8) 47.1% [47.1%]	(6) 26.1% [40%]
Military	(1) 4.2% [5.3%]	(15) 45.5% [75%]	(2) 11.8% [11.8%]	(11)47.8% [73.3%]
Non-government opposition	-	-	-	-
Experts	-	-	(1) 5.9% [5.9%]	-
Activists	-	-	-	-
Other (specify)	(2) 8.3% [10.5%]	(1) 3% [5%]	(1) 5.9% [5.9%]	-

Table S2-20: Quoted and mentioned Russian actors in S2. (N in this table refers to the number of actors quoted or mentioned in each group. The number is different from the number of articles in the previous table because some articles quote and mention more than one actor)

In the Russian sample the quoted Other Russian actor was a journalist, and in English it was journalists (2 times) and a business. The mentioned Other Russian actor in the English sample were the people who have been killed by IS.

### *Syrian actors*

#### **Syrian actors in articles – S2**

	<b>English sample (cases), % N=42</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N=37</b>
Articles that quote Syrian actors	(6) 14.3%	(3) 8.1%
Articles that mention Syrian actors	(26) 61.9%	(23) 62.2%

Table S2-21: Presence of quoted and mentioned Syrian actors in articles in S2.

#### **Syrian actors –S2**

Actors	English sample		Russian sample	
	Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 8	Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N =53	Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 3	Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N =55
President Bashar Assad	(1) 12.5 [16.7%]	(5) 11.3% [23.1%]	-	(10) 18.2% [43.5%]
Other government officials	(1) 12.5 [16.7%]	(9) 17% [34.6%]	-	(10) 18.2% [43.5%]
Military	(1) 12.5 [16.7%]	(10) 18.9% [38.5%]	-	(15) 27.3% [65.2%]
Syrian opposition	(2) 25% [33.3%]	(16) 30.2% [61.5%]	-	(13) 23.6% [56.5%]
Experts	-	-	(2) 66.7% [66.7%]	-
White Helmets	-	-	-	-
Activists	-	-	-	-
Eyewitnesses	-	(1) 1.9% [3.8%]	-	-
Other (specify)	(3) 37.5% [50%]	(11) 20.8% [42.3%]	(1) 33.3% [33.3%]	(7) 12.7% [30.4%]

Table S2-22: Quoted and mentioned Syrian actors in S2. (N in this table refers to the number of actors quoted or mentioned in each group. The number is different from the number of articles in the previous table because some articles quote and mention more than one actor)

Among the ‘Other’ actors quoted in the English sample were a political commentator, Kurdish Red Crescent representative and general public, and in the Russian sample Kurdish Red Crescent representative. Among the ‘Other’ actors mentioned in the English sample were Syrian refugees (4 times), victims of the war (2 times), general public (8 times) and Syrian Arab Red Crescent representative, and in the Russian sample general public (7 times) and a public figure.

#### *Foreign actors*

#### **Foreign actors in articles – S2**

	English sample (cases), % N= 42	Russian sample (cases), % N= 37
Articles that quote foreign actors	(21) 50%	(16) 43.2%
Articles that mention foreign actors	(42) 100%	(33) 89.2%

Table S2-23: Presence of quoted and mentioned foreign actors in articles in S2. The coding manual specifies that all actors not from Syria or Russia are considered ‘foreign’ for the purposes of this analysis.

#### **Foreign actors – S2**

Actors	English sample	Russian sample
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	<b>Quoted (cases), %, [ % of cases] N = 26</b>	<b>Mentioned (cases), %, [ % of cases] N = 99</b>	<b>Quoted (cases), %, [ % of cases] N = 20</b>	<b>Mentioned (cases), %, [ % of cases] N = 84</b>
Barack Obama	-	(1) 1% [2.4%]	(1) 5% [5.9%]	(6) 7.1% [18.2%]
Donald Trump	-	-	-	-
Marine Le Pen	-	-	-	-
Recep Erdogan	(1) 3.8%	(2) 2% [4.8%]	-	(1) 1.2% [3%]
Other foreign officials (specify)	(12) 46.2% [57.1%]	(22) 22.2% [52.4%]	(9) 45% [52.9%]	(21) 25% [63.6%]
IS	-	(45) 35.4% [83.3%]	-	(26) 31% [78.8%]
International organisations	(2) 7.7% [9.5%]	(7) 7.1% [16.7%]	(2) 10% [19.2%]	(3) 3.6% [9.1%]
Experts	-	(3) 3% [7.1%]	(2) 10% [19.2%]	(3) 3.6% [9.1%]
Activists	-	-	-	-
Other (specify)	(10) 38.5% [47.6%]	(29) 29.3% [69%]	(6) 30% [35.3%]	(24) 28.6% [72.7%]

Table S2-24: Quoted and mentioned foreign actors in S2. (N in this table refers to the number of actors quoted or mentioned in each group. The number is different from the number of articles in the previous table because some articles quote and mention more than one actor)

### Other foreign officials – S2

<b>Actors</b>	<b>English sample</b>		<b>Russian sample</b>	
	<b>Quoted (cases), %, N = 16</b>	<b>Mentioned (cases), %, N = 44</b>	<b>Quoted (cases), %, N = 10</b>	<b>Mentioned (cases), %, N = 31</b>
US	(3) 18.8%	(19) 43.2%	(6) 60%	(12) 38.7%
Angela Merkel	(2) 12.5%	-	-	-
Germany	-	(2) 4.5%	-	(1) 3.2%
France	(4) 25%	(1) 2.3%	-	(2) 6.5%
UK	(4) 25%	(5) 11.4%	(1) 10%	(5) 16.1%
Czech Republic	(1) 6.3%		-	-
Turkey	(2) 12.5%	(8) 18.2%	(1) 10%	(2) 6.5%
Ukraine	-		-	(2) 6.5%
Iraq	-	(5) 11.4%	(1) 10%	(2) 6.5%
Belarus			(1) 10%	
Israel	-		-	(2) 6.5%
Yemen	-			(2) 6.5%
Venezuela	-	-	-	(1) 3.2%
'Foreign'	-	-	-	(2) 6.5%
Libya	-	(2) 4.5%	-	

Table S2-25: Quoted and mentioned foreign officials in S2. (N in this table refers to the number of actors quoted or mentioned in each group. The number is different from the number of articles in the previous table because some articles quote and mention more than one actor.)

### Other foreign actors – S2

Actors	English sample		Russian sample	
	Quoted (cases), %, N =15	Mentioned (cases), %, N = 46	Quoted (cases), %, N =7	Mentioned (cases), %, N = 30
Journalists	-	(2) 4.3%	(1) 14.3%	-
Refugees <sup>384</sup>	-	(1) 2.2%		-
General public	(2) 13.3%	(2) 4.3%	(2) 28.6%	(1) 3.3%
Public figures	(4) 26.7%	-	(1) 14.3%	(1) 3.3%
Specialists on the topic <sup>385</sup>	(5) 33.3%	-	(2) 28.6%	-
Military	(4) 26.7%	(21) 45.7%	-	(13) 43.3%
International military coalition in Syria	-	(8) 17.4%	-	(10) 33.3%
Muammar Gaddafi	-	(2) 4.3%	-	-
Historical figures	-	(1) 2.2%	(1) 14.3%	-
Other terrorist groups <sup>386</sup>	-	(7) 15.2%	-	(5) 16.7%
Victims of wars/IS <sup>387</sup>	-	(1) 2.2%	-	-
Business representatives	-	(1) 2.2%	-	-

Table S2-26: Quoted and mentioned ‘other’ foreign actors in English and Russian samples in S2. (N here stands for the overall amount of quoted and mentioned actors in each group. This number is different from the number of ‘Other foreign actors’ category counted in table S2-24 because that table counted texts that quote and mention this actor group while this table counts the individual actors, which are often quoted and mentioned more than once in one text.)

### S3

#### Capture of the town of Rabia in Latakia.

**Date of event: 24 January; period analysed: 21 - 27 January 2015.**

Articles in English: 4

Articles in Russian: 4

*Length of text*

#### Length of text – S3

<sup>384</sup> Actors coded as refugees in the foreign actor section are refugees that were in the text referenced in general, or specified as being from other countries and not Syria. Syrian refugees are coded as Other Syrian actors.

<sup>385</sup> Not referred to in the text as experts. This group includes academics, professionals, think tank representatives, researchers and other people presented in the text as relevant figures to share their knowledge.

<sup>386</sup> Actors coded as Other terrorist groups include Al Qaeda and all groups that are referred to as terrorist in the text, with the exception of IS (coded separately in the Foreign Actors question), any Syrian opposition groups that are referred to as terrorist (coded as Syrian actors).

<sup>387</sup> Coded here unless specified that victims are Syrian or Russian, in which case they are coded in Syrian/Russian actors questions.

<b>Adjectives</b>	<b>English sample (cases), % N=42</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N=4</b>
100-300 words	(1) 25%	(1) 25%
300-600 words	(3) 75%	(3) 75%
601 words and more	-	-

Table S3-1: Length of texts in S3.

*Topic*

**Topics – S3**

<b>Adjectives</b>	<b>English sample (cases), % [percent of cases] N=4</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % [percent of cases] N=4</b>
Military confrontation/clashes, warfare	(2) 50% [50%]	(2) 50% [50%]
International relations/diplomacy	(2) 50% [50%]	(2) 50% [50%]
Internal affairs of a country (specify)	-	-
Humanitarian issues	-	-
Accident	-	-
Other (specify)	-	-

Table S3-2: Topics in S3. (N in this table refers to the overall number of topics selected for the texts in each sample. N is higher than number or articles because up to two topics were allowed to be selected per each article. The total percent sum of percent of cases is higher than 100% for the same reason.)

*Description of Syria*

**Descriptions of Syria – S3**

	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	4	(4) 100%	-	100%
Russian sample	4	(4) 100%	-	100%

Table S3-3: Articles in English and Russian samples with and without descriptions of Syria in S3.

**Descriptions of Syrian government– S3**

<b>Adjectives</b>	<b>English sample (cases), % N=3</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N=0</b>
Syrian <i>Сирийский</i>	(2) 66.6%	-
Legitimate, legal <i>Легитимный, легальный, законный</i>	(1) 33.3%	-

Table S3-4: Descriptions of Syrian government in S3. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions.)

### Descriptions of Syrian army – S3

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=6	Russian sample (cases), % N=4
Syrian <i>Сирийский</i>	(2) 33.3%	(4) 100%
Elite	(1) 16.6%	-
Government <i>Правительственный</i>	(2) 33.3%	-
Successful	(1) 16.6%	-

Table S3-5: Descriptions of Syrian army in S3. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions.)

Syrian towns, villages and provinces are described as ‘strategic’ (30% of the instances in the English sample and 28.5% in the Russian one), ‘freed’ (10% in the English sample and 14.3% in the Russian one), ‘controlled by opposition’ (10% in English and 14.3% in Russian). Another 40% in the English sample is described by the geographical location, and 10% are described as controlled by the government forces. In Russian another 28.5% are described as ‘controlled by IS<sup>388</sup>’, and ‘mined<sup>389</sup>’ (10%).

#### *Description of military action*

### Descriptions of military action – S3

	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	4	(2) 50%	(2) 50%	100%
Russian sample	4	(2) 50%	(2) 50%	100%

Table S3-6: Articles in English and Russian samples with and without descriptions of military action in S3.

### Descriptions of military action – S3

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=3	Russian sample (cases), % N=5
Full scale, massive <i>Широкомасштабный, массивированный</i>	-	(2) 40%
Ideological <i>идеологический</i>	(1) 33.3%	(1) 20%
Violent <i>Ожесточенный</i>	-	(1) 20%
Syrian <sup>390</sup>	(1) 33.3%	-

<sup>388</sup> Находящийся в осаде террористов, заблокированный боевиками

<sup>389</sup> Заминированный

<sup>390</sup> These particular adjectives are used in relation to the Russia’s campaign in Syria

Сирийский		
Mediterranean <sup>391</sup>	(1) 33.3%	-
Civil (war) Гражданская (война)	-	(1) 20%

Table S3-7: Descriptions of military action in S3. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions of protests. It is different from the overall number of articles that feature descriptions because some articles contain more than 1 description.)

### *Description of Syrian opposition*

#### **Descriptions of Syrian opposition – S3**

	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	4	(1) 25%	(3) 75%	100%
Russian sample	4	(3) 75%	(1) 25%	100%

Table S3-8: Articles in English and Russian samples with and without descriptions of military action in S3.

#### **Descriptions of Syrian opposition – S3**

<b>Adjectives</b>	<b>English sample (cases), % N=2</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N=6</b>
Syrian <i>Сирийский</i>	(1) 50%	(2) 33.3%
Terrorist, extremist <i>Террористический, экстремистский</i>	-	(1) 16.6%
Anti-government <i>Антиправительственные</i>		(2) 33.3%
Patriotic <i>Патриотическая</i>	(1) 50%	(1) 16.6%

Table S3-9: Descriptions of Syrian opposition groups in S3. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions of protests. It is different from the overall number of articles that feature descriptions because some articles contain more than 1 description.)

### *Description of Russia*

#### **Descriptions of Russia – S3**

	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	4	(4) 100%	-	100%
Russian sample	4	(3) 75%	(1) 25%	100%

Table S3-10: Articles in English and Russian samples with and without descriptions of Russia in S3.

Russia is described as ‘Russian’ in all instances in both samples in this event.

<sup>391</sup> These particular adjectives are used in relation to the Russia’s campaign in Syria

*Description of other countries*

**Descriptions of other countries – S3**

	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	4	(1) 25%	(3) 75%	100%
Russian sample	4	(2) 50%	(2) 50%	100%

Table S3-11: Articles in English and Russian samples in S3 with and without descriptions of countries other than Russia and Syria.

**Descriptions of other countries – S3**

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=3	Russian sample (cases), % N= 2
Country-based adjectives <i>Прилагательные отсылающие к странам)</i>	(3) 100%	-
Foreign <i>Иностранный</i>	-	(2) 100%

Table S3-12: Descriptions of countries other than Syria and Russia in S3. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions of Russia).

*Description of IS*

**Descriptions of IS – S3**

	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	4	(1) 25%	(3) 75%	100%
Russian sample	4	-	(4) 100%	100%

Table S3-13: Articles in English and Russian samples in S3 with and without descriptions of IS.

There is only one instance in this sample where IS is described – in the English sample, as heavily armed.

*Sources*

**Sources – S3**

Sources	English sample (cases), %, [% of cases] N=8	Russian sample (cases), %, [% of cases] N=7
Other media or news agencies (specify)	(3) 37.5% [75%]	(2) 28.6% [50%]
Own correspondent or interview	(2) 25% [50%]	(2) 28.6% [50%]
Social media	-	-
Russian army or government	(1) 12.5% [25%]	(2) 28.6% [50%]

Syrian army or government	(1) 12.5% [25%]	(1) 14.3% [25%]
Russian sources not affiliated with the government	-	-
Syrian sources not affiliated with the government	-	-
Other countries' officials (specify)	-	-
International organisations (specify)	-	-
Experts	-	-
Eyewitnesses	-	-
Activists	-	-
Bloggers	-	-
No specified sources	(1) 12.5% [25%]	-
Other (specify)	-	-

Table S3-14: Sources in S3. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of sources appearing in the articles. Some articles referred to more than one source thus the percent of cases is higher than 100%).

### Other media as sources – S3

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=2	Russian sample (cases), % N=5
Russian	(1) 50%	(3) 60%
Syrian	(1) 50%	(1) 20%
International	-	(1) 20%

Table S3-15: Other media sources by ownership in S3. (“N in this table refers to the number of media outlets mentioned in the articles as sources. It is higher than the number of ‘Other media’ sources specified in the previous table because that counted the number of articles that referred to other media as sources, not all instances of these references, of which there were often more than one in articles).

### Sources per article – S3

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=4	Russian sample (cases), % N=4
Single source	(1) 25%	(2) 50%
Two or more sources	(3) 75%	(2) 50%

Table S3-16: Articles that refer to one or two or more sources in S3.

In the English sample there is one article that only refers to one single source, which in that case in ‘Unspecified’. In the Russian sample the two texts that refer to a single source both refer to the Russian government and army sources.

### *Russian actors*

### Russian actors in articles – S3

	<b>English sample (cases), % N=4</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N=4</b>
Articles that quote Russian actors	(1) 25%	(1) 25%
Articles that mention Russian actors	(4) 75%	(3) 75%

Table S3-17: Presence of quoted and mentioned Russian actors in articles in S3.

### Russian actors – S3

<b>Actors</b>	<b>English sample</b>		<b>Russian sample</b>	
	<b>Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 1</b>	<b>Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N =7</b>	<b>Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 1</b>	<b>Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N =7</b>
President Putin and spokesman Peskov	(1) 100% [100%]	-	-	-
Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergei Lavrov	-	-	-	-
Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokeswoman Maria Zakharova	-	-	-	-
Other government officials	-	(2) 28.6% [50%]	-	(1) 14.3% [25%]
Military	-	(4) 57.1% [100%]	(1) 100% [100%]	(4) 57.1% [100%]
Non-government opposition	-	-	-	-
Experts	-	-	-	-
Activists	-	-	-	-
Other (specify)	-	(1) 14.3% [25%]	-	(2) 28.6% [50%]

Table S3-18: Quoted and mentioned Russian actors in S3. (N in this table refers to the number of actors quoted or mentioned in each group. The number is different from the number of articles in the previous table because some articles quote and mention more than one actor)

The ‘Other’ mentioned actor both samples are Russian journalists.

### Syrian actors

### Syrian actors in articles – S3

	<b>English sample</b>	<b>Russian sample</b>
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	(cases), % N=4	(cases), % N=4
Articles that quote Syrian actors	(2) 50%	(1) 25%
Articles that mention Syrian actors	(2) 50%	(3) 75%

Table S3-19: Presence of quoted and mentioned Syrian actors in articles in S3.

