A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF RUSSIA'S COVERAGE

IN CNN NEWS PROGRAMS, 1993 - 1997

By

ELENA M. SHALABANOVA

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St. Petersburg State University

St. Petersburg, Russia

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Thesis Approved:

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Thesis Adviser

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Dean of the Graduate College

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I don't know a good Russian from a bad Russian.
I can tell a good Frenchman from a bad
Frenchman. I can tell a good Italian from a bad
Italian. I know a good Greek when I see one.
But I don't understand the Russians.
                              Franklin Delano Roosevelt

Background

As the world enters the new millennium, celebrating globalization, progress and

democratic ideals, some important forces that shaped recent history need to be re-

examined. While agreeing on the winning trends of world development, researchers

nowadays pay closer attention to the issues of cultural differences. Coupled with global

interdependence is global fragmentation. Thus, culture studies occupy a prominent

position in the area of cross-disciplinary research.

As if imprisoned in their cultures, people look at the world from their intrinsic

cultural perspectives. Internationalization, globalization and even disappearance of

physical borders between nations do not abolish cultural borders. To the contrary, in

some instances, they even enhance the defensiveness of countries overwhelmed by the

forces of globalization. An obvious example is Central Europe, where centuries-old

ethnic rivalries have erupted. It is difficult to overestimate how important it becomes to

recognize and distinguish culture specific issues and stereotypes.

Mass media, with their ever-increasing power, play a crucial role in creating

cultural stereotypes. The press is often the only reference point for people seeking to learn

and comprehend the news from foreign countries. Stereotypes can be helpful in this respect, since they offer a pattern, a frame, a matrix for thinking. However, as the years of the Cold War have shown, media-promoted crude stereotypes can paralyze the international communication effort. Therefore, in order to promote multi-cultural understanding and develop cultural sensitivity, it is useful to periodically examine the media frames and challenge them.

General

Ever since the United States emerged as an independent nation, it has found it necessary to follow developments in Russia for their likely impact on events in this country. The American image of Russia has changed often.

In the early years of American history Russia was considered a distant but potentially friendly power that might provide support against the immediate enemy, Great Britain. Toward the end of the nineteenth century American-Russian relations cooled, as a result of America's increasingly friendly attitude toward Britain and proportionally decreasing taste for the authoritarian rule of the Russia's czarist government. Following a brief improvement in relations between the establishment of the liberal Russian Provisional Government in March 1917 and its overthrow by the Bolsheviks eight months later, the United States came to regard the Soviet regime as a threat to democratic institutions and to the peace of the world.[1]

Russia stunned the West by signing a nonagression pact with Hitler in late August 1939. A week after the treaty was negotiated, Hitler began World War II. The Soviet invasion of Finland confirmed to Americans that Russia brutalized small neighbors. In

June 1941, however, Hitler's armies swept into the Soviet Union in history's greatest military operation.

The State department debated for twenty-four hours before issuing an announcement that declared that "communist dictatorship" was as intolerable as "Nazi dictatorship," said nothing good about the Russians, but concluded that they must be helped since Hitler posed the larger threat. Harry S. Truman, then Democratic senator from Missouri, bluntly expressed his feelings: "If we see that Germany is winning we should help Russia and if Russia is winning we ought to help Germany and that way let them kill as many as possible, although I don't see Hitler victorious under any circumstances."[2]

Though it was not the best spirit with which to start a new partnership, American perceptions of the Soviet Union changed during World War II. Russia became an ally in the struggle against Hitler. In support of the Russian war effort, the United States provided vast amounts of assistance. An attempt to more closely coordinate the military operations of the United States, Great Britain and the Soviet Union was undertaken through the meeting of the countries' leaders in Tehran in November 1943. In June 1944 the second front was opened in Europe. In 1945 the allies met again, first in February in Malta and later, in July, in Postdate. Post-war arrangements were discussed with increasing controversy.

Wartime partnership did not survive post-war antagonism: as Americans had feared during the war, Moscow took advantage of the presence of the Red Army in Eastern Europe to establish regimes under Soviet control. Compounding the growing

conflict between East and West was America's development and use of the atomic bomb.[3]

The existence of "Cold War" between the United States and Russia was recognized when on March 5, 1946, in Futon, Missouri, Britain's wartime leader Winston Churchill declared: "From Staten in the Baltic to Truest in the Adriatic an iron curtain has descended across the Continent."[4] In 1947 the policy, labeled "containment of communism," was approved and pursued by Washington.

During the decades of Cold War propaganda efforts were extensively exercised in both countries separated by the information vacuum. Little information passed through the Iron Curtain in either direction, and what did leak through to the United States came mostly from covert operations of organizations founded during the Cold War period such as the National Security Council (NSC) and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), as well as accounts of dissidents.[5]

Both nations waged a war of hostile words and threats of mutual destruction. A lot of negative stereotypes of Russians were created and promoted by American media. Aggressive, uncivilized and never-smiling Soviets populated cold, snowy and poor "mother-Russia," suffering from totalitarianism and chronic deficits, but still threatening the world with their nuclear arsenals -- that was the more or less common and enduring perception in the U.S.

This hostility was voiced at the highest echelons of government when Ronald Reagan, addressing the National Association of Evangelicals convention in 1983, referred to the Soviet Union as the "evil empire." The struggle was no more between the two

countries, but "between right and wrong and good and evil," since, as Reagan saw it "all those who live in that totalitarian darkness…are the focus of evil in the modern world."[6]

Depending on the political currency, the Cold War stereotypes became explicit or implicit, fluctuated, changed slightly, but never completely left the American press. The Cold War rhetoric and imagery were ingrained in American citizens.

When in 1985 Russian leader Mikhail Gorbachev proclaimed a new policy of openness, democratization and transition, American interest in Russia sky-rocketed. Celebrating America's victory in the Cold War, the U.S. media portrayed Russia as an aspiring democracy and developing free market. It was depicted, rather sympathetically, as trying to overcome the legacy of totalitarianism, communism and command economy. Professional and academic exchanges between the U.S. and the Soviet Union became very popular. The number of American correspondents in Moscow increased by 25 percent between 1989 and 1990.[7]

The events of 1991 provided a dramatic ending to the Soviet era. The wealth of information outpouring from the formerly iron-curtain country overwhelmed the public. The epochal news stories were broadcast: the end of the Cold War, the end of communism, the end of Empire. However, ever since the Soviet Union collapsed and the threat of the nuclear confrontation subsided, American interest in Russia has gradually eased.

In the 1900s the pace of economic and social change, the rapid, and often unfortunate, development of Russia's political life, left a lot of observers confused and bewildered. As journalist David Remnick admitted: "The texture of Russian life after

1991 is so fluid, so changeable and supercharged, that it is nearly impossible to capture in words and images."[8]

As a lot of researchers admit, the major innovation in collecting and reporting international news is the rise of CNN, the 24-hour Cable New Network. By 1990, ten years after its birth, it had established eighteen overseas news bureaus to collect news round-the-clock, which was then relayed to 53 million homes in the United States and 200 million viewers in more than 100 other countries.

The striking feature about CNN, behind the comprehensiveness of its news-gathering apparatus, is its continuous coverage of major crises. As is typical of live coverage, the reports are a mixture of events and interviews range from the trivial to the significant, with less time given to analysis and expert commentary. "The emphasis is on taping whatever is readily and inexpensively available so that viewers are the first to see a breaking news event at close range."[9]

Unique among international news reporting agencies, CNN also collects and broadcasts brief (usually under three minutes) uncensored reports submitted by sources throughout the world. They become part of its weekly two-and-a-half hour "CNN World Report." CNN's viewership is not overwhelming, but the network rates very high on credibility and most Americans prefer CNN to other networks when looking for quality news.[10]

As Cold War stereotypes vanish and the democratic euphoria recedes, it is interesting to examine how one of the most reliable, proficient and reputable American broadcast news networks frames Russia's news. How does CNN capture the elusive Russia?

Theoretical Framework

To address these questions, some aspects of the following theoretical approaches to mass communication will be considered:

Culture Studies. Culture studies attempt to decipher the interpretations people cast on their experiences (in this case, communication). Culture is a process whereby reality is created, maintained and transformed. Communication is a social ritual creating the presentation of reality that gives life an overall form, order and tone. News is the social construction of reality rather then the mere presentation of reality. Therefore, news, as a text, can be viewed and analyzed as social reality in itself.

Frame Analysis. This approach discusses "strips" and "frames" of reality. Strip is an arbitrary slice or cut from the stream of ongoing activity. Frame refers to as the main principles and elements governing the organization of experience. Media frame reality by choosing to cover certain reality strips and ignore others. The analysis of media frames can provide significant cultural inferences.

Cultivation Analysis. Cultivation analysis focuses on television's contributions over time to the thinking of large and otherwise heterogeneous social aggregates. Television blends certain images and concepts into the cultural mainstream and, by repeating them, "cultivates" them in the heads of the audience. The analysis of cultivated images leads to the understanding of stereotypes.

Statement of the Problem

The end of the Cold War substituted hostile American stereotypes of Russia with optimistic images of developing democracy. However, this simple, linear and one-

dimensional mode of thinking soon proved to be na e and misleading. Media agenda and media frames with respect to Russia became blurred, followed by further crumbling of stereotypes, fragmentation and proliferation of post-Soviet images. It is unclear what presentation of Russia's news dominates American media nowadays. It is quite problematic to see whether any stereotypes are left and what they, or their absence, signify in terms of a new Russian agenda.

Purpose of the Study

We would expect that, as a major U.S. broadcast news channel, CNN should deconstruct old stereotypes and contribute to the development of new, more complex images of Russia in American society. The purpose of this study is to find out how CNN has presented Russia's news during the last five years, from 1993 to 1997.

The researcher's task was to study how the variety, number and priority topics of the news on Russia changed over last five years in all CNN news programs.

Overall, the study will try to identify whether American media are becoming more flexible and culturally sensitive in regard to the new developments in foreign countries.

Methodology

The project is a case study using content analysis and qualitative analysis. CNN's news scripts of all news programs produced over the last five years will be used for the purpose of this research.

There are three major phases in the study. The first one is data gathering and evaluation through the keyword search of the Broadcast News Database available on a

CD-ROM at the Oklahoma State University library. The next stage is data sampling and review that counts the number of the news stories on Russia in every sample for each year from 1993 to 1997, assigns them into topical categories and conducts statistical analysis in order to identify the difference and trends over time. Finally, the quantitative data will be used for qualitative critical text analysis.

The research will attempt to answer the following questions:

1) How has CNN's news content presented Russia from 1993 until 1997?

2) Did the number and variety of news stories change over the years?

3) What is the priority of Russian topics covered by CNN?

4) Did the topics change over time?

5) What are the descriptives used to portray Russia in CNN news programming?

6) Did the descriptives change over time?

Generally, the study will try to identify what images of Russia are cultivated by American media.

Significance

Through the CNN case study, the work will show whether crude stereotyping is becoming a thing of the past in international news reporting or whether it is still enduring. The study will demonstrate how American media have met the challenge of the lost fixed agenda and adapted their coverage to the rapidly changing reality of Russia in 1993 to 1997.

The results of the study could yield conclusions on the current foreign agenda of American media and their perspective on Russia, helping to apprehend the changes of

attitude of Americans towards Russians. These conclusions could contribute to political science research, culture and media discourse studies. They could help to identify the problematic areas and conflicts in multi-cultural communications. The study could also provide insights for international reporters and other media practitioners.

Limitations

The study has certain limitations that must be considered.

First of all, among many other networks, CNN is chosen for analysis. It should be noted that, even though CNN rates very high on credibility and quality of news reporting, ABC, CBS and NBC are considered the main networks with the highest viewership in the country. Thus is cannot be considered representative of a typical news source for an average American. However, as many researchers suggest, "CNN, with its extensive overseas coverage, has, in part, supplanted the networks as the primary television source for foreign affairs news."[11]

Precisely because of this leading position and somewhat " itist' character of CNN, it serves as an example to follow for other networks, sets the nation-wide mode for live, unfolding international news coverage and, therefore, presents the best material for the purposes of this particular study.

Russia's images became the focus of the project due to the researcher's background.

Secondly, the period of time considered for this research spans from January 1993 to October 1997. The logic of historical events prompts, however, that the drastic changes in Russia's media coverage should be expected starting with August 1991, when the

unsuccessful coup attempt happened in Moscow, followed by the sudden break-up of the

Soviet Union and the rise of Boris Yeltsin as a new leader.

