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**MEDIA CREDIBILITY:  
cases of Russia and the United States**

Master Thesis

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## **ABSTRACT**

The primary purpose of this work is to examine the differences in media credibility perception among Russian and American respondents, to compare the importance of mass media and interpersonal channels as sources for information and to check whether there is a relation between a medium credibility perception and a medium's importance as a source for news. This paper functions as a comparative analysis and consists of two parts. The first part is based on the study of already existing literature, especially, the overview of historical development and contemporary state of mass media, some theories of media ecology, and cultural dimensions. Based on this first theoretical part, I created a survey, which results are presented and interpreted in the second part of this work.

The main limitation of this study is the small sample size that cannot be considered representative. However, findings of this study provide insights into important issues related to cultural environment impacts on credibility perception of mass media and interpersonal channels. The results of the comparative survey can provide a useful framework for examining the cross-cultural differences in media credibility.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Some theorists of media argue that among all functions of mass media surveillance might be the most obvious one (for more information see Dominick, J.R., 1993). Surveillance refers to the news and informative role of the media. A major part of what we know about our society or even about the world we live in we know through the mass media. This is true not only about our knowledge of society and history. „What we know about the stratosphere is the same as what Plato knows about Atlantis: we’ve heard tell of it. Or, as Horatio puts it: “So have I heard, and do in part believe it. At the same time we know so much about the mass media that we are not able to trust them as sources of our knowledge”. (Luhmann, N., 2000, p. 1)

In different societies, the surveillance function might be performed by different kinds of media. While in some countries it is primarily performed by television and print media, in others this might be the function of friends and family. Whether or not we trust the information, we get dependant on the source of information. If we read about unidentified flying objects approaching the Earth in the tabloid press, we would hardly pay any attention to this information. However, if we hear this news announced on the latest news program in television or in the radio, it would have a completely different meaning and effect. Would this meaning and effect be different for Russians and Americans? Would people in Russia and the United States trust television, print media, radio, and the Internet to the same extent is one of the main questions to answer in my paper. The reasons why the public trusts or distrusts the mass media lie in historical events, culture, political and social situation, individuals’ background. These two cultures differ significantly in their cultural patterns, values, norms of behavior, beliefs, and habits. Russia and the United States are significant and important players in international political and economic life. At the same time they are quite the opposites in terms of culture. Through their examples one can follow how different political, cultural, and social conditions in the past and today may influence mass media credibility.

There is a variety of communication needs that must be met for a society to exist. “Primitive tribes had sentinels who scanned the environment and reported dangers. Councils of elders interpreted facts and made decisions. Tribal meetings were used to transmit these decisions to the rest of the group. As society became larger and more complex, these jobs grew too big to be carried out by single individuals. With the advent of a technology that allowed the development of mass communication, these jobs were taken by the mass media”. (Dominick, J.R., 1993, p. 33) In his book (1993) Dominick states that sentinels and lookouts have transformed into the media. Journalists and correspondents collect news and information for television networks and newspapers they consider important for the public, but which they cannot get by themselves. This has certain consequences for the society. According to Dominick (1993), the first one is modern news travels much faster. Development of the electronic media continues to make gathering and sharing of news quicker and easier. The second consequence is a bit subtler. In ancient times, if a war began, it was a direct experience. A stranger would appear at the mouth of a cave and belt the inhabitant with a club. This event was directly observable, and, therefore, there was very little doubt about its validity and trustworthiness. At that time the known world was small and easily surveyed. Today, the mass media delivers news from different places that are far beyond our immediate senses. We cannot easily verify this information but usually trust it. The majority of what we know about the world is “secondhand”. We have to rely on what other people in the mass media tell us. We get highly dependent on others as sources for information. “This trust, called credibility, is an important factor in determining, which medium people find the most believable”. (Dominick, J.R., 1993, p. 34)

Media credibility is closely related to the surveillance function of mass media. Media significantly influence and shape collective behavior. Kiouisi argues (2001) that it is generally acknowledged the notable decrease in media credibility can potentially transform social and civic life in a society. (Kiouisi, S., 2001) Media credibility is often viewed as a vitally important factor for effective and smooth cooperation among individuals and different groups in society. If we have serious reservations about media credibility, media cannot efficiently fulfill their news or informative function. From this perspective studying media credibility seems as critically important.



## 1.1 THE GOAL

The primary goal of this work is to examine the differences in media credibility perception among Russian and American respondents and compare the results of this survey with existing opinions and material. Other intentions of this work are to compare the importance of mass media and interpersonal channels as sources for information and to check whether there is a relation between a medium credibility perception and importance of a medium as a source for news.

For the case study I chose two countries, Russia and the United States, since these two countries are important actors on the international political and economic scene. I am also familiar with the past and contemporary media situation and cultural environment in both of them. Russia and the United States are quite the opposite in terms of mass media development in history and current media situation. In my work I will try to check whether or not cultural setting has an influence on media credibility perception and how well the surveillance function is performed by mass media and interpersonal channels in these two countries.

My assumption of differences in media credibility perception between Russian and American respondents is based on the following factors:

- Differences in historical development and the role mass media played in these two countries in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and now
- Differences in contemporary political and economical situations, which have a significant impact on mass media sphere
- Differences in cultural dimensions (individualism vs. collectivism, small-power distance vs. large power-distance) and cultural settings that determine the mass media usage

## 1.2 HYPOTHESES

These are the hypotheses I advance in my study based on the findings of the media credibility surveys conducted in the past, G. Hofstede's theory about cultural dimensions, and my personal experience with mass media in Russia and the United States.

- Mass media credibility perception among Russians and Americans would differ. On average Americans perceive mass media as more credible than Russians (For more details see chapter 3-3.4)
- On average Americans tend to consider mass media as more fair, objective, accurate, and unbiased than Russians (For more details see chapter 3-3.4)
- Among four main mass media (television, newspapers and magazines, radio, Internet) Russians will tend to rate television as the most credible medium; Americans will tend to rate television and the Internet as more credible media than the press and radio. (For more details see chapter 7, p. p. 38-40)
- Media perceived as most credible will be judged as most important news sources. If people perceive a medium as credible, they should seek for information from this medium they trust. (For more information see chapter 7, p. 38-40).
- Russians will averagely consider interpersonal channels to be more important as a source for news on actual events than Americans. (For more details see chapters 4-4.3.)
- American respondents' opinions on actual event will tend to coincide less with opinions of their social community members compared to Russian respondents, whose opinions will be are more individualist in shaping their opinions, while Russians will tend to share their opinion with other members of social community. (For more details see chapters 4-4.3)

The intent of this study is to serve as basis and a general framework for extrapolation and cross-cultural comparison. In conducting this survey I am conscious of limitations in the procedures and methodology used.

### 1.3 METHODOLOGY

In this work my intention is to compare and analyze differences in media credibility perception in Russia and the United States. Therefore, this paper functions as a comparative analysis.

This work consists of two parts. The first part is based on the study of already existing literature, especially, the overview of contemporary media situation, some theories of new media, and cultural dimensions. Based on this first theoretical part, I created a survey, which results consist the second part of this work.

To facilitate my study I conducted a quantitative research that will serve to compare media credibility perception in these two countries. The research was conducted through the distribution of questionnaires among people, who had both theoretical knowledge and practical experience with mass media. Respondents from both countries were chosen randomly, but with consideration given to their comparability (such as age, country of origin, occupation, experience). (For more detailed description of respondents see chapter 6)

### 1.4 LITERATURE OVERVIEW

There are a few main factors I used as a basis to advance my hypotheses in this paper. On them is already existing results of media surveys conducted in different times in the United States.

**Hazel Erskine** in his article *The Polls: Opinions of the New Media (1970-1971)* traces the history of surveys conducted between 1937 and 1970 on such topics as freedom of the press, governments regulations of the media, objectiveness and unprejudiced of the new media, and the relative credibility of the new media. First surveys regarding opinions of the new media in the United States were taken in 1930's and were focused on tracing how newspapers fared when radio and then television began competing with

them in delivering the news. During the World War II and Cold War the surveys were mainly researching the relative credibility of different media, since for effective news service it was important to know what media American believed more. (Erskine, H., 1970-1971) In his article Erskine grouped the results of the polls taken in different time on the same topics so that we can compare how the results have been differing during the time. This article motivated me to a large extent for conducting my comparative case study. A few questions I used in my questionnaire (questions # 2, 3, 4, and 5) were taken from some surveys conducted fifty years ago.

**Michael J. Robinson** and **Andrew Kohut** in their study *Believability and the Press* (1988) looked at believability ratings of 39 news organizations and news personalities in the United States. In 1980's there were big studies and discussions about the credibility crisis for the press and, therefore, an image problem for the media. In 1985 there were published the results of a long-year study of public attitudes towards the new media. According to that study, three-fourths of the American public had some serious doubts about the credibility of the press. But the definition of the credibility in that study was set up very broadly and included a wide range of dimensions of the media from rudeness of reporters to the accuracy of their copy. In their study in 1988 Robinson and Kohut stated the opposite results. They claimed that if the question of credibility is narrowly defined as believability (i.e. in terms of media delivering accurate and unbiased information) and if the public is given the specific news organizations, the overwhelming majority of the public believes most of the nation's press, therefore, "there is no believability crisis for the press". (Robinson, M.J., Kohut, A., 1988, p. 188) While people have certain reservations about particular media techniques and organizations the majority of the public considers the press believable.

In their study *Cruising is Believing?: Comparing Internet and Traditionally Sources on Media Credibility Measures* (1998), **Thomas J. Johnson** and **Barbara K. Kaye** made a research among politically-interested Web users to figure out whether they perceive online publications as credible as corresponding information delivered by traditional sources. (Johnson, T. J., Kaye B. K., 1998) As some past studies suggest that people are less likely to pay attention to media they do not perceive as credible, Johnson and Kaye argue that "credibility is crucial if the public is going to continue to embrace and accept

the Internet... Lack of trust in information obtained from the Web could keep it from becoming a major source of news in the immediate future“. (Johnson, T. J., Kaye B. K., 1998, p. 325) Johnson and Kaye’s research found out that online media tended to be perceived as more credible than their traditional versions. However, both online and traditional media were judged only as “somewhat credible”. (Johnson, T. J., Kaye B. K., 1998, p. 338) This research also supports past studies that indicate that a medium’s credibility is related to the degree to which people rely on it, therefore, the most relied-on media are judged as the most credible.

To study how cultural environment might influence the importance of interpersonal channels as a source for information and sharing opinions within social community I chose to use **Geert Hofstede**’s dimensions of culture. These cultural dimensions were elaborated in his book *Cultures and organizations: software of the mind* (2005). He chose five main dimensions: small and large power-distance, individualism vs. collectivism, masculinity vs. femininity, high vs. low uncertainty avoidance, and long-term vs. short-term orientation. Even though his work provides a relatively general framework for analysis of culture, it can be very useful in practice. Hofstede’s model reduces the complexity of culture into five cultural dimensions that we can be relatively easily understood and applied to many everyday intercultural interactions. Cultural dimensions make it easy to compare cultures; therefore, they are more often used in the area of cross-comparison studies. For the purpose of my work I will be referring to two out of five cultural dimensions: individualism vs. collectivism and small vs. large power-distance.

**Marshall McLuhan**’s theory about the role of the electronic media in mass popular culture is one of the most widely known of communication technologies. Media has a very powerful influence on people, society, culture, consumer market, and a variety of other areas. This is the reason why media advantages and disadvantages become a frequent topic to discuss. Every medium carries the message. In his book *The Medium is the Message: An Inventory of Effects* (1989), McLuhan states that the medium is more powerful than the message it brings. He states “the medium is the message” and argues that the form of media has a more significant effect on society and knowledge than the

content carried by the media. (McLuhan, M., Fiore, Q., 1989, p. 26) We invent and change media and they in turn change us. We shape media and they in turn shape us.

## 2. SURVEILLANCE

Surveillance literally means “watching over”. (“Surveillance”, 2008) This term is frequently used for all forms of observation or monitoring. In regard to mass media, surveillance refers to our need for knowledge and what we usually call the news and informative role of the media.

When we talk about surveillance, it is important to distinguish two different parts of this informative function. In economic terms we can talk about mass media’s supply and demand for information. According to Dominick (1993), there are two main types of surveillance performed by mass media. The first type is warning or monitoring surveillance. This type of surveillance occurs when the media informs us about danger or threats from natural disasters, increasing inflation, air pollution, unemployment, military threats and other states of emergency. The second type is transmission of information that is useful and helpful in everyday life. It is called instrumental surveillance. (Dominick, 1993, p. 34) There is a lot of news and information that is not actually dangerous or threatening to society but many people demand it. It includes information about films played at the local cinemas, latest fashion trends, cooking tips, hot spots for summer vacations, new products on the market, and so on. Entertaining programs often suggest some interesting news, tips, and recommendations; so the surveillance function can be found even in the media content that is primarily meant to entertain.

There are a number of different factors that might affect how well the surveillance function is performed by mass media. The main factor might be freedom of press. In some countries independent media does not exist and journalists are commonly persecuted and censored. Mass media are controlled by government, other political organizations or private businesses. Surveillance function will be fulfilled differently in countries with free and independent mass media and those with government-controlled media used mainly for transmitting official propaganda. To deliver valuable and good-

quality information mass media require highly professional journalists and sufficient financial sources; therefore, general economic situation has an influence on mass media situation as well.

For us, as information users, surveillance means the need to know what is happening in the world around. We are interested not only in information that has a direct impact on our lives but are motivated to know about the world around us by a natural curiosity. To gratify our need for knowledge we use a number of different mass media. What media we use and the way we actually use them to meet this need is determined by a variety of factors: what kind of information we are currently seeking for, what media we have access to, what media we like and trust most. However, it is important to keep in mind that the media themselves are a part of the world they tell us about. In his book (1985) Postman points out that “information has become the commodity for sell”. (Postman, N., 1985) Different media struggle for audience’s attention to increase their rate and then prices for advertisement. To survive in the market competition mass media have to attract the mass audience. For that reason the media content is designed to appeal to what Dominick calls “the lowest common denominator of taste”. (Dominick, J.R., 1993, p. 47) Media try to attract audience’s attention by entertaining content and causing sensations. Postman (1985) argues mass audience seeks mainly for entertainment and media are willing to present serious news as entertainment. To maintain high rates media are eager to present any information as a show. Print media cut prices, so that a larger part of population can afford to buy them. By simple language, many pictures, and partial information news become interesting programs that we like to watch to amuse ourselves. (Postman, N., 1985) This shows that surveillance function of media is shaped by several different factors. The first one is the fact that media have to provide the content in line with actual needs and interests of the audience. The second factor is related to political and cultural environment as well as media tradition in a certain society. By media tradition I mean requirements and expectation of a society that media have traditionally met and functions that media have traditionally performed. In Western democratic societies media have primarily been “the 4th dimension” of power and public service is meant to be their prior function. In totalitarian societies the mass media often serve as the means for official propaganda. Mass media are used as the main means for public opinion manipulation. Information is regularly distorted and

shaped in line with the government interests and intentions. This fact should not be neglected in exploring the question of surveillance function of the mass media.