### Syrian actors –S3

Actors	English sample		Russian sample	
	Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 2	Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N =11	Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 1	Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N =8
President Bashar Assad	-	(1) 9.1% [33.3%]	-	-
Other government officials	(1) 50 [50%]	(2) 18.2% [66.7%]	-	(1) 12.5% [25%]
Military	(1) 50 [50%]	(3) 27.3% [100%]	(1) 100% [100%]	(3) 37.5% [75%]
Syrian opposition	-	(2) 18.2% [66.7%]	-	(2) 25% [50%]
Experts	-	-	-	-
White Helmets	-	-	-	-
Activists	-	-	-	-
Eyewitnesses	-	(1) 1.9% [3.8%]	-	-
Other (specify)	-	(3) 27.3% [100%]	-	(2) 25% [50%]

Table S3-20: Quoted and mentioned Syrian actors in S3. (N in this table refers to the number of actors quoted or mentioned in each group. The number is different from the number of articles in the previous table because some articles quote and mention more than one actor)

Mentioned ‘Other’ actors in all cases in both samples are general public.

### Foreign actors

### Foreign actors in articles – S3

	English sample (cases), % N= 4	Russian sample (cases), % N= 4
Articles that quote foreign actors	-	-
Articles that mention foreign actors	(4) 100%	(4) 100%

Table S3-21: Presence of quoted and mentioned foreign actors in articles in S3. The coding manual specifies that all actors not from Syria or Russia are considered ‘foreign’ for the purposes of this analysis.

### Foreign actors – S3

Actors	English sample		Russian sample	
	Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 0	Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 5	Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 0	Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 4
Barack Obama	-	-	-	-
Donald Trump	-	-	-	-
Marine Le Pen	-	-	-	-
Recep Erdogan	-	-	-	-
Other foreign officials (specify)	-	-	-	-
IS	-	(3) 60% [75%]	-	(1) 25% [25%]
International organisations	-	-	-	-
Experts	-	-	-	-
Activists	-	-	-	-
Other (specify)	-	(2) 40% [50%]	-	(3) 75% [75%]

Table S3-22: Quoted and mentioned foreign actors in S3. (N in this table refers to the number of actors quoted or mentioned in each group. The number is different from the number of articles in the previous table because some articles quote and mention more than one actor)

‘Other’ mentioned actors in the English sample are journalists and other terrorist groups, and in the Russian sample it is journalists.

### S4

**Russian president Vladimir Putin announced Syrian mission accomplished, Russian Air Force begins to leave Syria.**

**Date of event: 14 March; period analysed: 11 - 17 March 2016.**

Articles in English: 29

Articles in Russian: 63

*Length of text*

### Length of text – S4

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=29	Russian sample (cases), % N=63
100-300 words	(3) 10.3%	(38) 60.3%
300-600 words	(15) 51.7%	(15) 23.8%
601 words and more	(11) 37.9%	(1) 15.9%

Table S4-1: Length of texts in S4.

*Topic*

### Topics – S4

<b>Adjectives</b>	<b>English sample (cases), % [percent of cases] N=43</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % [percent of cases] N=72</b>
Military confrontation/clashes, warfare	(11) 25.6% [37.9%]	(14) 19.4% [22.2%]
International relations/diplomacy	(17) 39.5% [58.6%]	(42) 58.3% [66.7%]
Internal affairs of a country (specify)	(7) 16.3% [24.1%]	(12) 16.7% [19%]
Humanitarian issues	(7) 16.3% [24.1%]	(4) 5.6% [6.3%]
Accident	-	-
Other (specify)	(1) 2.3% [3.4%]	-

Table S4-2: Topics in S4. (N in this table refers to the overall number of topics selected for the texts in each sample. N is higher than number or articles because up to two topics were allowed to be selected per each article. The total percent sum of percent of cases is higher than 100% for the same reason.)

When topic was coded as ‘Internal affairs’ the country in question in the English sample was Syria (6 times) and Russia, and in the Russian sample Syria (10 times) and Russia (2 times). ‘Other’ topic in the English sample was coded as culture.

#### *Description of Syria*

#### Descriptions of Syria – S4

	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	29	(21) 72.4%	(8) 27.6%	100%
Russian sample	63	(34) 53.9%	(29) 46.1%	100%

Table S4-3: Articles in English and Russian samples with and without descriptions of Syria in S4.

#### Descriptions of Syrian government– S4

<b>Adjectives</b>	<b>English sample (cases), % N= 21</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N=15</b>
Syrian <i>Сирийский</i>	(11) 52.3%	(9) 60%
Legal <i>Законный</i>	-	(2) 13.4%
Assad’s	(9) 42.8%	-
Central <i>Центральный</i>	-	(2) 13.4%
Current, acting <i>Действующее</i>	(1) 4.9%	(1) 6.6%
Local	-	(1) 6.6%

<i>Местный</i>		
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Table S4-4: Descriptions of Syrian government in S4. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions.)

#### Descriptions of president Assad– S4

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=2	Russian sample (cases), % N=2
Syrian <i>Сирийский</i>	(2) 100%	(1) 50%
Legitimate <i>Легитимный</i>	-	(1) 50%

Table S4-5: Descriptions of president Bashar Assad in S4. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions.)

#### Descriptions of Syrian army – S4

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=19	Russian sample (cases), % N=27
Syrian <i>Сирийский</i>	(8) 42.2%	(16) 59.2%
Government, pro-government <i>Правительственный</i>	(9) 47.4%	(11) 40.8%
Heroic	(1) 5.2%	-
Assad's	(1) 5.2%	-

Table S4-6: Descriptions of Syrian army in S4. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions.)

#### Description of military action

#### Descriptions of military action – S4

	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	29	(17) 58.6%	(12) 41.3%	100%
Russian sample	63	(28) 44.4%	(35) 55.5%	100%

Table S4-7: Articles in English and Russian samples with and without descriptions of military action in S4.

#### Descriptions of military action – S4

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=36	Russian sample (cases), % N= 41
Russian <sup>392</sup> <i>Российский</i>	-	(2) 4.9%

<sup>392</sup> This description related to the Russian military campaign in Syria

Successful, ‘carried out wonderfully’ <sup>393</sup> Успешный, великолепно проведенный	-	(3) 7.4%
Counterterrorist, anti-ISIS <sup>394</sup> Контртеррористический	(9) 25%	(5) 12.3%
Five month-long <sup>395</sup>	(3) 8.4%	-
Wide-reaching <sup>396</sup>	(1) 2.7%	-
Syrian Сирийский	(9) 25%	(17) 41.5%
Armed Вооруженный	-	(2) 4.9%
Civil (war) Гражданская (война)	(13) 36.2%	(7) 17%
Difficult Сложный	-	(1) 2.4%
Violent, bloody Ожесточенный	(1) 2.7%	(1) 2.4%
Continuing Продолжающийся	-	(1) 2.4%
Unprecedented Беспрецедентный	-	(1) 2.4%
Transparent Прозрачный	-	(1) 2.4%

Table S4-8: Descriptions of military action in S4. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions of protests. It is different from the overall number of articles that feature descriptions because some articles contain more than 1 description.)

#### *Description of Syrian opposition*

#### **Descriptions of Syrian opposition – S4**

	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	29	(18) 62%	(11) 38%	100%
Russian sample	63	(33) 52.4%	(30) 47.6%	100%

Table S4-9: Articles in English and Russian samples with and without descriptions of military action in S4.

#### **Descriptions of Syrian opposition – S4**

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N= 39	Russian sample (cases), % N= 48
Syrian <i>Сирийский</i>	(3) 7.7%	(11) 22.9%
Rebel	(8) 20.6%	

<sup>393</sup> This description related to the Russian military campaign in Syria

<sup>394</sup> This description related to the Russian military campaign in Syria

<sup>395</sup> This description related to the Russian military campaign in Syria

<sup>396</sup> This description related to the Russian military campaign in Syria

Terrorist, extremist <i>Террористический, экстремистский</i>	(5) 12.8%	(11) 22.9%
Anti-Assad	(3) 7.7%	
Oppositional Оппозиционный	(2) 5.1%	(9) 18.7%
Kurdish Курдский		(6) 12.5%
Armed <i>Вооруженный</i>		(6) 12.5%
So-called moderate, 'moderate' Так называемый умеренный	(4) 10.4%	(2) 4.2%
Banned in Russia <sup>397</sup> Запрещенный в России		(1) 2.1%
'That haven't joined the truce' Не присоединившийся к режиму прекращения огня		(1) 2.1%
Patriotic Патриотическая	(1) 2.5%	(1) 2.1%
Adjectives referring to connection with US and the West <sup>398</sup>	(8) 20.6%	-
Saudi-backed	(1) 2.5%	-
Al-Qaeda affiliated <sup>399</sup>	(1) 2.5%	-
Adjectives identifying a connection to Islam (islamist)	(3) 7.7%	-

Table S4-10: Descriptions of Syrian opposition groups in S4. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions of protests. It is different from the overall number of articles that feature descriptions because some articles contain more than 1 description.)

### *Description of Russia*

#### **Descriptions of Russia – S4**

	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	29	(16) 55.1%	(13) 44.9%	100%
Russian sample	63	(40) 63.5%	(23) 36.5%	100%

Table S4-11: Articles in English and Russian samples with and without descriptions of Russia in S4.

<sup>397</sup> This description refers to Al Nusra Front

<sup>398</sup> In the English sample this category includes 'US-backed', 'Western'backed', 'trained abroad' and 'US-trained'. In the Russian sample this category includes 'supported by the US' (поддерживаемые США) and 'added by the American side to the list of groups observing the truce' (включенные американской стороной в списки соблюдающих режим прекращения боевых действий)

<sup>399</sup> This description refers to Al Nusra Front

### Descriptions of Russia – S4

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N= 73	Russian sample (cases), % N= 99
Russian <i>Российский</i>	(72) 98.6%	(96) 96.9%
Well-protected Точечный	(1) 1.4%	-
Great <sup>400</sup> Великий	-	(1) 1%
Located in Syria <i>Дислоцированные в Сирии</i>	-	(1) 1%
‘That were destroying terrorists in SAR’ <i>Выполнявшие задачи по уничтожению террористов в САР</i>	-	(1) 1%

Table S4-12: Descriptions of Russia in S4. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions of protests. It is different from the overall number of articles that feature descriptions because some articles contain more than 1 description.)

#### Description of other countries

### Descriptions of other countries – S4

	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	29	(14) 48.3%	(15) 51.7%	100%
Russian sample	63	(28) 44.4%	(35) 55.6%	100%

Table S4-13: Articles in English and Russian samples in S4 with and without descriptions of countries other than Russia and Syria.

### Descriptions of other countries – S4

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=20	Russian sample (cases), % N= 43
Country-based adjectives <i>Прилагательные отсылающие к странам)</i>	(17) 85%	(37) 86%
(Coalition) US-led	(2) 10%	(2) 4.7%
(Coalition) Antiterrorist	-	(1) 2.4%
Other descriptions	(1) 5%	(3) 6.9%

Table S4-14: Descriptions of countries other than Syria and Russia in S4. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions).

‘Other’ descriptions all appeared in the texts once. In the English sample ‘Other’ description is ‘militant’ and refers to PKK, A Turkey and Iraq-based Kurdistan Workers' Party. In the

<sup>400</sup> This description was referring to Russian sports people

Russian sample ‘Other’ descriptions include a description of Turkey as ‘very clever<sup>401</sup>’ and Erdogan as ‘who has only ever read one book<sup>402</sup>’ and of a foreign expert described as ‘respected<sup>403</sup>’.

### Description of IS

Descriptions of IS – S4				
	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	29	(8) 27.6%	(21) 72.4%	100%
Russian sample	63	(17) 26.9%	(46) 73.1%	100%

Table S4-15: Articles in English and Russian samples in S4 with and without descriptions of IS.

### Descriptions of IS – S4

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=21	Russian sample (cases), % N= 30
Terrorist, radical, extremist <i>Террористический, радикальный</i>	(10) 47.7%	(23) 76.7%
Adjectives identifying a connection to Islam (islamist, Islamic, jihadist) <i>Исламистские, исламские</i>	(1) 4.7%	(3) 10%
So-called, self-proclaimed <i>Так называемый</i>	(3) 14.3%	(1) 3.3%
Brutal, horrific, genocidal, responsible for crimes against humanity, fanatical <i>Фанатичный, жестокий, страшный</i>	(5) 23.9%	-
Militant	(1) 4.7%	-
Desperate	(1) 4.7%	-
Banned in Russia <i>Запрещенный в России</i>	-	(2) 6.7%
Resisting both the opposition militants and the Bashar Assad regime Противостоящая одновременно боевикам оппозиции и режиму Башара Асада	-	(1) 3.3%

Table S4-16: Descriptions of IS in S4. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions).

### Sources

<sup>401</sup> In Russian: такая умная

<sup>402</sup> In Russian: прочитавший лишь одну книгу

<sup>403</sup> In Russian: уважаемый



### Sources – S4

Sources	English sample (cases), %, [% of cases] N=44	Russian sample (cases), %, [% of cases] N=86
Other media or news agencies (specify)	(11) 25% [37.9%]	(27) 31.4% [42.9%]
Own correspondent or interview	(12) 27.3% [41.4%]	(25) 29.1% [39.7%]
Social media	-	(2) 2% [3.2%]
Russian army or government	(3) 6.8% [10.3%]	(8) 9.3% [12.7%]
Syrian army or government	-	(1) 1.2% [1.6%]
Russian sources not affiliated with the government	-	(2) 2% [3.2%]
Syrian sources not affiliated with the government	(2) 4.5% [6.9%]	(4) 4.7% [6.3%]
Other countries' officials (specify)	(3) 6.8% [10.3%]	(3) 3.5% [4.8%]
International organisations (specify)	(3) 6.8% [10.3%]	-
Experts	-	(4) 4.7% [6.3%]
Eyewitnesses	-	-
Activists	-	-
Bloggers	-	-
No specified sources	(6) 13.6% [20.7%]	(7) 8.1% [11.1%]
Other (specify)	(4) 9.1% [13.8%]	(3) 3.5% [4.8%]

Table S4-17: Sources in S4. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of sources appearing in the articles. Some articles referred to more than one source thus the percent of cases is higher than 100%).

'Other countries' officials' sources in the English sample are Serbia, Germany and the UK, and in the Russian sample the UK (4 times) and Italy. 'Other' sources in the English sample are a think tank, an NGO, Syrian Observatory for the Human Rights and Syrian American medical society, and in the Russian sample a political scientists and journalists (2 times).

### Other media as sources – S4

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=25	Russian sample (cases), % N=29
Russian	(6) 24%	(28) 96.6%
Syrian	(1) 4%	-

International	(18) 72%	(1) 3.4%
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Table S4-18: Other media sources by ownership in S4. (“N in this table refers to the number of media outlets mentioned in the articles as sources. It is higher than the number of ‘Other media’ sources specified in the previous table because that counted the number of articles that referred to other media as sources, not all instances of these references, of which there were often more than one in articles).

### Sources per article – S4

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=29	Russian sample (cases), % N=63
Single source	(19) 65.5%	(45) 71.4%
Two or more sources	(10) 34.5%	(18) 28.6%

Table S4-19: Articles that refer to one or two or more sources in S4.

### Articles that refer to one source – S4

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=19	Russian sample (cases), % N=45
Other media & news agencies	(6) 31.6%	(23) 51.1%
Own reporter or interview	(4) 21.2%	(9) 20%
Russian government or military	(1) 5.2%	(6) 13.3%
International organisations	(1) 5.2%	
No specified sources	(6) 31.6%	(7) 15.6%
Other	(1) 5.2%	-

Table S4-20: Sources in articles that refer to one source. N in this table refers to the number of articles that only refer to one source.

### Russian actors

### Russian actors in articles – S4

	English sample (cases), % N= 29	Russian sample (cases), % N=63
Articles that quote Russian actors	(11) 37.9%	(28) 44.4%
Articles that mention Russian actors	(14) 48.3%	(41) 65.1%

Table S4-21: Presence of quoted and mentioned Russian actors in articles in S4.

### Russian actors – S4

Actors	English sample		Russian sample	
	Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 11	Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N =35	Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 29	Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N =93

President Putin and spokesman Peskov	(2) 18.2% [18.2%]	(8) 22.9% [57.1%]	(6) 20.7% [21.4%]	(26) 28% [63.4%]
Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergei Lavrov	(3) 27.3% [27.3%]	(2) 5.7% [14.3%]	(5) 17.2% [17.9%]	(7) 7.5% [17.1%]
Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokeswoman Maria Zakharova	-	-	(3) 10.3% [10.7%]	(1) 1.1% [2.4%]
Other government officials	(6) 54.5% [54.5%]	(9) 25.7% [64.3%]	(9) 31% [32.1%]	(20) 21.5% [48.8%]
Military	-	(12) 34.3% [85.7%]	(1) 3.4% [3.6%]	(32) 34.4% [78%]
Non-government opposition	-	-	-	-
Experts	-	(1) 2.9% [7.1%]	(1) 3.4% [3.6%]	-
Activists	-	-	-	-
Other (specify)	-	(3) 8.6% [21.4%]	(4) 13.8% [14.3]	(7) 7.5% [17.1%]

Table S4-22: Quoted and mentioned Russian actors in S4. (N in this table refers to the number of actors quoted or mentioned in each group. The number is different from the number of articles in the previous table because some articles quote and mention more than one actor)

The ‘Other’ quoted actors in the Russian sample are journalists (2 times) a specialist on the topic<sup>404</sup> and a human rights activist. The ‘Other’ mentioned actors in the English sample are journalists, wives of the Russian soldiers who died in Syria and Varvara Karaulova, a Russian woman who tried to leave for Syria to join IS. In the Russian sample ‘Other’ mentioned actors are general public (4 times) and journalists.