Unfortunately, CNN news scripts prior to the middle of 1992 are not available.

The CNN Library in Atlanta, Georgia, sells CNN videotapes, but because the taping goes

24 hours a day and there are no scripts in hardcopy, the research of the thousands of

videotapes is not feasible.

Two other companies possessing the rights for the distribution of CNN materials

are LEXIS/NEXIS electronic database and Federal Clearing House. The former stores

CNN news scripts from the middle of 1992 up to date. The latter sells videotapes from

1996 on. CNN has a homepage on the Internet. The transcripts for the last ten days are

available at http://www.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/index.html free of charge. The

Oklahoma City-based company called Data Times, Corp. used to provide CNN materials,

but recently discontinued this service.

Having considered the above options, the researcher chose Broadcast News

database as a sampling frame. The Broadcast News is a full-text current issues CD-ROM

published by Research Publications International. It is a comprehensive reference

database of the news and current affairs programming of ABC, CNN, NPR and PBS. The

Broadcast News database is fully indexed and abstracted, and is searchable by both full

text and keyword.

The database, though generally accurate, has certain flaws. The most significant

of them is that broadcast news stories for each year from 1993 to 1997 are stored on

separate drives, each containing data for 12 months. Due to the production and copyright

problems, Research Publications International organized the data for 1993 through 1995

as 12 months for each year starting with January and ending with December, but deviated from this structure for the years of 1996 and 1997. The drive with cumulative data for the year 1996 has 12 months starting with August 1995 and ending in July 1996. The drive with cumulative data for the year of 1997 has 12 months starting with November 1996 and ending in October 1997. As it becomes obvious, there are certain gaps and overlaps in the available data. They are accounted for in the sampling process.

In the future it would be useful to conduct a similar study of other television networks, entertainment programs, movies, advertising and tabloid press, to see whether the results, obtained for CNN, constitute a distinguished pattern. It would be also interesting to conduct a comparative analysis of current Russian and American mutual representations in the media of both countries.

Thesis Plan

Chapter II of the thesis represents an integrated literature review covering a variety of topics related to culture studies, frame analysis, cultivation theory and international news coverage. The studies of stereotypes of Russia are also included in the literature review.

Chapter III is devoted to the methodology of the study. The procedure for sampling, data gathering, processing and analyzing are explained in detail in this chapter.

Chapter IV presents the results of the research and interpretations of the findings.

Chapter V summarizes the results and draws conclusions. The problems for future research are identified.

ENDNOTES

[1]Benson L. Grayson, The American Image of Russia: 1917 - 1977, (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co, 1978), 2 - 43.

[2]Walter LaFeber, America, Russia and the Cold War 1945 - 1992, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1993), 6.

[3]Benson L. Grayson, The American Image of Russia: 1917 - 1977, (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co, 1978), 2 - 43.

[4]Winston Churchill, "The Iron Curtain Has Descended," The American Image of Russia: 1917 - 1977, (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co, 1978), 178.

[5]USA - USSR Media Studies Conference: A Conference Report, (Columbia U, Gannett Foundation Media Center, 1991), 1.

[6]Strobe Talbott, The Russians and Reagan, (New York: Vintage Books, 1984), 116 - 117.

[7]"1990 Moscow Press Corps Who's Who," Deadline, (March/April 1990), 5 - 12.

[8]David Remnick, Resurrection, (New York: Random House, 1997), x - xi.

[9]John C. Merrill, Global Journalism, (New York: Longman, 1995), 46 - 47.

[10]Glenn Michael Leshner, "Switching Channels: The Effects of Channel Specialization and Differentiation on Judgment, Evaluation, and Memory of Television Information," Ph.D. Dissertation, (Stanford University, 1995).

[11]The Media and Foreign Policy in the Post-Cold War World, (Columbia U, The Freedom Forum Media Studies Center, 1993), 17 - 19.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Cultural Approach to Media Research

As many researchers have pointed out, American tradition of media studies is closely connected with quantitative research. The signification of "communication studies" tends towards a focus on messages and their construction and effects, the relationship between senders and receivers. The underlying view is the linear concept of meaning creation and transmission. The term "cultural studies" is infused much more by a model of meaning which stresses its generation out of the collaborative interaction of authors and producers, texts and readers within specific contexts. The school of culture studies is interested in the symbolic codes available for social expression, and the ways in which the structure and exploitation of these codes both reflects social relationship and contributes to their formation.[1]

Comparing European and American traditions of communication research, Jay Blumler noted that in the United States mass media are more often seen either as partial cause agents in social change, or as tools that would-be political actors can use to gain publicity, or as authoritative information sources upon which people have become more dependent as the pressures of a rapidly changing world threaten to become too much for them. He suggested that American researchers should ameliorate their work with the insights borrowed from the critical European tradition.[2]

The insufficiency of positivistic media research led to the development of cultural studies perspectives in the 1960s and 1970s. The focus shifted from the debates on media

effects and audience attitude/behavior change towards an emphasis on the wider cultural environment. Cultural studies brought the benefits of the literary studies tradition including structuralism and semiotics. The considerable intellectual innovation was media texts analysis, especially in relation to subordinate groups, including women, young people and ethnic communities.[3]

Raymond Williams' book The Long Revolution, published in 1965, is often acknowledged as a starting point in cultural studies. Williams viewed culture as a particular sense of life, particular community of experience. He described this phenomenon as the "structure of feeling," meaning the culture of a period, common grounds that create deep community and make communication possible. Williams wrote about the importance of making interpretations conscious, showing historical alternatives and relating the interpretation to the particular contemporary values on which it rests.[4]

Similar perspectives on culture were shared by Stuart Hall who in 1971 wrote that "culture is the way social life is experienced and handled, the meanings and values which inform human action, which are embodied in and mediate social relations, political life, etc."[5] For Williams and for Hall, the media should be studied not as "effecting culture," but as an indicator of social values and meanings, a text through which cultural meanings are revealed and evaluated.

The Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies in Birmingham University, England, directed by Stuart Hall, was the pioneer in locating communication processes within their economic, political and cultural contexts. Drawing on Gramsci, Althusser, Barthes, the Frankfurt school and still other sources, the Center developed studies of youth culture, the link between media and racism and economic crisis, and women's

perspectives on culture and media. The Center produced a stimulating application of critical theories to empirical research. The keys to the whole project were (a) a respect for popular culture; (b) an acknowledgment that communication cannot be studied effectively outside its cultural, economic and political matrix; and (c) a commitment to critical perspectives.[6]

James Carey followed the steps of Williams and Hall. In 1989 his book Communication as Culture comprised a lot of invaluable ideas of most prominent sociologists, philosophers and anthropologists.[7]

According to Carey, the notion of culture is not a hard-edged term of intellectual discourse in the U.S. for domestic purposes. The intellectual aversion to the idea of culture derives from the notion of American individualism, which makes psychological life the paramount reality; from Puritanism, which leads to disdain for the significance of human activity that is not practical and work oriented; and from the isolation of science from culture.

Carey thinks that the lack of cultural perspective on media has reduced the extraordinary phenomenological diversity of communication into an arena in which people alternatively pursue power or flee anxiety. This is what is found in the social theories now dominating media studies: information theory, learning theory, influence and dissonance theory, balance theory, and functionalism or uses and gratifications analysis.

For all media phenomena there are only two patterns of explanation borrowed from behavioral sciences: functional or causal. Both go directly from cause to effect without ever seriously examining mass communication as a system of interacting

symbols and interlocked meanings that somehow must be linked to the motivations and emotions for which they provide a symbolic outlet.

The cultural approach to media studies, advocated by Carey, utilizes the resources found in the works of Weber, Durkheim, de Tocqueville, Huizinga, Kenneth Burke, Hugh Duncan, Adolph Portman, Thomas Kuhn, Peter Berger, and Clifford Geertz. The most viable tradition of thought comes from Dewey and the Chicago School: from Mead and Cooley through Robert Park and on to Erving Goffman.

This tradition views culture as a set of practices, a mode of human activity, a process whereby reality is created, maintained, and transformed. Communication is a social ritual creating the presentation of reality that gives life an overall form, order, and tone. Culture studies attempt to decipher the interpretations people cast on their experience. A cultural science of communication views human action as a text. "Our task is to construct a "reading" of the text. The text itself is a sequence of symbols...Our task...is to interpret the interpretations."[8]

Michael Real uses the ideas of Carey to suggest the methodology of cultural analysis. His quite eclectic framework for media phenomena study includes eight concepts, or eight areas of problems: identity, participation, reception, text, hegemony, gender, ethics, postmodernism, self.[9]

Culture studies underscore the importance of qualitative methods. Qualitative research in mass communication today acknowledges three main philosophical assumptions:

1) Humans are creatures who symbolize. Culture is the ensemble of meaning-

making practices.

2) Humans fabricate rather than discover reality. They use symbols to construct the worlds in which they live. Reality is an accomplishment.

3) Symbolic acts are public and social.[10]

Outliving quantitative, qualitative research challenges and changes its core procedures and methods. A qualitative researcher does not search the materials for a clear message, moral, or value, but interprets them as texts, that is, as more or less integrated strategies of symbolic action. Qualitative researchers do not specify variables, operational definitions or hypotheses. They search the work of others for useful ways of talking about the phenomenon they wish to study. For a qualitative researcher "representativeness" is itself a discourse. Media narratives remain symbolically significant regardless of their statistical accuracy.

Qualitative research relies on some combination of literary analysis and fieldwork. A major requirement for this type of study might be that the researcher does not reduce or distort the described cultural world to his own established propositions.

> "The best a qualitative research can do is to marshal a metaphor....The purpose of qualitative research is not to control others' behavior with our bromides, nor to diffuse the news of our civilization's virtue, nor to link consumers everywhere in a global marketplace, nor to rev the engines of public opinion, but simply to know our cultural habitat."[11]

The tradition of cultural studies embraces a lot of approach and methods, and has been criticized from different perspectives. Jim McGuigan, for example, blamed the school for idealist theorizing derived from structuralism and resulting in specialized academicism and loss of historical imagination. In his view, cultural studies is a messy

picture with a lot of strands of thought, dead ends, false starts and often blurred difference between actually doing concrete research and theorizing it. The most disabling feature of contemporary cultural studies, according to McGuigan, is the separation from the political economy of culture, lack of economic perspective.[12]

However justified the criticism of culture studies may be, the invaluable contribution of this tradition to media studies is the attention towards text and context. The purpose of this approach is to make the conventions the problematic of research and attempt to chart their appearance and transformation. Media are to be studied for their meaning and appeal, rather than as reflections of deeper psychological and sociological categories. Cultural studies allow us to analyze media in terms of their contribution to popular consciousness through the employed language, symbolic and cultural codes. Media are no longer neutral organizations, independent "fourth estate" or "watchdog." They are institutions embedded into existing social relations, creating and maintaining particular cultural environment.

It is worth noting that a new wave of culture studies, emphasizing geopolitical, rather than popular culture problems, raised with the proliferation of ethnic conflicts in the post Cold War world. "Culture," "civilization" and "cultural differences" became widely circulated terms in political discussions, countering and balancing popular verbose discourse on globalization. The benchmark of the contemporary geopolitical macro-perspective on culture was set by the article titled "The Clash of Civilizations?" by Samuel P. Huntington. Huntington postulates that the world is entering a new phase where the dominating source of international conflict will be cultural. Civilizations - the highest cultural groupings of people - are differentiated from each other by religion,

history, language and tradition. These divisions are deep and increasing in importance. From Yugoslavia to the Middle East to Central Asia, the fault lines of civilizations are the battle lines of the future.[13]

The article of Huntington the and the following discussions linked the concepts of culture studies with political science research. Thus again the importance of studying symbolic environments was underscored.

In the following part of the literature review some particular example of news discourse studies, acknowledging the constructing, rather than representational, function of media, will be discussed. Among the most influential studies of media texts are the works of Goffman, Tuchman, Gans, Gitlin, Gerbner, Merrill and VanDijk.

News as Text: Influences and Bias Studies

News, as viewed by many scholars, is a very special type of action. It is trivial and sensational by their nature, according to Dewey.

> The catastrophic, namely, crime, accident, family rows, personal clashes and conflicts, are the most obvious forms of breaches of continuity; they supply the element of shock which is the strictest meaning of sensation; they are the *new* par excellence, even though only the date of the newspaper could inform us whether they happened last year or this, so completely are they isolated from their connections.[14]

Erving Goffman agrees with the concept of news as something extraordinary rather than typical or representative, but his point is that our understanding of the world precedes news stories, determining which one reporters will select and how the ones that are selected will be told.