## 2.1 FUNCTIONS OF MASS MEDIA FOR SOCIETY

Another important function of mass media, closely connected to the surveillance function, is the interpretation function. (McQuail, D., 1994) Mass media do not deliver just facts and data. The “added value” of the facts they deliver is the meaning and significance of particular events. One form of media interpretation is so obvious that many people fail to see it. Any day none of the media can include everything that happens in the world. Among all events media organizations select what to cover in the media and decide how much time or space to give them. This allows us to come across a large number of different perspectives; so that we can find out and consider many sides of an issue before forming our own opinion about the topic. In this regard Dominick (1993) points out that it can be quite difficult to collect and evaluate different perspectives presented in the media and, therefore, requires some efforts from our side. Dominick draws our attention to possible dysfunction that might occur when an individual starts to rely too much on the views presented in the media and begins to lose his or her critical ability. As a result a person might become passive and allow others to think for him or her. (Dominick, J.R., 1993)

Another function performed by the mass media is linking elements of a society that are not directly connected. (McQuail, D., 1994) As illustration McQuail (1994) gives an example of mass advertising that aims to link products of sellers with needs of buyers. Another type of connection occurs when the media link groups that are geographically separated but share a common interest. Because of linking members from different societal backgrounds and contexts, the media might create completely new social groups of individuals who have not recognized before that other people have similar interests. The consequence of this role of the mass media is the fact that different groups of society can be mobilized quickly. The negative aspect is that media can link groups that might threaten to society (for example, extremist or terrorist organization). (McQuail, D., 1994)



The next function of the mass media – transmission of values – is a subtle but very important function of the mass media. It has also been called “socialization function”. “Socialization refers to the ways in which an individual comes to adopt the behavior and values of a group”. (Dominick, J.R., 1993, p. 43-44) The mass media present pictures of our society and through them we learn how we are supposed to act and what values are important. “Media coverage can ensure that the values of the majority of society are highlighted and upheld by what they choose to emphasize. The media’s function as enforcer of social norms was claimed that for many years the image of minority groups transmitted from one generation to the next by the mass media reflected the stereotypes held by those who were in power” (Dominick, J.R., 1993, p. 44) The media provide us with role models that we can observe and imitate. By enforcing social norms mass media can also transmit values.

It is difficult to imagine any medium (apart from a few exceptions like radio news channels or financial newspapers) without puzzles, horoscopes, games, tips, humor, gossips. All this is a form of entertainment. Thanks to mass media we can afford entertainment for relatively little money. Entertainment becomes available almost for everyone and this makes our leisure time more enjoyable. The negative side of this is that, by definition, mass media must appeal to the mass audience, which often makes the media content simple and plain in accordance with the “the lowest common denominator of taste”. (Dominick, J.R., 1993, p. 47) Another negative impact of the common media usage for entertainment is that “it is now quite easy to sit back and let others entertain you”. (Dominick, J.R., 1993, p. 47) This form of entertainment requires only little effort from our side, which can encourage passivity. Instead of playing tennis people might simply watch it on television. Dominick (1993) claims that “the mass media turn modern society into a society of watchers and listeners instead of doers”. (Dominick, J.R., 1993, p. 47)

The only way to understand the importance of the mass media in our lives is to imagine life without media. If the media were eliminated, nothing else would be the same. Our lifestyle would be different. Our entertainment would be different. Our understanding of the world around us would be different. Since we would not have newspapers, television, magazines, and books to explain us what is happening in our society (and

beyond it), our understanding of politics, economics, latest events and trends would be entirely different. Media are the resource of explanation of the social reality and different concepts of it. Media express the changes in culture and values of society and different social groups. Niklas Luhmann (2000) and some other postmodern thinkers claim that media do not only inform and interpret but also create the social reality as well as new social and interpersonal relations and values. (Luhmann, N., 2000) The mass media are the important source of models of social behavior. (McQuail, D., 1994) They represent social norms, expectations, roles, status of a variety of societal groups. Our social life, how we interact with other people, would also change without media. We understand ourselves, who we are, and how we differ from one another through comparing ourselves against images, characters, and roles presented in mass media. Without media we would not have these images to compare ourselves against and, as a result, our understanding of ourselves would be different. Changes would not involve only the sphere of our private lives but would reach far beyond it. Social institutions need media as a source and means to transmit vitally important information. In the absence of media, therefore, all social institutions including education, religion, police, health care, and every other would be also different. Government would operate differently because media are potential means of influence and control over society and, therefore, the significant source of power. Without advertising business sphere and consumer market would operate in a totally different way. Being the most important source of entertainment media define the most common ways of how we spend as well as organize our leisure time. Dominick (1993) states that besides most obvious informative and interpretation functions television, for instance, fulfills significant socialization function. Since it is so widely watched, it becomes the subject of many small conversations. When we talk about television or any other types of media with our friends and family, we engage and participate in a kind of collective interpretive activity. (Dominick, 1993, p. 48) Media play a major part in shaping society's habits, values, and direction. However, to fully understand the function and role mass media play in our society we need to keep in mind that media presentation is always *interpretation*. Unfortunately, we often fail to remember that events and the world presented in media are always already interpreted and this interpretation does not always correspond to reality.

## 2.2 MEDIA IN THE PROCESS OF MASS COMMUNICATION

“The term “mass media” includes all those institutions of society, which make use of copying technologies to disseminate communication”. (Luhmann, N., 2000, p. 2) This means mainly magazines and newspapers, but also all kinds of photographic or electronic copying procedures, if that they produce large amounts of copies and their target groups are not determined yet. The term also includes “the dissemination of communication via broadcasting”, provided that it is for the large audience and “does not merely serve to maintain a telephone connection between individual participants. ...the technology of dissemination plays the same kind of role as that played by the medium of money in the differentiation of the economy: it merely constitutes a medium which makes formation of forms possible. These formations in turn, unlike the medium itself, constitute the communicative operations, which enable the differentiation and operational closure of the system”. (Luhmann, N., 2000, p. 2) The central point in any case is that no immediate contact or interaction between sender and receivers can happen. Interaction is excluded by technology, which serves as a middleman. This has significant consequences that define the concept of mass media. McQuail (1994) points out that the process of dissemination is possible only because of and thanks to technology. What is possible as mass communication is organized and limited by the way this technology works. (McQuail, D., 1994) Communication “happens” only when someone watches, listens, reads, and understands. The mere act of saying something is not communication. In case of mass media, however, it is difficult to recognize the target audience of communication process. Very often we can only assume the presence of the target audience without observing it.

The term “mass communication” appeared in the third decade of the last century. Today, it involves too many connotations and denotations, so that it is difficult to set an adequate definition acceptable for everyone. The word “mass” itself is full of contradictions and associations, which often are quite judgmental. There are different definitions and views on communication. According to Gerber, “communication is

social interaction by means of messages”, and this definition may be the most precise and compelling one. (McQuail, D., 1994, p. 30-31) “Mass” refers to the big quantity, number or amount (either people or products), while “communication” means transmission and reception of the messages. Mass communication is often defined as communication which includes institutions and processes by which certain groups use technical means (press, radio, films, etc.) to broadcast the symbolic content to the large, heterogeneous, and diverse audience. (Danesi, M., 2000) In this definition, as well as many others, mass communication is defined as transmission only from the side of the one who sends the message. Such explanation excludes response and feedback from the person who receives the messages and eliminates interaction between the sender and the receiver.

It is important to remark that the process of “mass communication” is not a synonym to “mass media”. Mass media are processes and technologies that enable mass communication. The same technology can be used for different. Mass media can be used not only to communicate to the masses, but for individual and private purposes as well. The same technology can be used to appeal to the masses as well as to create very personal and intimate relations.

In mass communication, a source is normally a professional communicator who shapes the message to be shared. A professional communicator is usually “a group of individuals who act within predetermined roles in an organizational setting...”, thus, “...mass communication is the end product of more than one person”. (Dominick, J.R., 1993, p. 18) According to Dominick (1993), mass communication channels are characterized by at least one (and usually more than one) machine involved in the process of sending and transmitting of the message. These machines convey the message from one channel to another. In contrast to the interpersonal communication, where many channels are available, mass communication is commonly restricted to one or two. In mass communication, messages are public and addressed “to whom it may concern”, as they are not addressed to anyone particularly. These messages are also very expensive and many times encoded and then decoded until they reach the target audience. (Dominick, J.R., 1993, p. 12) Another distinguishing feature of mass communication, according to Dominick (1993), is the audience. The mass

communication audience is large, heterogeneous, wide-spread, anonymous to one another, and always self-selective. (Dominick, J.R., 1993) This means that if the receiver decides not to attend to the message, the message is not received. Since the audience is diverse and large, mass communication requires careful choice of symbols. The common experience with mass communication is incredibly diverse. Moreover, it is formed by culture, lifestyle, and expectations of the individual in the particular social environment. Since each receiver has a different frame of references, the same symbols may evoke different associations and reactions. To evoke correct interpretations among all receivers, symbols must be very clear and have a single meaning. In their book Croteau and Hoynes (2002) argue, that missing or much delayed feedback in mass communication is what makes it more difficult than face-to-face conversation and interaction. In interpersonal communication continuous feedback always ensures the correct understanding and interpretation of the message. There is almost no chance for a source to repeat or reformulate the meaning of the messages. Due to this fact, messages in mass communication must be constructed in a way they will be understood by everyone. (Croteau, D., Hoynes, W., 2002)

Table 2.1 Differences in communication settings (Dominick, J.R., 1993, p. 21)

Element	Setting	
	Interpersonal	Mass
Source/Sender	Single person; has knowledge of receiver	Organizations; little knowledge of receiver
Encoding	Single stage	Multiple stage
Message	Private or public; cheap; hard to terminate; altered to fit receivers	Public; expensive; easily terminated; same message to everybody
Channel	Potential for many; no machine interposed	Restricted to one or two; usually more than one machine interposed
Decoding	Single stage	Multiple stage
Receiver	One or a relatively small; in physical presence of source; selected by source	Large numbers; our of physical presence of source; self-selected

Feedback	Plentiful immediate	Highly limited, delayed
Noise	Semantic; environmental	Semantic, environmental, mechanical

### 2.3 CONCEPT OF MEDIA CREDIBILITY

According to Kiouisi (2001), credibility is a characteristic of information sources. Media credibility is the factor that influences to a large extent the evaluation of news by the audience. Media credibility is defined primarily in three ways: message, source, and media credibility. Even though all three terms obviously overlap, some past surveys indicated that it was meaningful to distinguish between them. (Newhagen, J., Nass, C., 1989) Message credibility focuses on news content. Source credibility focuses on message senders. Media credibility is defined as the perception of the news media believability. Today many social scientists argue that these three credibility concepts are out-of-date and that all message, source and media features constitute the general perceived credibility of news. (Kiouisi, S., 2001, p. 381–403)

The first surveys focused on cross comparison of media credibility were conducted in 1960's (Roper polls) and showed that television was rated as more credible news source than newspapers. Since then many researches on cross comparison were made. Television has been frequently called as the most credible medium, but overall credibility ratings of all media have decreased over time. (Finberg, H., Stone, M., 2002) The findings from the surveys conducted in September 2004 and aimed at United States news media organizations and journalists showed that news media credibility was the lowest in 30 years. In June 2005 the Gallup Organization reported that the audience's trust in newspapers and television news was at its lowest point ever. (Geary, D. L., 2005)

### 2.4. SURVEILLANCE AND MEDIA CREDIBILITY - MOTIVATION FOR THIS STUDY

Whether or not people trust media as a source of information might have significant consequences for a society. Effective news service is a must for a society to exist. Without our trust mass media are not capable of fulfilling their informative function and operating as a „watchdog” in a society. Media enable linkage and communication

between individuals and different social groups. Education, religion, and every other social institution needs trustworthy media to deliver news and information. Media is used by social institutions to maintain the trust relationship with the target public, to gain its loyalty and influence their social behavior. Media credibility has an influence on many human interactions and social behavior. If media credibility is low media cannot effectively serve their function of dissemination information. This could have serious consequences on a number of various societal spheres.

Media credibility has been a topic of interest and concern for journalists as well as many social and political scientists. Social scientists are especially concerned with the negative impact of low media credibility ratings on the politically related issues. (Kiousi, S., 2001) When people have negative opinions about media credibility, they do not get the information they need to make meaningful political decisions. Being the significant source of power media are the potential means of influence and control over society. When media credibility is low, it is difficult for government organizations to influence and predict public's engagement and participation in political life.

Based on my personal interest in media and cross-cultural studies I decided to research cross-cultural differences in media credibility perception. In my master thesis I would like to study which media Russians and Americans find the most credible and what factors might influence their credibility. A number of media surveillance surveys were conducted in the United States from the middle of the last century till now. As far as I am aware, any major cross-cultural studies of media credibility have not been done yet.

### **3. PRESS FREEDOM INDEX**

From 2002 Reporters without Borders annually announces worldwide index of press freedom. This index is compiled by asking 130 correspondents all around the world who are the members of Reporters without Borders organization, as well as other 14 partner freedom of expression organizations in five continents, including journalists, researchers, jurists, and human rights activists. They are asked to answer 52 questions to indicate the state of press freedom in 169 countries. The questionnaire includes

questions regarding any kind of violation aimed at journalists (physical attacks, imprisonment, direct threats and murders), indirect threats and access to information, state monopoly, economic and administrative pressure, censorship from official authorities, and self-censorship of the media. Some countries were not included in the research due to the lack of relevant, confirmed information. (“Reporters sans frontières – Third Annual Worldwide Press Freedom Index”, 2008)

Countries with the greatest freedom of press are at the top of the list and those countries where independent media either does not exist or journalists are normally censored and persecuted are at the bottom of the list. According to this index, in 2004 the United States were 23<sup>rd</sup> in the list and Russia was in the 140<sup>th</sup> place. It is stated in the report that no freedom of information and safety of journalists are guaranteed in Russia. The coverage of the tragic crisis in Beslan with plenty of hostages in school was a “flagrant illustration of the total control exercised by the Kremlin over the national TV stations”. (“Reporters sans frontières – Third Annual Worldwide Press Freedom Index”, 2008) Many Russian and foreign journalists were not allowed to work. Censorship applied to Chechnya was extended to other republics in that region as well. During the summer two journalists were killed, one of them was Paul Khlebnikov, the editor of the Russian version of one of the most influential US magazines *Forbes*. The correspondent of the *Agence France-Press* was still missing in North Ossetia. (“Reporters sans frontières – Third Annual Worldwide Press Freedom Index”, 2008)

According to the results in 2005, the United States slipped back to more than 20 places and was in the 44<sup>th</sup> place. This was mainly due to the imprisonment of one of reporters of New York Times and also “legal moves undermining of the privacy of journalistic sources”. (“Reporters sans frontières – Annual Worldwide Press Freedom Index – 2005”, 2008) In the 2006 index the United States has fallen nine places and is ranked 53<sup>rd</sup> of 168 countries. In the 2007 index the United States were ranked 48<sup>th</sup> in the world. There were fewer press freedom violations and the blogger Josh Wolf was freed after 224 days in prison. However, the imprisonment of Al-Jazeera’s Sudanese cameraman, Sami Al-Haj, since 13 June 2002 at the military base of Guantanamo and the murder of Chauncey Bailey in Oakland in August demonstrates that the US is still unable to climb



up to the top of the list. (“Reporters sans frontiers – Annual Worldwide Press Freedom Index – 2007”, 2008)

In the United States the first amendment protects free speech and freedom of the press, which guarantees the rights of American citizens to speak and publish freely. (Kilman, J., Costello, G., 2000) Although there are always instances where freedom of the press is restricted; in the 20<sup>th</sup> century freedom of speech was considered to be one of the more important complementary parts of the democratic system in the US and, in contrast to Soviet Socialist system, was generally guarded. (Kilman, J., Costello, G., 2000) In the state of emergency due to the national security reasons war censorship can be used. During the World War II all reporting and correspondence in general was strictly censored by an emergency wartime agency, the Office of Censorship. War censorship was also practiced during the Vietnam, Afghanistan, and Iraq wars. War censorship covered correspondence and media coverage of daily war casualties. Today war censorship applies to information about creating or use of a destructive device like a bomb or any other kind of a weapon. (Zoglin, R., 1991)