#### *Syrian actors*

#### **Syrian actors in articles – S4**

	<b>English sample (cases), % N=29</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N=63</b>
Articles that quote Syrian actors	(10) 34.5%	(10) 15.9%
Articles that mention Syrian actors	(25) 86.2%	(51) 81%

Table S4-23: Presence of quoted and mentioned Syrian actors in articles in S4.

#### **Syrian actors –S4**

<sup>404</sup> Not referred to in the text as experts.

Actors	English sample		Russian sample	
	Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 14	Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 71	Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 11	Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 112
President Bashar Assad	(1) 7.1% [10%]	(9) 12.7% [36%]	-	(13) 11.6% [24.5%]
Other government officials	(3) 21.4% [30%]	(10) 14.1% [40%]	(2) 18.2% [20%]	(15) 13.4% [28.3%]
Military	-	(15) 21.1% [60%]	(1) 9.1% [10%]	(17) 15.2% [32.1%]
Syrian opposition	(6) 42.9% [60]	(17) 23.9% [68%]	(5) 45.5% [50%]	(39) 34.8% [73.6%]
Experts	-	-	-	-
White Helmets	-	-	-	-
Activists	-	(1) 1.4% [4%]	-	(1) 0.9% [1.9%]
Eyewitnesses	-	-	-	(2) 1.8% [3.8%]
Other (specify)	(4) 28.6% [40%]	(19) 26.8% [76%]	(3) 27.3% [30]	(25) 22.3% [47.2%]

Table S4-24: Quoted and mentioned Syrian actors in S4. (N in this table refers to the number of actors quoted or mentioned in each group. The number is different from the number of articles in the previous table because some articles quote and mention more than one actor)

#### Other Syrian actors – S4

Actors	English sample		Russian sample	
	Quoted (cases), %, N =5	Mentioned (cases), %, N = 34	Quoted (cases), %, N =3	Mentioned (cases), %, N =32
General public	(3) 60%	(21) 61.8%	(1) 100%	(22) 68.7%
Journalists	(1) 20%	(1) 2.9 %	-	(1) 3.1%
Victims of conflict, injured & killed civilians	-	(5) 14.8%	-	-
Syrian refugees	-	(4) 11.7%	-	(8) 25%
Public figures	(1) 20%	(1) 2.9%	-	(1) 3.1%
Historical figures	-	(2) 5.9%	-	-

Table S4-25: Quoted and mentioned 'other' Syrian actors in English and Russian samples in S4. (N here stands for the overall amount of quoted and mentioned actors in each group. This number is different from the number of 'Other Syrian actors' category counted in table S4-24 because that table counted texts that quote and mention this actor group while this table counts the individual actors, which are often quoted and mentioned more than once in one text.

#### Foreign actors

#### Foreign actors in articles – S4

	<b>English sample (cases), % N= 29</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N= 63</b>
Articles that quote foreign actors	(16) 55.2%	(23) 36.5%
Articles that mention foreign actors	(23) 79.3%	(45) 71.4%

Table S4-26: Presence of quoted and mentioned foreign actors in articles in S4. The coding manual specifies that all actors not from Syria or Russia are considered 'foreign' for the purposes of this analysis.

### Foreign actors – S4

<b>Actors</b>	<b>English sample</b>		<b>Russian sample</b>	
	<b>Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 26</b>	<b>Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 5</b>	<b>Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 34</b>	<b>Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 84</b>
Barack Obama	(2) 7.7% [11.8%]	(4) 6.8% [16.7%]	(1) 2.9% [4.3%]	(4) 4.8% [8.9%]
Donald Trump	-	-	-	-
Marine Le Pen	-	-	-	-
Recep Erdogan	-	(1) 1.7% [4.2%]	-	(2) 2.4% [4.4%]
Other foreign officials (specify)	(10) 38.5% [58.8%]	(10) 16.9% [41.7%]	(11) 32.4% [47.8%]	(13) 15.5% [28.9%]
IS	-	(21) 35.6% [87.5%]	-	(27) 32.1% [60%]
International organisations	(9) 34.6% [52.9%]	(9) 15.3% [37.5%]	(1) 2.9% [4.3%]	(11) 13.1% [24.4%]
Experts	-	-	(6) 17.6% [26.1%]	(2) 2.4% [4.4%]
Activists	-	-	-	-
Other (specify)	(5) 19.2% [29.4%]	(14) 23.7% [58.3%]	(15) 44.1% [65.2%]	(25) 29.8% [55.6%]

Table S4-27: Quoted and mentioned foreign actors in S4. (N in this table refers to the number of actors quoted or mentioned in each group. The number is different from the number of articles in the previous table because some articles quote and mention more than one actor)

### Other foreign officials – S4

<b>Actors</b>	<b>English sample</b>		<b>Russian sample</b>	
	<b>Quoted (cases), %, N = 15</b>	<b>Mentioned (cases), %, N =23</b>	<b>Quoted (cases), %, N = 18</b>	<b>Mentioned (cases), %, N =19</b>
US	(8) 53.3%	(16) 69.6%	(5) 27.8%	(6) 31.6%
Angela Merkel	-	-	-	(1) 5.3%
Germany	(1) 6.7%	-	-	(1) 5.3%
France	-	-	(6) 33.3%	(1) 5.3%

UK	(1) 6.7%	(3) 13%	(3) 16.7%	(2) 10.5%
Australia	(1) 6.7%	-	-	-
Turkey	-	(2) 8.7%	-	(3) 15.8%
Ukraine	-	-	(1) 5.6%	(2) 10.5%
Iraq	-	(2) 8.7%	-	-
North Korea	-	-	-	(1) 5.3%
China	(1) 6.7%	-	(1) 5.6%	(1) 5.3%
Italy	-	-	(1) 5.6%	-
Sweden	-	-	(1) 5.6%	-
Tunisia	-	-	-	(1) 5.3%
Serbia	(1) 6.7%	-	-	-
Iran	(1) 6.7%	-	-	-

Table S4-28: Quoted and mentioned foreign officials in S4. (N in this table refers to the number of actors quoted or mentioned in each group. The number is different from the number of articles in the previous table because some articles quote and mention more than one actor.)

### Other foreign actors – S4

Actors	English sample		Russian sample	
	Quoted (cases), %, N =7	Mentioned (cases), %, N = 30	Quoted (cases), %, N =20	Mentioned (cases), %, N = 28
Journalists	(4) 57.1%	(1) 3.3%	(6) 30%	(4) 14.3%
Refugees <sup>405</sup>	-	(3) 10%		(3) 10.7%
General public	(1) 14.3%	(4) 13.3%		(4) 14.3%
Public figures		(4) 13.3%	(8) 40%	
Specialists on the topic <sup>406</sup>	(1) 14.3%	(4) 13.3%	(5) 25%	(1) 3.6%
Military	(1) 14.3%	(3) 10%	(1) 5%	(12) 42.9%
International military coalition in Syria	-	(3) 10%	-	(1) 3.6%
Muammar Gaddafi	-	(1) 3.3%	-	-
Historical figures	-	(3) 10%	(1) 14.3%	-
Other terrorist groups <sup>407</sup>	-	(2) 6.7%	-	(3) 10.7%
Hosni Mubarak		(1) 3.3%		
Ben Ali		(1) 3.3%		

Table S4-29: Quoted and mentioned ‘other’ foreign actors in English and Russian samples in S4. (N here stands for the overall amount of quoted and mentioned actors in each group. This number is different from the number of ‘Other foreign actors’ category counted in table S4-27 because that table counted texts that quote and mention this actor group while this table counts the individual actors, which are often quoted and mentioned more than once in one text.)

<sup>405</sup> Actors coded as refugees in the foreign actor section are refugees that were in the text referenced in general, or specified as being from other countries and not Syria. Syrian refugees are coded as Other Syrian actors.

<sup>406</sup> Not referred to in the text as experts. This group includes academics, professionals, think tank representatives, researchers and other people presented in the text as relevant figures to share their knowledge.

<sup>407</sup> Actors coded as Other terrorist groups include Al Qaeda and all groups that are referred to as terrorist in the text, with the exception of IS (coded separately in the Foreign Actors question), any Syrian opposition groups that are referred to as terrorist (coded as Syrian actors).

S5

Palmyra recapture from IS

Date of event: 27 March; period analysed: 24 - 30 March 2016.

Articles in English: 20

Articles in Russian: 37

*Length of text*

**Length of text – S5**

<b>Adjectives</b>	<b>English sample (cases), % N=20</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N=37</b>
100-300 words	(1) 5%	(17) 45.9%
300-600 words	(12) 60%	(17) 45.9%
601 words and more	(7) 35%	(3) 8.1%

Table S5-1: Length of texts in S5.

*Topic*

**Topics – S5**

<b>Adjectives</b>	<b>English sample (cases), % [percent of cases] N=26</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % [percent of cases] N=26</b>
Military confrontation/clashes, warfare	(14) 53.8% [70%]	(18) 39.1% [48.6%]
International relations/diplomacy	(4) 15.4% [20%]	(18) 39.1% [48.6%]
Internal affairs of a country (specify)	(3) 11.5% [15%]	(3) 6.5% [8.1%]
Humanitarian issues	-	-
Accident	-	-
Other (specify)	(5) 19.2% [25%]	(7) 15.2% (18.9%)

Table S5-2: Topics in S5. (N in this table refers to the overall number of topics selected for the texts in each sample. N is higher than number or articles because up to two topics were allowed to be selected per each article. The total percent sum of percent of cases is higher than 100% for the same reason.)

When topic was coded as ‘Internal affairs’ the country in question was Syria in all instances in both samples. ‘Other’ topic in all cases in both samples was culture.

*Description of Syria*

**Descriptions of Syria – S5**

	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	20	(20) 100%	-	100%

Russian sample	37	(35) 94.6 %	(2) 5.4%	100%
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Table S5-3: Articles in English and Russian samples with and without descriptions of Syria in S5.

### Descriptions of Syrian government– S5

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=14	Russian sample (cases), % N=5
Syrian <i>Сирийский</i>	(14) 100%	(5) 100%

Table S5-4: Descriptions of Syrian government in S5. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions.)

### Descriptions of president Assad– S5

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=3	Russian sample (cases), % N=3
Syrian <i>Сирийский</i>	(3) 100%	(3) 100%

Table S5-5: Descriptions of president Bashar Assad in S5. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions.)

### Descriptions of Syrian army – S5

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=55	Russian sample (cases), % N=97
Syrian <i>Сирийский</i>	(45) 81.8%	(68) 70.1%
‘The only force capable of fighting IS’ <i>Единственная способная сила</i>	(2) 3.6%	(4) 4.1%
Government <i>Правительственный</i>	(7) 12.7%	(24) 24.7%
‘Fighting terrorists’ <i>Воюющая с терроризмом</i>	-	(1) 1%
Heroic	(1) 1.8%	-

Table S5-6: Descriptions of Syrian army in S5. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions.)

### Descriptions of Palmyra – S5

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=85	Russian sample (cases), % N=86
Syrian <i>Сирийский</i>	(5) 5.9%	(4) 4.7%
Ancient, historical	(46) 54.1%	(59) 68.6



<i>Древний, античный, исторический</i>		
Freed, liberated <i>Освобожденный</i>	(5) 5.9%	(8) 9.3%
Destroyed, devastated, looted, mined, desecrated, demolished <i>Уничтоженная</i>	(9) 10.6%	(1) 1.2%
Important, key <i>Важный</i>	(3) 3.5%	(2) 2.3%
Well-preserved, best preserved, intact <i>Нетронутый</i>	(6) 7.1%	(1) 1.2%
Unique, remarkable <i>Уникальный</i>	(5) 5.9%	(3) 3.5%
Famous, iconic <i>Знаменитый, знаковый</i>	(3) 3.5%	(2) 2.3%
Strategic <i>Стратегический</i>	(1) 1.2%	(2) 2.3%
Symbolic <i>Символический</i>	(1) 1.2%	(2) 2.3%
Other descriptions <sup>408</sup>	(1) 1.2%	(3) 3.5%

Table S5-7: Descriptions of Palmyra in S5. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions.)

#### *Description of military action*

#### **Descriptions of military action – S5**

	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	20	(9) 45%	(11) 55%	100%
Russian sample	37	(15) 40.5%	(22) 59.5%	100%

Table S5-8: Articles in English and Russian samples with and without descriptions of military action in S5.

#### **Descriptions of military action – S5**

<b>Adjectives</b>	<b>English sample (cases), % N=11</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N=14</b>
Ongoing, nonstop	(2) 18.1%	-
Fierce, raging, intensive, tense <i>Ожесточенный, тяжелый, напряженный</i>	(5) 45.4%	(5) 35.7%
Anti-terrorist	(2) 18.1%	-
Military <i>Военный, боевой</i>	(1) 9%	(6) 42.9%

<sup>408</sup> In the English sample this category includes the word 'greatest' and in the Russian sample this category includes 'beautiful' (прекрасная), 'eastern' (восточная), 'civilisational' (цивилизационная).

Full scale	(1) 9%	
Civil (war) Гражданская (война)	-	(3) 21.4%

Table S5-9: Descriptions of military action in S5. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions of protests. It is different from the overall number of articles that feature descriptions because some articles contain more than 1 description.)

### Description of Syrian opposition

#### Descriptions of Syrian opposition – S5

	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	20	(5) 25%	(15) 75%	100%
Russian sample	37	(7) 18.9%	(30) 81.1%	100%

Table S5-10: Articles in English and Russian samples with and without descriptions of military action in S5.

#### Descriptions of Syrian opposition – S5

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N= 7	Russian sample (cases), % N= 15
Syrian <i>Сирийский</i>	(2) 28.5%	(1) 6.6%
Terrorist, extremist <i>Террористический, экстремистский</i>	(2) 28.5%	(3) 20%
Patriotic <i>Патриотический</i>	(1) 14.2%	
Armed <i>Вооруженный</i>	-	(4) 26.6%
Moderate <i>Умеренный</i>	-	(1) 6.6%
'Who announced their dedication to the truce' <i>Заявивший о своей приверженности прекращению боевых действий/прекращению огня</i>	-	(2) 13.3%
Opposition <i>Оппозиционный</i>	(1) 14.2%	(2) 13.3%
Healthy <i>Здоровый</i>	-	(1) 6.6%
'Who call themselves opposition' <i>Причисляющий себя к оппозиции</i>	-	(1) 6.6%
Backed by the West	(1) 14.2%	

Table S5-11: Descriptions of Syrian opposition groups in S10. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions of protests. It is different from the overall number of articles that feature descriptions because some articles contain more than 1 description.)

*Description of Russia*

<b>Descriptions of Russia – S5</b>				
	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	20	(18) 90%	(2) 10%	100%
Russian sample	37	(18) 48.6%	(19) 51.4%	100%

Table S5-12: Articles in English and Russian samples with and without descriptions of Russia in S5.

<b>Descriptions of Russia – S5</b>		
<b>Adjectives</b>	<b>English sample (cases), % N=29</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N= 29</b>
Russian (civic) <i>Российский</i>	(26) 89.6%	(25) 86.2%
Russian (ethnic) <i>Русский</i>	-	(1) 3.4%
Sent by Putin <sup>409</sup> <i>Отправленный Путиным</i>	-	(1) 3.4%
Effective	(1) 3.4%	-
Esteemed <sup>410</sup>	(1) 3.4%	-
‘Only’ (country that coordinates with the Syrian army) <i>Единственная (страна, координирующая действия с сирийской армией)</i>	(1) 3.4%	-
Sincere in efforts to fight terrorism <i>Искренний в своих усилиях по борьбе с терроризмом</i>	-	(1) 3.4%
Much criticised <i>Много критиковавшийся</i>	-	(1) 3.4%

Table S5-13: Descriptions of Russia in S5. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions of protests. It is different from the overall number of articles that feature descriptions because some articles contain more than 1 description.)

In addition to the descriptions in the table a Russian soldier who died near Palmyra was described in the sample as ‘surrounded’ (2 times) and ‘committed to his duty until the end’.

*Description of other countries*

<sup>409</sup> This description was relating to Russian army

<sup>410</sup> This description was relating to art restoration specialists from the State Hermitage

### Descriptions of other countries – S5

	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	20	(7) 35%	(13) 65%	100%
Russian sample	37	(3) 8.1%	(34) 91.9%	100%

Table S5-14: Articles in English and Russian samples in S5 with and without descriptions of countries other than Russia and Syria.

### Descriptions of other countries – S5

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=5	Russian sample (cases), % N= 3
Country-based adjectives <i>Прилагательные отсылающие к странам</i>	(1) 100%	(2) 66.6%
Wahhabist (Turkish government) <i>Ваххабистский</i>	-	(1) 33.3%

Table S4-15: Descriptions of countries other than Syria and Russia in S4. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions of Russia).

### Descriptions of the Western coalition in Syria – S5

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=2	Russian sample (cases), % N= 1
US-led	(2) 100%	-
So-called Western <i>Так называемая западная</i>	-	(1) 100%

Table S5-16: Descriptions of countries other than Syria and Russia in S5. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions of Russia).

### Description of IS

#### Descriptions of IS – S5

	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	20	(5) 25%	(15) 75%	100%
Russian sample	37	(13) 35.1%	(24) 64.9%	100%

Table S5-17: Articles in English and Russian samples in S5 with and without descriptions of IS.

#### Descriptions of IS – S4

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=5	Russian sample (cases), % N=
Terrorist, radical <i>Террористический</i>	(3) 60%	(9) 60%

Retreating	(1) 20%	-
Adjectives identifying a connection to Islam (Islamist, jihadist)	(1) 20%	-
Big Крупный	-	(1) 6.6%
Barbarian Варварский	-	(4) 26.6%
'That captured Palmyra' Захвативший Пальмиру	-	(1) 6.6%

Table S5-18: Descriptions of IS in S5. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions of Russia).