The design of these reported events is fully responsive to our demands - which are not for facts but for typifications. Their telling demonstrates the power of our conventional understandings to cope with the bizarre potentials of social life, the furthest reaches of experience. What appears, then, to be a threat to our way of making sense of the world turns out to be an ingeniously selected defense of it.[15]

Some important definitions used throughout many good media studies are borrowed from Goffman who speaks of "strips" and "frames" of reality. Strip is used to refer to any arbitrary slice or cut from the stream of ongoing activity. Frame is refered to as main principles and elements governing the organization of experience. The meaningfulness of everyday activity is dependent on the frame.[16]

Gaye Tuchman described media constructed news "as a 'frame' organizing 'strips' of everyday reality and imposing order on it."[17] According to Tuchman, media frames both draw upon and reproduce institutional structures. The act of making news is the act of constructing reality itself rather than a picture of reality.

Robert Smith uses the word "myth" to explain the phenomenon of framing. Television news is a way to communicate the myth, i.e., to explain or render in fictive terms perceptions of our social environment. According to Smith's analysis of television narratives, in place of sirens, demons, sensations of flying and falling, we have a new mythology: political leaders as an omnipotent elite, beyond both marketplace and law, struggling with each other to determine the rules under which the rest of us must live. "The Greek gods on Mount Olympus were no less remote and only slightly more powerful."[18]

Through the structural analysis of network news stories, Smith showed that government officials are the main actors in television news. These actors are engaged in

prolonged decision making, suffering, and, occasionally, they catch villains. Most foreign news are also related to government activities. Preplanned events, like press conferences and opening nights, dominate the media. These "pseudoevents" are not spontaneous, are planned for the purpose of being reported, have an ambiguous relations to "underlying reality," and involve a self-fulfilling prophecy.[19]

One area of controversy in television news is the problem of bias. Individuals and groups on the political right claim to detect a persistent left-wing bias in news accounts. Other people claim the opposite - that television news reinforces and reproduces an essentially conservative viewpoint. Many politicians have complained that news stories always accentuate the negative aspects of government policy. Other critics argue that responsible journalism reporting has become a casualty of the networks' relentless quest for profit and "infotainment." News bias has been attributed to media production routines, technical innovations and escalating costs, economic constraints, codes of news personnel and socialization of journalists, and, finally, globalization.

A lot of studies have been done to shed light on the problems of media bias. Some of them among those dealing with the news discourse will be considered for the purpose of this study.

Herbert Gans identified the major criteria of newsworthiness of American journalism. They include the following: timeliness, political importance, a further development in an ongoing story, involvement of individuals rather than abstract structures or institutions, conflict, involvement of powerful people or celebrities, drama, geographical and cultural proximity, negative events, scope or size and potential impact

of event, visual interest, relevance to some deep-rooted cultural theme, novelty, violations

of social order, and human interest.[20]

In other words, what constitutes news is defined against background assumptions

about what is normal, routine and hence not news. These assumptions reflect widespread

agreement about the way the world works, or cultural common sense. Gans approached

this delicate matter by identifying eight clusters of enduring values in American news:

ethnocentrism, altruistic democracy, responsible capitalism, small-town pastoralism,

individualism, moderatism, social order, and national leadership. He believed the last two

are more striking than the rest.[21]

Todd Gitlin studied the coverage of the New Left in the 1960s looking at bias as

framing. His book follows the tradition of Erving Goffman and Gaye Tuchman. Gitlin

writes:

> Frames enable journalists to process large amounts of information quickly
> and routinely: to recognize it as information, to assign it to cognitive categories,
> and to package it for efficient relay to their audiences. Thus, for organizational
> reasons alone, frames are unavoidable, and journalism is organized to regulate
> their production.[22]

According to Gitlin, the prevailing frame is defined by ideology. To accommodate

the events conflicting with it, media use the following framing devices: trivialization,

polarization, emphasis on internal dissent, marginalization and others.[23]

Another prominent study of media bias involved a content analysis of Time

magazine. John Merrill sought to determine in what ways the news magazine stereotyped

presidents Truman, Eisenhower and Kennedy. The researcher analyzed his data by

constructing six categories of bias to help determine what kind of language was used to

describe each President. The semantic categories were 1) attribution bias, 2) adjective bias, 3) adverbial bias, 4) contextual bias, 5) outright opinion, and 6) photographic bias. Each instance of bias was noted either as "positive" (favorable) or "negative" (unfavorable). The results of Merrill's study indicated that Time consistently reinforced a stereotype of the President in office by using the six devices previously mentioned.[24]

George Gerbner introduced a new perspective on the role of mass media in promoting stereotypes -- cultivation analysis. Accordingly, culture is a system of messages and images that regulates and reproduces social relations. Public is the result of the "public-making" activity approximately named publication. Publication as a general social process is the creation and cultivation of shared ways of selecting and viewing events and aspects of life. Mass production and distribution of message systems transforms selected private perspectives into broad public perspectives, and brings mass publics into existence.[25]

These publics are maintained through continued publication. They are supplied with selections of information and entertainment, fact and fiction, news and fantasy or 'escape' materials which are considered important or interesting or entertaining and profitable (or all of these) in terms of the perspective to be cultivated. Mass-mediated public message systems create the common culture through which communities cultivate shared and public notions about facts, values, and contingencies of human existence.

Interpretations of any public, social and policy matters require the background knowledge of existence, priorities, values, and relationships given in collectively shared public message systems. These "cultural indicators" are similar to the economic indicators compiled to guide economic policy and social indicators proposed to inform

social policy making. Cultivation analysis is an important component of defining cultural indicators.[26]

The methods and assumptions behind cultivation analysis are different from those traditionally employed in mass communication research. Cultivation analysis is concerned with more general and pervasive consequences of cumulative exposure to cultural media.

Cultivation does not imply any sort of simple, linear "stimulus-response" model of relationship between media content and audiences. Rather, it implies long-term, cumulative consequences of exposure to an essentially repetitive and stable system of messages. It is concerned with continuity, stabilization, and gradual shifts rather than outright change. A slight but persuasive shift in the cultivation of common perspectives may not change much in individual outlooks and behavior but may later change the meaning of those perspectives and actions profoundly.

Cultivation analysis theoretical framework could be applied to any dominant form of communication. Most cultivation analyses, however, have focused on television because of the medium's uniquely repetitive and persuasive message characteristics and its dominance among other media.

> The historical circumstances in which we find ourselves have taken the magic of human life - living in a universe erected by culture taken out of the hands of families and small communities. What has been a richly diverse hand-crafted process has become - for better or worse, or both - a complex manufacturing and mass-distribution enterprise. This has abolished much of the provincialism and parochialism, as well as some of the elitism, of the pretelevision era. It has enriched parochial cultural horizons. It also gave increasingly massive industrial conglomerates the right to conjure up much of what we think about, know, and do in common.[27]

As successive generations become enculturated into the mainstream of television's version of the world, the former traditional cultural distinctions become blurred. Cultivation thus means the steady entrenchment of mainstream orientations in most cases and the systematic but almost imperceptible modification of previous orientations in others: affirmation for the believers and indoctrination for the deviants.

The first and the most important stage in cultivation analysis is the work with media discourse. Cultivation analysis begins with content (message system) analysis: identifying and assessing the most recurrent and stable patterns of TV content (the consistent images, portrayals, and values that cut across most types of programs).

Gerbner introduces four terms of media content analysis:

1. **Attention** is the result of selection of phenomena to be attended. A measure of attention is an indication of the presence and frequency of subject elements (topics, themes, etc.) in a message system.

   Question: What Is? (what exists as an item of public knowledge).

2. **Emphasis** is that aspect of the composition of message systems which establishes a context of priorities of importance or relevance. Emphasis "structures the agenda" of public conception and discourse cultivated in message systems. Measures of emphasis may be based on such indications of importance as size, intensity, or stress as the headlining of topics in news items.

   Question: What Is Important? (how the items are ordered).

3. **Tendency** is the explicit or contextual judgment of qualities of phenomena expressed in their presentation. A measure of the favorable/unfavorable

associations expressed in the comparative study of message systems may be called critical tendency. It is based primarily on whether a subject or topic appears in a supportive or critical context.

Question: What Is Right? (or wrong, or endowed with any qualities, or presented from any point of view).

4. **Structure** is that aspect of context which reveals relationships among components. These may be simply proximal, which we may call clustering, or they may be causal or other logical relationships.

Question: What Is Related To What? (by proximity or other connection)[28]

Critiques of cultivation analysis are basically based on the problems with operational definitions and failures to replicate the cultivation studies. Among many other charges and counter-charges, it is safe to say that the major issues resolved around questions of spuriousness and controls.

To advance the debate on cultivation, George Gerbner offered six general considerations:

1. TV is a unique medium requiring a special approach to study.

2. TV messages form a coherent system, the mainstream of our culture.

3. Those message systems (content) provide clues to cultivation.

4. Cultivation analysis focuses on television's contributions over time to the thinking and actions of large and otherwise heterogeneous social aggregates.

5. New technologies extend rather than deflect the reach of TV messages.

6. Cultivation analysis focuses on pervasive stabilizing and homogenizing consequences.[29]

Teun van Dijk contributed to the development of news discourse studies by proposing a careful analysis of textual structure. He suggested that the text of a news story can be described at a microlevel, macrolevel and the level of superstructure. The microlevel of description deals with sounds, words, sentence patterns and their meanings. The macrolevel analysis works with bigger units: headlines, summaries, leads, sections, closing paragraphs. The news schemata, or supestructure, puts a story in the context of a broader news discourse, explaining the meaning of the story in relation to other news featured in the newspaper or television cast.[30]

The common ground for all the researchers mentioned above is the belief in the active and selective nature of news. The proposed terms of analysis vary: frames, myths, general semantics, cultivation, structural levels. However, the idea behind them is the same. By analyzing the news discourse it is possible to deconstruct the social discourse, i.e. reveal the assumptions and perceptions existing and cultivated in the society.

Foreign News in American Media

The experts offer different views of how media decide what foreign story to cover. Herbert Gans examined foreign affairs news in television newscasts and in news magazines and identified seven subjects that are aired frequently.

First in order of frequency of coverage are American activities in foreign countries, particularly when presidents and secretaries of state visit. Second are events that affect Americans directly in major ways, such as wars, oil embargoes, and international economic problems. Third are relations of the United States with Communist and formerly Communist states. Fourth, elections in other parts of the world

are covered if they involve a change in the head of the state. Fifth are stories about
dramatic political conflicts: wars, coups d'etat and revolutions. Sixth are disasters, if they
involve massive loss of lives and destruction of property. Seventh are the excess of
foreign dictators, particularly when they involve brutality against political dissidents.[31]

Noticeably absent from American broadcasts are stories about ordinary people
and ordinary events abroad. Those would be news to Americans, but, except for
occasional special features, they are not news in the professional dictionary of journalists.

Foreign news stories also must have an appealing format. Emphasis on violence,
conflict and disaster, timelines or novelty, and familiarity of persons and situations are
the major selection criteria. Stories must be cast into familiar frameworks, such as the
battle against poverty and racism or the moral bankruptcy of military dictators.[32]

The need to keep news stories brief is particularly troubling for foreign
correspondents because foreign events are often unintelligible without adequate
background information or interpretation. Complexity therefore becomes a major enemy
and avoidance or oversimplification the defensive strategy. Stories must be written
simply and logically even if the situation defies logic. Usually a single theme must be
selected to epitomize the entire complex story.[33]

Annabelle Sreberny-Mohammadi in her study of U.S. television coverage of Iran
found that the main question "How does this event affect the United States?" blots out
any independent attempt to understand the internal dynamics of a situation, the main
actors and their motivation.[34]

According to Sreberny, news language supplies subtle and not-so-subtle value-
laden terms that constitute an interpretive framework for the audience. The news media

eagerly present dramatic and visual stories with readily comprehensible plots and identifiable actors, creating stereotypes and labels, and show little interest in more positive news of development or slow process of social change, thus being unable to explain most crises in relation to their causes.