In Russia, which was traditionally at the bottom of the list (138<sup>th</sup>), in 2005 there were two assassinations carried out on the journalists. One journalist was killed and another one survived. Chechnya remains a major “black hole” for news in Russia. The government also traditionally controls all the country’s TV stations, which is a serious threat for news diversity and objectiveness. (“Reporters sans frontiers – Annual Worldwide Press Freedom Index – 2005”, 2008) In 2006 Russia was put at 147<sup>th</sup> place from a list of 168 countries in the World Press Freedom Index. In 2007 Russia was ranked 144<sup>th</sup>. There is nothing surprising about Russia not progressing. Murder of Anna Politkovskaya in October 2006, the failure to find and punish murderers, and the lack of diversity in the media are the main reasons for poor evaluation of press freedom in Russia. (“Reporters sans frontiers – Annual Worldwide Press Freedom Index – 2007”, 2008) It is stated in the report that Russia was ranked on the bottom part of the list during last few years due to "the absence of pluralism in news and information, an intensifying crackdown against journalists... and the drastic state of press freedom in Chechnya". (“Reporters sans frontiers – Annual Worldwide Press Freedom Index – 2007”, 2008)

### 3.1 MEDIA IN THE UNITED STATES

According to the yearly Press Freedom Index by Reporters Without Borders, in 2005 the United States were ranked 23<sup>rd</sup> in the world, while in 2007 the United States has fallen 25 points and were ranked 48<sup>th</sup>. (for more details see “Reporters sans frontières – Annual Worldwide Press Freedom Index – 2007”, 2008) The reasons of this fall were numerous scandals about media manipulation, bias, inaccuracy, distortion, and government propaganda. Shah (2007) argues that these problems are acknowledged by many critics outside the United States, but often are not realized inside the country. (Shah, A., 2007) Americans consider freedom of speech to be an integral American value and not many of them realize what current flaws and problems the mainstream American media face. According to Shah (2007), for the average American citizen it is difficult to obtain an objective view of many issues that involve the United States. On the one hand, the US government attempts to manipulate media in the reports about the war in Iraq and “war on terror”. There is a distinct tendency towards simplification and generalization of the such complicated and controversial issues as terrorism and terrorist attacks, the perception of Muslim/Islamic world, energy crisis, conflicts in Africa, and other. On the other hand, there is so called “market censorship”. Media seek to make profit, satisfy their owners, and attract advertisers. Thus, news coverage is designed to achieve high ratings and attract the audience. Not to lose advertisers media tend to censor themselves by avoiding many important (but ambiguous or controversial issues) and limiting themselves to a narrow range of views, opinions, and perspectives. Many influential journalists in American news have admitted that a large part of media self-censorship comes from their fear to be criticized for not being enough patriotic and loyal to their country. (Shah, A., 2007)

In their book *Manufacturing Consent* (1988) Noam Chomsky and Edward Herman argue that in many cases the US mainstream media provide very critical and detailed information regarding their perspective at the various actions of other nations in geopolitical issues. However, when it comes to covering the actual events of their own nation in geopolitical topics, their reports often match a propaganda model. They also

define and describe this model in their book. This propaganda model is usually very explicit in the countries with authoritarian regimes. However, this propaganda regime still exists in many democratic countries in a very subtle form. It is a result of a combination and interaction of a number of various political, economic, and social aspects that affect decisions on what and how media report. It allows filtering the news. Chomsky and Herman (1988) attempt to demonstrate how “money and power are able to filter out the news, ... marginalize dissent, and allow the government and dominant private interests to get their message across to the public”. (Chomsky, N., Herman, E., 1988) Chomsky and Herman (1988) set up the propaganda model very broadly. It includes a wide range of dimensions that might affect the media content and news coverage and consists of the following elements: 1. Size, ownership and profit orientation of the dominant mass media companies; 2. Advertising as the primary income source of the mass media; 3. Dependence of the media on information provided by government, business and “experts” paid and approved by these primary sources; 4. Censure as a means of regulating the media; 5. “Anticommunism” as a national religion and control mechanism. (Chomsky, N., Herman, E., 1988, p. 101)

### 3.2 THE SOVIET MEDIA: A USUALLY RELIABLE SOURCE

In the Soviet Union all media including television, radio, books, newspapers and magazines were state-controlled and state-owned. Thus, all people employed in media were state employees. All publishing houses were also owned by state. In order to pass censorship the media materials had to meet the favor of the Soviet leadership. The majority of newspapers and magazines journalists and editors were members of *The Union of Journalists*, which was directly controlled by the communist party. According to data stated the article *Soviet Media in Transition: Structural and Economic Alternatives* by Lalande (1995), *The Union of Journalists* consisted of about 74 000 members. In 1988 around 80 percent of his members were also the party members. Inevitably, responsibilities of journalists and editors had to be approved by the party. The state controlled even possession and use of copying machine to prevent illegal home production and distribution of leaflets, books and magazines that were not in line with the official propaganda. (Lalande, G., 1995)

In the Soviet Union censorship in all mass media was “ingrained, pervasive and strictly imposed”. (Lalande, G., 1995, p. 88) Vladimir Lenin was convinced that literature and art could be used for political and ideological as well as educational purposes. As a result, the communist party promptly established control over electronic media, book publishing and distribution as well as bookstores and libraries. It also totally controlled newspapers, magazines and periodicals and could create or abolish them any moment at will. (Lalande, G., 1995)

The Soviet leadership was always very careful about what appeared in the Soviet press. The Soviet press was, naturally, strictly censored and discussed everything with great care and concern. The attention to words resulted in a highly ambiguous, vague, and unclear style of discourse. Axelrod and Zimmerman (1981) remark that it was an ambiguity that derived not from careless ignorance of the facts, but that was carefully thought-out and formulated. That ambiguity was meant to and, indeed, permitted and encouraged multiple interpretations. The Soviet press always demonstrated a great restraint in making any distinct statements and used silence as the extreme form of ambiguity. Silence “minimizes commitment and maximizes options. It even lends credence to words when they are uttered”. (Axelrod, R., Zimmerman, W., 1981, p. 183-200) Great care with choosing “right” words produced statements and reports that were not lies, even if they were misleading. Statements were usually so vague that they could not be proved false, since the Soviet leaderships never wanted not to be caught in a lie in order to maintain its credibility.

According to Axelrod and Zimmerman (1981), all regimes try to maintain their credibility for several reasons. First, countries wish to persuade their allies that they are not only strong, but also reliable. Second, credibility is viewed as an important part of own self-image. Third, most paradoxically, credibility is important as a source to achieve deception. When statements are meant to deceive, this effort will not be successful if it is based on a reputation for deceit and lies. The numerous possible interpretations of statements and reports allowed the Soviet government not to be committed to any action. All central Soviet press was to manifestly maintain pretences to domestic audience and mislead enemies of the regime. Soviet leadership was concerned with its reputation for credibility, therefore, the central Soviet press used to

tell lies only occasionally when the stakes were very high and the potential gains from the deception were worth the loss of achieved credibility. (Axelrod, R., Zimmerman, W., 1981)

### 3.3 MEDIA IN RUSSIA TODAY

According to the article *Country profile: Russia* published on the official web pages of *BBC* (2008), for most Russians television is the main source of domestic and international news. State-owned or influenced TV channels attract the biggest audiences. (“Country profile: Russia”, 2008) Among three main national TV networks, two are owned and run by state and one is run by the gas monopoly Gasprom, which is in turn also run by the state. Even though there are more than 400 daily newspapers, the print media are not as influential and dominant as TV networks. A large part of the influential press is privately-owned by the companies closely related to the state. The major national newspapers are located in Moscow but they are not capable of enlightening the local news, therefore, many readers in the regions prefer the local newspapers. The largest radio national networks are also owned and run by state. The privately-owned radio stations are typically focused on music and do not contain analytical or investigative journalism. (“Country profile: Russia”, 2008) According to the *Public Opinion Foundation* in March 2008 there were 28 million Internet users in Russia, which is 19.5% of the population. (“Public Opinion Foundation Database”, 2008)

### 3.4 FORMULATING HYPOTHESES ABOUT GENERAL MEDIA CREDIBILITY PERCEPTION IN RELATION WITH CURRENT POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC SITUATION

Mentioned differences in media spheres (in relation with political situations) in Russia and the United States could be the starting point to advance the hypotheses about differences in general media credibility perception in these two countries. As it was discussed in the chapter devoted to media surveillance, the mass media have a direct impact on politics, economics and many other areas of society and in turn politics, economics, and cultural settings affect media sphere. Mass media in Russia have been strictly controlled by the government during the 20<sup>th</sup> century and at the present. Based on my own experience I can say that the Soviet media tradition of telling “half-truths”

and using a very ambiguous and vague way of expression continues till now. Many people are aware of this fact and tend to be very skeptical about the possibility to know the truth or real state of affairs from the mass media. People realize that the government uses mass media in its interest and exploits it as a means to manipulate with public opinion and deliver information that serves its goals. Many Russians are conscious of the fact that state-controlled and state-run media can hardly provide any objective and impartial information. American respondents might have certain reservations about media credibility as well; however, mass media in general are believed to serve primarily the interest of public (not the government) and to guard public right for information and civil liberties. This allows me to advance my hypothesis about differences in general media credibility perception. I assume that due to the specific media patterns characteristic for the past and current state regimes Russians will generally tend to perceive mass media much less credible than Americans, who do not have this solid background of long-lasting state control and censorship of mass media. In frame of this general hypothesis I can advance minor hypotheses regarding fairness, objectivity, accuracy, and impartiality of information presented in mass media. I assume that on average American respondents will tend to consider mass media as more fair, objective, accurate, and unbiased than Russian respondents.

#### **4. WHAT IS CULTURE?**

There are many definitions of culture. People often use the term “culture”, when they are referring to a particular society at a particular place and time, for example: Greek civilization. However, in my paper I will be using the term “culture” as it defines Geert Hofstede, as the “software of the mind” that guides us in our daily life. (Hofstede, G., 2005, p. 4) “Culture is like an iceberg: the deeper layers (e.g., traditions, beliefs, values) are hidden from our view; we only see and hear the uppermost layers of cultural artifacts (e.g., fashion, trends, pop music) and of verbal and nonverbal symbols. However, to understand a culture with any depth, we have to match its underlying values accurately with its respective norms, meanings and symbols. It is the underlying set of beliefs and values that drives people’s thinking, reacting, and behaving.” (Ting-Toomey, S., 1999, p. 10)

Hofstede's work is probably one of the most popular in the field of culture research. Hofstede chose five main dimensions of culture and has developed one of the most profound models of culture. These dimensions are small vs. large power-distance, individualism vs. collectivism, masculinity vs. femininity, high vs. low uncertainty avoidance, and long-term vs. short-term orientation. For my research such dimensions as individualism vs. collectivism and power distance are very important. Although his work provides a relatively general framework for analysis of culture, it can be very useful in practice. Since it reduces the complexity of culture into five cultural dimensions that are relatively easily understandable, it is easily applied to many everyday intercultural interactions.

“Individualism is the one side versus its opposite, collectivism, that is the degree to which individuals are integrated into groups. On the individualist side we find societies in which the ties between individuals are loose: everyone is expected to look after him/herself and his/her immediate family. On the collectivist side, we find societies in which, people from birth onwards are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups often extended families (with uncles, aunts and grandparents) which continue protecting them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty”. (Hofstede, G., 2005, p. 74) In sum, in the collectivist society interest of the group prevails over the individual's interests and power of the group over individual is high; while in the individualist society interest of the individual prevails over the interest of the group and power of the group over individual is low.

Power distance is defined as “the extent to which the less powerful members of organizations and institutions (like the family) accept and expect that power is distributed unequally. This represents inequality (more versus less), but defined from below, not from above. It suggests that a society's level of inequality is endorsed by the followers as much as by the leaders.” (Hofstede, G., 2005, p. 40) According to Hofstede (2005), in large power-distance countries people read relatively few newspapers but tend to express trust and confidence in those they read. People also rarely discuss politics because political disagreements soon turn into violence. The system often

admits only one political party. Even where more parties are allowed the same party usually wins elections”. (Hofstede, G., 2005)

Table 4.1. Key differences between collectivist and individualist societies: language, personality, and behavior (Hofstede, G., 2005, p. 90)

Collectivist	Individualist
Use of the word ‘I’ is avoided	Use of the word ‘I’ is encouraged
Interdependent self	Independent self
On personality tests, people score more introvert	On personality tests, people score more extrovert
Dependence relationship develops between a person and the in-group, which is both practical and psychological.	Neither practically, nor psychologically is the healthy person supposed to be dependent on a group.
Consumption patterns show dependence on others	Consumption patterns show self-supporting lifestyles
<i>Social network is the primary source of information</i>	<i>Media is the primary source of information</i>
One owes lifelong loyalty to one’s group, and breaking this loyalty is the worst thing a person can do.	Purpose of education is to enable the child to stand on its own feet. The child is expected to leave parental home as soon as this has been achieved.

Table 4.2 Key differences between small- and large - power - distance societies (Hofstede, G., 2005, p. 57-59)

Small power distance	Large power distance
Inequalities among people should be minimized.	Inequalities among people are expected and desired.
Hierarchy in organizations means an inequality of roles, established for convenience.	Hierarchy in organizations reflects existential inequality between higher and lower levels.



Decentralization is popular.	Centralization is popular.
All should have equal rights.	The powerful should have privileges.
Power is based on formal position, expertise, and ability to give rewards.	Power is based on tradition or family, charisma, and the ability to use force.
Social relations should be handled with care.	Status should be balanced with restraint.

#### 4.1 RANKING RUSSIA AND THE U.S. ACCORDING TO THEORETIC DIMENSIONS

For the purpose of my study I am going to focus mostly on one of Hofstede's cultural dimensions: collectivist vs. individualist society. As for it, Russia belongs to collectivist cultures; the U.S.A belongs to individualist ones. G. Hofstede has not publicized indexes for Russia himself; however, in the article *Hofstede's country classification 25 years later* by D. Fernandez we can find the data proving that Russia is a collectivist country. He ranks Russia 9.24; USA 13.41, where more points means inclination towards individualist society. (Fernandez, D., Carlson, D., Stepina, L., Nicholson, J., 1997 p. 43-55) In the original Hofstede's study the USA was ranked as one of the most individualist countries (91 on his scale compared with a world average of 50). (Hofstede, G., 2001) Unfortunately, it cannot be compared to Russia based on Hofstede's original study. Based on his characteristics of this dimension, however, we can assume that Russia is not individualist at all.

#### 4.2 WHY DOES CULTURE MATTER?

Culture is something that defines one group of people from others. The modern world continues to shrink and we constantly interact with different cultures through media and travelling. In terms of practical cooperation it seems very useful and appropriate to get to know other cultures better. If we know other cultures better we are more capable of smooth and productive interaction with them. A major part of the world's conflicts derive from differences in religion, race, language, and other cultural characteristics. That is why it is so important to learn to understand other cultures, people of different origins, their patterns of behavior, and most importantly, the ideas behind their actions.

Sometimes the rules of another culture seem illogical, awkward and inexplicable without understanding the roots and ideas behind them. People tend to create territories for themselves, places where they feel safe, secure, and understood. When some outsider invades this territory we naturally feel threatened and tend to defend ourselves. “When two people interact they do not merely respond to each other as individuals but as members of their respective groups. The actors behave according to the norms of the group they belong to...” (Bochner, S., 1982, p. 35) It is much easier and more comfortable to get along and find “a common language” with people who have ways of thinking, views, language, and habits similar to ours. Familiar cultural environment makes interactions predictable and, therefore, easy and more comfortable. With members of other cultural groups we have to go through emotional stress and anxiety. However, it is “through the mirror of others that we learn to know ourselves. It is through facing our own discomfort and anxiety that we learn to stretch and grow. Encountering a dissimilar other helps us to question our routine way of thinking and behaving. Getting to really know a dissimilar stranger helps us to glimpse into another world – a range of unfamiliar experiences and a set of values unlike our own.” (Ting-Toomey, S. 1999, p. 8)

#### 4.3 FORMULATING CULTURAL-BASED HYPOTHESES

Based on the Hofstede’s theory I assume that answers of Russians respondents will expose their cultural background as members of a collectivist society; while Americans will tend to behave more as members of an individualist society. Based on Hofstede’s statement (2005) that in a collectivist society social network is the primary source of information, while in an individualist society the primary source of information is media, I assume that interpersonal channels will be a more important source for news about actual events for Russians than for Americans. Loyalty to social group is considered to be much more important in a collectivist society, than in the individualist one, therefore, I assume that Russians will tend to cherish social harmony and peace much more than Americans and, therefore, will tend to share their opinion on actual events with other social community members much more than Americans.