### Sources

### Sources – S5

Sources	English sample (cases), %, [% of cases] N=49	Russian sample (cases), %, [% of cases] N=66
Other media or news agencies (specify)	(12) 24.5% [60%]	(7) 10.6% [18.9%]
Own correspondent or interview	(11) 22.4% [55%]	(19) 28.8% [51.4%]
Social media	(1) 2% [5%]	(1) 1.5% [2.7%]
Russian army or government	(7) 14.3% [35%]	(6) 9.1% [16.2%]
Syrian army or government	(8) 16.3% [40%]	(11) 16.7% [29.7%]
Russian sources not affiliated with the government	(2) 4.1% [10%]	(2) 3% [5.4%]
Syrian sources not affiliated with the government	-	(3) 4.5% [8.1%]
Other countries' officials (specify)	-	(4) 6.1% [10.8%]
International organisations (specify)	(4) 8.2% [20%]	(2) 3% [5.4%]
Experts	-	(3) 4.5% [8.1%]
Eyewitnesses	-	-
Activists	-	-
Bloggers	-	-
No specified sources	(1) 2% [5%]	(1) 1.5% [2.7%]
Other (specify)	(3) 6.1% [15%]	(7) 10.6% [18.9%]

Table S5-19: Sources in S5. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of sources appearing in the articles. Some articles referred to more than one source thus the percent of cases is higher than 100%).

‘International organisation’ sources are UNESCO in all instances in both samples. ‘Other’ sources in the English sample are journalists<sup>411</sup> (3 times), art and restoration specialists (3 times), a former politician, a political analyst, and a lawyer, and in the Russian sample journalists (2 times), art & restoration specialists (2 times), a former politician, general public and readers’ comments on various international news media websites.

#### Other media as sources – S5

<b>Adjectives</b>	<b>English sample (cases), % N=21</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N=9</b>
Russian	(10) 47.6%	(8) 88.9%
Syrian	(2) 28.6%	-
International	(4) 19%	(1) 11.1%
Other RT platforms	(1) 4.8%	-

Table S5-20: Other media sources by ownership in S5. (“N in this table refers to the number of media outlets mentioned in the articles as sources. It is higher than the number of ‘Other media’ sources specified in the previous table because that counted the number of articles that referred to other media as sources, not all instances of these references, of which there were often more than one in articles).

#### Sources per article – S5

<b>Adjectives</b>	<b>English sample (cases), % N=20</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N=37</b>
Single source	(5) 25%	(17) 45.9%
Two or more sources	(15) 75%	(20) 54.1%

Table S5-21: Articles that refer to one or two or more sources in S5.

#### Articles that refer to one source – S5

<b>Adjectives</b>	<b>English sample (cases), % N=5</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N=17</b>
Other media & news agencies	(3) 60%	(7) 41.7%
Own reporter or interview	-	-
Social media	-	-
Russian government or military	(1) 20%	(6) 35.2%
Syrian government or military		(1) 5.7%
International organisations	-	-
Expert	-	-
No specified sources	(1) 20%	(1) 5.7%
Other	-	(2) 11.7%

<sup>411</sup> Journalists who don’t work for RT and are not reporting in this instance but rather sharing their opinions and predications in an ‘expert’ capacity, without being referred to in the text as an expert.

Table S5-22: Sources in articles that refer to one source. N in this table refers to the number of articles that only refer to one source.

*Russian actors*

**Russian actors in articles – S5**

	<b>English sample (cases), % N= 20</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N=37</b>
Articles that quote Russian actors	(14) 70%	(13) 35.1%
Articles that mention Russian actors	(20) 100%	(29) 78.4%

Table S5-23: Presence of quoted and mentioned Russian actors in articles in S5.

**Russian actors – S5**

<b>Actors</b>	<b>English sample</b>		<b>Russian sample</b>	
	<b>Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 21</b>	<b>Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N =32</b>	<b>Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 14</b>	<b>Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N =45</b>
President Putin and spokesman Peskov	(6) 28.6% [42.9%]	(2) 6.3% [10%]	(2) 14.3% [15.4%]	(10) 22.2% [34.5%]
Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergei Lavrov	(1) 4.8% [7.1%]	-	-	(1) 2.2% [3.4%]
Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokeswoman Maria Zakharova	-	-	(1) 7.1% [7.7%]	-
Other government officials	(4) 19% [28.6%]	(5) 15.6% [25%]	(4) 28.6% [30.8%]	(3) 6.7% [10.3%]
Military	(5) 23.8% [35.7%]	(19) 59.4% [95%]	(3) 21.4% [23.1%]	(28) 62.2% [96.6%]
Non-government opposition	-	-	-	-
Experts	(1) 4.8% [7.1%]	(1) 3.1% [5%]	(1) 7.1% [7.7%]	-
Activists	-	-	-	-
Other (specify)	(4) 19% [28.6%]	(5) 15.6% [25%]	(3) 21.4% [23.1%]	(3) 6.7% [10.3%]

Table S5-24: Quoted and mentioned Russian actors in S5. (N in this table refers to the number of actors quoted or mentioned in each group. The number is different from the number of articles in the previous table because some articles quote and mention more than one actor)

The ‘Other’ quoted actors in both samples are art specialists (quoted 3 times in each sample) and a journalist (quoted once in each sample). The mentioned ‘Other’ actors in the English sample are general public (2 times) and archaeologists and restoration specialists (4 times), and in the Russian sample general public, journalist and art specialist.

*Syrian actors*

**Syrian actors in articles – S5**

	<b>English sample (cases), % N=20</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N=37</b>
Articles that quote Syrian actors	(11) 55%	(18) 48.6%
Articles that mention Syrian actors	(20) 100%	(35) 94.6%

Table S5-25: Presence of quoted and mentioned Syrian actors in articles in S5.

**Syrian actors –S5**

<b>Actors</b>	<b>English sample</b>		<b>Russian sample</b>	
	<b>Quoted (cases), %, [ % of cases] N = 18</b>	<b>Mentioned (cases), %, [ % of cases] N =45</b>	<b>Quoted (cases), %, [ % of cases] N = 20</b>	<b>Mentioned (cases), %, [ % of cases] N =85</b>
President Bashar Assad	(3) 16.7% [27.3%]	(4) 8.9% [20%]	(2) 10% [11.1%]	(10) 11.8% [27.8%]
Other government officials	(5) 27.8% [45.5%]	(9) 20% [45%]	(6) 30% [33.3%]	(15) 17.6% [41.7%]
Military	(5) 27.8% [45.5%]	(18) 40% [90%]	(7) 35% [38.9%]	(31) 36.5% [86.1%]
Syrian opposition	(1) 5.6% [9.1%]	(3) 6.7% [15%]	-	(7) 8.2% [19.4%]
Experts	-	(1) 2.2% [5%]	(2) 10% [11.1%]	-
White Helmets	-	-	-	-
Activists	-	-	-	-
Eyewitnesses	-	-	-	-
Other (specify)	(4) 22.2% [36.4%]	(10) 22.2% [50%]	(3) 15% [16.7%]	(22) 25.9% [61.1%]

Table S5-26: Quoted and mentioned Syrian actors in S5. (N in this table refers to the number of actors quoted or mentioned in each group. The number is different from the number of articles in the previous table because some articles quote and mention more than one actor)

**Other Syrian actors – S5**

<b>Actors</b>	<b>English sample</b>		<b>Russian sample</b>	
	<b>Quoted (cases), %, [ % of cases]</b>	<b>Mentioned (cases), %, [ % of cases]</b>	<b>Quoted (cases), %, [ % of cases]</b>	<b>Mentioned (cases), %, [ % of cases]</b>



	<b>N =4</b>	<b>N = 15</b>	<b>N =3</b>	<b>N =25</b>
General public	(1) 25%	(14) 93.3%	(1) 33.3%	(21) 84%
Journalists	(1) 25%	-	(1) 33.3%	-
Victims of conflict, injured & killed civilians	-	(1) 6.7%	-	(2) 8%
Specialists on the topic <sup>412</sup>	(2) 50%	-	(1) 33.3%	(2) 8%

Table S5-27: Quoted and mentioned ‘other’ Syrian actors in English and Russian samples in S5. (N here stands for the overall amount of quoted and mentioned actors in each group. This number is different from the number of ‘Other Ukrainian actors’ category counted in table S5-25 because that table counted texts that quote and mention this actor group while this table counts the individual actors, which are often quoted and mentioned more than once in one text.)

### *Foreign actors*

#### **Foreign actors in articles – S5**

	<b>English sample (cases), % N= 20</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N= 37</b>
Articles that quote foreign actors	(5) 25%	(10) 27%
Articles that mention foreign actors	(20) 100%	(35) 94.6%

Table S5-28: Presence of quoted and mentioned foreign actors in articles in S5. The coding manual specifies that all actors not from Syria or Russia are considered ‘foreign’ for the purposes of this analysis.

#### **Foreign actors – S5**

<b>Actors</b>	<b>English sample</b>		<b>Russian sample</b>	
	<b>Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 9</b>	<b>Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 39</b>	<b>Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 13</b>	<b>Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 55</b>
Barack Obama	-	-	-	(1) 1.8% [2.9%]
Donald Trump	-	-	-	-
Marine Le Pen	-	-	-	-
Recep Erdogan	-	-	-	(1) 1.8% [2.9%]
Other foreign officials (specify)	(1) 11.1% [20%]	(6) 15.4% [30%]	(6) 46.2% [54.5%]	(4) 7.3% [11.4%]
IS	-	(19) 48.7% [95%]	-	(31) 56.4% [88.6%]
International organisations	(4) 44.4% [80%]	(5) 12.8% [25%]	(2) 15.4% [18.2%]	(10) 18.2% [28.6%]

<sup>412</sup> Not referred to in the text as experts. This group includes academics, professionals, think tank representatives, researchers and other people presented in the text as relevant figures to share their knowledge.

Experts	(1) 11.1% [20%]	-	(3) 23.1% [27.3%]	-
Activists	-	-	-	-
Other (specify)	(3) 33.3% [60%]	(9) 23.1% [45%]	(2) 15.4% [18.2%]	(8) 14.5% [22.9%]

Table S5-29: Quoted and mentioned foreign actors in S5. (N in this table refers to the number of actors quoted or mentioned in each group. The number is different from the number of articles in the previous table because some articles quote and mention more than one actor)

### Other foreign officials – S5

Actors	English sample		Russian sample	
	Quoted (cases), %, N = 1	Mentioned (cases), %, N = 6	Quoted (cases), %, N = 8	Mentioned (cases), %, N = 6
US	(1) 100%	(3) 50%	(7) 87.5%	(4) 66.7%
Angela Merkel	-	-	-	-
Germany	-	-	-	-
France	-	(1) 16.7%	-	-
UK	-	(2) 33.3%	-	(1) 16.7%
Australia	-	-	-	-
Turkey	-	-	-	(1) 16.7%
Iraq	-	-	(1) 12.5%	-

Table S5-30: Quoted and mentioned foreign officials in S5. (N in this table refers to the number of actors quoted or mentioned in each group. The number is different from the number of articles in the previous table because some articles quote and mention more than one actor.)

### Other foreign actors – S5

Actors	English sample		Russian sample	
	Quoted (cases), %, N = 4	Mentioned (cases), %, N = 9	Quoted (cases), %, N = 2	Mentioned (cases), %, N = 10
Journalists	-	-	(1) 50%	(1) 10%
Refugees <sup>413</sup>	-	-	-	-
General public	(1) 25%	-	(1) 50%	-
Public figures	(2) 50%	(1) 11.1%	-	(3) 30%
Specialists on the topic <sup>414</sup>	(1) 25%	(1) 11.1%	-	(1) 10%
Military	-	(3) 33.3%	-	(3) 30%
International military coalition in Syria	-	(4) 44.4%	-	(2) 20%

Table S5-31: Quoted and mentioned ‘other’ foreign actors in English and Russian samples in S5. (N here stands for the overall amount of quoted and mentioned actors in each group. This number is different from the number of ‘Other foreign actors’ category counted in table S5-28 because that table counted texts that quote and

<sup>413</sup> Actors coded as refugees in the foreign actor section are refugees that were in the text referenced in general, or specified as being from other countries and not Syria. Syrian refugees are coded as Other Syrian actors.

<sup>414</sup> Not referred to in the text as experts. This group includes academics, professionals, think tank representatives, researchers and other people presented in the text as relevant figures to share their knowledge.

mention this actor group while this table counts the individual actors, which are often quoted and mentioned more than once in one text.)

**S6**  
**Russian orchestra performs in Palmyra.**  
**Date of event: 5 May; period analysed: 2 - 8 May 2016.**

Articles in English: 7  
 Articles in Russian: 10

*Length of text*

**Length of text – S6**

<b>Adjectives</b>	<b>English sample (cases), % N=7</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N=10</b>
100-300 words	-	(9) 90%
300-600 words	(6) 85.7%	(1) 10%
601 words and more	(1) 14.3%	-

Table S6-1: Length of texts in S6.

*Topic*

**Topics – S6**

<b>Adjectives</b>	<b>English sample (cases), % [percent of cases] N=8</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % [percent of cases] N=11</b>
Military confrontation/clashes, warfare	(1) 12.5% [14.3%]	(1) 9.1% [10%]
International relations/diplomacy	(4) 50% [57.1%]	(2) 18.2% [20%]
Internal affairs of a country (specify)	(1) 12.5% [14.3%]	(3) 27.3% [30%]
Humanitarian issues	-	-
Accident	-	-
Other (specify)	(2) 25% [28.6%]	(5) 45.5% (50%)

Table S6-2: Topics in S6. (N in this table refers to the overall number of topics selected for the texts in each sample. N is higher than number or articles because up to two topics were allowed to be selected per each article. The total percent sum of percent of cases is higher than 100% for the same reason.)

When topic was coded as ‘Internal affairs’ the country in question was Russia in all instances in both samples. ‘Other’ topic in all cases in both samples was culture.

*Description of Syria*

**Descriptions of Syria – S6**

	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	7	(7) 100%	-	100%
Russian sample	10	(8) 80 %	(2) 20%	100%

Table S6-3: Articles in English and Russian samples with and without descriptions of Syria in S6.

In this event there is only one description of the Syrian government – in the English sample it is described as ‘Syrian’. Syrian army is described once in the Russian sample (as ‘Syrian<sup>415</sup>’) and 5 times in the English sample - 4 times as ‘Syrian’ and once as ‘loyal to Assad’. However, there are descriptions of Palmyra in both samples.

### Descriptions of Palmyra – S6

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=20	Russian sample (cases), % N=11
Syrian <i>Сирийский</i>		(2) 18.2%
Ancient, historical <i>Древний, античный, исторический</i>	(5) 25%	(6) 54.6%
Freed, liberated <i>Освобожденный</i>	(2) 10%	(2) 18.2%
Destroyed, ruined, devastated <i>Разоренный</i>	(6) 30%	(1) 9.1%
Embattled, war-stricken, war-torn	(3) 15%	-
Intact	(1) 5%	-
Magnificent, famous, iconic	(3) 15%	-

Table S5-4: Descriptions of Palmyra in S6. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions.)

### Description of military action

#### Descriptions of military action – S6

	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	7	(2) 28.6%	(5) 71.4%	100%
Russian sample	10	-	(10) 100%	100%

Table S6-5: Articles in English and Russian samples with and without descriptions of military action in S6.

In the Russian sample there are no texts that contain descriptions of the military action while in the English sample there are just two instances of the descriptions - one described the military action as a civil war, and another one as ‘Syrian’.

### Description of Syrian opposition

<sup>415</sup> In Russian: сирийская

### Descriptions of Syrian opposition – S6

	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	7	(1) 14.3%	(6) 85.7%	100%
Russian sample	10	(1) 10%	(9) 90%	100%

Table S6-6: Articles in English and Russian samples with and without descriptions of military action in S6.

In both samples Syrian opposition is described as ‘terrorist’, and in the English sample it is also described as rebel and opposed to Assad.

#### *Description of Russia*

### Descriptions of Russia – S6

	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	7	(5) 71.4%	(2) 28.6%	100%
Russian sample	10	(7) 70%	(3) 30%	100%

Table S6-7: Articles in English and Russian samples with and without descriptions of Russia in S6.

Russian government officials and army are all described as ‘Russian’ in both language samples in all of the cases. However, there are also descriptions (most of which appear once) of the Russian soldier who died during the operation to retake Palmyra: in the English sample he is described as Palmyra hero, slain, heroic, deceased, surrounded, killed, and as twenty-five-years-old. In the Russian sample he is described as ‘deceased’<sup>416</sup> (7 times), as Russian in a civic sense<sup>417</sup> (4 times), as Russian with a word that has ethnic connotations<sup>418</sup>, as 25-years-old, and as ‘top’<sup>419</sup>.

In the English sample there are also descriptions of the Russian orchestra that performed in Palmyra, the conductor Valery Gergiev and some of the most famous musicians. They are described, with all descriptions appearing once: as ‘renowned’ and ‘internationally acclaimed’ and Valery Gergiev is described as an ethnic Ossetian.

#### *Description of other countries*

### Descriptions of other countries – S6

	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	7	(4) 57.1%	(3) 42.9%	100%
Russian sample	10	(3) 30%	(7) 70%	100%

Table S6-8: Articles in English and Russian samples in S6 with and without descriptions of countries other than Russia and Syria.

<sup>416</sup> In Russian: погибший

<sup>417</sup> In Russian: российский

<sup>418</sup> In Russian: русский

<sup>419</sup> In Russian: передовой

### Descriptions of other countries – S6

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=6	Russian sample (cases), % N= 4
Country-based adjectives <i>Прилагательные отсылающие к странам)</i>	(2) 33.3%	(3) 75%
Breakaway <sup>420</sup>	(2) 33.3%	-
Renowned <sup>421</sup>	(1) 16.6%	-
Targeting civilian infrastructure <sup>422</sup>	(1) 16.6%	-
'Located in Lebanon' <sup>423</sup> , <i>Находящийся в Ливане</i>	-	(1) 25%

Table S6-9: Descriptions of countries other than Syria and Russia in S6. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions of Russia).