Marvin Kalb reaches similar conclusions. He thinks that two factors play major role. First, the story has to stir emotions (topics: riot, hijacking, disaster, famine). Second, are U.S, troops involved? If a foreign affairs story meets either of these two requirements, it is likely to get coverage in the United States. Robert MacNeil suggests that the media's choice is heavily influenced by the White House and "presidential driven."[35]

An interesting observation has been made by Barry Rubin who points out: "Once the main stories of the day have been identified and defined, the media can be like a stampeding herd, hard to turn toward a new interpretation of an issue." The news of today sequels the news of yesterday. Only a relatively small number of journalists are able or allowed to open up new areas of concern. Stereotypes become fixed; countries and leaders once depicted as friendly or antagonistic to the United States may be characterized that way long after the reality has changed.[36]

One of the problems in the post-Cold War coverage is that the stories have become incredibly complicated. The marvelous simplicity of good guys vs. bad guys is over.

The end of the Cold War opened new horizons for the American media, but it also confronted them with new problems. One of the overarching issues for the media today is finding ways to make sense of the rapidly changing world. The old criteria for covering foreign affairs and many of the old standards of newsworthiness no longer apply.

American policy-makers left the media without a clearcut prism through which to see the world.[37]

The Cold War agenda was a comfortable one, defined in terms of "us" and "them," typically employing sports metaphors and with a definite sense of "winners" and "losers." The press stationed its foreign correspondents in countries and places that met the Cold War criteria, with some bureaus considered strategically more important than others largely for geopolitical reasons. As some media scholars claim, the current dimension for the media is topicality. Rather than simply covering international affairs by country or region, there is emphasis on economics, the environment, health, nuclear arms and scores of other unifying themes that make sense of the world.[38]

According to the results of the study conducted by Freedom Forum in 1993, only a handful of American newspapers, namely, the New York Times, Los Angeles Times, Christian Science Monitor, Wall Street Journal and Washington Post, devote extensive efforts to reporting on foreign affairs. And while the number of foreign correspondents employed by the major newspapers has remained more or less constant during and after the Cold War, "the number of foreign correspondents used by the three main networks - ABC, CBS and NBC - has plummeted."[39] Under pressure from their headquarters to cut costs, the networks have closed a lot of overseas bureaus.

CNN, with its extensive overseas coverage, has, in part, supplanted the networks as the primary television source for foreign affairs news. However, it should be noted that CNN's audience remains relatively small, except during crisis situations, when its audience share skyrockets.[40]

In 1993 CNN had 30 foreign correspondents and 26 stringers in 25 countries.[41] In 1995 the reported number of CNN's foreign correspondents was 25, whereas ABC, CBS and NBC had 48, 24 and 28 respectively.[42]

Various studies show divergent statistics, but the consensus of most media scholars is that American interest in foreign news and foreign affairs has waned since the end of the Cold War.[43] The foreign desk editor of the New York Times Bernard Gwertzman argues that this interest has always been insignificant: "At any given time, there are only about two million people in this country who are really interested in foreign affairs."[44]

One reason that the public's interest in foreign affairs may have waned since the end of the Cold War is that the ominous adversary that the United states pitted itself against for so long, the Soviet Union, has disappeared. "The fright factor is gone…The tense and sometimes gripping competition that characterized relations between the two countries has evaporated….The dramatic good vs. evil component to covering Russia no longer exists."[45]

The media are challenged to reintroduce the world to the United States. In an internal memorandum to the New York Times foreign correspondents, Bernard Gwertzman urged his staff to take up stories touching on all facets of the society they are reporting on. "Imagine you are being asked to write a letter home every week to describe a different aspect of life in the area you are assigned," he wrote to his reporters. Correspondents should not fixate on strictly political news, he added. Instead, they should explore new arenas for story material, probing such questions as, "What is the interrelationship of oil, wealth and social conditions in oil-producing countries? Why do

Germans have such nice cars? Why is bread tasty in France? How is vodka produced?"[46] The key is to make foreign news relevant and understandable for American public.

Another opinion is offered by James Hoge. He thinks that international reporters have to re-educate themselves, since they are now trying to catch up with sociological and anthropological concepts, such as tribalism, religion as a political force, which they thought they could ignore before because the Cold War had them preoccupied with something they assumed more perilous.[47]

Yet another view is advocated by an African journalist Tunji Lardner, who said that the Cold War is not over. "The language of analysis remains the same, and anyone reading the subtext in the stories on the former Soviet Union will see it. The central criterion is that they have to be like us...."[48]

As the studies have shown, foreign news in the American press is sparse and unbalanced, focusing on the wealthier and more powerful countries. It assesses foreign countries largely in terms of U.S. interests, with little attempt to explain their culture and concerns from their own perspectives. It does not sensitize Americans to "the needs and desires of others" nor foster "respect of the rights and dignity of all nations." Rather, it reinforces Americans' preexisting assumptions and stereotypes.

Images of Russia in American Media

A lot of research on Russian and American media images has been done in the United States, Great Britain and Russia. In the U.S. this problem was addressed in the writings of George Gerbner (on images of the Soviet Union in television entertainment programs), Ellen Mickiewicz (on television programming), Daniel Hallin (on

comparative coverage of summits) and many others. There also have been several

doctoral dissertations and master's theses that develop this topic.[49]

In Britain an interesting case study of a television news story that dealt with

Soviet immigrants who, after coming to the United States, had decided to return to their

homeland, was conducted by Richard Gruneau and Robert A. Hackett. The story was

aired on CBS on December 29, 1986. After a shot-by-shot description and careful frame

analysis, the researchers concluded that the unusual event was presented as a

"pseudoevent" and Soviet propaganda.

> The codes of television news tend to generate preferred meanings in news
> items that articulate and reproduce a hypothetical "common sense" about the
> world and the place of the United States in it....The viewer is invited to share with
> the correspondent a position of superior knowledge, in contrast to people whose
> knowledge is only limited and partial. The Russians feel (they are homesick) but
> they do not know (the benefits of "real" freedom).[50]

It should be noted, that the main corpus of Russian images research falls into the

time period of Cold War and democratic reforms of 1985 - 1990. The findings of the

researchers primarily deal with the Cold War stereotypes and the changes in them

brought about by Gorbachev's reforms. Somehow, the more complex and uncertain

period of Russian history, that is the period following the breakup of the Soviet Union,

remains uncovered. Thus, the accumulated research on the topic resolves around the

drastic image changes, beautiful democratic rhetoric and overall post-Cold War

optimism.

Yassen Zassoursky, a head of journalism department at Moscow State University,

has conducted extensive research on mutual images of the United States and the Soviet

Union in the media. According to his findings, throughout the 300-year-old exchange of

information between the two countries there has been only one period where the images have been openly hostile - the period of the Cold War. The Red Square and the Kremlin were the symbols of the "red menace" and the embodiment of the "evil empire.' "American Cold War rhetoric portrayed the Soviets as aggressive, lazy, illiterate, foolish and uneducated."[51]

George Gerbner's inquiry into the Cold War-time cultivation of Russia's image on American prime-time television resulted in the following findings. Out of a sample of 44 programs since 1976, Gerbner found a "very stable cast" of Russians. Though the British and Germans had more representation, Russians were a visible presence on American television. "Nine out of ten Russian characters are males and all of them fall into five simple categories, the larger group consisting of secret agents, security personnel and spies. Not surprisingly, these characters are depicted as cold, ruthless and machine-efficient."

Most of the Russian men, found Gerbner, tried to prevent or reclaim the other half - the defectors - and watch over the ballet dancers and diplomats to make sure that they didn't defect. They also steal U.S. secrets and kidnap U.S. scientists. Nothing can stop the deception, murder and terrorism except bullets and the CIA.

The second category for men, 23 percent of all Soviet portrayed, and the largest for women, 42 percent, was the role of the defector. This category included mostly dancers, sport figures and the spouses or family members of defectors. Gerbner found that for the most part, Soviets on American television played the roles of the "hunters and the hunted."[52]

In his article "The Image of Russians in American Media and The "New Epoch," George Gerbner referred to the psychological study of U.S. attitudes and cognitions regarding the Soviet Union conducted by Brett Silverstein in 1989. Silverstein was convinced that the media are prime suppliers of the pervasive images "that depict the Soviets as inhumane, vicious torturers who enjoy inflicting pain and murdering children."[53]

Silverstein cites polls showing that one out of four college students consistently underestimates the number of Soviet causalities in World War II and thinks that the Soviets first invented the atomic bomb. With the 1980s movie market saturation of such films as *Rambo* (in which Soviet soldiers torture Stallone), *Invasion U.S.A.* (in which two agents destroy a suburban neighborhood), *Red Dawn* (chronicling numerous Soviet invasions) and others, it was not too surprising that 28 percent of those responding to a New York Times survey in November 1985 believed that in World War II the Soviet Union fought *against* the United States.[54]

Speaking at the 1991 Media Studies Conference at Columbia University, George Gerbner underscored that the accumulated cultivation of Cold War conceptions has highly affected the less-educated and the lower-income heavy television viewers in the population, making their response to the rapidly changing world unstable.[55] George Gerbner reported that the Cold War imagery exploited "a sense of suspicion and danger" in the viewing population and perpetuated negative attitudes toward Russians that would take years to eradicate. "The reservoir filled with suspicion and malice for half a century can be replenished at will. More than likely it can be turned with appropriate adaptations, to new uses."[56]

An interesting observation was made by a Moscow researcher Svetlana Kolesnik. She examined the imagery pertaining to Russia on American television. According to her, all the networks regularly showed Soviet women with brooms and shovels. Often Soviet women were filmed while preparing the road for the asphalt works. The soldiers marching near the Kremlin wall became another popular video image.

Regardless of the subject, the cameras consistently focused on nearby military service personnel. As an example, after watching the coverage of a rock concerts one might get the impression that only military men and soldiers enjoyed rock music. "This pervasive effort to pick out military personnel in every crowd, on every street, during people's holidays and sporting events, smacks of the Cold War days."[57]

Daniel Hallin in his study of summit coverage found that the traditional stereotypes of the Soviet Union became less common, though they did not disappear completely. "The Soviet Union now plays a different role in confirming the American self-image. Before, Americans defined themselves in *contrast* to the Soviet Union. Today Americans more often see the Soviet Union as adopting and thus confirming American ideology."[58]

Won Ho Chang conducted a content analysis of 1988 Russia-related stories in the New York Times, Washington Times and Los Angeles Times. His working assumption was that the prevailing image of the Soviet Union in American media is that of a crisis-ridden, decaying system composed of a stagnant, inefficient economy; a corrupt bureaucratic elite; a sick, cynical and restive society; and an aging, inept political leadership that can't change or make policy, but only manipulate it. The study showed

that the coverage of news from Russia was becoming significantly more objective, unprejudiced and favourable.[59]

Similar findings were obtained in the course of content analysis of <u>Newsweek</u>. The study proved that in 1985 and 1987 the <u>Newsweek</u> readers could see a picture of an alien empire full of repression within the country and espionage outside its borders, a country with huge stocks of armament and a grim foreign minister whose approval of an American proposal was viewed as an outstanding event. In 1989, the Soviet Union was presented as a civilized country with the problems of inflation, parliamentary debates, election campaigns, railway accidents and earthquakes.[60]

The study of <u>Christian Science Monitor</u> confirmed the overall tendency of warming towards the Soviets in the American press of 1988 - 1989. In that particular publication, positive information on the Soviet Union in 1989 increased by about three times, negative - by 1.4 times, and neutral - by 4.4 times.[61]

Summarizing the studies reviewed above, we can conclude that between 1985 and 1989 a lot of changes happened to the image of the Soviet Union and Russians in American media. The Cold War stereotypes subsided, giving the way to a more complex picture. A steady increase in the amount of Russian news is observed. American media welcomed the new policy of openness in the Soviet Union and praised Gorbachev as a historical leader. Though, the "enemy image" did not disappear completely, overall the coverage of the Soviet Union became more favorable and detailed, with a healthy doze of childish curiosity and na e sympathy towards the formerly inaccessible country.