### 5. THEORETICAL APPROACH TO MASS MEDIA

One of the main goals of this paper is to compare credibility perception between old telecommunication technologies and the more recent ones. This chapter will briefly cover the views on mass media of the key theorists of media: Marshall McLuhan, Neil Postman, Walter Benjamin, Paul Virilio and Lev Manovich. All of them were studying the media theory with the emphasis on media ecology. The word “ecology” implies the study of the environment. Media ecology is “the study of media environments, the idea that technology and techniques, modes of information and codes of communication play a leading role in human affairs” (Strate, L., 2008) In other words, we can say that the study of media as environments focuses on their structure, content, and impact on our behavior. Since media to a large extent define and constitute what we can see, say, and feel; they shape the way we think, feel and behave.

#### 5.1 THE MEDIUM AS THE MESSAGE

McLuhan (2003) argues that “*what* is on television is only an interruption to what is actually significant and important about the *medium*”. (McLuhan, M., 2003, p. 19) According to him, we often fail to recognize and realize that the content can never be separate from the medium itself. It doesn't matter *what* is on television, because what is *on* television is always television. The message is always the medium of television. McLuhan claims (2003) that the greatest influence on culture and society has the sensory experience that the medium imposes. He points out that quite ironically we invent communication media which in return reinvent and shape us. The everyday use of certain technology shapes us because we use it so often, that in the end it becomes an extension of ourselves. Since every medium highlights different senses and encourages different habits, daily usage of a medium trains and acclimatizes the senses to particular kinds of receptivity. (McLuhan, M., 2003)

#### 5.2. THE MESSAGE AS THE ENVIRONMENT

McLuhan (1989) perceives the medium as the message that simultaneously functions as the certain environment. Like any natural environment, media affect the way we think,

feel, and act. All media shape, influence and alter us. “The medium is the message. Any understanding of social and cultural change is impossible without a knowledge of the way media work as environments”. (McLuhan, M., Fiore, Q., 1989, p. 26) The medium as the environment is transparent and almost always unconscious.

McLuhan (2003) does the media analysis of human history. He divides all human history into four periods: a tribal age, a literate age, a print age, and an electronic age. He argues that the transitions between those periods were neither gradual nor evolutionary. The new period always started when the new media technology was invented. The phonetic alphabet, the printing press, and the telegraph were the milestones that completely changed life on the planet. If the phonetic alphabet made visual dependence possible, the printing press made it widespread. The invention of telegraph has taken away all bearings of the printed word and returned us to a pre-alphabetic oral tradition where sound and touch are more important than sight. “We have gone “back to the future” to become a village unlike any other previous village. We’re now a global village”. (McLuhan, M., 2003, p 56) McLuhan argues that the electronic media make us be in touch with everyone, everywhere, and instantly. While the book was the extension of the eye, the electronic media extend the central nervous system. Our daily reality is that we are in contact with the world anytime or, actually, all the time. (McLuhan, M., 2003)

In his book *Laws of Media* McLuhan (1988) focuses on the research of the media ecology and claims that every new medium inevitably has an impact on the environment. He shows the often neglected effects of radio, television, and the computer. McLuhan divides these effects into four main groups: what the medium enhances, obsolesces, retrieves, and reverses into. According to McLuhan (1988), radio enhances the access to the entire planet everywhere and for everybody; wires and connections as well as physical bodies have become out of date; radio recovers tribal ecological environment and paranoia; it also reverses the world into the global village theater. Television increases the sense of everything being at one moment and one place. Due to television, the acoustic space and eye are used as hand and ear. Television makes movie theaters and radio out of date. It revives visual as such and reverses everything into the screen of computer (or television), which leads to isolation and detachment. The computer enhances the speed of calculation and renewal of

information as well as personalized choice of information. It obsolesces libraries, approximation, and sequence. It revives total and exact memory and changes our society into anarchy, loss of privacy and time thieving. (McLuhan, M., McLuhan, E., 1988)

Unlike McLuhan, another influential theorist of media, Neil Postman (2000), believes that the primary task of media ecology is to make moral judgments about media environments. According to Postman (2000), a new technology can never be a merely addition to culture. A new technology always creates something and destroys something; it gives us something and always takes something away. Postman makes a clear distinction between technology and medium. A technology is a physical apparatus. A medium is the use to which a physical apparatus is put. Postman compares a technology with the brain as a physical organ and a medium with the mind. A technology becomes a medium in a moment when it uses a specific symbolic code in a particular social setting, economic and political context. In other words, a technology is only a machine, whereas a medium is the social and intellectual environment a machine creates. (Postman, N., 2000) In his most famous book *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business* (1985) Postman argues that a medium is a system. A medium is not an object but rather a way of thinking, experiencing, and expressing. Postman modifies the McLuhan's famous saying that "the medium is the message" into "the medium is the metaphor". (Postman, N., 1985) A medium does not tell us anything explicit and precise about the world. It rather suggests and implies what our world is like by offering us meanings in a specific way and through a particular form. Postman says (1985) that the content of the medium is always "molded" and regulated by the form of the particular medium. As an example he gives the form of television that is against any type of significant and substantial content. The medium of television implies that everything should be amusing, which, in turn, makes everything trivial. Contrary to McLuhan, Postman believes (1985) that the effect of the medium of television is negative for society because it has led to the loss of serious public discourse. Television changes the form of information "from discursive to non-discursive, from propositional to presentational, from rationalistic to emotive". (Postman, N., 1985, p. 44) In other words, the media environment of television turns everything into entertainment and everyone into childish adults.

Forms of human conversation and ways we communicate have a significant impact on what we are able to express through them. In this sense, according to Postman (1985), the whole culture is a big conversation or rather a number of many different conversations expressed through different symbolic forms. The prior message of any medium of communication is to create intellectual and social issues of the culture. While the word is the main medium of the press, visual imagery dominates in the television communication. Television focuses on the visual effect, thus, any content is presented as amusing. When the world is presented in images, it seems to be simple. Images in television are always symbolic and are always an interpretation. Postman argues that the most significant cultural fact of the United States is the end of “the century of the press” and the beginning of “the century of television”. (Postman, N., 1985, p. 45) There is a fundamental difference between the way of thinking in the culture of the printed word and the culture of the image. While the first one implies “the century of exposition”, the second one is “the century of entertainment”. (Postman, N., 1985, p. 45) According to Postman (1985), the merger of two revolutionary ideas in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in the United States led to creation of the new medium of public communication – telegraph. The first idea was the possibility to separate transportation and communication. Distance stopped being the obstacle for information flows. The second idea was the idea of information without the context. The value of information does not have to be connected to the importance of this information for the society and can be based only on its novelty and originality. “Information has become the commodity for sale with no regard to its significance and usefulness”. (Postman, N., 1985)

Postman argues (1985) that telegraph has launched the new way of public communication. The content of public communication in the era of telegraph qualitatively differed from the content of the printed press. Telegraph started to create much more information, including the irrelevant one. As a result, people are no longer capable of reacting to this information in a coherent and relevant way. In other words, in the culture of the oral and printed word the value and meaning of the information was tightly connected to the possibility to act or react to this information. While in the era of telegraph and other electronic media the relation between information and reaction has vanished away. The main advantage of telegraph as a medium was not its ability to collect, explain or elaborate the news, but mainly to deliver the news. The language of

telegraph significantly differed from the language of the press. The news has become short, without the story and the context. Telegraph enables to *be aware* of many things, but not to *know* the things. (Postman, N., 1985) “*All-at-once-ness* experience and integral awareness” of telegraph (as well as all electronic technologies) is the main difference from step-by-step knowing and line-by-line experience of reading books. (Griffin, E., 2006, p. 101)

Word and image have different functions. Postman points out the main differences in how word and image operate. A photograph can express only actual, physical, and specific. It cannot express abstract, general, or intangible. Photograph comprehends the reality in a completely different way than language. A language makes sense only as a sequence of statements. A phrase without a context is meaningless. A photograph, on the contrary, does not need any context. It isolates the image from the context. There is no story and no sequence in the photograph. The photograph has only presence without the context and references to anything else besides its actuality. (Postman, N., 1985) I can rephrase this and say that the photograph has no beginning and no end, no past and no future. If the information of the photograph is not connected to our past knowledge or future plans and intentions, this information is meaningless for us. Even though we have a feeling that we have learnt something, this information is of no use and will be forgotten even faster than it was remembered.

Electronic technologies have created the new world – *world-kaleidoscope* – where images change and switch incredibly fast. (Postman, N., 1985) Postman claims (1985) that even though telegraph and photography prepared conditions for this world, it has been fully launched only with the beginning of the era of television. Television manages and controls our lives by regulating and dictating how we use other media. Television creates the communication environment. No other medium has such a major influence on our lives as television. Television has become a “meta-medium”, i.e. medium that manipulates not only with our knowledge of the world but rather with the ways how to gain this knowledge. People are often inclined to take everything presented in television (and the way it is presented) as something factual and unquestionable. Television does not either inform us about our culture or reflects it. Television gets to be our culture itself. (Postman, N., 1985)

#### DISTANCE AND AURA

The overview about the major differences between old telecommunication technologies and the more recent ones would be incomplete without mentioning the arguments by two key theoreticians of old and new media: Walter Benjamin and Paul Virilio. These arguments come from two essays: Benjamin's *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (1988) and Virilio's *Big Optics* (1992) and *Open Sky* (2003). These essays focus on the same topic: "the disruption caused by a cultural artifact, specifically, a new communication technology (film in the case of Benjamin, telecommunication in the case of Virilio) in the familiar patterns of human perception; in short, the intervention of technology into human nature". (Manovich, L., 2001, p. 171)

Both Benjamin (1988) and Virilio (1992) argue that new technologies destroy the distance between the subject (the observer) and the object (the observed). Benjamin defines this distance as "aura", which is arguably his most famous concept. Aura "as the unique phenomenon of a distance" is a natural detachment of a work of art from reality. (Benjamin, W., 1988, p. 14) In other words, the unique presence of a work of art, a historical or natural object must be respected for distance. Such new technologies of mass reproduction as photography and film destroy this distance of the unique aura.

While by new technologies Benjamin meant film and photography, Virilio already considers them as a part of human nature and human sight. Virilio (1992) uses the term "small optics" to describe the geometric perspective, which is human vision, the Renaissance perspective, painting, and film. In contrast to the natural small optics Virilio puts the big optics of instant electronic transmission. To understand the effect of electronic transmission, which is the main principle of telecommunication and telepresence, Virilio also uses the concept of distance. Electronic transmission of information ruins physical distances, the concepts of near and far. Real-time transmission of information destroys the space and eliminates the distance between the subject who sees and the object which is being seen. (Virilio, P., 1992) For Benjamin (1988) and Virilio (1992) it is distance that preserves the aura of an object and its position in the world. New technologies erase the difference between what is near and what is far, make near and far objects the same close and by destroying this distance eliminate the aura.



## NEW MEDIA

According to Lev Manovich (2002), new media is identified with the use of a computer as a machine for media production, distribution, and exhibition as well as a storage media device. (Manovich, L., 2002)

If the printing press in the 14<sup>th</sup> century and photography in the 19<sup>th</sup> were revolutionary for the development of modern society and culture, today we are in the middle of a new media revolution – “the shift of all culture to computer-mediated forms of production, distribution, and communication”. (Manovich, L. 2002, p. 19) Manovich (2002) argues that we are just at the beginning of this revolution. He explains why this revolution is going to be more profound and complex than any previous ones. According to him (2002), the introduction of the printing press had an effect on only one stage of cultural communication – the distribution of media. In the same way, the introduction of photography had an impact only on one type of cultural communication – still images. In contrast, the computer media revolution concern and influence all stages of communication, including acquisition, manipulation, storage, and distribution; it also has an effect on all types of media – texts, sounds, still images, moving images, and special constructions. (Manovich, L., 2002)

In his book “*The Language of New Media*” (2002) Manovich describes the key differences between old and new media and summarizes the principles of the new media. He says, however, that these principles should not be considered “as absolute laws but rather as general tendencies of a culture undergoing computerization”. (Manovich, L.. 2002, p. 27) I will list and shortly go over the main points of these principles.

### 1) Numerical representation

All new media objects are created of digital code. They exist as (quantified) data and in numeric form. So they can be described formally through mathematical functions. This also means that media become programmable and can be changed by modifying certain algorithms.

## 2) Modularity

The different elements of new media exist independently. Discrete media elements can function separately and be combined into a number of various sequences under program control.

## 3) Automation

New media objects are often rather than created completely by a human author, are partly created or modified automatically (for example, generated from databases by using templates).

## 4) Variability

New media objects are not fixed once for good. They can exist in multiple (potentially infinite) versions. This is the consequence of the first principle (digital coding of media) and the second principle (modular structure of a media object). As a result, new media objects can be made “on demand” in accord with customer wishes and requirements.

## 5) Transcoding

A new media object can be converted into another form (for example, different numeric form or digital code).

All electronic technologies are characterized by telepresence. “Telepresence means presence at a distance”. (Manovich, L., 2002, p. 165) Telepresence means being “present” in a synthetic environment generated by computer and being “present” in a remote physical location via a live video image. (Manovich, L., 2002, p. 165)

Manovich points out two main differences between old image-instruments and telepresence. The first difference is electronic transmission of video images involved in telepresence, so that the construction of representations takes place simultaneously. The second difference is connected to the first one. Due to the ability to receive visual information about a remote place in real time, we can manipulate physical reality in this place, also in real time. “Telepresence is the example of representational technologies used to enable action, that is, to allow the viewer to manipulate reality through

representations”. (Manovich, L. 2002, p. 165) Telepresence gives us a unique and unprecedented kind of power, which is real-time remote action and control – an ability to manipulate (and destroy) objects at a distance. Electricity and electromagnetism, which are two crucial discoveries of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, made possible electronic telecommunication – the technology that enables teleaction. The original meaning of television used in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was “vision at a distance”. In 1920’s television was linked with broadcasting and after that this meaning fade away. (Manovich, L. 2002) Electronic communication is connected to a computer used for real-time control. This leads to a new relationship between objects and their signs. Two processes become immediate: the first one when objects are turned into signs and the reverse one when objects are manipulated through these signs. In his book “*Open Sky*” (2003) Virilio points out the ability of visual representation to deceive and a possibility of using sign to teleact. (Virilio, P., 2003)

Summing up I can say that all mentioned theorists in their media studies were focused primarily on the structure, content, and impact of different media on society and people. All of them agree on one thing: a new medium always affects the way we act and interact within our environment; the way we perceive and understand ourselves and the world around; the way we see, think, feel, and act. Specific media environments might be either beneficial or destructive for our society (or both at the same time). In any case, a new technology always changes and modifies the society. Media studies draw our attention to these changes and different media impacts. If we want to understand media, these changes and impacts cannot be neglected.

## **6. RESPONDENTS DESCRIPTION**

As the respondents for the “Credibility of the Media” survey I chose people of two nationalities: American and Russian. Each respondent had at least a BA degree, more often a Masters degree and in a few cases PhDs. All of them actively used different mass media in their daily lives. Respondents were chosen randomly; they are comparable in terms of their degree, experience with mass media, etc. To find respondents, I contacted *various individuals who have to use mass media in their work*. Among the professions of the respondents we can find mainly University students and

teachers, some IT, Public Relations, and Human Resources specialists. Their age group spans from 21 to 55 years of age. Out of 36 Russian respondents 19 were male and 17 were female. Out of 36 American respondents 18 were male and 18 were female. The 72 respondents used for the purpose of this work cannot be considered a representative sample for its limited number; however, they may be useful for cross-comparison study of attitudes towards media credibility.