### Description of IS

#### Descriptions of IS – S6

	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	7	(3) 42.9%	(4) 57.1%	100%
Russian sample	10	-	(10) 100%	100%

Table S6-10: Articles in English and Russian samples in S6 with and without descriptions of IS.

IS is not described in any of the articles in the Russian sample, and in the English sample it is described with words like 'brutal', 'terrorist' (2 times), 'terrible' and 'enemy'.

### Sources

#### Sources – S6

Sources	English sample (cases), %, [% of cases] N=12	Russian sample (cases), %, [% of cases] N=15
Other media or news agencies (specify)	(2) 16.7% [28..6%]	(4) 26.7% [40%]
Own correspondent or interview	(2) 16.7% [28..6%]	(3) 20% [30%]
Social media	(1) 8.3% [14.3%]	-
Russian army or government	(2) 16.7% [28..6%]	(2) 13.3% [20%]

<sup>420</sup> This description related to the unrecognised state of South Ossetia

<sup>421</sup> This description related to the poet Robert Burns

<sup>422</sup> This description related to Georgian army

<sup>423</sup> This description related to a foreign journalist

Syrian army or government	-	-
Russian sources not affiliated with the government	-	(1) 6.7% [10%]
Syrian sources not affiliated with the government	-	-
Other countries' officials (specify)	-	(1) 6.7% [10%]
International organisations (specify)	-	(1) 6.7% [10%]
Experts	-	-
Eyewitnesses	-	-
Activists	-	-
Bloggers	-	-
No specified sources	(3) 25% [42.9%]	(2) 13.3% [20%]
Other (specify)	(2) 16.7% [28.6%]	(1) 6.7% [10%]

Table S6-11: Sources in S6. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of sources appearing in the articles. Some articles referred to more than one source thus the percent of cases is higher than 100%).

'Other countries' officials' source in the Russian sample is the US State Department.

'International organisation' source in the Russian sample is UNESCO.

'Other' sources in the English sample are general public and a security analyst, and in the Russian sample general public.

#### Other media as sources – S6

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=2	Russian sample (cases), % N=4
Russian	-	(4) 100%
Syrian	(1) 50%	-
International	(1) 50%	-
Other RT platforms	-	-

Table S6-12: Other media sources by ownership in S6. ("N in this table refers to the number of media outlets mentioned in the articles as sources. It is higher than the number of 'Other media' sources specified in the previous table because that counted the number of articles that referred to other media as sources, not all instances of these references, of which there were often more than one in articles).

#### Sources per article – S6

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=7	Russian sample (cases), % N=10
Single source	(4) 25%	(6) 60%
Two or more sources	(3) 75%	(4) 40%

Table S6-13: Articles that refer to one or two or more sources in S6.

#### Articles that refer to one source – S6

<b>Adjectives</b>	<b>English sample (cases), % N=4</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N=6</b>
Other media & news agencies	(1) 25%	(3) 50%
Own reporter or interview	-	-
Social media	-	-
Russian government or military	-	(1) 16.6%
Syrian government or military	-	-
International organisations	-	-
Expert	-	-
No specified sources	(3) 75%	(2) 33.3%
Other	-	-

Table S6-14: Sources in articles that refer to one source. N in this table refers to the number of articles that only refer to one source.

### *Russian actors*

#### **Russian actors in articles – S6**

	<b>English sample (cases), % N= 7</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N=10</b>
Articles that quote Russian actors	(3) 42.9%	(6) 60%
Articles that mention Russian actors	(7) 100%	(9) 90%

Table S6-15: Presence of quoted and mentioned Russian actors in articles in S6.

#### **Russian actors – S6**

<b>Actors</b>	<b>English sample</b>		<b>Russian sample</b>	
	<b>Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 4</b>	<b>Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N =15</b>	<b>Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 6</b>	<b>Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N =22</b>
President Putin and spokesman Peskov	(1) 25% [33.3%]	(1) 6.7% [14.3%]	(1) 16.7% [16.7%]	(3) 13.6% [33.3%]
Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergei Lavrov	-	(1) 6.7% [14.3%]	-	-
Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokeswoman Maria Zakharova	(1) 25% [33.3%]	-	-	-



Other government officials	(2) 50% [66.7%]	(2) 13.3% [28.6%]	(2) 33.3% [33.3%]	(3) 13.6% [33.3%]
Military	-	(5) 33.3% [71.4%]	-	(8) 36.4% [88.9%]
Non-government opposition	-	-	-	-
Experts	-	-	(1) 16.7% [16.7%]	-
Activists	-	-	-	-
Other (specify)	-	(6) 40% [85.7%]	(2) 33.3% [33.3%]	(8) 36.4% [88.9%]

Table S6-16: Quoted and mentioned Russian actors in S6. (N in this table refers to the number of actors quoted or mentioned in each group. The number is different from the number of articles in the previous table because some articles quote and mention more than one actor)

The ‘Other’ quoted actors in the Russian sample is general public and Russian representative in UNESCO. Mentioned ‘Other’ actors in the English sample are general public (5 times) and peacekeepers and in the Russian sample general public in all instances.

#### *Syrian actors*

#### **Syrian actors in articles – S6**

	<b>English sample (cases), % N=7</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N=10</b>
Articles that quote Syrian actors	-	(1) 10%
Articles that mention Syrian actors	(6) 85.7%	(6) 60%

Table S6-17: Presence of quoted and mentioned Syrian actors in articles in S6.

#### **Syrian actors –S6**

<b>Actors</b>	<b>English sample</b>		<b>Russian sample</b>	
	<b>Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 0</b>	<b>Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N =14</b>	<b>Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 1</b>	<b>Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N =8</b>
President Bashar Assad	-	(2) 14.3% [33.3%]	-	-
Other government officials	-	(1) 7.1% [16.7%]	-	(1) 12.5% [16.7%]
Military	-	(5) 35.7% [83.3%]	-	(2) 25% [33.3%]
Syrian opposition	-	(1) 7.1% [16.7%]	-	(1) 12.5% [16.7%]
Experts	-	-	-	-
White Helmets	-	-	-	-

Activists	-	-	-	-
Eyewitnesses	-	-	-	-
Other (specify)	-	(5) 35.7% [83.3%]	(1) 100% [100%]	(4) 50% [66.7%]

Table S6-18: Quoted and mentioned Syrian actors in S6. (N in this table refers to the number of actors quoted or mentioned in each group. The number is different from the number of articles in the previous table because some articles quote and mention more than one actor)

The quoted ‘Other’ actor in the Russian sample is a Syrian film director. Mentioned ‘Other’ actors in the English sample are victims of war (3 times), general public (3 times), and Syrian refugees, and in the Russian sample general public (5 times).

### Foreign actors

#### Foreign actors in articles – S6

	English sample (cases), % N= 7	Russian sample (cases), % N= 10
Articles that quote foreign actors	(3) 42.9%	(3) 70%
Articles that mention foreign actors	(7) 100%	(10) 100%

Table S6-19: Presence of quoted and mentioned foreign actors in articles in S6. The coding manual specifies that all actors not from Syria or Russia are considered ‘foreign’ for the purposes of this analysis.

#### Foreign actors – S6

Actors	English sample		Russian sample	
	Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 4	Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 12	Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 3	Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 15
Barack Obama	-	-	-	-
Donald Trump	-	-	-	-
Marine Le Pen	-	-	-	-
Recep Erdogan	-	-	-	-
Other foreign officials (specify)	(2) 50% [66.7%]	(1) 8.3% [14.3%]	(3) 100% [100%]	(1) 6.7% [10%]
IS	-	(5) 41.7% [71.4%]	-	(8) 53.3% [80%]
International organisations	-	-	-	(2) 13.3% [20%]
Experts	-	-	-	-
Activists	-	-	-	-
Other (specify)	(2) 50% [66.7%]	(6) 50% [85.7%]	-	(4) 26.7% [40%]

Table S6-20: Quoted and mentioned foreign actors in S6. (N in this table refers to the number of actors quoted or mentioned in each group. The number is different from the number of articles in the previous table because some articles quote and mention more than one actor. Percent of cases adds up to a number higher than 100% because more than one actor can be quoted and mentioned in one article.)

The quoted ‘Other foreign officials’ in the English sample are from Germany and the UK, and in the Russian sample they are from Peru and the US (2 appearances). The mentioned ‘Other foreign officials’ in the English sample are from the US and the UK, and in the Russian sample they are from the UK. The quoted ‘Other’ foreign actors in the English sample are general public and a security analyst. The mentioned ‘Other’ actors in the English sample are general public (5 times), historical figures (2 times), a journalist, foreign military and a topic specialist. In the Russian sample mentioned ‘Other’ actors are general public (2 times), a journalist, and a topic specialist.

### S7

#### **Russian helicopter shot down in Idlib province, killing five on board.**

**Date of event: 1 August; period analysed: 1 - 4 August 2016.**

Articles in English: 6

Articles in Russian: 10

#### *Length of text*

#### **Length of text – S7**

<b>Adjectives</b>	<b>English sample (cases), % N=6</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N=10</b>
100-300 words	-	(9) 90%
300-600 words	(4) 66.7%	(1) 10%
601 words and more	(2) 33.3%	-

Table S7-1: Length of texts in S7.

#### *Topic*

#### **Topics – S7**

<b>Adjectives</b>	<b>English sample (cases), % [percent of cases] N=9</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % [percent of cases] N=17</b>
Military confrontation/clashes, warfare	(3) 33.3% [50%]	(6) 35.3% [60%]
International relations/diplomacy	(1) 11.1% [16.7%]	(4) 23.5% [40%]
Internal affairs of a country (specify)	(1) 11.1% [16.7%]	-
Humanitarian issues	(3) 33.3% [50%]	(5) 29.4% [50%]
Accident	(1) 11.1% [16.7%]	(2) 11.8% [20%]
Other (specify)	-	-

Table S7-2: Topics in S7. (N in this table refers to the overall number of topics selected for the texts in each sample. N is higher than number or articles because up to two topics were allowed to be selected per each article. The total percent sum of percent of cases is higher than 100% for the same reason.)

Where topic is selected as “Internal affairs’ country specified is Syria.

*Description of Syria*

**Descriptions of Syria – S7**

	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	6	(6) 100%	-	100%
Russian sample	10	(8) 80 %	(2) 20%	100%

Table S7-3: Articles in English and Russian samples with and without descriptions of Syria in S7.

Syrian government is described only in the English sample of this event, as ‘Syrian’ in all (100%) instances. Aleppo authorities are described in the Russian sample as ‘city<sup>424</sup>’ in all (2) instances.

**Descriptions of Syrian army – S7**

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=3	Russian sample (cases), % N=4
Syrian <i>Сирийский</i>	(2) 66.6%	(3) 75%
Government <i>Правительственный</i>	(1) 33.3%	(1) 25%

Table S7-4: Descriptions of Syrian army in S7. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions.)

**Descriptions of Aleppo – S7**

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=6	Russian sample (cases), % N=6
Syrian <i>Сирийский</i>	(1) 16.6%	(4) 66.6%
Adjectives relating to who controls the town or its parts (controlled by rebels/ government) <i>Контролируемый боевиками, подконтрольный правит. войскам</i>	(3) 50%	(2) 33.3%
Contested	(1) 16.6%	-
Plagued by dire humanitarian situation	(1) 16.6%	-

Table S7-5: Descriptions of Syrian army in S7. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions.)

<sup>424</sup> In Russian: городские

*Description of military action*

**Descriptions of military action – S7**

	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	6	(2) 33.3%	(4) 66.7%	100%
Russian sample	10	(2) 20%	(8) 80%	100%

Table S7-6: Articles in English and Russian samples with and without descriptions of military action in S7.

In the Russian sample all (100%, 2 times) of the descriptions of the military action describe it as ‘intensive’<sup>425</sup>, while in the English sample in one instance (50%) it is described as ‘deadly’ and in another instance (50%) it is described as ‘anti-terrorist’.

*Description of Syrian opposition*

**Descriptions of Syrian opposition – S7**

	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	6	(6) 100%	-	100%
Russian sample	10	(7) 70%	(3) 30%	100%

Table S7-7 Articles in English and Russian samples with and without descriptions of military action in S7.

**Descriptions of Syrian opposition – S7**

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=23	Russian sample (cases), % N= 17
Terrorist, extreme <i>Террористический, экстремистский</i>	(7) 30.4%	(2) 11.8%
‘Using civilians as human shields’ Использующие мирных граждан в качестве живых щитов	-	(2) 11.7%
Armed Вооруженный	(1) 4.4%	(3) 17.6%
Moderate Умеренный	(1) 4.4%	(1) 5.9%
So-called moderate, ‘moderate’, seen as/considered moderate by the US/Washington <i>«Умеренный», так называемый умеренный</i>	(4) 17.3%	(6) 35.2%

<sup>425</sup> In Russian: интенсивные

Implicated in/responsible for chemical attack Совершившие химическую атаку	(2) 8.8%	(1) 5.9%
Rebel	(3) 13%	-
US-backed, Pentagon-trained	(4) 17.3%	-
Based in Aleppo	(1) 4.4%	-
Blocked Блокированный	-	(1) 5.9%
“Who want to lay down arms’ Желающие сложить оружие	-	(1) 5.9%

Table S7-8: Descriptions of Syrian opposition groups in S7. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions of protests. It is different from the overall number of articles that feature descriptions because some articles contain more than 1description.)

### Description of Russia

#### Descriptions of Russia – S7

	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	6	(3) 50%	(3) 50%	100%
Russian sample	10	(4) 40%	(6) 60%	100%

Table S7-9: Articles in English and Russian samples with and without descriptions of Russia in S7.

Russia is only described with the adjective ‘Russian’ in all of the instances (100%) in both samples in this event.

### Description of other countries

#### Descriptions of other countries – S7

	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	6	(1) 16.7%	(5) 83.3%	100%
Russian sample	10	(2) 20%	(8) 80%	100%

Table S7-10: Articles in English and Russian samples in S7 with and without descriptions of countries other than Russia and Syria.

Words used to describe other countries in the English sample are country-based adjectives, and in the Russian sample there is once instance of a country-based adjective, and in addition French officials are described as ‘having previously visited Crimea<sup>426</sup>, and the and US army is described as ‘supporting the Syrian opposition<sup>427</sup>’.

### Description of IS

<sup>426</sup> In Russian: посетившие ранее Крым

<sup>427</sup> In Russian: поддерживающая сирийскую оппозицию армия США

### Descriptions of IS – S7

	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	6	(2) 33.4%	(4) 66.6%	100%
Russian sample	10	(2) 20%	(8) 80%	100%

Table S7-11: Articles in English and Russian samples in S7 with and without descriptions of IS.

IS is described with the adjective ‘terrorist’ in all of the instances (100%) in both samples in this event.

### Sources

#### Sources – S7

Sources	English sample (cases), %, [% of cases] N=22	Russian sample (cases), %, [% of cases] N=13
Other media or news agencies (specify)	(3) 13.6% [50%]	(4) 30.8% [40%]
Own correspondent or interview	(5) 22.7% [83.3%]	(1) 7.7% [10%]
Social media	-	(1) 7.7% [10%]
Russian army or government	(4) 18.2% [66.7%]	(5) 38.5% [50%]
Syrian army or government	-	-
Russian sources not affiliated with the government	-	-
Syrian sources not affiliated with the government	(2) 9.1% [33.3%]	-
Other countries’ officials (specify)	(2) 9.1% [33.3%]	(1) 7.7% [10%]
International organisations (specify)	(1) 4.5% [16.7%]	-
Experts	-	-
Eyewitnesses	(1) 4.5% [16.7%]	(1) 7.7% [10%]
Activists	-	-
Bloggers	-	-
No specified sources	-	-
Other (specify)	(4) 18.2% [66.7%]	-

Table S7-12: Sources in S7. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of sources appearing in the articles. Some articles referred to more than one source thus the percent of cases is higher than 100%).

‘Other countries’ officials’ sources in the English sample are US State Department in both cases. ‘International organisation’ source in the English sample is Amnesty International.

'Other' sources in the English sample are journalists (2 times), topic specialists (2 times), and general public (2 times).

### Other media as sources – S7

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=3	Russian sample (cases), % N=4
Russian	-	(3) 75%
Syrian	(3) 100%	(1) 25%
International	-	-
Other RT platforms	-	-

Table S7-13: Other media sources by ownership in S7. ("N in this table refers to the number of media outlets mentioned in the articles as sources. It is higher than the number of 'Other media' sources specified in the previous table because that counted the number of articles that referred to other media as sources, not all instances of these references, of which there were often more than one in articles).

### Sources per article – S7

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=6	Russian sample (cases), % N=10
Single source	-	(7) 70%
Two or more sources	(6) 100%	(3) 30%

Table S7-14: Articles that refer to one or two or more sources in S7.

### Articles that refer to one source – S7

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=0	Russian sample (cases), % N=7
Other media & news agencies	-	(3) 42.9%
Own reporter or interview	-	-
Social media	-	-
Russian government or military	-	(4) 57.1%

Table S7-15: Sources in articles that refer to one source. N in this table refers to the number of articles that only refer to one source.

### Russian actors

### Russian actors in articles – S7

	English sample (cases), % N= 6	Russian sample (cases), % N=10
Articles that quote Russian actors	(5) 83.3%	(6) 60%
Articles that mention Russian actors	(4) 66.7%	(7) 70%

Table S7-16: Presence of quoted and mentioned Russian actors in articles in S7.