After the break-up of the Soviet Union and following bloody ethnic conflicts and severe economic hardships, the first signs of inadequacy and overreaction in American

attitude towards Russian news started to surface. American critics admitted that because journalists were unprepared for the end of the Cold War, "they paid too much attention to governments and officials (especially former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, around whom the press built an extraordinary personality cult)." The press did not pay enough attention to "civil society" - many forces and people who move events quite independently of governments. [62]

As was mentioned before, the field of image constructing remains relatively unexplored since 1991. For those who watch the news, however, it is pretty obvious that the frames have been changing and shifting . For example, at one point American media were full of stories on Russian Mafia, casinos, prostitutes and flamboyant "new Russians." The article titled "Far from Normal: Scenes from the New Moscow" is quite representative of this framing.[63]

Russian presidential elections of 1996 were mostly framed as a "good guy" democrat Yeltsin fighting a "bad guy" communist Zyuganov. This frame, however, quickly disappeared after Yeltsin reasserted his power. Very soon the media were filled with stories on "dysfunctional Russia:" sick and marasmatic president, poor nuclear arms control, hungry army, falling apart economy, "pseudo-democracy."

During the "newsless" season of summer 1997, the torrent of "troubled MIR space station" stories swept the networks. The issues of economic support for Russia were seriously doubted on numerous occasions, and the very character of Russian reforms was questioned. Sociologists and politologists initiated the discussion of democracy's "prerequisites."[64] Journalists very positively reviewed the works of Fareed Zakaria[65] and

Robert D. Kaplan[66] asserting that democracy implanted in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, is deeply troubled.

The new frame seems to dwell on now popular cultural differences. The Western idea of development, modernization and democratization does not withstand Russia's cultural realities. Imported values and beliefs are twisted in the process of adoption. In the absence of a solid tradition of constitutional liberalism, i.e., strong rule of law and accountability of power, free elections do not create democracy. Therefore, the Russia's case is a "pseudo-democracy."[67]

So far, these ideas have been discussed and debated mostly in academic circles. It is interesting to find out whether the above frames have affected the press and, if so, whether they embrace the remnants of the supposedly deconstructed Cold-War stereotypes.

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[65]Fareed Zakaria, "The Rise of Illiberal Democracy," <u>Foreign Affairs</u>, Nov./Dec. 1997, 76 (6), 22 - 42.

[66]Robert D. Kaplan, "Was Democracy Just a Moment?" <u>Atlantic Monthly</u>, Dec. 1997, v280n6, 55 - 80.

[67]Fareed Zakaria, "The Rise of Illiberal Democracy," 22 - 42.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter is devoted to the methodology of the study. The procedure for sampling, data gathering, processing and analysis will be explained in detail in this chapter.

Purpose of the Study

The purposes of this study is to find out how CNN has changed its presentation of Russia in the news programming over the last five years, from 1993 to 1997.

The researcher's task was to study how the number of stories and variety of topics of the news about Russia changed over last five years in all CNN news programs.

Overall, the study tries to identify whether American media are becoming more responsive and less stereotype-driven in portraying Russia.

Research Approach

A content analysis of CNN news programming was performed for the purpose of the study. Content analysis is an efficient method of analyzing media content. It "infers underlying intent, motivation, orientation, and effects, either implicit or manifest."[1] Krippendorff defined content analysis as "a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from data to their context."[2]

A qualitative approach of cultivation analysis and frame analysis was used to identify the patterns and frames in presentation of Russia by CNN. The analytical categories of "attention," "emphasis," "tendency," and "structure," as introduced by George Gerbner,[3] were adopted to discuss the cultivated perception of Russia.

The content analysis was employed in the study as the most appropriate method for examining differences and changes from 1993 to 1997 in the CNN news programming. The qualitative approach was incorporated for explaining the differences and in-depth analysis. Both methods have certain limitations. All CNN news programs of 1993 and 1997 were used for this study.

The study has three major stages. The first one is data gathering and sampling. The Broadcast News Database was used as a data source and frame. CNN news scripts were sampled from it. The second stage is review of stories. Stories were assigned to topical categories and counted in each category. Finally, the quantitative data were statistically analyzed in order to identify the differences and trends over time. A qualitative approach was used to discuss the underlying frames and cultivated motives of news stories in most frequently occurring topical categories.

Research Questions, Hypotheses and Variables

The study attempted to answer the following research questions:

1) How has CNN's presentation of Russia changed from 1993 to 1997?

2) Did the number of news stories change over the years?

3) What are the topics of the news stories involving Russia covered by CNN?

4) Did the topics of coverage change over time?

5) What is the perception of Russia as framed by CNN news?

6) Did the frame change over time?

The null hypotheses of the study were as follows:

1) The number of news stories about Russia did not change over five years from 1993 until 1997.

2) There are no differences among the proportion on news stories on different topics in different years.

3) The topics did not change over time.

4) The presentation of Russia did not change over time.

The following variables were considered in the study:

Independent variables: News stories involving Russia, categories of topics discussed in the stories, time.

Dependent variables: Number of news stories broadcast per years, frequency of topics per year.

Sampling

CNN news programming is the focus of this study. The analysis was conducted across all network's news programs of 1993 and 1997 including *NewsHour, Capital Gang, Prime News, The World Today, Breaking News, Early Prime, NewsDay, NewsNight, The Week in Review, World News, CNN & Company, Inside Politics, The International Hour, Daybreak, Business Monthly, CNN Overnight, Business Day, Newsmaker, International Correspondents, Evans and Novak, Larry King Live, CNN*

Newsroom, Worldwide Update, Morning News, Crossfire, Daywatch. The sampling frame was the Broadcast News Database[4] storing the news scripts of major networks.

Two composite years of news stories were created for 1993 and 1997 as representative samples. A composite year includes sample weeks from each of the four seasons. It contains:

- the first week of January, the first month, (representing winter);

- the second week of March, the third month, (representing spring);

- the third week of June, the sixth month, (representing summer);

- the fourth week of September, the ninth month, (representing fall).

Overall, four weeks (28 days) of a year represented a year. Every story mentioning Russia and broadcast by CNN during those days was considered for the study.

The search of the database was conducted using the following parameters: keyword - Russia, network - CNN, format - news, dates - from 01/01/93 until 01/07/93, from 03/08/93 until 03/14/93, from 06/15/93 until 06/21/93, and from 09/22/93 until 09/28/93 (same dates were used for the year 1997).

Data Collection and Analysis

The content analysis considered the news scripts as news stories. The number of stories involving Russia for 1993 and 1997 was counted. The length of the stories was not considered because most news scripts were approximately of the same length - three pages long.

Each story was assigned to a topical category. Though some stories touched upon several inter-related issues, the main message was always regarded as a topic. The rationale behind that was the very nature of broadcast news. It tends to simplify narration and structure of stories, favoring one particular subject. Every news script was coded and counted only once in each topical category. When a news program was a debate on a particular issue with different points of view presented, the topic of the discussion and the angle of its presentation were considered. The relationship of issues coded in different topical categories was accounted for and qualitatively analyzed in the qualitative part of the research.

The categories of topics were as follows:

Arms Control and Disarmament -- all stories devoted to the U.S. - Russia nuclear nonproliferation treaties and activities supporting them were included in this category. The stories discussed the end of the Cold War, the significance of START II Treaty, military cuts and arms reduction in Russia and the U.S.

Economic Conditions in Russia -- stories describing Russia's economy were included in this category.

Social Conditions in Russia – stories focusing on social life comprised this category. Among them there were news about Christmas celebration, living standards of ordinary citizens, domestic violence, children, religion, cultural initiatives, construction projects in Moscow.

Power Struggle in Russia – news stories about political conflicts in Russia were included in this category.

War in Yugoslavia – Russia's role in the war was discussed under this heading.

U.N. and Russia – news about the role of Russia in the organization, U.N.'s attitude towards Russia's reforms.

Former Soviet Republics and Russia – stories about the relationship between Russia and the former Soviet republics. The stories about Ukraine and the war in Chechnya appeared in this category.

Cold War/Defectors/KGB – news stories concerning these three Cold War issues were included in the category.

Economic Assistance - news stories discussing economic assistance of the U.S. and other countries to the former Soviet Union were assigned to this category. The stories dealt with America's interest in helping Russia, forms and distribution of aid, its influence on Russia's development.

Mir Space Station – news about Mir Space Station and international cooperation in astronautics were considered here. The stories discussed the troubles of Mir and American involvement in the project.

Crime and Criminals in Russia – news about criminal activities in Russia.

NATO – Russia's attitude towards NATO expansion.

President's Yeltsin's Health – news about the heath conditions of the Russian leader.

Summits – news about Clinton - Yeltsin summit in Helsinki, Finland in1997, stories describing Russia's participation in G7 meeting in Denver, Colorado in 1997 were included under the heading.

The data were statistically analyzed using chi-square tests to examine differences and relationships among numbers of stories in categories in 1993 and 1997.

The chi-square, according to Kerlinger, is one of the simplest and yet most useful statistical tests. The test helps a researcher determine if obtained results differ significantly from those expected. Results that are considered statistically significant warrant further analysis.[5]

Crosstabs were done for the numbers of articles and topics to examine relationships. Descriptive statistics were used to report frequency of topics. A qualitative analysis of news stories in prevailing categories was used to determine the framing of Russia as manifested in the attention, emphasis, tendency and structure of news.

Qualitative Approach

The qualitative approach used in this study is based on the methodology suggested by George Gerbner. According to his theory of cultivation analysis, the key to understanding the media is message system analysis: identifying and assessing the most recurrent and stable patterns of TV content (the consistent images, portrayals, and values that cut across most types of programs).[6]

Gerbner's four terms of media content analysis were employed in the qualitative part of this research:

1. **Attention:**

   Question: What Is? (what exists as an item of public knowledge).

   Attention is the result of selection of phenomena to be attended. A measure of attention is an indication of the presence and frequency of subject elements

(topics, themes, etc.) in a message system. In this study attention is described by the most numerous topical categories.

2. **Emphasis:**

   Question: What Is Important? (how the items are ordered).

   Emphasis is that aspect of the composition of message systems which establishes a context of priorities of importance or relevance. Emphasis "structures the agenda" of public conception and discourse cultivated in message systems. Measures of emphasis used for the purpose of this study are based on such indications of importance as intensity and concentration of certain motives in news stories.

3. **Tendency:**

   Question: What Is Right? (or wrong, or endowed with any qualities).

   Tendency is the explicit or contextual judgment of qualities of phenomena expressed in their presentation. A measure of the favorable/unfavorable association is based primarily on whether a subject or topic appears in a supportive or critical context.

4. **Structure/Frame:**

   Question: What Is Related To What? (by proximity or other connection).

   Structure, or frame, is that aspect of context which reveals relationships among components. In this research, proximal, causal and other logical relationships are analyzed. As far as framing is concerned, the notion of frame, as viewed by Goffman, approaches the notion of structure, as suggested by Gerbner. Throughout this research, these two terms are used interchangeably.

Limitations

The study has certain limitations.

Content analysis was employed for the purpose of the study. Though being generally sufficient it has certain problems. Reliability is one of them. It concerns the question whether different individuals at the same time or at different times reach the same conclusions regarding the text of the news stories.

The qualitative approach, also used in the study, allows for in-depth analysis of findings, but unavoidably involves a measure of subjectivity. Also, the nationality and personal experience of the researcher might have an influence on the interpretations of the results.

It is difficult to fairly evaluate the broadcast news stories without actually watching them. The visual imagery is an extremely important part of television news. Unfortunately, it was not possible to consider it for this study. A combination of text and visual images analysis might offer better possibilities for the future research in the area of TV presentation of foreign news.

The analyzed materials were limited to CNN news programming. CNN was chosen because of the network's leading position in the field of international news reporting. However, it is by far not the only and major source of foreign news for Americans. There are other networks, as well as magazines, newspapers and many other media of communication. Given this, the results of the study will not allow for general conclusions about all American media. They will only speak for CNN.

It should be also noted that broadcast news stories, their topics and numbers are influenced by a great number of external variables, such as currency, real life events and dramas, time constraints, production routines and others. Pamela Shoemaker, who explored the influence of various variables intrinsic to press on its content, pointed out that the distortions in media representation of reality are due to the journalistic routines, journalists' socialization, and influences from extra-media factors, primarily, the ideologies of those who finance the news media.[7]

Therefore, in the future to obtain more accurate results regarding framing of Russia in American media it would be useful to look at other media and other genres, and analyze different networks, magazine articles, photographs, profiles, reviews, movies, documentaries.

ENDNOTES

[1]H.J. Hsia, <u>Mass Communications Research Methods</u> (New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1988), 318.

[2]Karl Krippendorff, <u>Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology</u> (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1980), 21.

[3]George Gerbner, "Mass Media Discourse," <u>Discourse and Communication</u>, (New York: de Gruyter, 1985).

[4]<u>Broadcast News CD</u>, (Woodbridge, CT: Research Publications International, 1994).