Table 6.1 Respondents description

Nationality	American respondents	Russian respondents
Male respondents	18	19
Female respondents	18	17
All together	36	36

## 7. QUESTIONNAIRE DESCRIPTION

The questionnaire was meant to look for the main differences and key attributes specific to attitudes to mass media in Russia and the Unites States.

For each question I did the two-tail *t-test* which is a statistical hypothesis test used to determine whether the means of two groups are distinct and statistically significant. The statistical *mean* is commonly called the average. The mean describes the central location of the data in a data set. The mean for a data set is counted by dividing the sum of the observations by the number of observations. Level 0.05 is usually chosen for statistical significance. If the calculated p-value is below this level then the null hypothesis, which usually states that the two groups do not differ, is rejected in favor of an alternative hypothesis, which typically states that the groups do differ. In all questions of my survey I expect the difference in answers of American and Russian respondents. If the calculated p-value is below level 0.05, then the means of two groups are statistically different and significant. To calculate the average meaning I used the numeric coding (from one to five) where the given options of answers are coded into

numbers. The mean reports the average meaning, which is calculated by dividing the sum of all answers of respondents by the number of respondents. In t-test the mean expresses the central tendency. A confidence interval is used to indicate the reliability of an estimate in statistics. A confidence interval is “an estimated range of values, which is likely to include an unknown population parameter; the estimated range being calculated from a given set of sample data”. (Easton, V.J., McCall, J.H., 2008) In other words, a confidence interval, as an interval estimate of a certain population parameter, describes how reliable the survey results are. A 95% confidence interval is most frequently used one in surveys. I use it in my study as well. 95% confidence interval describes 95% probability that the calculated interval will include all given parameters. If all other results are equal, a result with a small confidence interval is more reliable than a result with a large confidence interval.

**1) Which source do you think gives you more reliable news and reports about actual events? (More than one answer is possible)**

Television	Newspapers and magazines	Radio	Internet	Other (specify which .....)
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The first question was designed to find out and compare what media Americans and Russians perceive to be the most credible sources of information on actual events.

A number of various cross-comparison surveys measuring media and news credibility were conducted over time in the United States. I could find their results in different sociological journals and reviews. However, I could not find any information about similar media studies in Russia. Therefore, I can propose my hypotheses about media credibility in Russia only based on my own experience and cultural studies of Russia.

Past studies suggest that the medium credibility is strongly related to the amount of use and to the degree to which people rely on it. Similarly, several surveys suggest that people tend to judge the medium they prefer as the most credible. In their study, Johnson and Kyle (1998) argue that since television is most preferred, used and relied on medium, it is also often judged as the most credible. (Johnson, T., Kaye, B., 1998)

Based on this premise, I assume that Russians will rate television as the most credible medium. Television in Russia is the most used and relied on medium for obtaining information, which is also accessible almost for everyone. The situation with the radio as the source for news is more ambiguous. On the one hand, due to the increasing amount of commercial music channels, the radio has lost its respect of the major news distributor it used to have during the Soviet times and has changed into the entertainment medium. On the other hand, there are a few radio stations, like “Echo of Moscow” or “Radio Free Europe”, which are less state-regulated compared to the other networks and less aligned with the government’s position. Most of their content consists of news and talk shows that focus on important political and social issues of the day. These stations attract their audience by providing source variety and different points of view. These radio stations are very popular news sources among intellectuals and students who make a significant part of my respondents. I assume that credibility of the print media will not score high in this survey, as newspapers and magazines are unaffordable “luxury” for a large part of my respondents. In my opinion, from this point the respondents can be considered to be a representative sample of the Russian population. It is difficult to foresee how Russian respondents will rate the Internet in terms of its credibility as the news source. All of the respondents have experience with using the Internet but not all of them actively use it. In my opinion, many Russians conventionally prefer to rely on traditional media for information. Nevertheless, I believe, there is a large part of Russians who perceive the Internet as the medium with the less pro-government position, so they use it for alternative points of view and a variety of opinions.

Based on the findings of the surveys from the earlier years in the U.S. regarding the opinion on news media, I assume that Americans will rate television and the Internet as more credible media than the press and radio. A number of surveys were designed to trace the changes in credibility of newspapers when radio and then television began to be their serious competition in providing the news. Their results show that, first, during the World War II, newspapers were vastly surpassed by the greater credibility of the radio news. Then, during the 1960’s and 1970’s, credibility of the TV news increased so much that in 1977 television news attained credence from twice as many people as the newspapers. (Erskine, H., 1970-1971) In 2002 credibility of television, newspapers, radio, and magazines was measured and compared. According to that survey, the most

popular sources of news were the branded news websites maintained by newspapers and television networks. Television was frequently named as the most credible medium, but overall credibility ratings of all media have declined over time. (Finberg, H., Stone, M., 2002) In 2003 another survey showed that even though the 2003 Iraq war coverage notably undermined Americans' trust into the unbiased character of the television news; television still remained the dominant medium for obtaining information in the United States. (Rainie, L., Fox, S., Fallows, D., 2006) Some American social scientists concluded that "the Internet had emerged as a major channel for news during the 2003 war. While one-quarter of online users normally get news from the Internet on a typical day, a recent Pew survey found that more than threequarters of online Americans made use of the Internet in connection with the war in Iraq"<sup>1</sup>. (Rainie, L., Fox, S., Fallows, D., 2006)

Three following questions are tightly connected to each other and are meant to find out the attitude of Russians and Americans towards the news fairness, objectivity, impartiality, and accuracy from different sides. Questions compare four media: television, press, radio, and Internet. These questions were used in several surveys conducted in the past with the purpose to find out the public opinion on the news media in the U.S. The findings of those surveys were presented and interpreted in the article *The Polls: Opinion of the News Media* by Hazel Erskine. (Erskine, H., 1970-1971)

**2) Do you agree that most news in the following sources is presented in a fair and objective way?**

**3) Do you agree that the news story itself in the following sources is accurate as to its facts?**

**4) In presenting the news concerning political organizations and private businesses do you think the following sources deal fairly with all sides or they tend to favor one side?**

Television

yes, always	yes, more often than not	sometimes	rather not	no, never	no opinion
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<sup>1</sup> The Pew Research Center is an independent opinion research organization that studies public attitudes toward the press, politics, and public policy issues in the United States.

### Newspapers and magazines

yes, always	yes, more often than not	sometimes	rather not	no, never	no opinion
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### Internet

yes, always	yes, more often than not	sometimes	rather not	no, never	no opinion
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### Radio

yes, always	yes, more often than not	sometimes	rather not	no, never	no opinion
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These three questions concern different aspects of the general credibility of the mass media. On the basis of different media and political situations in Russia and the United States and my own experience I assume that Americans will generally tend to trust mass media more than Russians. Based on the results of the previous studies that indicate the linkage between the medium credibility and its amount of use, I assume that Americans will trust mostly television and the Internet, while Russians television and radio as the dominant media for obtaining the news. I assume the Internet will score on the second place (after the television) for Americans and on the third place (after television and radio) for Russians. However, the situation with the Internet in Russia is more complicated compared to the United States. All of the American respondents actively use the Internet in their daily lives. As I already mentioned above, even though all of the Russian respondents have access to the Internet, many of them do not actively use it and prefer to rely on traditional media. Therefore, I expect quite significant part of Russian respondents to give the answer “no opinion”.

In general, I assume that Americans will perceive news programs in all mentioned media to be more objective, fair, accurate, and unbiased than Russians will.

**5) If you got conflicting or different reports of the same news story from different sources, which of them would you be most inclined to believe?**



Television	Newspapers and magazines	Radio	Internet	Family, friends, colleagues
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This question is designed to compare not only the credibility of different mass media but the credibility (and importance) of the interpersonal channels as the source for news as well. We can say that information in mass media about the world around is “second-hand”. People in media tell us about something we usually cannot verify but we have to rely on. The information mediated by interpersonal channels is then “third-hand” as other people mediate us what they saw or heard in mass media. The authority of the channel affects to a large extent how much we trust the information it provides. From what we know from the Hofstede’s research (2005) on differences in cultural dimensions between Russia and the United States, Russia belongs to a group of collectivist countries, where “ties in the society are very strong and people from birth onwards are integrated into strong, cohesive groups”. (Hofstede, G., Hofstede, G.J., 2005, p. 73) The United States is an example of the opposite type of culture – the individualist one. According to Geert Hofstede (2005), individualist society is the one in which “the ties between individuals are loose: everyone is expected to look after him/herself and his/her immediate family.” (Hofstede, G., Hofstede, G.J., 2005, p. 74) In my opinion, in Russian society social network still fulfills the surveillance function; whereas in American society bonds between members of a community are relatively loose and social group does not play the role of the news mediator. People rely more on themselves than on other members of their social community. Therefore, I think, interpersonal channels in Russia are more important and credible source for news compared to the United States. Americans trust news mediated by other people much less than mass media as sources of information.

Next questions was designed to find out what media are the most helpful in satisfying the need for information on actual events.

**6) How important for you are the following media in receiving the news on actual events?**

6.1 Television

Very important	Somewhat important	Undecided	Rather not important	Unimportant
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## 6.2 Newspapers and magazines

Very important	Somewhat important	Undecided	Rather not important	Unimportant
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## 6.3 Radio

Very important	Somewhat important	Undecided	Rather not important	Unimportant
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## 6.4 Internet

Very important	Somewhat important	Undecided	Rather not important	Unimportant
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## 6.5 Interpersonal channels

Very important	Somewhat important	Undecided	Rather not important	Unimportant
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It is known that the mass media are helpful in satisfying a number of needs arising from individual dispositions and social roles. The key needs include knowledge, information, and understanding of the society and the world around; self-identity and self-growth; entertainment; emotional experience and escapism from reality; social contact. (Tsfati, Y., Cappella, J., 2005) With regard to the central topic of my thesis I would like to focus on what media Russians and Americans find the most helpful in obtaining the news. The selection of media largely depends on the media credibility perception. Supposing that high credibility leads to reliance on the media as a news source, we become very dependent on the media in situations when we require information controlled by the media. If our goal is to obtain information on important issues of the day, we have to rely on news media, since the media control our access to a variety of information. According to Johnson and Kaye (1998), *if individuals perceive the news media to be highly credible, they will tend to rely on it for information. Media perceived as most credible will be judged as most important news sources. If people believe that the media are highly credible and if they are dependent on the media for information, they should actively seek for information from the media they trust.* (Johnson, T., Kaye, B., 1998)

The media examined are television, press, radio, and the Internet. As a part of each question I included a query about interpersonal channels to study the role the social community plays as a source for news. In interpreting the obtained results I tried to take

into consideration and distinguish the attributes, the characteristic content, and the social and physical context with which each medium is typically associated.

**7) Would you buy newspapers and magazines more if you could afford it?**

yes	Undecided	No
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While television and radio is available for all respondents at home, the Internet access is provided at least at work, newspapers and magazines might be not accessible and affordable for everyone. Therefore, people might watch news programs on television more often than read newspapers not because they have more credence in TV news but because they don't have enough access to the print media. To understand how much people use and trust print media as a source of information on actual events we need to keep in mind that some people might not be able to read newspapers as often as they would like to because they cannot afford to buy them. This question was meant to find out whether people read newspapers and magazines more if they could afford it. In case of low credibility ratings of the press, this question will help to understand whether they are so low because people do not trust the press or because they don't have enough access to it. If a large part of the respondents answers "yes" to this question we can assume that people are not satisfied with their current access to the press but consider it to be the credible source of information.

**8) Does your opinion on actual events coincide with opinion of your family, friends, colleague, neighbors, etc.?**

always	more often than not	Sometimes	rather not	never
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According to Hofstede (2005), in the United States, as an individualist country, use of the word *I* as opposed to *we* is encouraged and maintaining harmony with social community is not considered to be important. People tend to form their opinion on actual events by themselves based on facts obtained and compared from different mass media. In Russia, as a typical collectivist country, public opinion and maintaining unity of opinion as means to achieve balance and harmony in a society is considered important. (Hofstede, G., Hofstede, G.J., 2005) For that reason, I expect Russians' opinions to coincide with opinions of members of their social group more often than

Americans. In Russia, as a collectivist country, it is important to maintain social peace and sharing opinion is one of the ways to do that. In the United States, as an individualist country, according to Geert Hofstede (2005), the most important task is to achieve your goal, and if expressing and standing up for your opinion is necessary, there is nothing wrong with it. (Hofstede, G., Hofstede, G.J., 2005)

**9) Have you had some previous practical experience in watching television, reading press, listening to the radio, and using the Internet?**

This question was included to see whether a respondent was qualified for this questionnaire and whether his/her experience is comparable to the other respondents' experiences and knowledge.

This questionnaire was translated to Russian and back, so that the meaning of the questions is the same.

The findings from this study are limited by the small sample size. Results cannot be generalized to the whole population and this sample cannot be considered as representative.

**RESULTS**

To the first question *which source do you think gives you more reliable news and reports about actual events?* there were given five options to choose among: four most popular and used media (television, newspapers and magazines, radio, Internet) and respondent's own answer in case it differed from the given options.

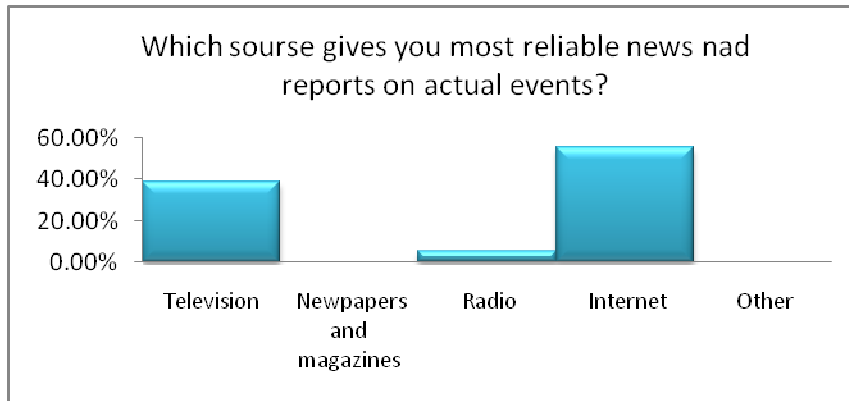
**1) Which source do you think gives you more reliable news and reports about actual events?**

Russian respondents:

Table 7.1 Source ratings according to its news and reports reliability (by percentage)

Television	Newspapers and magazines	Radio	Internet	Other (specify which)
38.89%	0.00%	5.56%	55.56%	0.00%

Graph 7.1 Opinions on news and reports reliability in different sources (by percentage)

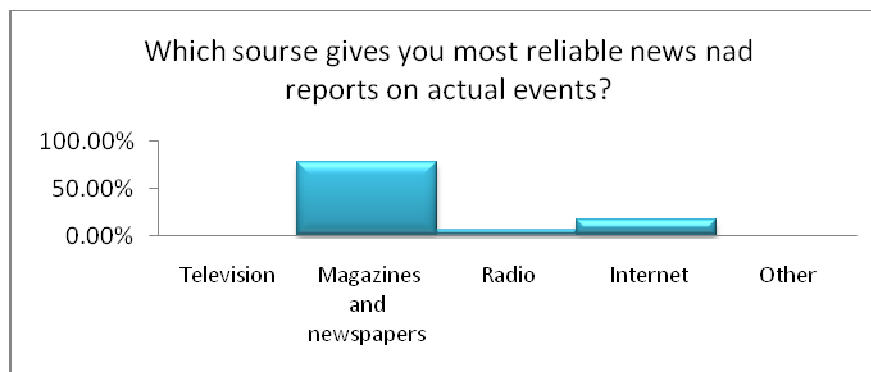


American respondents:

Table 7.2 Source ratings according to its news and reports reliability (by percentage)

Television	Newspapers and magazines	Radio	Internet	Other (specify which)
0.00%	77.78%	5.56%	16.67%	0.00%

Graph 7.2 Opinions on news and reports reliability in different sources (by percentage)



To find out and compare the central tendencies in answers of two groups for each medium I did the t-test. In each case I compiled two lists of 36 answers: if a respondent named a tested source as the source for most reliable news, I put "1"; if he gave any other answer I put "0". Doing this I could calculate the average meaning (mean) and P value or confidence interval. If P value is less than 0.05 (95% hypothesized mean difference) then the difference in answers of two groups is statistically significant. When one of two means = 0, the statistical significance of the difference in results is

calculated by the confidence intervals. If the calculated confidence interval does not include “0”, the difference in answers of two groups is statistically proved.