**Russian actors – S7**

Actors	English sample		Russian sample	
	Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 8	Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N =7	Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 6	Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N =9
President Putin and spokesman Peskov	(1) 12.5% [20%]	-	-	-
Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergei Lavrov	-	-	-	-
Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokeswoman Maria Zakharova	-	-	(1) 16.7% [16.7%]	-
Other government officials	(3) 37.5% [60%]	(4) 57.1% [100%]	(2) 33.3% [33.3%]	(1) 11.1% [14.3%]
Military	(3) 37.5% [60%]	(2) 28.6% [50%]	(3) 50% [50%]	(6) 66.7% [85.7%]
Non-government opposition	-	-	-	-
Experts	-	-	-	-
Activists	-	-	-	-
Other (specify)	(1) 12.5% [20%]	(1) 14.3% [25%]	-	(2) 22.2% [28.6%]

Table S7-17: Quoted and mentioned Russian actors in S7. (N in this table refers to the number of actors quoted or mentioned in each group. The number is different from the number of articles in the previous table because some articles quote and mention more than one actor)

The ‘Other’ quoted actors in the English sample is a journalist. Mentioned ‘Other’ actor in the English sample is general public and in the Russian sample also general public in all instances.

*Syrian actors*

**Syrian actors in articles – S7**

	English sample (cases), % N=6	Russian sample (cases), % N=10
Articles that quote Syrian actors	(2) 33.3%	(1) 10%
Articles that mention Syrian actors	(6) 100%	(8) 80%

Table S7-18: Presence of quoted and mentioned Syrian actors in articles in S7.

### Syrian actors –S7

Actors	English sample		Russian sample	
	Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 2	Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N =15	Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 2	Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N =23
President Bashar Assad	-	-	-	-
Other government officials	-	(2) 13.3% [33.3%]	(1) 50% [50%]	(4) 17.4% [50%]
Military	-	(2) 13.3% [33.3%]	-	(3) 13% [37.5%]
Syrian opposition	-	(6) 40% [100%]	(1) 50% [50%]	(7) 30.4% [87.5%]
Experts	-	-	-	-
White Helmets	-	-	-	-
Activists	-	-	-	-
Eyewitnesses	-	-	-	(1) 4.3% [12.5%]
Other (specify)	(2) 100% [100%]	(4) 26.7% [66.7%]		(8) 34.8% [100%]

Table S7-19: Quoted and mentioned Syrian actors in S7. (N in this table refers to the number of actors quoted or mentioned in each group. The number is different from the number of articles in the previous table because some articles quote and mention more than one actor)

Quoted ‘Other’ actors in the English sample are general public, a journalist and a topic specialist. Mentioned ‘Other’ actors in the English sample are general public (5 times) and victims of the conflict (2 times). In the Russian sample ‘Other’ mentioned actors are general public (8 times), victims of the conflict (2 times), Syrian refugees and Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

#### Foreign actors

### Foreign actors in articles – S7

	English sample (cases), % N= 6	Russian sample (cases), % N= 10
Articles that quote foreign actors	(5) 83.3%	(2) 20%
Articles that mention foreign actors	(3) 50%	(7) 70%

Table S7-20: Presence of quoted and mentioned foreign actors in articles in S7. The coding manual specifies that all actors not from Syria or Russia are considered ‘foreign’ for the purposes of this analysis.

### Foreign actors – S7

Actors	English sample		Russian sample	
	Quoted	Mentioned	Quoted	Mentioned

	(cases), %, [% of cases] N = 8	(cases), %, [% of cases] N = 4	(cases), %, [% of cases] N = 2	(cases), %, [% of cases] N = 9
Barack Obama	-	-	-	-
Donald Trump	-	-	-	-
Marine Le Pen	-	-	-	-
Recep Erdogan	-	-	-	-
Other foreign officials (specify)	(2) 25% [40%]	-	(2) 100% [100%]	(2) 22.2% [28.6%]
IS	-	(2) 50% [66.7%]	-	(3) 33.3% [42.9%]
International organisations	(2) 25% [40%]	-	-	(1) 11.1% [14.3%]
Experts	(1) 12.5% [20%]	-	-	-
Activists	-	-	-	-
Other (specify)	(3) 37.5% [60%]	(2) 50% [66.7%]	-	(3) 33.3% [42.9%]

Table S7-21: Quoted and mentioned foreign actors in S7. (N in this table refers to the number of actors quoted or mentioned in each group. The number is different from the number of articles in the previous table because some articles quote and mention more than one actor)

Quoted 'Other foreign officials' in the English sample are US State Department representatives, and in the Russian sample a US State Department representative and a French politician. Mentioned 'Other foreign officials' in the Russian sample are also From the US and France. Quoted 'Other' actors in the English sample are a journalist, a topic specialist and an injured victim of an attack. Mentioned 'Other' actors in the English sample are foreign military and victims of war, and in the Russian sample the Western coalition (2 times) and foreign military (2 times).

## S8

### Recapturing of Aleppo.

**Date of event: 5 - 16 December; period analysed: 2 - 19 December 2016.**

Articles in English: 106

Articles in Russian: 130

#### *Length of text*

#### **Length of text – S8**

<b>Adjectives</b>	<b>English sample (cases), % N=106</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N=130</b>
100-300 words	(12) 11.3%	(108) 83.1%
300-600 words	(65) 61.3%	(8) 6.2%
601 words and more	(29) 27.4%	(14) 10.8%

Table S8-1: Length of texts in S8.

#### *Topic*

### Topics – S8

<b>Adjectives</b>	<b>English sample (cases), % [percent of cases] N=144</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % [percent of cases] N=177</b>
Military confrontation/clashes, warfare	(44) 30.6% [41.5%]	(44) 24.9% [33.8%]
International relations/diplomacy	(47) 32.6% [44.3%]	(75) 42.4% [57.7%]
Internal affairs of a country (specify)	(3) 2.1% [2.8%]	(3) 1.7% [2.3%]
Humanitarian issues	(42) 29.2% [39.6%]	(55) 31.1% [42.3%]
Accident	(4) 2.8% [3.8%]	-
Other (specify)	(4) 2.8% [3.8%]	-

Table S8-2: Topics in S8. (N in this table refers to the overall number of topics selected for the texts in each sample. N is higher than number or articles because up to two topics were allowed to be selected per each article. The total percent sum of percent of cases is higher than 100% for the same reason.)

### Description of Syria

#### Descriptions of Syria – S8

	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	106	(98) 92.4%	(8) 7.6%	100%
Russian sample	130	(105) 80.7%	(25) 19.3%	100%

Table S8-3: Articles in English and Russian samples with and without descriptions of Syria in S8.

#### Descriptions of Syrian government– S8

<b>Adjectives</b>	<b>English sample (cases), % N=65</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N=25</b>
Syrian <i>Сирийский</i>	(60) 92.4%	(20) 80%
Legal, legitimate <i>Законный, легитимный</i>	(3) 4.6%	(4) 16%
Assad's	(2) 3%	-
Responsible for what's happening in the country <i>Ответственный за происходящее в стране</i>	-	(1) 4%

Table S8-4: Descriptions of Syrian government in S8. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions.)

#### Descriptions of president Assad– S8

<b>Adjectives</b>	<b>English sample (cases), % N=14</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N=4</b>
Syrian <i>Сирийский</i>	(13) 92.9%	(1) 25%
Legal, legitimate <i>Законный, легитимный</i>	(1) 7.1%	-
Bloodthirsty <i>Кровожадный</i>	-	(1) 25%
Anti-American <i>Антиамериканский</i>	-	(1) 25%
Acting <i>Действующий</i>	-	(1) 25%

Table S8-5: Descriptions of president Bashar Assad in S8. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions.)

### Descriptions of Syrian army – S8

<b>Adjectives</b>	<b>English sample (cases), % N=186</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N=122</b>
Syrian <i>Сирийский</i>	(110) 59.2%	(77) 63.1%
Assad's, pro-Assad	(3) 1.7%	-
Government <i>Правительственный</i>	(69) 37%	(43) 35.3%
Russia-backed	(1) 0.5%	-
Damascus	(2) 1.1%	-
Retreating <i>Отступающий</i>	-	(1) 0.8%
Elite	(1) 0.5%	-
Uncoordinated <i>Разрозненный</i>	-	(1) 0.8%

Table S8-6: Descriptions of Syrian army in S8. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions.)

### *Description of military action*

#### Descriptions of military action – S8

	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	106	(45) 42.5%	(61) 57.5%	100%
Russian sample	130	(20) 15.4%	(110) 84.6%	100%

Table S8-7: Articles in English and Russian samples with and without descriptions of military action in S8.

#### Descriptions of military action – S8

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=28	Russian sample (cases), % N=15
Syrian Сирийский	(18) 64.3%	(6) 40%
Constant	(1) 3.5%	-
Major, fierce Ожесточенный	(1) 3.5%	(2) 13.4%
Civil (war) Гражданская (война)	(3) 10.8%	(6) 40%
Horrible Ужасный	-	(1) 6.6%
Successful	(2) 7.2%	-
Humane	(1) 3.5%	-
Rebel	(2) 7.2%	-

Table S8-8: Descriptions of military action in S8. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions of protests. It is different from the overall number of articles that feature descriptions because some articles contain more than 1 description.)

In the English sample the Russian operation in Syria is described in the Russian sample as ‘Russian-backed’ (6 times) and ‘anti-terrorist’ (twice) and the US alliance operation is described as ‘allegedly counter-terrorist’ (twice). In the Russian sample Russian operation is described as ‘succesfull’ and ‘risky’

#### *Description of Syrian opposition*

#### **Descriptions of Syrian opposition – S8**

	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	106	(64) 60.4%	(42) 39.6%	100%
Russian sample	130	(46) 35.4%	(84) 64.6%	100%

Table S8-9: Articles in English and Russian samples with and without descriptions of military action in S8.

#### **Descriptions of Syrian opposition – S8**

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=174	Russian sample (cases), % N= 109
Syrian Сирийский	(18) 10.4%	(14) 12.9%
Terrorist, extremist, radical, irreconcilable <i>Террористический, радикальный</i>	(17) 9.8%	(24) 22%
Opposition Оппозиционный	(12) 6.9%	(8) 7.3%
Armed Вооруженный	(16) 9.2%	(20) 18.4%
Moderate	(4) 2.3%	(3) 2.8%

Умеренный		
So-called moderate, 'moderate' «Умеренный», так называемый умеренный	(33) 19.1%	(15) 13.8%
Militant	(17) 9.8%	-
Rebel	(32) 18.5%	-
Anti-government Антиправительственный	(2) 1.1%	(9) 8.2%
US-backed, supervised by the west, western-backed, US-vetted, pentagon trained Подконтрольный западу	(7) 4%	(3) 2.8%
Affiliated with Al-Qaeda	(3) 1.7%	-
Wounded Раненый	(2) 1.1%	(1) 0.9%
Adjectives identifying a connection to Islam (islamist, jihadist) Исламистский	(4) 2.3%	(1) 0.9%
Illegal Незаконный	(3) 1.7%	(4) 3.7%
Democratic, civic Гражданский	(2) 1.1%	(1) 0.9%
Hijacked	(1) 0.5%	-
Last	(1) 0.5%	-
Banned in Russia Запрещенный в России	-	(2) 1.8%
Efficient Эффективный	-	(2) 1.8%
Revolutionary, insurgent Революционный, повстанческий	-	(2) 1.8%

Table S8-10: Descriptions of Syrian opposition groups in S8. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions of protests. It is different from the overall number of articles that feature descriptions because some articles contain more than 1 description.)

### Description of Russia

	Descriptions of Russia – S8			
	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	106	(91) 85.8%	(15) 14.2%	100%
Russian sample	130	(78) 60%	(52) 40%	100%

Table S8-11: Articles in English and Russian samples with and without descriptions of Russia in S8.

Descriptions of Russia – S8		
Adjectives	English sample	Russian sample

	(cases), % N=164	(cases), % N=134
Russian <i>Российский</i>	(160) 97.6%	(123) 91.9%
Unharmed <sup>428</sup> Точечный	(1) 0.6%	-
Adjectives describing professionalism, talent and experience	(3) 1.8%	-
Injured <sup>429</sup>	-	(6) 4.6%
Influential Имеющая мировое влияние		(1) 0.7%
Important Важная		(1) 0.7%
Responsible for the events in the country Ответственная за происходящее в стране		(1) 0.7%
Enriched by military experience Обогащенная бесценным боевым опытом	-	(1) 0.7%
Showed the world its military power Продемонстрировавшая на зависть всему миру свою боеготовность		(1) 0.7%

Table S8-12: Descriptions of Russia in S8. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions of protests. It is different from the overall number of articles that feature descriptions because some articles contain more than 1 description.)

In this category there are several groups that get described. First of all, Russian military doctors that were in Syria as a part of a humanitarian mission are described in the Russian sample as ‘injured’ in one instance and as ‘dead in a bombing’ in 4 instances. Other descriptions of Russia as a country all feature only once: ‘enriched with an invaluable combat experience and having showcased to the envy of the whole world its fighting capacity<sup>430</sup>’, ‘military superpower<sup>431</sup>’, ‘having an international influence<sup>432</sup>’, ‘an important country<sup>433</sup>’, ‘responsible for what is going on in Syria<sup>434</sup>’ and as a ‘smaller, weaker country<sup>435</sup>’.

### *Description of other countries*

#### **Descriptions of other countries – S8**

<sup>428</sup> This description related to a military pilot

<sup>429</sup> These descriptions related to medical staff injured in a bombing

<sup>430</sup> In Russian: обогатившаяся бесценным боевым опытом, продемонстрировавшая на зависть всему миру свою боеготовность

<sup>431</sup> In Russian: военная супердержава

<sup>432</sup> In Russian: имеющая мировое влияние

<sup>433</sup> In Russian: важная страна

<sup>434</sup> In Russian: ответственная за происходящее в Сирии

<sup>435</sup> In Russian: меньшая, слабее



	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	106	(68) 64.1%	(38) 35.9%	100%
Russian sample	130	(52) 40%	(78) 60%	100%

Table S8-13: Articles in English and Russian samples in S8 with and without descriptions of countries other than Russia and Syria.

### Descriptions of other countries – S8

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N= 81	Russian sample (cases), % N= 58
Country-based adjectives <i>Прилагательные отсылающие к странам</i>	(64) 79%	(48) 82.8%
US-led (coalition)	(2) 2.5%	-
Unprepared (UN) Неподготовленный	-	(3) 5.2%
Unarmed Невооруженный		(2) 3.4%
Other descriptions appearing once	(15) 18.5%	(5) 8.6%

Table S8-14: Descriptions of countries other than Syria and Russia in S8. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions of Russia).

The coalition is described in the Russian sample with words that point out that it is led by the US<sup>436</sup> in all of the instances (100%).

### Description of IS

#### Descriptions of IS – S8

	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	106	(6) 5.7%	(100) 94.3%	100%
Russian sample	130	(9) 6.9%	(121) 93.1%	100%

Table S8-15: Articles in English and Russian samples in S8 with and without descriptions of IS.

#### Descriptions of IS – S8

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=8	Russian sample (cases), % N= 9
Terrorist, radical <i>Террористический</i>	(5) 62.5%	(7) 77.8%
Militant	(2) 25%	-
Advancing	-	(1) 11.1%

<sup>436</sup> In Russian the following words were coded into this category: ‘pro-American’ (проамериканская), ‘headed by the US’ (возглавляемая США)

Наступающий		
Reinforced by tanks	(1) 12.5%	-
Unfinished Недобитый	-	(1) 11.1%

Table S8-16: Descriptions of IS in S8. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions of Russia).

Sources

Sources – S8

Sources	English sample (cases), %, [% of cases] N=191	Russian sample (cases), %, [% of cases] N=179
Other media or news agencies (specify)	(44) 23% [41.5%]	(50) 27.9% [38.5%]
Own correspondent or interview	(39) 20.4% [36.8%]	(36) 20.1% [27.7%]
Social media	(5) 2.6% [4.7%]	(4) 2.2% [3.1%]
Russian army or government	(45) 23.6% [42.5%]	(52) 29.1% [40%]
Syrian army or government	(9) 4.7% [8.5%]	(8) 4.5% [6.2%]
Russian sources not affiliated with the government	-	(1) 0.6% [0.8%]
Syrian sources not affiliated with the government	(3) 1.6% [2.8%]	-
Other countries' officials (specify)	(5) 2.6% [4.7% %]	(8) 4.5% [6.2%]
International organisations (specify)	(5) 2.6% [4.7% %]	(1) 0.6% [0.8%]
Experts	(1) 0.5% [0.9%]	(7) 3.9% [5.4%]
Eyewitnesses	(7) 3.7% [6.6%]	-
Activists	-	-
Bloggers	-	-
No specified sources	(18) 9.4% [17%]	(4) 2.2% [3.1%]
Other (specify)	(10) 5.2% [9.4%]	(8) 4.5% [6.2%]

Table S8-17: Sources in S8. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of sources appearing in the articles. Some articles referred to more than one source thus the percent of cases is higher than 100%).

'Other countries' officials' sources in the English sample come from the US (4 times) and the UK government, and in the Russian sample from the governments in the US (4 times), the UK (4 times), Austria, France, Belgium, Germany and Turkey. "Other" sources in the English sample are topic specialists (6 times), journalists (3 times) and public figures, and in the

Russian sample public figures (3 times), journalists (5 times), and political and military analysts (2 times).

### Other media as sources – S8

<b>Adjectives</b>	<b>English sample (cases), % N=74</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N=52</b>
Russian	(26) 35.1%	(46) 88.5%
Syrian	(8) 10.8%	(2) 3.8%
International	(35) 47.3%	(4) 7.7%
Other RT platforms	(5) 6.8%	-

Table S8-18: Other media sources by ownership in S8. (“N in this table refers to the number of media outlets mentioned in the articles as sources. It is higher than the number of ‘Other media’ sources specified in the previous table because that counted the number of articles that referred to other media as sources, not all instances of these references, of which there were often more than one in articles).

### Sources per article – S8

<b>Adjectives</b>	<b>English sample (cases), % N=106</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N=130</b>
Single source	(54) 50.9%	(96) 73.8%
Two or more sources	(52) 49.1%	(34) 26.2%

Table S8-19: Articles that refer to one or two or more sources in S8.