[5]Fred N. Kerlinger, <u>Foundations of Behavioral Research</u>, 3d ed., (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1986), 127.

[6]George Gerbner, "Mass Media Discourse," <u>Discourse and Communication</u>, (Berlin; New York: de Gruyter, 1985), 20 - 24.

[7]Pamela Shoemaker, "Building a Theory of News Content," <u>Journalism Monographs</u> 103 June 1987: 13 - 21.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Introduction

A content analysis was employed in this study as the most appropriate method for examining differences and changes in regard to the CNN's coverage of Russia over the period from 1993 to 1997. A qualitative approach was used for interpretation of findings.

All CNN news programs broadcast in 1993 and 1997 were used for the purpose of the study. The study contained three major stages. The first one was data gathering and sampling. During the second stage the data were reviewed, news stories counted and assigned to categories. Finally, the data were statistically analyzed in order to identify differences and trends over time. A qualitative study was used to conduct frame analysis of stories in most numerous categories.

Results

The total number of news scripts dealing with the news mentioning Russia on CNN in the composite years of 1993 and 1997 was 191. For the composite year of 1993 124 news stories were obtained as a result of sampling. A similar procedure yielded 76 stories for the composite year of 1997. Fourteen topical categories were established as a result of data review. The data were analyzed by chi-square tests.

Overall, the analysis of data reports a significant decrease in the number of news stories about Russia over the last five years when all stories were considered together. A simple chi-square test was performed to examine the difference between the number of

news stories involving Russia in 1993 and 1997. Calculated $x^2 = 17.02$. Critical value at

$df = 1$ and 95% confidence level is 3.841. The difference is significant which means that

the null hypothesis is not supported. There is a statistically significant difference between

the number of new stories involving Russia broadcast by CNN in 1993 and 1997. A

significant decrease is observed.

Table I

Number of stories about Russia on CNN in 1993 and 1997
(for the composite years of 1993 and 1997)

Year	1993	1997
Number of stories	124	67

Overall, fourteen topical categories were obtained in the course of the study. Nine

topical categories were comprised of the stories broadcast in 1993. The numbers of

stories in categories for the composed year of 1993 are given in Table II.

Table II

Number of stories involving Russia on CNN in topical
categories for the composite year of 1993 (N=124)

	Topical Category	Number of stories
1	Arms Control/Disarmament	10
2	War in Yugoslavia	1
3	Economic Conditions in Russia	3
4	Social Conditions in Russia	2
5	U.N. and Russia	2
6	Former Soviet Republics and Russia	1
7	Cold War/Defectors/KGB	2
8	Economic Assistance to Russia	17
9	Power Struggle	86
TOTAL:		124

Out of 124 stories of 1993, 68% of stories described *Power Struggle in Moscow*,

14% - *Economic Assistance to Russia*, and 8% - *Arms Control and Disarmament*. Six

other categories altogether accounted for 9% of coverage.

Figure 1

Distribution of stories involving Russia on CNN in topical
categories for the composite year of 1993 (N=124)

Eleven topical categories were obtained for the news stories involving Russia and

broadcast by CNN in 1997. The numbers of stories in categories for the composite year of

1997 are given in Table III.

Table III
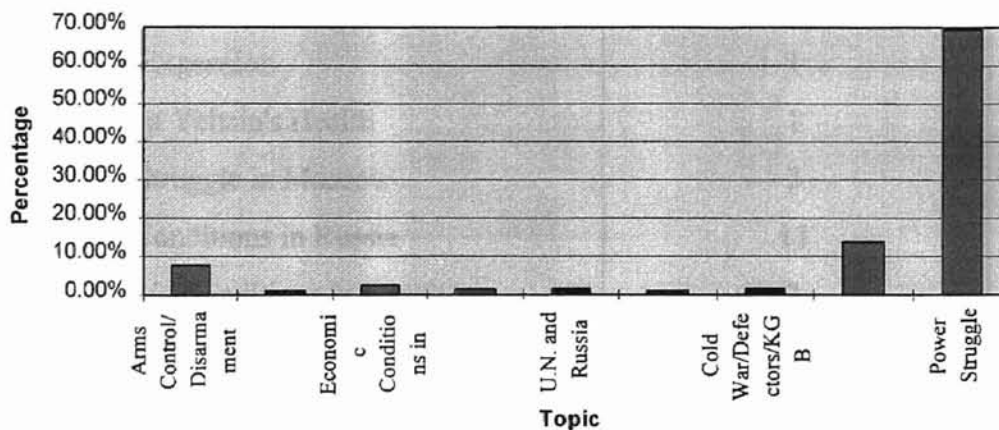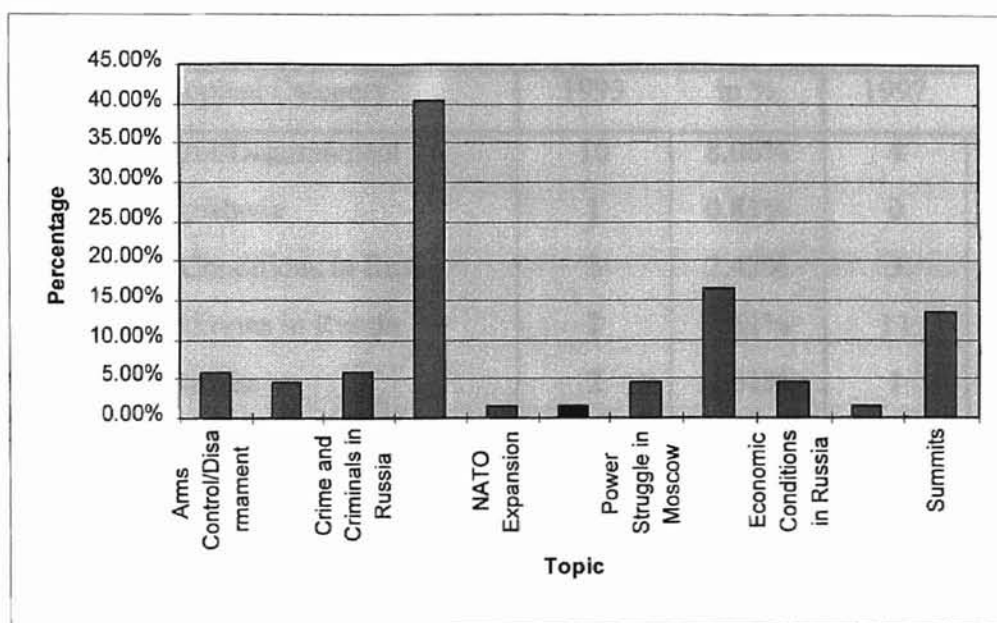
Number of stories involving Russia on CNN in topical categories
for the composite year of 1997 (N=67)

	Topical Category	Number of stories
1	Arms Control/Disarmament	4
2	Former Soviet Republics and Russia	3
3	Crime and Criminals in Russia	4
4	MIR Space Station	27
5	NATO Expansion	1
6	President Yeltsin's Health	1
7	Power Struggle in Moscow	3
8	Social Conditions in Russia	11
9	Economic Conditions in Russia	3
10	U.N. and Russia	1
11	Summits	9
TOTAL:		67

Out of 67 stories of 1997, 41% of news was devoted to *MIR Space Station*, 17% -
to *Social Conditions in Russia*, 14% - to *Summits*, 7% - to *Arms Control and
Disarmament*, 6% - to *Crime and Criminals*, 4% - to *Former Soviet Republics*, 4% - to
Power Struggle in Moscow and 4% - to *Economic Assistance*. The rest of the categories
altogether comprised 3% of coverage.

Figure 2

Distribution of stories involving Russia on CNN in topical
categories for the composite year of 1997 (N=67)

Six topical categories of 1993 and 1997 overlap. In both years we find the

categories *Arms Control/Disarmament, Economic Conditions in Russia, Social*

Conditions in Russia, U.N. and Russia, Former Soviet Republics and Russia, Power

Struggle in Moscow.

Three categories present in 1993 disappeared in 1997: *Economic Assistance, War*

in Yugoslavia, Cold War/Defectors/KGB. Instead, five different categories were added:

Crime and Criminals, MIR Space Station, NATO Expansion, President Yeltsin's Health,

Summits. The summary of stories in categories for the samples of 1993 and 1997 are

presented in Table IV.

Table IV

Number of stories involving Russia on CNN in topical categories
for the composite years of 1993 and 1997 (N=191)

	Topical Category	1993	in %	1997	in %
1	Arms Control/Disarmament	10	8.06%	4	5.97%
2	War in Yugoslavia	1	0.81%	0	0.00%
3	Economic Conditions in Russia	3	2.42%	3	4.48%
4	Social Conditions in Russia	2	1.61%	11	16.42%
5	U.N. and Russia	2	1.61%	1	1.49%
6	Former Soviet Republics and Russia	1	0.81%	3	4.48%
7	Cold War/Defectors/KGB	2	1.61%	0	0.00%
8	Economic Assistance to Russia	17	13.71%	0	0.00%
9	Power Struggle in Moscow	86	69.35%	3	4.48%
10	Crime and Criminals in Russia	0	0.00%	4	5.97%
11	MIR Space Station	0	0.00%	27	40.30%
12	NATO Expansion	0	0.00%	1	1.49%
13	President Yeltsin's Health	0	0.00%	1	0.00%
14	Summits	0	0.00%	9	13.43%
TOTAL		124	100%	67	100.00%
	TOTAL: 191				

A complex chi-square test was used to determine whether there was a significant
difference between the number of stories in different categories in 1993 and 1997.
Calculated x^2 = 145.487 at df = 13, $p < 0.05$. The null hypothesis is rejected. There is a
significant difference between the number of stories in different categories in 1993 and

1997. The contingency coefficient is 0.658. It shows that there is a moderate relationship between the number of stories, the type of category and time. Coefficient of determination is 0.433. It demonstrates that 43% of variation in the number of stories can be explained by category and/or time; 57% of variation is accounted for by other factors. It should be noted, though, that the use of chi-square was hindered because many cells had zero counts or low numbers.

Simple chi-square tests were performed to determine whether the numbers of stories in categories for each year separately were significantly different. Comparing the frequency counts in categories for the year 1993 the test showed the calculated x^2=867.98. Critical value at df = 13 and 95% confidence level is 22.362. The difference is significant which means that the null hypothesis is not supported. There is a statistically significantly difference between the numbers of stories in topical categories for the year 1993. The topical categories *Power Struggle in Moscow, Economic Assistance* and *Arms Control* received more attention than the others.

The analysis of stories in categories for 1997 revealed similar results. Calculated $x^2 = 161.76$. It is greater than the critical value of 22.362 at df = 13 and 95% confidence level. The difference is significant. Null hypothesis is rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the numbers of stories in topical categories for 1997. The topical categories *MIR Space Station, Social Conditions in Russia* and *Summits* received more coverage than the others.

Simple chi-square tests were performed to determine the difference between 1993 and 1997 in number of stories in each topical category. No statistically significant difference was found for the categories of *Arms Control/Disarmament, War in*

Yugoslavia, Economic Conditions in Russia, United Nations, Former Soviet Republics, Cold War, NATO and *President Yeltsin's Health.* This means that the null hypothesis is supported for these categories. The differences among them can be attributed to the sampling error.

However, six topical categories yielded significant difference. The number of stories on *Social Conditions in Russia* was two in 1993 and eleven in 1997. Calculated x^2 = 6.24. Critical value at df = 1 and 95% confidence level is 3.841. The difference is significant which means that the null hypothesis is not supported. There is a statistically significantly difference in the number of stories on social issues in Russia between the year of 1993 and the year of 1997. There was a significant increase in the number of stories in this category over the years.

The number of stories on *Economic Assistance to Russia* was 17 in 1993 and zero in 1997. Calculated x^2 = 17. Critical value at df = 1 and 95% confidence level is 3.841. The difference is significant which means that the null hypothesis is not supported. There was a significant decrease in the number of stories in this category over the years.

Similar results were obtained for the category *Power Struggle in Moscow.* Calculated x2 = 77.40. Critical value at df = 1 and 95% confidence level is 3.841. The difference is significant. The number of news stories about politics in Moscow decreased over the years.

For the three categories appearing only in 1997, *Crime and Criminals in Russia, MIR Space Station,* and *Summits,* the results of simple chi-square tests also appeared significant. Calculated chi-squares are 77.4; 4.0 and 9.0 respectively. This means that the

appearance of new topical categories is not due to chance. There was a statistically significant change in subjects covered by CNN between 1993 and 1997.