Table 7.3 T-test. Television

	<i>Russian respondents</i>	<i>American respondents</i>
Mean	0.389	0
Observations	36	36
Confidence interval	(0.2204; 0.5572)	

Table 7.4 T-test. Newspapers and magazines

	<i>Russian respondents</i>	<i>Americans respondents</i>
Mean	0	0.778
Observations	36	36
Confidence interval	(0.6316; 0.9524)	

Table 7.5 T-test. Radio

	<i>Russian respondents</i>	<i>American respondents</i>
Mean	0.056	0.056
Observations	36	36
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.692	

Table 7.6 T-test. Internet

	<i>Russian respondents</i>	<i>American respondents</i>
Mean	0.556	0.167
Observations	36	36
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.0006	

The first unforeseen outcome of this question is that Russian respondents rate the Internet as the most reliable news source among four mentioned media (55.56%). 38.89% of Russians named television and 5.56% named radio as the most reliable news source. Nobody mentioned either newspapers and magazines or any other source. Another unforeseen result is that the press news reliability ratings strikingly exceed television news reliability ratings on the American side. 77.78% of the respondents judged the press as the source of the most reliable news and nobody named television.

The Internet is considered to be the most reliable news source by 16.67% and radio by 5.56% of the American respondents.

As it appears from the research, Russians more often rely on news and reports on the Internet and television as opposed to news and reports provided by newspapers and magazines and radio. Americans tend to rely on the print media news. Similarly surprising findings are that both groups assigned Internet news more reliable than television news and that generally Russians trust online news and reports more than Americans.

One explanation for these unforeseen results may be that “the introduction of online sources has changed the public perception of traditional media credibility. Regardless of whether people actually have access to or use the Internet, its mere presence could have reduced trust in television while concomitantly increasing trust in newspapers“. (Kiousis, S., 2001, p. 395) Marshall McLuhan (2003) argues that the dissemination of new technologies do change the perception and shift opinions on older media. (McLuhan, M., 2003) The low score of the press news reliability in Russia could be explained by the fact that print media in Russia are not widely spread and commonly used, since they are unaffordable to a major part of population.

2) Do you agree that most news in the following sources is presented in a fair and objective way?

### 2.1. Television

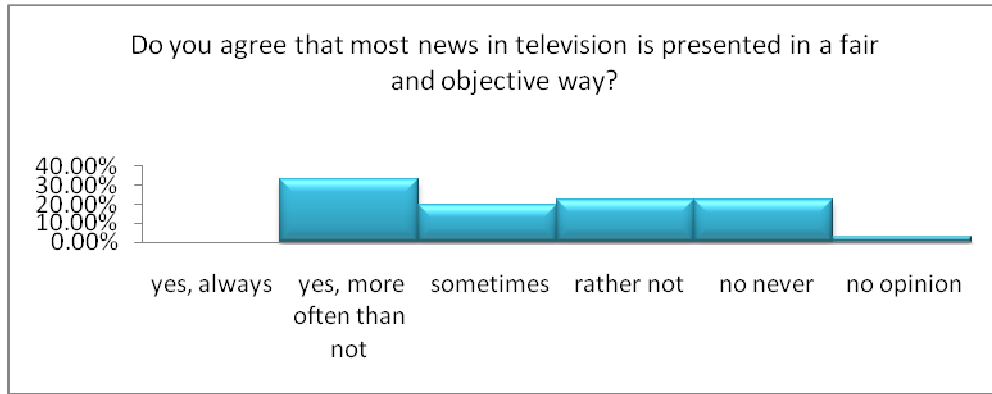
Russian respondents:

Table 7.2.1.1 Television news ratings according to its fairness and objectivity (by percentage)

Yes, always	Yes, more often than not	Sometimes	Rather not	No, never	No opinion
1	2	3	4	5	N
0.00%	33.33%	19.44%	22.22%	22.22%	2.78%

Graph 7.2.1.1 Opinions on television news fairness and objectivity (by percentage)

Mean = 3.34 = “Sometimes”



American respondents:

Table 7.2.1.2 Television news ratings according to its fairness and objectivity (by percentage)

Yes, always	Yes, more often than not	Sometimes	Rather not	No, never	No opinion
1	2	3	4	5	N
0.00%	0.00%	8.33%	69.44%	22.22%	0.00%

Graph 7.2.1.2 Opinions on television news fairness and objectivity (by percentage)

Mean = 4.13 = "Rather not"

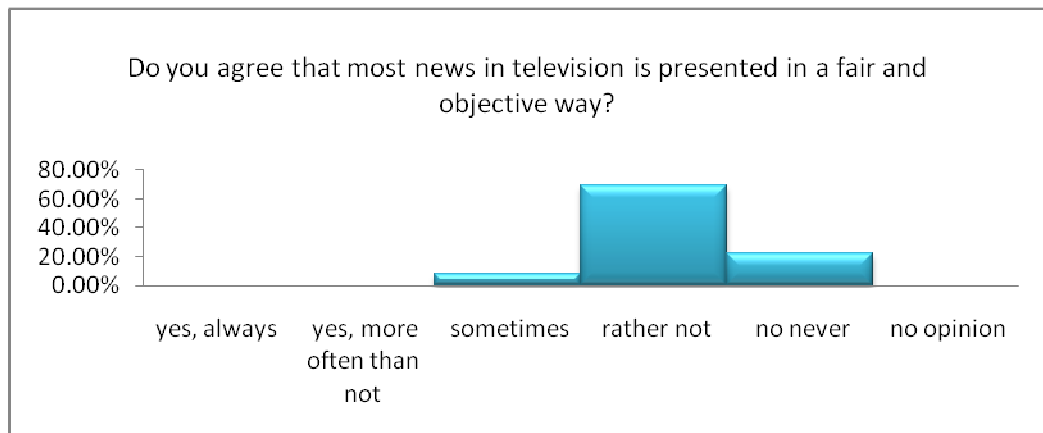


Table 7.2.1.3 T-test. Television

	Russian respondents	American respondents
Mean	3.34	4.13
Observations	35	36
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.005	
Confidence level	(2.9351; 3.7505)	(3.9569; 4.3208)

## 2.2. Newspapers and magazines

Russian respondents:



Table 7.2.2.1 Magazines and newspapers news ratings according to its fairness and objectivity

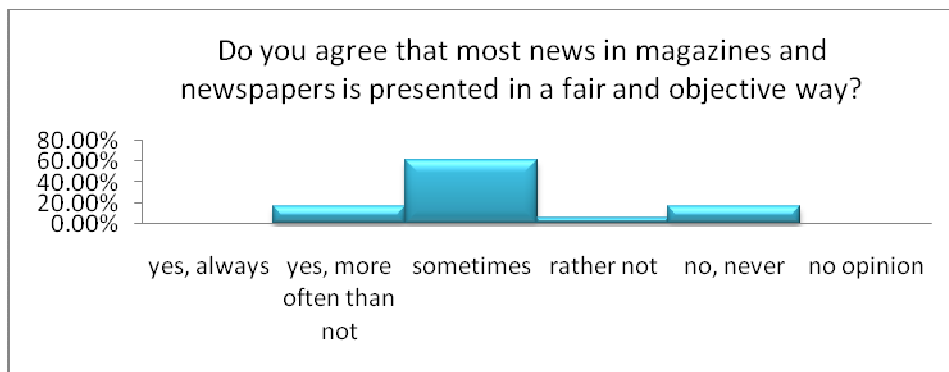
(by percentage)

Yes, always	Yes, more often than not	Sometimes	Rather not	No, never	No opinion
1	2	3	4	5	N
0.00%	16.67%	61.11%	5.56%	16.67%	0.00%

Graph 7.2.2.1 Opinions on newspapers and magazines news fairness and objectivity

(by percentage)

Mean = 3.22 = “Sometimes”



American respondents:

Table 7.2.2.2 Magazines and newspapers news ratings according to its fairness and objectivity

(by percentage)

<u>Yes, always</u>	<u>Yes, more often than not</u>	<u>Sometimes</u>	<u>Rather not</u>	<u>No, never</u>	<u>No opinion</u>
<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>N</u>
<u>0.00%</u>	<u>58.33%</u>	<u>25.00%</u>	<u>11.11%</u>	<u>5.56%</u>	<u>0.00%</u>

Graph 7.2.2.2 Opinions on newspapers and magazines news fairness and objectivity

(by percentage)

Mean = 2.63 = between “Yes, more often than not” and “Sometimes”

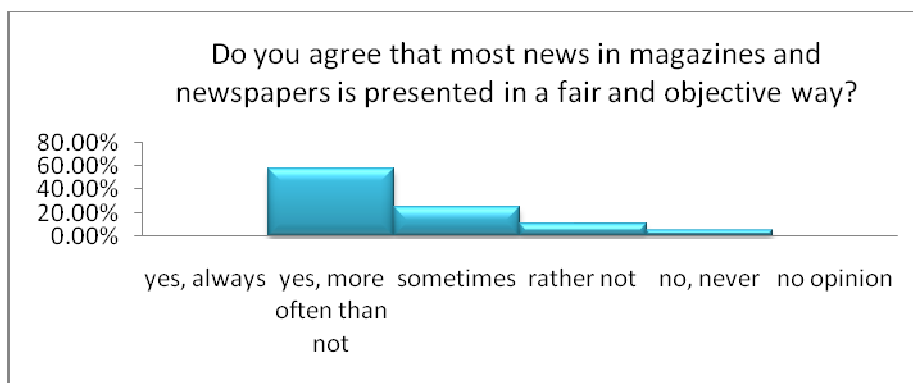


Table 7.2.2.3 T-test. Newspapers and magazines

	<i>Russian respondents</i>	<i>American respondents</i>
Mean	3.22	2.63
Observations	36	36
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.008	
Confidence interval	(2.9078; 3.5366)	(2.3346; 2.9431)

### 2.3. Internet

Russian respondents:

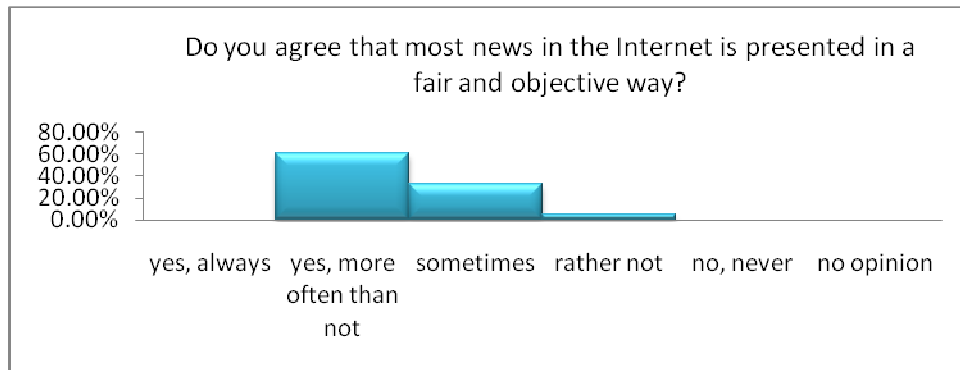
Table 7.2.3.1 Internet news ratings according to its fairness and objectivity

(by percentage)

Yes, always	Yes, more often than not	Sometimes	Rather not	No, never	No opinion
1	2	3	4	5	N
0.00%	61.11%	33.33%	5.56%	0.00%	0.00%

Graph 7.2.3.1 Opinions on Internet news fairness and objectivity (by percentage)

Mean = 2.44 = between “Yes, more often than not” and “Sometimes”



American respondents:

Table 7.2.3.2. Internet news ratings according to its fairness and objectivity (by percentage)

Yes, always	Yes, more often than not	Sometimes	Rather not	No, never	No opinion
1	2	3	4	5	N
0.00%	41.67%	52.78%	5.56%	0.00%	0.00%

Graph 7.2.3.2 Opinions on Internet news fairness and objectivity (by percentage)

Mean = 2.64 = between “Yes, more often than not” and “Sometimes”

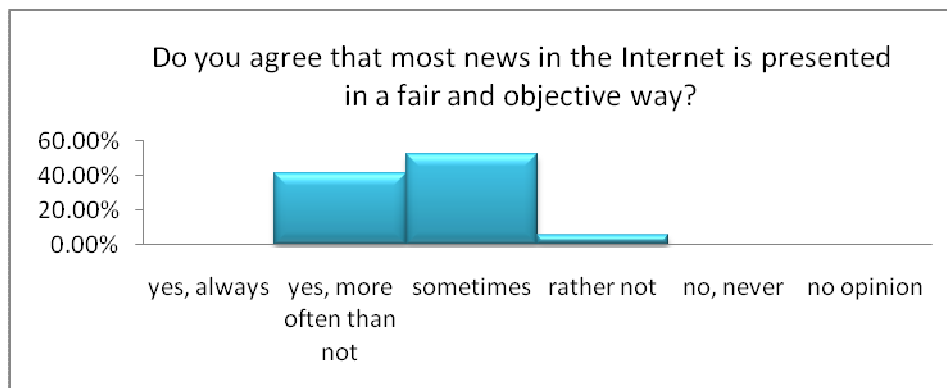


Table 7.2.3.3 T-test. Internet

	<i>Russian respondents</i>	<i>American respondents</i>
Mean	2.44	2.64
Observations	36	36
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.173	
Confidence level	(2.2391; 2.6497)	(2.4382; 2.8395)

## 2.4. Radio

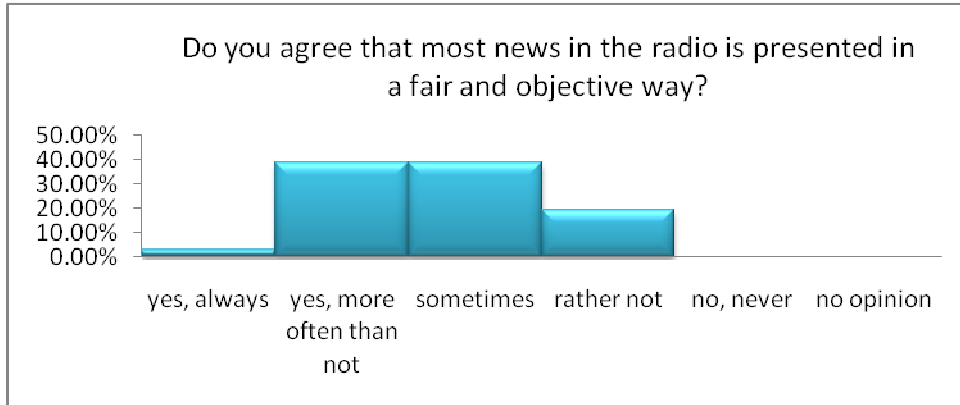
Russian respondents:

Table 7.2.4.1 Radio news ratings according to its fairness and objectivity (by percentage)

Yes, always	Yes, more often than not	Sometimes	Rather not	No, never	No opinion
1	2	3	4	5	N
2.78%	38.89%	38.89%	19.44%	0.00%	0.00%

Graph 7.2.4.1 Opinions on radio news fairness and objectivity (by percentage)

Mean = 2.75 = “Sometimes”



American respondents:

Table 7.2.4.2 Radio news ratings according to its fairness and credibility (by percentage)

Yes, always	Yes, more often than not	Sometimes	Rather not	No, never	No opinion
1	2	3	4	5	N
0.00%	19.44%	50.00%	11.11%	11.11%	8.33%

Graph 7.2.4.2 Opinions on radio news fairness and objectivity (by percentage)

Mean = 3.15 = “Sometimes”

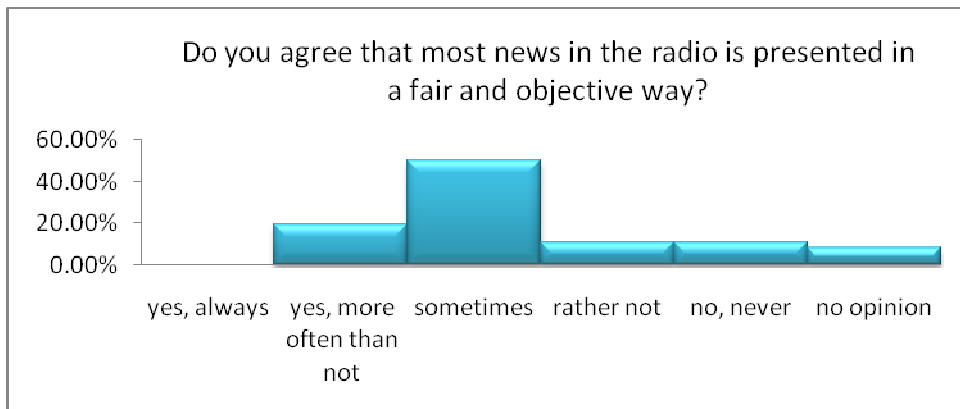


Table 7.2.4.3 T-test. Radio

	<i>Russian respondents</i>	<i>American respondents</i>
Mean	2.75	3.15
Observations	36	33
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.009	
Confidence interval	(2.4772; 3.0227)	(2.7529; 3.5500)

The findings to this question show that both groups of the respondents rate television news as the least fair and objective among all four media. The mean (= 3.34; CI = (2.9351; 3.7505) indicates that on average Russians tend to consider television news to be fair and objective only “sometimes”. Americans tend to perceive television news as “rather not” objective (the mean = 4.13; CI = (3.9569; 4.3208). The P value (= 0.005) shows that the results are statistically significant.