### Articles that refer to one source – S8

<b>Adjectives</b>	<b>English sample (cases), % N=0</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N=96</b>
Other media & news agencies	(14) 25.9%	(46) 47.9%
Own reporter or interview	(2) 3.7%	(4) 4.2%
Social media	(1) 1.8%	-
Russian government or military	(14) 25.9%	(39) 40.7%
Other countries’ officials	(2) 3.7%	(1) 1%
International organisations	-	(1) 1%
Expert	-	-
No specified sources	(18) 33.3%	(4) 4.2%
Other	(2) 3.7%	(1) 1%

Table S8-20: Sources in articles that refer to one source. N in this table refers to the number of articles that only refer to one source.

### Russian actors

### Russian actors in articles – S8

	<b>English sample (cases), % N= 106</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N=130</b>

Articles that quote Russian actors	(61) 57.5%	(83) 63.8%
Articles that mention Russian actors	(65) 61.3%	(83) 63.8%

Table S8-21: Presence of quoted and mentioned Russian actors in articles in S8.

### Russian actors – S8

Actors	English sample		Russian sample	
	Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 88	Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 84	Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 94	Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 116
President Putin and spokesman Peskov	(7) 8% [11.5%]	(8) 9.5% [12.1%]	(9) 9.6% [10.8%]	(17) 14.7% [20.5%]
Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergei Lavrov	(2) 22.7% [32.8%]	(4) 4.8% [6.1%]	(9) 9.6% [10.8%]	(13) 11.2% [15.7%]
Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokeswoman Maria Zakharova	(5) 5.7% [8.2%]	-	(2) 2.1% [2.4%]	-
Other government officials	(37) 42% [60.7%]	(17) 20.2% [25.8%]	(40) 42.6% [48.2%]	(19) 16.4% [22.9%]
Military	(18) 20.5% [29.5%]	(41) 48.8% [62.1%]	(21) 22.3% [25.3%]	(45) 38.8% [54.2%]
Non-government opposition	-	-	-	-
Experts	-	(2) 2.4% [3%]	(6) 6.4% [7.2%]	(2) 1.7% [2.4%]
Activists	-	-	-	-
Other (specify)	(1) 1.1% [1.6%]	(12) 14.3% [18.2%]	(7) 7.4% [8.4%]	(20) 17.2% [24.1%]

Table S8-22: Quoted and mentioned Russian actors in S8. (N in this table refers to the number of actors quoted or mentioned in each group. The number is different from the number of articles in the previous table because some articles quote and mention more than one actor)

Quoted ‘Other’ actor in the English sample is a topic specialist and in Russian they are topic specialists (8 times) and a journalist. Mentioned ‘Other’ actors in the English sample are Russian medical personnel that was injured or killed in an attack on a Russian mobile hospital in Syria(11 times), and business & NGO representatives (2 times), and in the English sample injured or killed medical personnel (15 times), topic specialists (5 times), general public, a business representative, a journalist, Russian hackers, and Russian orchestra.

### Syrian actors

### Syrian actors in articles – S8

	<b>English sample (cases), % N=106</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N=130</b>
Articles that quote Syrian actors	(27) 25.5%	(17) 13.1%
Articles that mention Syrian actors	(101) 95.3 %	(115) 88.5%

Table S8-23: Presence of quoted and mentioned Syrian actors in articles in S8.

### Syrian actors –S8

<b>Actors</b>	<b>English sample</b>		<b>Russian sample</b>	
	<b>Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 30</b>	<b>Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N =3 33</b>	<b>Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 18</b>	<b>Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N =264</b>
President Bashar Assad	(2) 6.7% [7.1%]	(28) 8.4% [27.7%]	(6) 33.3% [35.3%]	(18) 6.8% [15.7%]
Other government officials	(7) 23.3% [25%]	(46) 13.8% [45.5%]	(5) 27.8% [29.4%]	(28) 10.6% [24.3%]
Military	(4) 13.3% [14.3%]	(76) 22.8% [75.2%]	(1) 5.6% [5.9%]	(49) 18.6% [42.6%]
Syrian opposition	(4) 13.3% [14.3%]	(89) 26.7% [88.1%]	(4) 22.2% [23.5%]	(90) 34.1% [78.3%]
Experts	-	-	-	(1) 0.4% [0.9%]
White Helmets	-	(8) 2.4% [7.9%]	-	(6) 2.3% [5.2%]
Activists	-	-	-	(1) 0.4% [0.9%]
Eyewitnesses	(4) 13.3% [14.3%]	(4) 1.2% [4%]	-	(2) 0.8% [1.7%]
Other (specify)	(9) 30% [32.1%]	(82) 24.6% [81.2%]	(2) 11.1% [11.8%]	(69) 26.1% [60%]

Table S8-24 Quoted and mentioned Syrian actors in S8. (N in this table refers to the number of actors quoted or mentioned in each group. The number is different from the number of articles in the previous table because some articles quote and mention more than one actor)

### Other Syrian actors – S8

<b>Actors</b>	<b>English sample</b>		<b>Russian sample</b>	
	<b>Quoted (cases), %, N =9</b>	<b>Mentioned (cases), %, N = 87</b>	<b>Quoted (cases), %, N =2</b>	<b>Mentioned (cases), %, N =72</b>
General public	(7) 77.8%	(79) 90.8%	(1) 50%	(68) 94.4%
Journalists	(2) 22.2%	(1) 1.1%	(1) 50%	-
Victims of conflict, injured	-	-	-	(1) 1.4%

& killed civilians				
Specialists on the topic <sup>437</sup>	-	(3) 3.4%	-	(2) 2.8%
Refugees		(2) 2.3%		-
Syrian Observatory of Human Rights		(2) 2.3%		(1) 1.4%

Table S8-25: Quoted and mentioned ‘other’ Syrian actors in English and Russian samples in S8. (N here stands for the overall amount of quoted and mentioned actors in each group. This number is different from the number of ‘Other Syrian actors’ category counted in table S8-24 because that table counted texts that quote and mention this actor group while this table counts the individual actors, which are often quoted and mentioned more than once in one text.)

### Foreign actors

#### Foreign actors in articles – S8

	<b>English sample (cases), % N= 106</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N= 130</b>
Articles that quote foreign actors	(53) 50%	(35) 26.9%
Articles that mention foreign actors	(73) 68.9%	(73) 56.2%

Table S8-26: Presence of quoted and mentioned foreign actors in articles in S8. The coding manual specifies that all actors not from Syria or Russia are considered ‘foreign’ for the purposes of this analysis.

#### Foreign actors – S8

<b>Actors</b>	<b>English sample</b>		<b>Russian sample</b>	
	<b>Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 65</b>	<b>Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 123</b>	<b>Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 42</b>	<b>Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 119</b>
Barack Obama	(2) 3.1% [3.8]	(9) 7.3% [12.3%]	(2) 4.8% [5.4%]	(7) 5.9% [9.6%]
Donald Trump	(1) 1.5%	(5) 4.1%	-	(4) 3.4% [5.5%]
Marine Le Pen	-	-	-	-
Recep Erdogan	-	(1) 0.8% [1.4%]	-	(5) 4.2% [6.8%]
Other foreign officials (specify)	(29) 44.6% [54.7%]	(32) 26% [43.8%]	(17) 40.5% [45.9%]	(31) 26.1% [42.5%]
IS	-	(29) 23.6% [39.7%]	-	(20) 16.8% [27.4%]
International organisations	(11) 16.9% [20.8%]	(26) 21.1% [39.7%]	(10) 23.8% [27%]	(29) 24.4% [39.7%]

<sup>437</sup> Not referred to in the text as experts. This group includes academics, professionals, think tank representatives, researchers and other people presented in the text as relevant figures to share their knowledge.

Experts	(1) 1.5% [1.9%]	-	(3) 7.1% [8.1%]	(3) 2.5% [4.1%]
Activists	-	-	-	-
Other (specify)	(21) 32.3% [39.6%]	(21) 17.1% [28.8%]	(10) 23.8% [27%]	(20) 16.8% [27.4%]

Table S8-27: Quoted and mentioned foreign actors in S8. (N in this table refers to the number of actors quoted or mentioned in each group. The number is different from the number of articles in the previous table because some articles quote and mention more than one actor)

### Other foreign officials – S8

Actors	English sample		Russian sample	
	Quoted (cases), %, N = 35	Mentioned (cases), %, N = 44	Quoted (cases), %, N = 25	Mentioned (cases), %, N = 61
US	(19) 54.3%	(13) 29.5%	(5) 20%	(15) 24.6%
Angela Merkel	-	-	-	(2) 3.3%
Germany	-	(3) 6.8%	(1) 4%	(6) 9.8%
France	(2) 5.7%	-	(2) 8%	(6) 9.8%
UK	(12) 34.3%	(11) 25%	(4) 16%	(8) 13.1%
China	(1) 2.9%	-	-	(1) 1.6%
Turkey	(1) 2.9%	(6) 13.6%	(9) 36%	-
Iraq	-	(2) 4.5%	-	-
'Western'	-	(3) 6.8%	-	-
Nigeria	-	(1) 2.3%	-	-
Iran	-	(4) 9.1%	(1) 4%	(4) 6.6%
UAE	-	(1) 2.3%	-	-
Austria	-	-	(1) 4%	-
Belgium	-	-	(2) 8%	-
Canada	-	-	-	(3) 4.9%
Italy	-	-	-	(3) 4.9%
Spain	-	-	-	(1) 1.6%
Japan	-	-	-	(2) 3.3%
Egypt	-	-	-	(1) 1.6%
Kazakhstan	-	-	-	(1) 1.6%
New Zealand	-	-	-	(1) 1.6%
Qatar	-	-	-	(1) 1.6%

Table S8-28: Quoted and mentioned foreign officials in S8. (N in this table refers to the number of actors quoted or mentioned in each group. The number is different from the number of articles in the previous table because some articles quote and mention more than one actor.)

### Other foreign actors – S5

Actors	English sample		Russian sample	
	Quoted (cases), %, N = 24	Mentioned (cases), %, N = 25	Quoted (cases), %, N = 16	Mentioned (cases), %, N = 29
Journalists	(9) 37.5%	(6) 24%	(8) 50%	-

Refugees <sup>438</sup>	-	-	-	(1) 3.4%
General public	-	(2) 8%	(1) 6.3%	(2) 6.9%
Public figures	(4) 16.7%	(1) 4%	(6) 37.5%	(3) 10.3%
Specialists on the topic <sup>439</sup>	(7) 29.2%	(2) 8%	-	(1) 3.4%
Military	(1) 4.2%	(11) 44%	(1) 6.3%	(12) 41.4%
International military coalition in Syria	-	-	-	(7) 24.1%
Turkish gunman who shot Russian ambassador in Ankara	(3) 12.5%	(1) 4%	-	(1) 3.4%
Other terrorist groups <sup>440</sup>	-	(2) 8%	-	(1) 3.4%
Historical figures	-	-	-	(1) 3.4%

Table S5-30: Quoted and mentioned ‘other’ foreign actors in English and Russian samples in S5. (N here stands for the overall amount of quoted and mentioned actors in each group. This number is different from the number of ‘Other foreign actors’ category counted in table S5-28 because that table counted texts that quote and mention this actor group while this table counts the individual actors, which are often quoted and mentioned more than once in one text.)

## S9

### **Chemical attack on the rebel-held town of Khan Sheikhoun in north-western Syria. Date of event: 4 April; period analysed: 4 - 7 April 2017.**

Articles in English: 55

Articles in Russian: 95

#### *Length of text*

#### **Length of text – S9**

<b>Adjectives</b>	<b>English sample (cases), % N=55</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N=95</b>
100-300 words	(12) 21.8%	(86) 90.5%
300-600 words	(31) 56.4%	(2) 2.1%
601 words and more	(12) 21.8%	(7) 7.4%

Table S9-1: Length of texts in S9.

#### *Topic*

#### **Topics – S9**

<b>Adjectives</b>	<b>English sample</b>	<b>Russian sample</b>
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<sup>438</sup> Actors coded as refugees in the foreign actor section are refugees that were in the text referenced in general, or specified as being from other countries and not Syria. Syrian refugees are coded as Other Syrian actors.

<sup>439</sup> Not referred to in the text as experts. This group includes academics, professionals, think tank representatives, researchers and other people presented in the text as relevant figures to share their knowledge.

<sup>440</sup> Actors coded as Other terrorist groups include Al Qaeda and all groups that are referred to as terrorist in the text, with the exception of IS (coded separately in the Foreign Actors question), any Syrian opposition groups that are referred to as terrorist (coded as Syrian actors).



	(cases), % [percent of cases] N=171	(cases), % [percent of cases] N=114
Military confrontation/clashes, warfare	(15) 21.1% [27.3%]	(10) 8.8% [10.5%]
International relations/diplomacy	(44) 62% [80%]	(89) 78.1% [93.7%]
Internal affairs of a country (specify)	(7) 9.9% [12.7%]	(6) 5.3% [6.3%]
Humanitarian issues	(3) 4.2% [5.5%]	(6) 5.3% [6.3%]
Accident	-	-
Other (specify)	(2) 2.8% [3.6%]	(3) 2.6% [3.2%]

Table S9-2: Topics in S9. (N in this table refers to the overall number of topics selected for the texts in each sample. N is higher than number or articles because up to two topics were allowed to be selected per each article. The total percent sum of percent of cases is higher than 100% for the same reason.)

### Description of Syria

	Descriptions of Syria – S9			
	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	55	(53) 96.4%	(2) 3.6%	100%
Russian sample	95	(82) 86.3%	(13) 13.7%	100%

Table S9-3: Articles in English and Russian samples with and without descriptions of Syria in S9.

### Descriptions of Syrian government– S9

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=65	Russian sample (cases), % N=21
Syrian <i>Сирийский</i>	(57) 87.7%	(17) 81%
Legal, legitimate <i>Законный, легитимный</i>	(2) 3.1%	(4) 19%
Assad's	(5) 7.7%	-
Local	(1) 1.5%	-

Table S9-4: Descriptions of Syrian government in S9. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions.)

### Descriptions of president Assad– S9

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=16	Russian sample (cases), % N=16
Syrian <i>Сирийский</i>	(15) 93.8%	(13) 81.3%
Secular	(1) 6.2%	-

Encouraged and supported by Putin's Russia Поощряемый и поддерживаемый путинской Россией	-	(2) 12.5%
'Barbarian' «Варварский»	-	(1) 6.2%

Table S9-5: Descriptions of president Bashar Assad in S9. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions.)

### Descriptions of Syrian army – S9

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=40	Russian sample (cases), % N=90
Syrian <i>Сирийский</i>	(35) 87.5%	(54) 60%
Government <i>Правительственный</i>	(3) 7.5%	(35) 38.9%
Loyal to the government	(1) 2.5%	(1) 1.1%
Assad	(1) 2.5%	-

Table S9-6: Descriptions of Syrian army in S9. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions.)

### Description of military action

#### Descriptions of military action – S9

	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	55	(42) 76.4%	(11) 55%	100%
Russian sample	95	(48) 50.5%	(47) 49.5%	100%

Table S9-7: Articles in English and Russian samples with and without descriptions of military action in S9.

#### Descriptions of military action – S9

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=16	Russian sample (cases), % N=8
Aerial <sup>441</sup>	(1) 6.2%	-
Anti-terrorist <sup>442</sup>	(2) 12.5%	-
Controversial <sup>443</sup>	(1) 6.2%	
Syrian	(6) 37.6%	(7) 87.5%
Civil (war) Гражданская (война)	(5) 31.3%	(1) 12.5%
Protracted	(1) 6.2%	

<sup>441</sup> This description refers to the Russian operation in Syria

<sup>442</sup> This description refers to the Russian operation in Syria

<sup>443</sup> This description refers to the Turkish operation in Syria

Table S9-8: Descriptions of military action in S9. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions of protests. It is different from the overall number of articles that feature descriptions because some articles contain more than 1 description.)

### Descriptions of the chemical attack – S9

<b>Adjectives</b>	<b>English sample (cases), % N=66</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N= 14</b>
Reported, alleged, suspected Предполагаемый, якобы имевший место	(51) 77.3%	(13) 92.9%
Syrian, Syria	(2) 3%	-
Horrific, reprehensible, brutal, senseless, tragic	(7) 10.6%	-
'Barbaric'	(3) 4.6%	-
Perpetrated by militants	(1) 1.5%	-
Carried out by Syrian authorities Осуществленная сирийскими властями	-	(1) 7.1%
Assad's	(1) 1.5%	-
Recent	(1) 1.5%	-

Table S9-9: Descriptions of chemical attack in S9. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions of protests. It is different from the overall number of articles that feature descriptions because some articles contain more than 1 description.)

### Descriptions of US strikes on Syrian airfield – S9

<b>Adjectives</b>	<b>English sample (cases), % N=102</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N=84</b>
Unapproved	(1) 0.9%	-
Unlawful, illegitimate Нарушающий основополагающие принципы международного права	(2) 1.9%	(1) 1.1%
Appropriate, proportional, justified, just, measured Адекватный, подходящий, пропорциональный, своевременный, закономерный	(6) 6%	(5) 6%
Targeted	(1) 0.9%	-
American, US, carried out by Washington	(3) 2.9%	(4) 4.8%

Американский, Нанесенный Вашингтоном/США		
Unilateral	(2) 1.9%	-
Irresponsible, reckless, rash, short-sighted Бездумный, непродуманный, алогичный	(5) 5%	(3) 3.6%
Dangerous	(1) 0.9%	-
Not effective, poor	(2) 1.9%	-
Positive, beautiful, well- executed	(5) 5%	-
Ordered by Trump	(1) 0.9%	-
Cruise missile Ракетный	(73) 71.8%	(70) 83.4%
Carried out on the 7 <sup>th</sup> of April Нанесенный 7 апреля	-	(1) 1.1%

Table S9-9: Descriptions of chemical attack in S9. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions of protests. It is different from the overall number of articles that feature descriptions because some articles contain more than 1 description.)