Figure 3

Number of stories involving Russia on CNN in topical categories for the composite years of 1993 and 1997 (N=191)
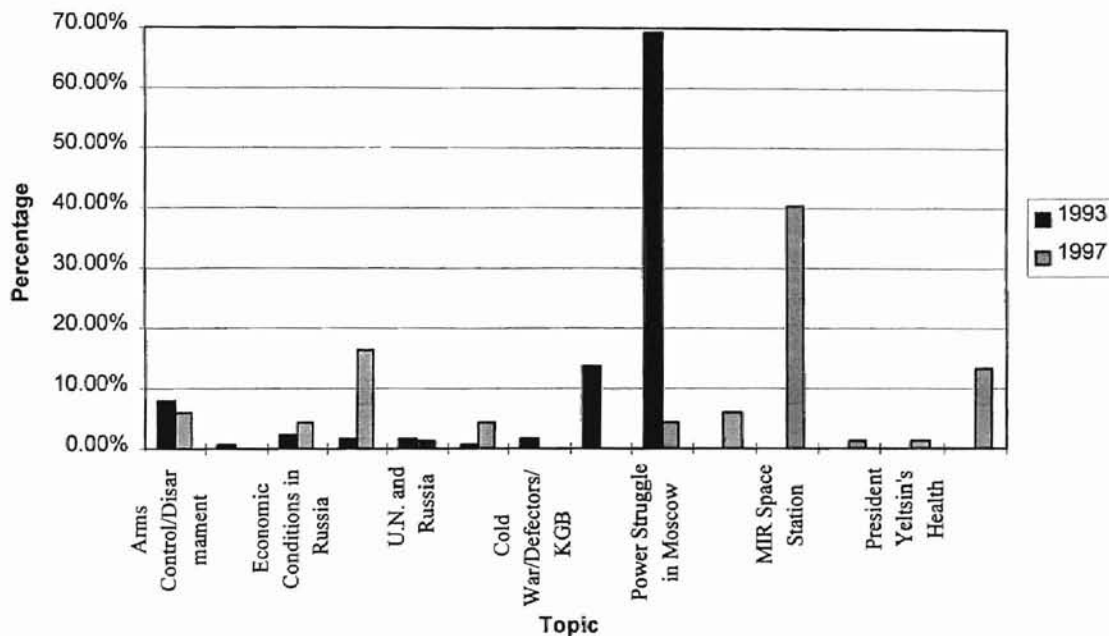
The qualitative study of the stories in the above categories exposed the logic behind the described distributions of news and suggested the following observations.

Among the biggest news of 1993 was the signing of START II Treaty. The Treaty was called "a historic achievement" ("Expert Says START II Signing a Historic Occasion," *Prime News*, 01/02/93), "a historic arms reduction pact" ("Bush and Yeltsin Announce Historic Arms Reduction Pact," *CNN Breaking News*, 01/03/93), "a treaty the two presidents consider well worth boasting" ("START II Treaty Signed," *Early Prime*, 01/03/93), and "a winner for both" ("START II Treaty Signed," *Newsday*, 01/03/93).

CNN speculated: "It will help Yeltsin to move forward with his country's difficult transition from communism and President Bush to move off the international stage with a sense of accomplishment" ("START II Treaty Signed," *Newsday*, 01/03/93).

Later in the year CNN quoted President Clinton describing Yeltsin as "a man of real courage and real commitment to democracy." The recurring opinion was that

> Russia is moving toward democracy and is acting… as a United States ally now. If Yeltsin fell and the more reactionary elements in Russia took over, that would change. So it's important for domestic economic reasons that Yeltsin succeed. ("Vancouver Summit - the Russian Connection," *CNN & Company*, 03/08/93).

The statement was rephrased and reiterated in numerous broadcasts:

> We can be relatively sure that if we don't help him /Yeltsin/, he will fall from power and somebody far worse will come and that will cost us more money in the long term. ("Yeltsin's Gamble," *Crossfire*, 03/08/93);

or

> …it would be more expensive if you let Russia go down the tubes….than it would be to send some money…over there now, preserve democracy and use Russia as an ally in keeping world peace. ("Western Aid," *Inside Politics*, 03/09/93).

Some concerns were voiced. Henry Kissinger, a former Secretary of State:

> I am concerned about the degree to which the United States is being drawn into supporting one individual and basing our entire policy in a large and ancient country on one person. ("Helping Yeltsin Survive?" *Inside Politics*, 03/11/93).

In *Capital Gang* Warner:

> I think what this administration has to do is target the aid in a different way, which is to small scale projects… that will slowly increase the degree…of the Russian economy that is private and help create a constituency for reform. This idea of trying to save Boris Yeltsin per se I don't think is going to be successful.

Novak:

It's /Russia/ got to work its will, work its way and don't have that American superiority complex to think you can control what's happening there. ("Boris Yeltsin in Trouble," *Capital Gang*, 03/13/93).

However, the winning attitude was that, even though the polls showed that

"market reforms and even democratic reforms were extremely unpopular," America had

to support Yeltsin:

There is an argument that we, by supporting Yeltsin, even if he takes some harsh measures, are going to ensure the continuation of further reforms, both politically, democratic reforms, and economic reforms. ("U.S. Should Back Yeltsin," *Business Day*, 03/12/93).

During the standoff between President Yeltsin and Russian Parliament (followed

by its dissolving in March 1993), the latter was presented as a hold-over from the

communism era. Dr. Brzezinski in *Evans & Novak*: "

In my own view, if he /Yeltsin/ announces a state of emergency - and bear in mind the congress doesn't represent the people; it represents the old system - and announces a timetable of democratic reform,...I think we have to view him as the lesser evil and support him...Any alternative to Yeltsin is worse. ("Russia," *Evans & Novak*, 03/13/93).

Charles Zeewee, CNN:

The government of the new nation of Russia is a patchwork affair, with a democratically elected president, a parliament seated when Russia was still a Soviet republic, and a constitution that dates from the Leonid Brezhnev era of the 1970s. The document does not resolve the question of who's in charge, and the president an congress have different answers. ("Power Struggle," *The Week in Review*, 03/14/93).

A different perspective, advocated by Russian journalists, was covered and

discussed only once in the newscast of that time. Mr. Shalnev and Mr. Drobkov of two

leading Russian publications in *International Correspondents*:

You must admit that you have to work with the Congress, no matter what kind of congress we have....This is a democratic process....And it's difficult to say who is the bigger hold over from the former Soviet Union, our president, who

is also a Communist, who was a Communist, for many, many years, and he was elected by the same people who elected the Congress....They are more or less on the same footing. ("Change in Russia," *International Correspondents*, 03/13/93).

In 1997 the CNN newscast boasted stories viewing Russia from a less politicised perspective. Democratic agenda faded.

CNN covered the opening of a center for abused women in St. Petersburg focusing on the increase of domestic violence among the country's economic turmoil ("Domestic Vilence is on the Rise in Russia," *World Report*, 03/11/97). There was also a story on the rise in crime in Moscow concluding that "contract killing to resolve business disputes is the norm here." ("Rise in Crime in Moscow Leaves Many Questioning Police Effectiveness," *Newsroom/World View*, 03/10/97). Yet another story described the public outcry against the pompous architectural endeavours of Moscow government: "They build war monuments, at the same time the government doesn't pay pensions to their war veterans." ("Controversy on the Statue of Russian Czar," *World Report*, 03/14/97).

While covering G-7 meeting in Colorado, CNN noted that for President Yeltsin participation in the summit was " a massive boost to help him out of the swamp of Russian politics."("Summit of Eight," *CNN Today*, 06/20/97). It was emphasized that "Russia is not a full-fledged member of the G-7" ("Russian President Yeltsin to Attend G-& Summit," *Early Prime*, 06/19/97) and "for the first time, President Yeltsin has come as a nearly equal partner, even though his nation's struggling economy hardly qualifies." ("Prior to Summit of Eight," *World View*, 06/20/97).

Among the numerous stories about Mir Space Station in summer - fall of 1997, a typical one could sound like the following:

Another Monday, another Mir malfunction. For the third week in a row, the main computer aboard the Russian space stations shut down. Then the fan on the air purifying system broke. And if that wasn't enough, the crew noticed a strange brown cloud of bubbles outside the station. ("Russian Officials Hope U.S. Will Continue Support for Mir," CNN Today, 09/22/97).

CNN observed that "with each new failure, NASA has come under increasing pressure from the U.S. Congress to end American Participation on Mir." ("Mir Computers Shut Down for Third Week in a Row," *Morning News*, 09/22/97).

Summary

Summarizing the results of all statistical procedures, a conclusion can be drawn that over the past five years the amount of news stories about Russia decreased significantly. In 1993 the primary subjects of news involving Russia were:

- *Political Struggle in Moscow.* The stories covered a standoff between President Yeltsin and Russian Parliament, the impeachment of Yeltsin by the Parliament, the Parliament disbanded by Yeltsin's decree, the storm of the White House and bloodshed in Moscow.

- *Economic assistance to Russia.* The stories covered the debates on economic aid and political support of the West to reforms in Russia, their impact on the future of Russian democracy, America's interest, involvement and influence.

- *Arms Control and Disarmament.* The stories discussed the significance and consequences of nuclear nonproliferation START II treaty signed the U.S. and Russia, military budget cuts and arms reductions.

The topics of economic assistance to Russia and political battles of democrats with communists in Moscow disappeared from the news in 1997. Instead, the themes of Russia's troubled space programs (category *MIR Space Station*), country's role on international arena (category *Summits*), and criminal situation (category *Crime and Criminals*) evolved and gained significance. In 1997 CNN devoted more attention to the news about social conditions in Russia than it did in 1993.

The most attention in 1997 CNN news about Russia was devoted to

- *MIR Space Station.* The stories covered the troubles aboard MIR, their causes, effects, significance for the future of space cooperation and activities aimed at fixing problems.

- *Social Conditions.* The stories were human interest stories, news about social life and living conditions in Russia.

- *Summits.* The news covered the meeting of President Yeltsin with President Clinton in Helsinki, Finland, as well as Russia's participation in G7 meeting in Denver, Colorado.

The in-depth analysis of news stories in the above categories yielded the following conclusions. In 1993 the image of Russia was cultivated by

- *Attention*: aimed at the process of democratic transition in Russia;

- *Emphasis*: the U.S. has to support young Russian democracy and its reformer president;

- *Tendency*: to prop up President Yeltsin and the necessity of economic aid;

- *Structure/Frame*: the only alternative to Yeltsin is chaos, or worse, communists and Cold War. It is in the best American interests to support Russian reforms economically

and President Yeltsin politically to make democratic changes irreversible and avoid

potential conflict. America has a high mission of saving Russia's democracy.

In 1997 the picture of Russia became less clear:

- *Attention*: aimed at troubles in economy and growing role on international arena;

- *Emphasis*: controversy and disproportion in Russia's social and political development;

- *Tendency*: it is better to distance from Russia and its unpredictability;

- *Structure/Frame*: the U.S. has to be cautious and less involved when dealing with

Russia: the country has serious problems with its economy and government.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENADTIONS

This chapter summarizes the research methodology and findings, discusses the results and suggests recommendations based on the findings.

Summary

The purpose of the study was to find out how the portrayal of Russia on CNN has changed over the past five years, from 1993 to 1997. This period of time was selected because many recent scholarly publications tend to re-examine the course of reforms in Russia blaming media and politicians for democracy rhetoric overuse.

It was expected that, faced with the complexity of Russia's internal developments, American media would question once highly praised process of democratization in Russia. It was also expected that Russia would get a closer look in regard to its real life everyday problems, often overshadowed by the discourse of political ideology. More sober and critical evaluation of Russia's news was anticipated.

The study attempted to answer the following research questions:

1) How has CNN's presentation of Russia changed over the years from 1993 to 1997?

2) Did the number of news stories change over the years?

3) What are the topics of the news stories involving Russia covered by CNN?

4) Did the topics change over time?

5) What is the image of Russia as framed by CNN?

6) Did the frame change over time?

The null hypotheses of the study were as follows:

1) The number of news stories about Russia did not change over the years from 1993 until 1997.

2) There are no differences among the proportion of news stories on different topics in different years.

3) The topics did not change over time.

4) The presentation of Russia did not change over time.