As far as newspapers and magazines are considered, on average Russians tend to judge the press news as fair and objective only “sometimes” (the mean = 3.22). The confidence interval (2.9078; 3.5366) indicates the tendency towards “rather not” answer. On the American side the mean = 2.63 and confidence interval = (2.3346; 2.9431). This shows that Russians are more doubtful than Americans. The P value = 0.008 proves the statistical significance of the difference in answers.

In case of online news, the P value (= 0.17) indicates that the difference in answers between two groups is not statistically significant. Both groups are inclined to judge online news as fair and objective between “more often than not” and “sometimes” (the mean = 2.44; CI = (2.2391; 2.6497) among Russians and the mean = 2.64; CI = (2.4382; 2.8395 among Americans).

In case of the radio news, on the Russian side the mean equals 2.75 and CI (2.4772; 3.0227) = between “yes, more often than not” and “sometimes”. On the American side the mean (= 3.15) and confidence interval (2.7529; 3.5500) mean “sometimes”. The P value (= 0.008) prove the statistical significance in answers. These findings indicate there is a little shift towards more credence to the radio news on the Russian side.

Summing up, I can conclude that Russians rate the Internet news as the most fair and objective. Americans put both the press and online news at the first place as most fair and objective (in both cases the mean = 2.63). Russians put the print news at the second place, then radio, and television. In case of Americans, radio was in the second place after the press and Internet. Both groups put television news on the bottom of the list in terms of their fairness and objectivity. Since all media are scored very low, we can conclude that as Russians as Americans have serious reservations in regard with news fairness and objectivity in general.

3) Do you agree that the news story itself in the following sources is accurate as to its facts?

### 3.1. Television

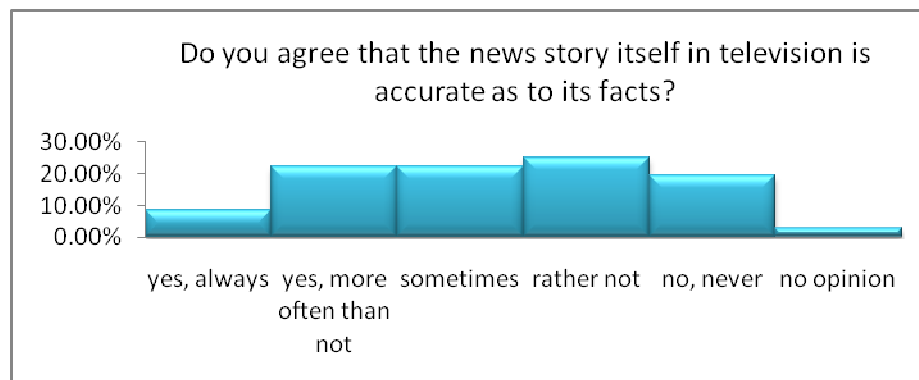
Russian respondents:

Table 7.3.1.1 Television news ratings according to its accuracy (by percentage)

Yes, always	Yes, more often than not	Sometimes	Rather not	No, never	No opinion
1	2	3	4	5	N
8.33%	22.22%	22.22%	25.00%	19.44%	2.78%

Graph 7.3.1.1 Opinions on television news accuracy (by percentage)

Mean = 3.26 = "Sometimes"



American respondents:

Table 7.3.1.2 Television news ratings according to its accuracy (by percentage)

Yes, always	Yes, more often than not	Sometimes	Rather not	No, never	No opinion
1	2	3	4	5	N
0.00%	2.78%	11.11%	75.00%	8.33%	2.78%

Graph 7.3.1.2 Opinions on television news accuracy (by percentage)

Mean = 3.91 = "Rather not"

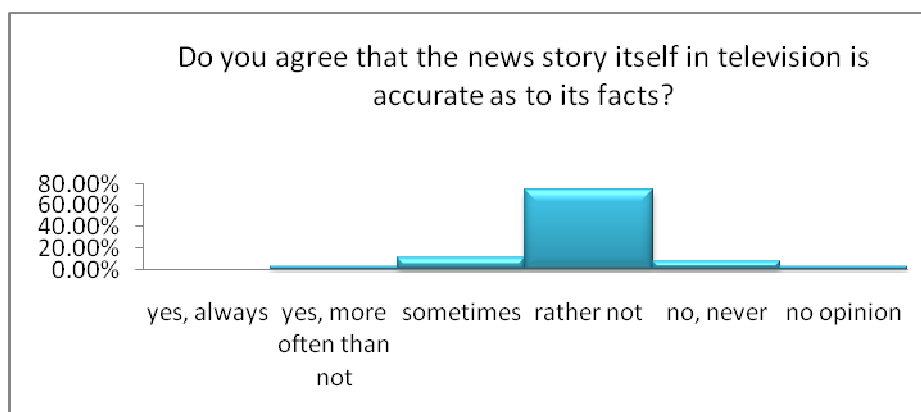


Table 3.1.3 T-test. Television

	<i>Russian respondents</i>	<i>American respondents</i>
Mean	3.26	3.91
Observations	35	35
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.011	
Confidence interval	(2.8068; 3.7074)	(3.6929; 4.1355)

### 3.2. Newspapers and magazines

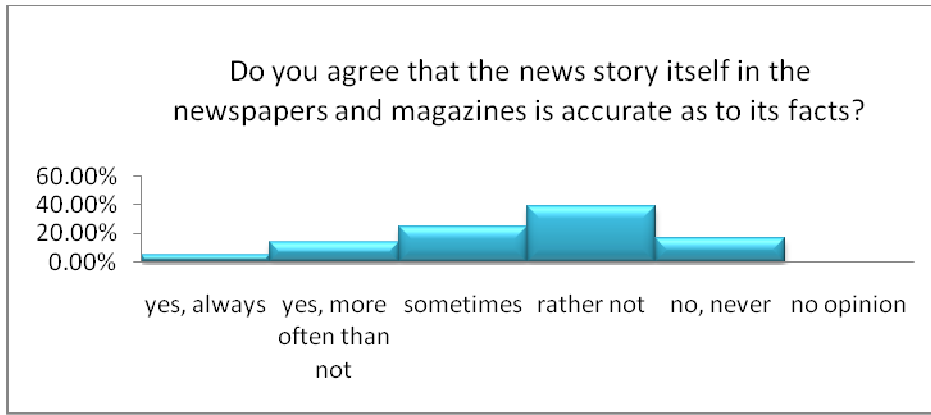
Russian respondents:

Table 7.3.2.1 Newspapers and magazines news according to its accuracy (by percentage)

Yes, always	Yes, more often than not	Sometimes	Rather not	No, never	No opinion
1	2	3	4	5	N
5.56%	13.89%	25.00%	38.89%	16.67%	0.00%

Graph 7.3.2.1 Opinions on newspapers and magazines news accuracy (by percentage)

Mean = 3.46 = between "Sometimes" and "Rather not"



American respondents:

Table 7.3.2.2 Newspapers and magazines ratings according its accuracy (by percentage)

Yes, always	Yes, more often than not	Sometimes	Rather not	No, never	No opinion
1	2	3	4	5	N
2.78%	63.89%	13.89%	16.67%	0.00%	2.78%

Graph 7.3.2.2 Opinions on newspapers and magazines news accuracy (by percentage)

Mean = 2.46 = between “Yes, more often than not” and “Sometimes”

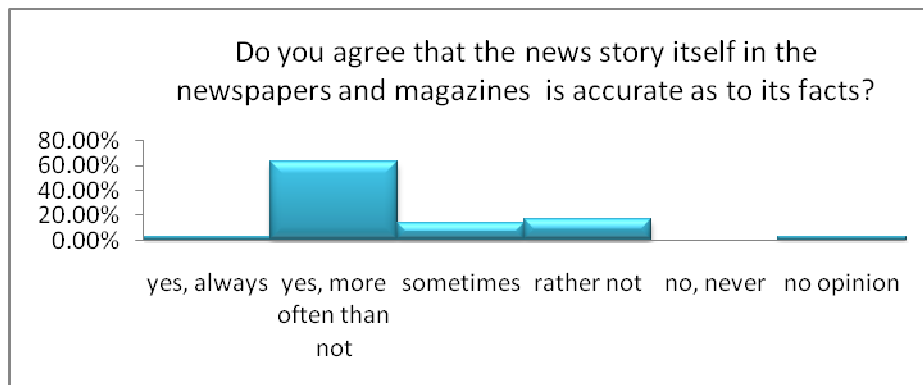


Table 7.3.2.3 T-test. Newspapers and magazines

	<i>Russian respondents</i>	<i>American respondents</i>
Mean	3.46	2.46
Observations	36	35
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.0006	
Confidence interval	(3.0840; 3.8302)	(2.1765; 2.7377)



### 3.3. Internet

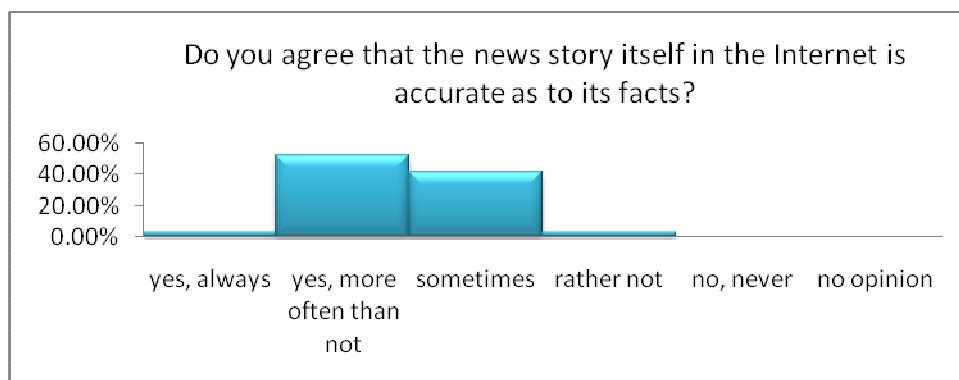
Russian respondents:

Table 7.3.3.1 Internet news ratings according to its accuracy (by percentage)

Yes, always	Yes, more often than not	Sometimes	Rather not	No, never	No opinion
1	2	3	4	5	N
2.78%	52.78%	41.67%	2.78%	0.00%	0.00%

Graph 7.3.3.1 Opinions on Internet news accuracy (by percentage)

Mean = 2.43 = between “Yes, more often than not” and “Sometimes”



American respondents:

Table 7.3.3.2 Internet news ratings according to its accuracy (by percentage)

Yes, always	Yes, more often than not	Sometimes	Rather not	No, never	No opinion
1	2	3	4	5	N
0.00%	47.22%	41.67%	5.56%	0.00%	5.56%

Graph 7.3.3.2 Opinions on Internet news accuracy (by percentage)

Mean = 2.66 = between “Yes, more often than not” and “Sometimes”

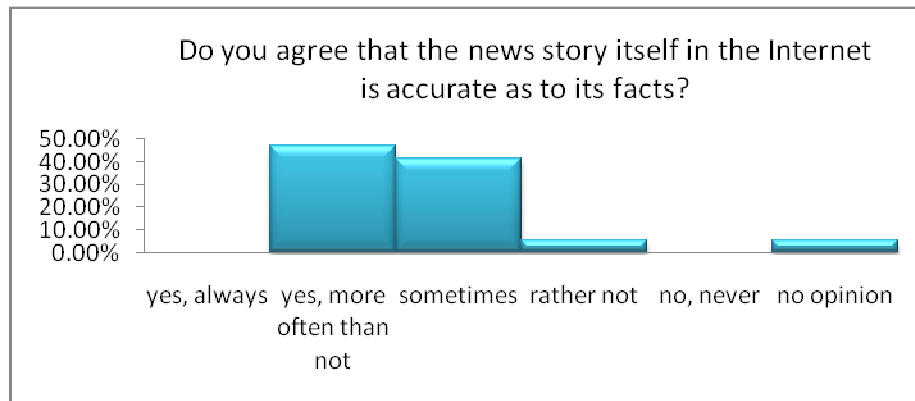


Table 7.3.3.3 T-test. Internet

	<i>Russian respondents</i>	<i>American respondents</i>
Mean	2.43	2.66
Observations	36	34
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.195	
Confidence interval	(2.2232; 2.6338)	(2.4434; 2.8780)

### 3.4. Radio

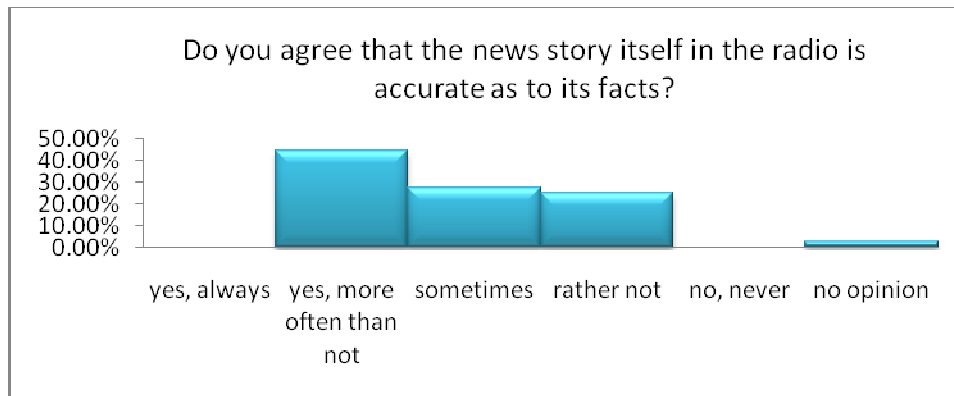
Russian respondents:

Table 7.3.4.1 Radio news ratings according to its accuracy (by percentage)

Yes, always	Yes, more often than not	Sometimes	Rather not	No, never	No opinion
1	2	3	4	5	N
0.00%	44.44%	27.78%	25.00%	0.00%	2.78%

Graph 7.3.4.1 Opinions on radio news accuracy (by percentage)

Mean = 2.76 = between “Yes, more often than not” and “Sometimes”



American respondents:

Table 7.3.4.2 Radio news ratings according to its accuracy (by percentage)