#### *Description of Syrian opposition*

#### **Descriptions of Syrian opposition – S9**

	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	55	(17) 30.9%	(38) 69.1%	100%
Russian sample	95	(25) 26.3%	(70) 73.7%	100%

Table S9-10: Articles in English and Russian samples with and without descriptions of military action in S9.

#### **Descriptions of Syrian opposition – S9**

<b>Adjectives</b>	<b>English sample (cases), % N=21</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N= 12</b>
Terrorist, extreme <i>Террористический, экстремистский</i>	(1) 4.7%	(7) 58.4%
Syrian Сирийский	(5) 23.8%	(1) 8.3%
Armed Вооруженный	-	(4) 33.3%
Self-organised	(1) 4.7%	
So-called moderate, 'moderate', seen as/considered moderate by the US/Washington <i>«Умеренный», так называемый умеренный</i>	(1) 4.7%	

Ankara-backed	(2) 9.6%	
Rebel	(5) 23.8%	-
US-backed, Pentagon-trained	(1) 4.7%	-
Al-Qaeda affiliated	(2) 9.6%	-
Major	(2) 9.6%	
Opposition	(1) 4.7%	

Table S9-10: Descriptions of Syrian opposition groups in S9. \*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions of protests. It is different from the overall number of articles that feature descriptions because some articles contain more than 1 description. In the English sample all percentages add up to 99.9% because this table displays only 1 decimal character.

### *Description of Russia*

#### **Descriptions of Russia – S9**

	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	55	(29) 52.7%	(26) 47.3%	100%
Russian sample	95	(27) 28.4%	(68) 71.6%	100%

Table S9-11: Articles in English and Russian samples with and without descriptions of Russia in S9.

#### **Descriptions of Russia – S9**

<b>Adjectives</b>	<b>English sample (cases), % N=51</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N=31</b>
Russian <i>Российский</i>	(49) 96%	(27) 87.1%
Guilty	(1) 2%	-
Self-proclaimed (guarantor of peace)	(1) 2%	-
Located in Syria to fight terrorists Находящийся в Сирии для борьбы с терроризмом	-	(1) 3.2%
Putin's Путинская	-	(2) 6.5%
Not competent enough Недостаточно компетентна	-	(1) 3.2%

Table S9-12: Descriptions of Russia in S9. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions of protests. It is different from the overall number of articles that feature descriptions because some articles contain more than 1 description.)

### *Description of other countries*

#### **Descriptions of other countries – S9**

	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	55	(47) 85.5%	(8) 14.5%	100%

Russian sample	95	(51) 53.7%	(44) 46.3%	100%
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Table S9-13: Articles in English and Russian samples in S9 with and without descriptions of countries other than Russia and Syria.

### Descriptions of other countries – S9

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=	Russian sample (cases), % N=
Country-based adjectives <i>Прилагательные отсылающие к странам</i>	(35)	(53)
Zionist	-	(2)
Assad ally (Iran)	(2)	-
New (US government)	-	(3)
Other descriptions appearing once	(15)	(7)

Table S9-14: Descriptions of countries other than Syria and Russia in S9. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions of Russia).

### Description of IS

#### Descriptions of IS – S9

	Articles overall	With descriptions (amount), %	No descriptions (amount), %	Total %
English sample	55	(6) 10.9%	(49) 89.1%	100%
Russian sample	95	(11) 11.6%	(84) 88.4%	100%

Table S9-15: Articles in English and Russian samples in S9 with and without descriptions of IS.

### Descriptions of IS – S9

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=6	Russian sample (cases), % N= 11
Terrorist <i>Террористический</i>	(2) 33.4%	(10) 90.9%
Notorious	(1) 16.6%	-
Adjectives identifying a connection to Islam (islamist, jihadist)	(2) 33.4%	-
Militant	(1) 16.6%	-
Banned in Russia <i>Запрещенный в России</i>	-	(1) 9.1%

Table S9-16: Descriptions of IS in S9. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of descriptions of Russia).

### Sources

#### Sources – S9

Sources	English sample (cases), %,	Russian sample (cases), %,
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	<b>[% of cases] N=93</b>	<b>[% of cases] N=121</b>
Other media or news agencies (specify)	(34) 36.6% [61.8%]	(46) 38% [48.4%]
Own correspondent or interview	(13) 14% [23.6%]	(16) 13.2% [16.8%]
Social media	(7) 7.5% [12.7%]	(5) 4.1% [5.3%]
Russian army or government	(7) 7.5% [12.7%]	(14) 11.6% [14.7%]
Syrian army or government	(8) 8.6% [14.5%]	(4) 3.3% [4.2%]
Russian sources not affiliated with the government	-	(2) 1.7% [2.1%]
Syrian sources not affiliated with the government	(1) 1.1% [1.8%]	-
Other countries' officials (specify)	(5) 5.4% [9.1%]	(6) 5% [6.3%]
International organisations (specify)	-	(1) 0.8% [1.1%]
Experts	-	(1) 0.8% [1.1%]
Eyewitnesses	-	-
Activists	-	(2) 1.7% [2.1]
Bloggers	(1) 1.1% [1.8%]	-
No specified sources	(10) 10.8% [18.2%]	(21) 17.4% [22.1%]
Other (specify)	(7) 7.5% [12.7%]	(3) 2.5% [3.2%]

Table S9-17: Sources in S9. (\*N in this table refers specifically to the number of sources appearing in the articles. Some articles referred to more than one source thus the percent of cases is higher than 100%).

‘Other countries’ officials’ sources in the English sample come from the US(3 times) and the UK (2 times), and in the Russian sample from the US (5 times) and the UK. “Other’ sources in the English sample are topic specialists (4 times), journalists (2 times), general public (2 times), public figures (2 times), and in the Russian sample they consist of topic specialists (3 times) and public figures (2 times).

#### **Other media as sources – S9**

<b>Adjectives</b>	<b>English sample (cases), % N=55</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N=53</b>
Russian	(6) 10.9%	(37) 69.8%
Syrian	(5) 9.1%	-
International	(42) 76.4%	(15) 28.3%

Other RT platforms	(2) 3.6%	(1) 1.9%
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Table S9-18: Other media sources by ownership in S9. (“N in this table refers to the number of media outlets mentioned in the articles as sources. It is higher than the number of ‘Other media’ sources specified in the previous table because that counted the number of articles that referred to other media as sources, not all instances of these references, of which there were often more than one in articles).

### Sources per article – S9

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N=55	Russian sample (cases), % N=95
Single source	(31) 56.4%	(78) 82.1%
Two or more sources	(24) 43.6%	(17) 17.9%

Table S9-19: Articles that refer to one or two or more sources in S9.

### Articles that refer to one source – S9

Adjectives	English sample (cases), % N= 31	Russian sample (cases), % N=78
Other media & news agencies	(19) 61.3%	(43) 55.1%
Own reporter or interview	-	(4) 5.2%
Russian government or military	(2) 6.5%	(8) 10.2%
Other countries’ officials	-	(1) 1.3%
International organisations	-	(1) 1.3%
No specified sources	(10) 32.2%	(21) 26.9%

Table S8-20: Sources in articles that refer to one source. N in this table refers to the number of articles that only refer to one source.

### Russian actors

### Russian actors in articles – S9

	English sample (cases), % N= 55	Russian sample (cases), % N=95
Articles that quote Russian actors	(21) 38.2%	(54) 56.8%
Articles that mention Russian actors	(26) 47.3%	(46) 48.4%

Table S9-21: Presence of quoted and mentioned Russian actors in articles in S9.

### Russian actors – S9

Actors	English sample		Russian sample	
	Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 27	Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N =35	Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 58	Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 60



President Putin and spokesman Peskov	(9) 33.3% [42.9%]	(9) 25.7% [34.6%]	(9) 15.5% [16.7%]	(10) 16.7% [21.3%]
Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergei Lavrov	(1) 3.7% [4.8%]	(1) 2.9% [3.8%]	-	(5) 8.3% [10.6%]
Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokeswoman Maria Zakharova	(1) 3.7% [4.8%]	(1) 2.9% [3.8%]	(4) 6.9% [7.4%]	-
Other government officials	(16) 59.3% [76.2%]	(12) 34.3% [46.2%]	(31) 53.4% [57.4%]	(20) 33.3% [42.6%]
Military	-	(9) 25.7% [34.6%]	(1) 1.7% [1.9%]	(14) 23.3% [29.8%]
Non-government opposition	-	-	-	-
Experts	-	(2) 5.7% [7.7%]	(9) 15.5% [16.7%]	(5) 8.3% [10.6%]
Activists	-	-	(1) 1.7% [1.9%]	-
Other (specify)	-	(1) 2.9% [3.8%]	(3) 5.2% [5.6%]	(6) 10% [12.8%]

Table S9-22: Quoted and mentioned Russian actors in S9. (N in this table refers to the number of actors quoted or mentioned in each group. The number is different from the number of articles in the previous table because some articles quote and mention more than one actor)

Quoted ‘Other’ actors in the Russian sample are topic specialists (3 times). Mentioned ‘Other’ actor in the English sample is a journalist and in the Russian sample they are topic specialists (3 times), a Russian IS recruit, and general public (2 times).

#### *Syrian actors*

#### **Syrian actors in articles – S9**

	<b>English sample (cases), % N=55</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N=95</b>
Articles that quote Syrian actors	(15) 27.3%	(11) 11.6%
Articles that mention Syrian actors	(51) 92.7 %	(75) 78.9%

Table S9-23: Presence of quoted and mentioned Syrian actors in articles in S9.

#### **Syrian actors –S9**

<b>Actors</b>	<b>English sample</b>		<b>Russian sample</b>	
	<b>Quoted (cases), %, [ % of cases]</b>	<b>Mentioned (cases), %, [ % of cases]</b>	<b>Quoted (cases), %, [ % of cases]</b>	<b>Mentioned (cases), %, [ % of cases]</b>

	<b>N = 16</b>	<b>N = 168</b>	<b>N = 12</b>	<b>N =177</b>
President Bashar Assad	(2) 12.5% [13.3%]	(29) 17.3% [56.9%]	-	(29) 16.4% [38.7%]
Other government officials	(7) 43.8% [46.7%]	(34) 20.2% [66.7%]	(8) 66.7% [72.7%]	(32) 18.1% [42.7%]
Military	(3) 18.8% [20%]	(34) 20.2% [66.7%]	(2) 16.7% [18.2%]	(48) 27.1% [64%]
Syrian opposition	(3) 18.8% [20%]	(31) 18.5% [60.8%]	(1) 8.3% [9.1%]	(28) 15.1% [37.3%]
Experts	-	-	(1) 8.3% [9.1%]	-
White Helmets	-	(4) 2.4% [7.8%]	-	(3) 1.7% [4%]
Activists	-	(1) 0.6% [2%]	-	-
Eyewitnesses	-	-	-	-
Other (specify)	(1) 6.3% [6.7%]	(35) 20.8% [68.6%]	-	(37) 20.9% [49.3%]

Table S9-24: Quoted and mentioned Syrian actors in S9. (N in this table refers to the number of actors quoted or mentioned in each group. The number is different from the number of articles in the previous table because some articles quote and mention more than one actor)

### Other Syrian actors – S9

Actors	English sample		Russian sample	
	Quoted (cases), %, N =1	Mentioned (cases), %, N = 44	Quoted (cases), %, N =0	Mentioned (cases), %, N =41
General public	(1) 100%	(41) 93.2%	-	(36) 87.8%
Journalists	-	(1) 2.3%	-	-
Victims of conflict, injured & killed civilians	-	-	-	-
Specialists on the topic <sup>444</sup>	-	-	-	-
Refugees	-	-	-	-
Syrian Observatory of Human Rights	-	(2) 4.5%	-	(5) 12.2%

Table S9-25: Quoted and mentioned ‘other’ Syrian actors in English and Russian samples in S9. (N here stands for the overall amount of quoted and mentioned actors in each group. This number is different from the number of ‘Other Syrian actors’ category counted in table S9-24 because that table counted texts that quote and mention this actor group while this table counts the individual actors, which are often quoted and mentioned more than once in one text.)

### Foreign actors

<sup>444</sup> Not referred to in the text as experts. This group includes academics, professionals, think tank representatives, researchers and other people presented in the text as relevant figures to share their knowledge.

### Foreign actors in articles – S9

	<b>English sample (cases), % N= 55</b>	<b>Russian sample (cases), % N= 95</b>
Articles that quote foreign actors	(35) 63.6%	(34) 35.8%
Articles that mention foreign actors	(50) 90.9%	(76) 80%

Table S9-26: Presence of quoted and mentioned foreign actors in articles in S9. The coding manual specifies that all actors not from Syria or Russia are considered 'foreign' for the purposes of this analysis.

### Foreign actors – S9

<b>Actors</b>	<b>English sample</b>		<b>Russian sample</b>	
	<b>Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 46</b>	<b>Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 137</b>	<b>Quoted (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 51</b>	<b>Mentioned (cases), %, [% of cases] N = 119</b>
Barack Obama	-	(7) 5.1% [9.2%]	-	(7) 5.9% [14%]
Donald Trump	(9) 19.6% [26.5]	(23) 16.8% [30.3%]	(5) 9.8% [14.3%]	(20) 16.8% [40%]
Marine Le Pen	-	-	-	(1) 0.8% [2%]
Recep Erdogan	(1) 2.2% [2.9%]	-	(3) 5.9% [8.6%]	(1) 0.8% [2%]
Other foreign officials (specify)	(22) 47.8% [64.7%]	(39) 28.5% [51.3%]	(28) 54.9% [80%]	(29) 24.4% [58%]
IS	-	(18) 13.1% [23.7%]	-	(25) 21% [50%]
International organisations	(4) 8.7% [11.8%]	(13) 9.5% [17.1%]	(2) 3.9% [5.7%]	(19) 16% [38%]
Experts	(3) 6.5% [8.8%]	(1) 0.7% [1.3%]	(3) 7.1% [8.1%]	-
Activists	(1) 2.2% [2.9%]	-	-	-
Other (specify)	(6) 13% [17.6%]	(34) 24.8% [44.7%]	(13) 25.5% [37.1%]	(17) 14.3% [34%]

Table S9-27: Quoted and mentioned foreign actors in S9. (N in this table refers to the number of actors quoted or mentioned in each group. The number is different from the number of articles in the previous table because some articles quote and mention more than one actor)

### Other foreign officials – S9

<b>Actors</b>	<b>English sample</b>		<b>Russian sample</b>	
	<b>Quoted (cases), %, N = 50</b>	<b>Mentioned (cases), %, N = 62</b>	<b>Quoted (cases), %, N = 29</b>	<b>Mentioned (cases), %, N = 69</b>

US	(38) 56%	(36) 58.1%	(22) 75.9%	(54) 78.3%
Bolivia	(1) 2%	-	-	-
Germany	-	-	(1) 3.4%	(1) 1.4%
France	-	(2) 3.2%	-	-
UK	(13) 26%	(16) 25.8%	(4) 13.8%	(5) 7.2%
China	(1) 2%	(3) 4.8%	-	(2) 2.9%
Turkey	(4) 8%	(2) 3.2%	(1) 3.4%	(3) 4.3%
Iraq	-	(1) 1.6%	-	-
Israel	(2) 4%	(1) 1.6%	-	(1) 1.4%
Ukraine	-	-	(1) 3.4%	-
Iran	(1) 2%	(1) 1.6%	-	-
Jordan	-	-	-	(3) 4.3%

Table S9-28: Quoted and mentioned foreign officials in S9. (N in this table refers to the number of actors quoted or mentioned in each group. The number is different from the number of articles in the previous table because some articles quote and mention more than one actor.)

### Other foreign actors – S9

Actors	English sample		Russian sample	
	Quoted (cases), %, N = 18	Mentioned (cases), %, N = 29	Quoted (cases), %, N = 12	Mentioned (cases), %, N = 40
Journalists	(6) 33.3%	(2) 6.9%	(3) 25%	(1) 2.5%
Refugees <sup>445</sup>	-	-	-	(1) 2.5%
General public	(1) 5.6%	(2) 6.9%	-	(2) 5%
Public figures	(5) 27.8%	(2) 6.9%	(4) 33.3%	(5) 12.5%
Specialists on the topic <sup>446</sup>	(5) 27.8%	(1) 3.4%	(2) 16.7%	-
Military	-	(15) 51.7%	(3) 25%	(26) 65%
International military coalition in Syria	-	(1) 3.4%	-	(2) 5%
Unidentified/anonymous sources	(1) 5.6%	-	-	-
Other terrorist groups <sup>447</sup>	-	-	-	(3) 7.5%
Historical figures	-	(1) 3.4%	-	-
Victims of wars/IS	-	(1) 3.4%	-	-
Saddam Hussein	-	(3) 10.3%	-	-
Business representatives	-	(1) 3.4%	-	-

Table S9-29: Quoted and mentioned ‘other’ foreign actors in English and Russian samples in S9. (N here stands for the overall amount of quoted and mentioned actors in each group. This number is different from the number of ‘Other foreign actors’ category counted in table S9-27 because that table counted texts that quote and mention this actor group while this table counts the individual actors, which are often quoted and mentioned more than once in one text.)

<sup>445</sup> Actors coded as refugees in the foreign actor section are refugees that were in the text referenced in general, or specified as being from other countries and not Syria. Syrian refugees are coded as Other Syrian actors.

<sup>446</sup> Not referred to in the text as experts. This group includes academics, professionals, think tank representatives, researchers and other people presented in the text as relevant figures to share their knowledge.

<sup>447</sup> Actors coded as Other terrorist groups include Al Qaeda and all groups that are referred to as terrorist in the text, with the exception of IS (coded separately in the Foreign Actors question), any Syrian opposition groups that are referred to as terrorist (coded as Syrian actors).

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