Contents analysis and qualitative analysis were employed in the study as the most useful methods for examining differences and changes in regard to the news stories about Russia. Both methods have certain limitations.

The study contained three major stages. The first one was data gathering and sampling. During the second stage the data were reviewed, news stories counted and assigned to categories. Finally, the data were statistically analyzed in order to identify differences and trends over time. A qualitative approach was used to conduct cultivation and frame analysis of stories in most numerous categories. The terms of qualitative analysis were attention, emphasis, tendency and structure/frame. The notion of structure, as suggested by Gerbner, approaches the notion of frame, as introduced by Goffman. Thus, these two terms together formed a single category of critical analysis and were used interchangeably throughout the research.

Overall, quantitative analysis reports that there was a significant change in presentation of Russia over the past five years. The number of news stories from Russia decreased. The topics of news changed.

In 1993 the primary subjects of news involving Russia were political battles in Moscow, economic assistance to Russia and the end of the Cold War celebrated by the signing of START II Treaty.

CNN praised President Yeltsin as a democrat and reformer. He was presented as an able leader struggling with rigid pro-Communist and anti-Western Parliament opposition. The alternative to Yeltsin, according to the news, was chaos and civil unrest. As the only hope of the West, President Yeltsin was entitled to political support. The issues of economic assistance to Russian democracy were played up. The logic behind them implied that it was in the best interests of America to support Yeltsin and reforms, financially and politically, in order to secure status quo. The U.S. mission of democracy saver was accentuated.

The topics of economic assistance to Russia and political controversy in Moscow nearly disappeared from the news in 1997. Instead, the themes of Russia's troubled space programs, the country's growing, but ambiguous, role in the international arena, and criminal situation evolved and gained significance. In 1997, CNN devoted more attention to the news about social conditions in Russia than it did in 1993.

The most frequent subjects of news involving Russia in 1997 were troubles with MIR Space Station, social life and living conditions, summits.

In 1997 a lot of news stories mentioning Russia resolved around the international cooperation in space and MIR Space Station. A lot of attention was devoted to the

discussion of troubles aboard MIR and their causes on Earth. The news cited a lot of complaints about the poor performance of the project predetermined by Russia's severe economic hardships. The need to continue dealing with the space program was questioned and American overbearing involvement in saving Russia's face by not letting down MIR was criticized.

Stories about social life in Russia emphasized asymmetry and disproportion in Russia's development. Often the examples of the growing gap between rich and poor were addressed. The stories discussed the problems of domestic violence, pitiful living conditions, low living standards and unpaid wages. On the other hand, there were neutral and even somewhat positive news stories about vast construction projects in Moscow, schoolchildren and ballet in Russia.

In stories covering international meetings, summits and conferences, it was often noted that Russia has a right to participate in high-level decision-making, but cannot be considered a developed industrialized democracy because of its low living standards and questionable politics. However, it was essential for the West to consider Russia as a partner and render it political support.

In 1997 the soap-opera of Russian democracy visibly disappeared from the news giving place to a more cautious attitude. Thus can be explained the raising attention to the difficult economic and social conditions, as well as criminal situation in Russia. The democracy rhetoric subsided, as was expected.

Conclusions and Discussion

Through the late 1960s, a dominant paradigm ruled intellectual definitions of development and guided national development programs. Implicit in the ruling paradigm were numerous assumptions about the "good things": industrial revolution, capital intensive technology, economic growth. Democracy was also among them. In 1970s the early criticism of the dominant paradigm was voiced, challenging American intellectual ethnocentrism. It was admitted that "international technical assistance programs sponsored by the rich nations, unfortunately, made the recipients even more dependent on donors."[1]

"Traditional" ways of thinking, beliefs and social values were restored in their rights. They were no longer regarded as the cause of underdevelopment. The whole concept of development was revised. The new definitions emphasized choice: "development is simply a powerful change toward the kind of social and economic system that a country decides it needs," or "development is a change toward patterns of society that allow better realization of human values...."[2]

The conclusion was that people cannot *be* developed. They can only develop themselves and there are many alternative pathways to development.[3]

However, the dominant paradigm debate primarily focused on economic and social, rather than cultural and political issues. Even though historical development had brought some delusion in the concept of "democacy-as-progress"[4] and culture studies tapped into politics introducing cultural differences, democracy was until recently viewed as the ultimate answer to many nations' political problems.

"For the first time in all history," President Clinton declared in his second inaugural address, "more people on this planet live under democracy than dictatorship." *The New York Times*, after careful checking, approved: 3.1 billion people live in democracies, 2.66 billion do not. According to end-of-history doctrine as expounded by its prophet, the minority can look forward to "the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government."[5]

The democracy/dictatorship dichotomy, however, has serious problems. Under this proposition, many experts would classify Russia, for example, as a democratic society. Yet the vast majority of Russians are strongly at odds with Western assumptions and would not call their society democratic or liberal-capitalistic.[6]

The fundamental mistake here is tying together capitalism and democracy. Democracy requires capitalism, but capitalism does not require democarcy.[7]

> The world today it torn in opposite directions. Globalization is in the saddle and rides mankind, but at the same time drives people to seek refuge from its powerful forces beyond their control and comprehension. They retreat into familiar, intelligible, protective units. They crave the politics of identity. The faster the world integrates, the more people will huddle in their religious or ethnic or tribal enclaves. Integration and disintegration feed on each other.[8]

Given this, cultural differences are becoming increasingly important and sensitive issue. It necessary to rethink the old frames, deconstruct the stereotypes and recognize that developing nations do not fit into them. The media, as the most powerful tool of cultivation, can play a leading role in this process.

As the study has shown, CNN used to frame Russia as clearly democratic. Now the opposite tendency is ready to surface. Both of them have the same problem of extreme polarity.

This problem was addressed by James Fallows who blasted the media for their extremism. Competing vigorously and hopelessly with the pure entertaining programs for higher ratings, piling up conflicts and scandals over the audience's heads, the news media do not bother to analyze them deeply or suggest any solutions. According to Fallows, the analyses and political predictions offered in the numerous talk-shows are often off the point, superficial, sensational, or sometimes completely wrong and brutally irrelevant.[9]

It is impossible to dispute the dominant role of oligarchy in Russian society nowadays. But by classifying Russia simply as "oligarchic," the systematic mistake of presenting post-communist Russia as purely "democratic" would be mirrored. To understand Russian society, it is necessary to recognize not one but four (or may be even more) facets: oligarchic, criminal, authoritarian, and liberal.[10] It is crucial that having deconstructed the stereotype formed in 1993, CNN and other media do not replace it with another one, backed up with the same logic of one-dimensional thinking.

U.S. assistance to Russia has rapidly declined following the fiscal year 1994 peak of $1.6 billion. To put it into perspective, about $31.1 billion of total assistance (exclusive of debt restructuring) has been disbursed to Russia from all sources through mid-1996. Of this amount, about $2.7 billion has been in technical assistance, some 44% of which has been provided by the U.S. through USAID. As of January1, 1996, the total outstanding external debt of the Government of the Russian Federation amounted to $120.4 billion.[11]

As this study has demonstrated, CNN in 1993 played an important role in selling the American public the idea of economic aid. Unfortunately, as many American political observers admit and as the latest news shows, this idea did not succeed. CNN

downplayed it later on and did not discuss it in 1997. A very radical statement came from

a prominent Russian economist Grigory Yavlinsky, who said last June:

> An enormous amount of time and money has been spent by the U.S.
> government, by the private sector, by foundations and universities in promoting
> the myth that Russia has achieved democracy. It would take great courage to
> admit that the taxpayers' money was wasted. But it is always better to be honest.
> Do not give up on Russia. Tell the truth to us and yourselves.[12]

For the media to tell the truth about Russia, or any other foreign country, means to

go beyond the "official" news and government agendas, to become independent of

stereotypes and bureaucracy, to develop the understanding of other traditions and

sensitivity to different value systems.

American media have to realize that ethnocentrism, altruistic democracy,

responsible capitalism, individualism, moderatism, social order, national leadership – all

the values predominant in American society and intrinsic to this news culture[13] -- are

sometimes in the way of an adequate international coverage.

To avoid cultivation of misperceptions, journalists have to distance themselves

from government and step out of cultivated frames. Foreign policy-driven news, dwelling

on agendas, stereotypes and rhetoric exercises, should be challenged by broader

perspectives of international correspondents.

Political matters should not predetermine and delimit the angles of international

news coverage. The news as perceived by the people of the nation covered, i.e. the public

angle, should find its place in the newscast.

Since stereotypes serve as hypothetical categories for analysis, packaging and

presentation of information, it is not feasible to avoid stereotyping completely. However,

the business of journalism requires that media professional change their perspectives often and do not promote rigid frames. The quality of reporting depends on the journalists' ability to adopt different angles and deconstruct stereotypes. Thus, managing frames becomes the essence of the profession and an open mind - the key to succeeding in it.

By being reflexive, questioning frames and shifting perspectives media will avoid the trap of stereotyping and allow for more insightful news. The meaningful news is vital as the public attempts to co-op with the challenges of globalization and integration into the rapidly changing world.

Recommendations

This study demonstrates the change of media framing over the last five years. It shows the stereotype of Russia cultivated in 1993 and its deconstruction by 1997. The case exemplifies the disappearance of firm beliefs in multi-faceted, post-modern world.

As further crumbling of stereotypes, fragmentation and proliferation of international images are coming along, mass media have to be very careful with ideological clich . Furthermore, it is critical that in portraying foreign countries the press attempts to understand the meaning of political terminology existing within the context of a particular culture and circumstance. The notion of democracy is different for people of different backgrounds. The meaningful in-depth news is invaluable in international newscast.

For future research in this field it is recommended to probe into visual imagery. The validity of the research will increase if the content study is enriched with visual

frame analysis. A combination of text and visual images analysis might offer better possibilities for the future research in the area of TV presentation of foreign news.

Though the analyzed materials were limited to CNN news programming, it has been suggested that the cultural significance in terms of transferring cultural values of international news is not as decisive as the influence that is exerted through advertising, educational publishing, children's comics, or women's magazines.[14] Given this, in the future it would be useful to look at other media and genres, and analyze different networks, magazine articles, photographs, profiles, reviews, movies, documentaries in respect to their presentation of international environment.

ENDNOTES

[1]Everett M. Rogers, "Communication and Development: The Passing of the Dominant Paradigm," <u>Communication Research</u>, 3.2 (April 1976): 213 - 217.

[2]Ibid, 225.

[3]Ibid, 223.

[4]John Mueller, "Policy Principles for Unthreatened Wealth-Seekers," <u>Foreign Policy</u>, 102 (Spring 1996): 22.

[5]Arthur Schlesinger, "Has Democacy a Future?" <u>Foreign Affairs</u>, 76.5: 2.

[6]Vladimir Shlapentokh, "The Four Faces of Mother Russia," <u>Harper's Magazine</u>, Oct. 1997, 60.

[7]Arthur Schlesinger, "Has Democacy a Future?" <u>Foreign Affairs</u>, 76.5: 7.

[8]Ibid, 8.

[9]James Fallows, <u>Breaking the News</u>, (Pantheon/Random, 1996), 9

[10]Vladimir Shlapentokh, "The Four Faces of Mother Russia," <u>Harper's Magazine</u>, Oct. 1997, 60.

[11]"The USAID FY 1998 Congressional Presentation: Russia," World Wide Web, Netscape, http://www.info.usaid.gov/pubs/cp98/eni/countries/ru.htm

[12]Georgie Anne Geyer, "Russian Mafia Controls Economy and Politics," <u>Tulsa World</u>, Oct. 2, 1997, A-13.

[13]Herbert Gans, <u>Deciding What's News</u>, (New York: Vintage Books, 1980).

[14]"Foreign News in the Media: International Reporting in 29 Countries," UNESCO, 1985, 52.

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VITA

Elena M. Shalabanova

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF RUSSIA'S COVERAGE
        IN CNN NEWS PROGRAMS, 1993 - 1997

Major Field: Mass Communications

Education: Graduated from St. Petersburg State University, Russia
        with a journalism major in May 1996;
        completed requirements for the Master of Science degree at
        Oklahoma State University in May 1998.

Professional Experience: Journalist at Chas Pik, St. Petersburg, Russia
        from 1993 to 1996;
        freelance columnist at Daily O'Collegian,
        Stillwater, Oklahoma from 1996 to 1997;
        writer-intern at Voice of America and
        producer-intern at WorldNet TV during summer 1997.