Yes, always	Yes, more often than not	Sometimes	Rather not	No, never	No opinion
1	2	3	4	5	N
0.00%	25.00%	52.78%	11.11%	5.56%	5.56%

Graph 7.3.4.2 Opinions on radio news accuracy (by percentage)

Mean = 3.14 = "Sometimes"

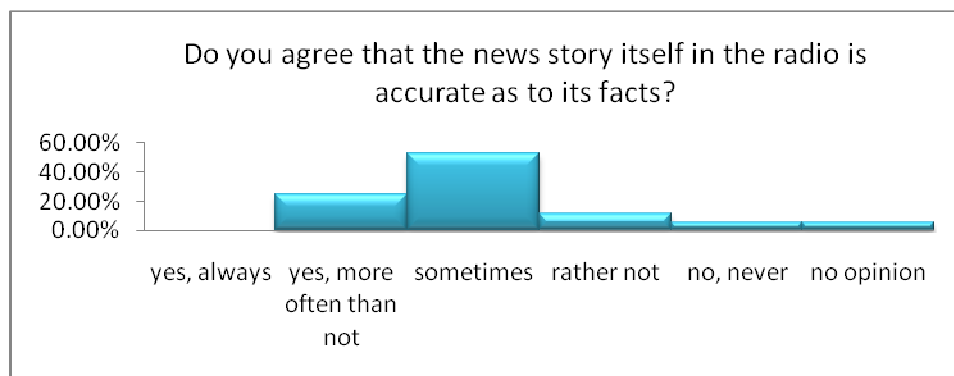


Table 7.3.4.3 T-test. Radio

	<i>Russian respondents</i>	<i>American respondents</i>
Mean	2.76	3.14
Observations	35	34
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.235	
Confidence interval	(2.4151; 3.07776)	(2.8607; 3.4170)

As it appears from the results, both groups of the respondents are skeptical about the accuracy of the news stories as to their facts in all main media. Among four named media television news are perceived as least accurate both by Russian (mean = 3.26 =

“sometimes”; CI = (2.8068; 3.7074) and by American groups (mean = 3.91 = “rather not”; CI = (3.6929; 4.1355). What is interesting is the large dispersion of opinions among Russians and the dominant inclination toward one opinion among Americans proved by the confidence intervals. Approximately the same number of respondents named “yes, more often than not” (22.22%), “sometimes” (22.22%), “rather not” (25%), and “no, never” (19.44%). The majority of Americans (75%) answered “rather not”. The P value = 0.01 proves the statistical significance of the difference in results.

In case of the press news, there is a major shift on the American side towards confidence in the accuracy of the news stories (mean = 2.46 = between “yes, more often than not” and “sometimes”; CI = (2.1765; 2.7377). There is much more uncertainty about the news accuracy on the Russian side: the mean = 3.46 = between “sometimes” and “rather not”. (CI = (3.0840; 3.8302). The most popular answer among Russians was “yes, more often than not” (38.89%). The majority of Americans (63.89%) answered “rather not”. The P value = 0.0006 proved that the difference is statistically significant.

In case of online news, the difference in opinion is not statistically significant (P value = 0.195). Both groups tend to perceive the Internet news as accurate somewhere in between “yes, more often than not” and “sometimes”. On the Russian side the mean = 2.43; 52.78% - “yes, more often than not”, “41.67% - “sometimes”. On the American side the mean = 2.66 = between “yes, more often than not” and “sometimes” (47.22% - “yes, more often than not”, 41.67% - “sometimes”). Confidence intervals indicate the similarity in range of opinions: among Russians CI = (2.2232; 2.6338); among Americans CI = (2.4434; 2.8780).

The majority of the Russian respondents (44.44%) find the radio news to be accurate as to its facts “more often than not”, 27.78% - “sometimes”, and 25% - “rather not”. The mean = 2.76 = “sometimes”. CI = (2.4151; 3.0777). The majority of Americans (52.78%) answered “sometimes”, the average meaning = 3.14 = “sometimes”; CI = (2.8607; 3.4170). The P value (= 0.235) indicates the statistical insignificance of the difference.

In summary, I can conclude that both groups of the respondents have certain reservations about the accuracy of the news stories as to the facts in all four media. Russians perceive online news and Americans news in the print media as the most

accurate. Americans are by far more skeptical about television news accuracy but have more credence in the press news accuracy than Russians. Online and radio news were judged approximately the same accurate by both groups.

4) In presenting the news concerning political organizations and private businesses do you think the following sources deal fairly with all sides or they tend to favor one side?

#### 4.1. Television

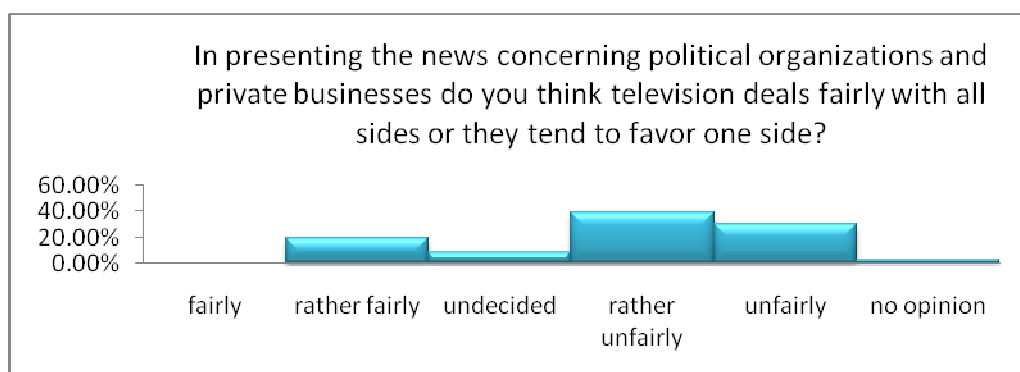
Russian respondents:

Table 7.4.1.1 Television news ratings according to how fairly it deals with political organizations and private businesses (by percentage)

Fairly	Rather fairly	Undecided	Rather unfairly	Unfairly	No opinion
1	2	3	4	5	N
0.00%	19.44%	8.33%	38.89%	30.56%	2.78%

Graph 7.4.1.1 Opinions on television news in terms of how fairly it deals with political organizations and private businesses (by percentage)

Mean = 3.83 = “Rather unfairly”



American respondents:

Table 7.4.1.2 Television news ratings according to how fairly it deals with political organizations and private businesses (by percentage)

Fairly	Rather fairly	Undecided	Rather unfairly	Unfairly	No opinion
1	2	3	4	5	N
0.00%	0.00%	22.22%	66.67%	11.11%	0.00%

Graph 7.4.1.2 Opinions on television news in terms of how fairly it deals with political organizations and private business (by percentage)

Mean = 3.89 = "Rather unfairly"

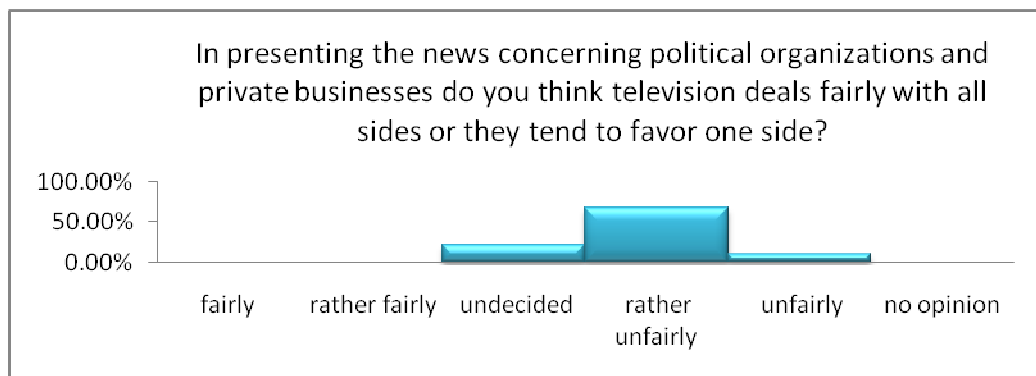


Table 7.4.1.3 T-test. Television

	<i>Russian respondents</i>	<i>American respondents</i>
Mean	3.83	3.89
Observations	35	36
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.772	
Confidence interval	(3.4514; 4.2056)	(3.6944; 4.0833)

## 4.2. Newspapers and magazines

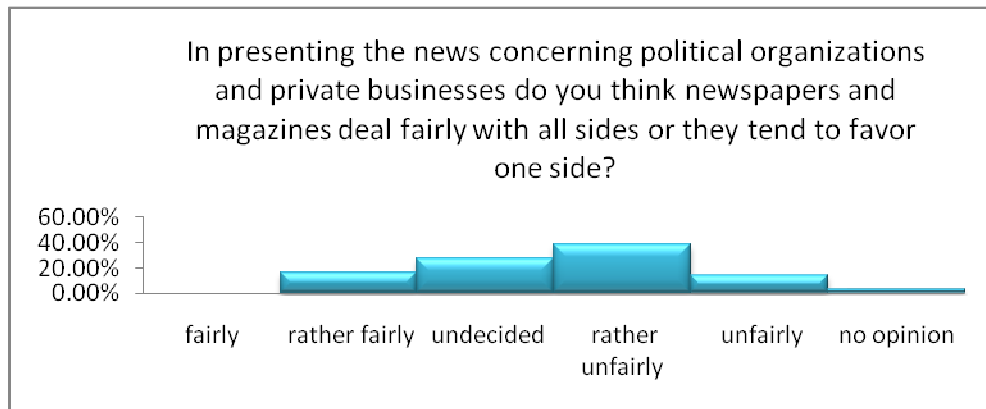
Russian respondents:

Table 7.4.2.1 Newspapers and magazines news ratings according to how fairly it deals with political organizations and private businesses (by percentage)

Fairly	Rather fairly	Undecided	Rather unfairly	Unfairly	No opinion
1	2	3	4	5	N
0.00%	16.67%	27.78%	38.89%	13.89%	2.78%

Graph 7.4.2.1 Opinions on newspapers and magazines news in terms of how fairly it deals with political organizations and private businesses (by percentage)

Mean = 3.51 = between “Undecided” and “Rather unfairly”



American respondents:

Table 7.4.2.2 Newspapers and magazines news ratings according to how fairly it deals with political organizations and private businesses (by percentage)

Fairly	Rather fairly	Undecided	Rather unfairly	Unfairly	No opinion
1	2	3	4	5	N
2.78%	50.00%	38.89%	8.33%	0.00%	0.00%

Graph 7.4.2.2 Opinions on newspapers and magazines news in terms of how fairly it deals with political organizations and private businesses (by percentage)

Mean = 2.53 = between “Rather fairly” and “Undecided”

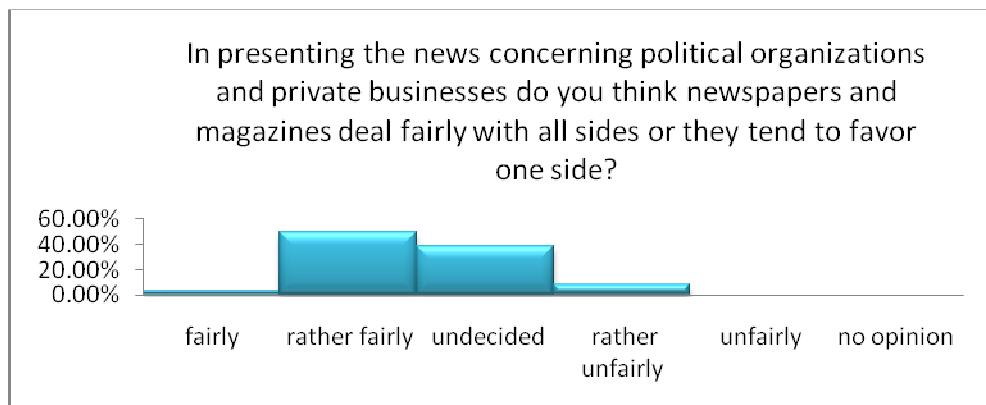


Table 7.4.2.3 T-test. Newspapers and magazines

	<i>Russian respondents</i>	<i>American respondents</i>
Mean	3.51	2.53
Observations	35	36
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.0000006	
Confidence interval	(3.1876; 3.8409)	(2.2921; 2.7633)

### 4.3. Internet

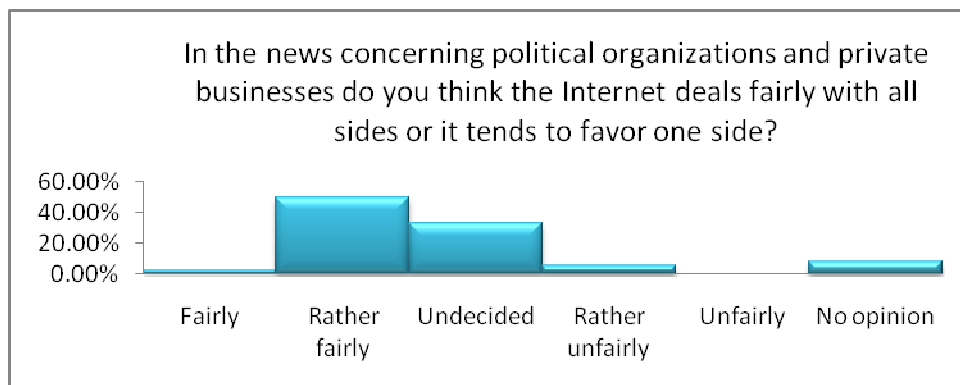
Russian respondents:

Table 7.4.3.1 Internet news ratings according to how fairly it deals with political organizations and private businesses (by percentage)

Fairly	Rather fairly	Undecided	Rather unfairly	Unfairly	No opinion
1	2	3	4	5	N
2.78%	50.00%	33.33%	5.56%	0.00%	8.33%

Graph 7.4.3.1 Opinions on Internet news in terms of how fairly it deals with political organizations and private businesses (by percentage)

Mean = 2.45 = between “Rather fairly” and “Undecided”





American respondents:

Table 7.4.3.2 Internet news ratings according to how fairly it deals with political organizations and private businesses (by percentage)

Fairly	Rather fairly	Undecided	Rather unfairly	Unfairly	No opinion
1	2	3	4	5	N
0.00%	66.67%	19.44%	8.33%	0.00%	5.56%

Graph 7.4.3.2 Opinions on Internet news in terms of how fairly it deals with political organizations and private businesses (by percentage)

Mean = 2.38 = between “Rather fairly” and “Undecided”

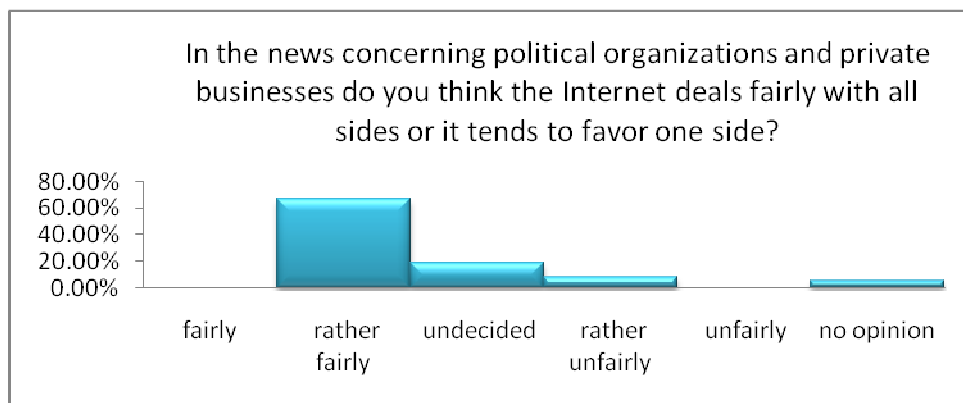


Table 7.4.3.3 T-test. Internet

	<i>Russian respondents</i>	<i>American respondents</i>
Mean	2.45	2.38
Observations	33	34
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.655	
Confidence interval	(2.2184; 2.6905)	(2.1548; 2.6098)

#### 4.4. Radio

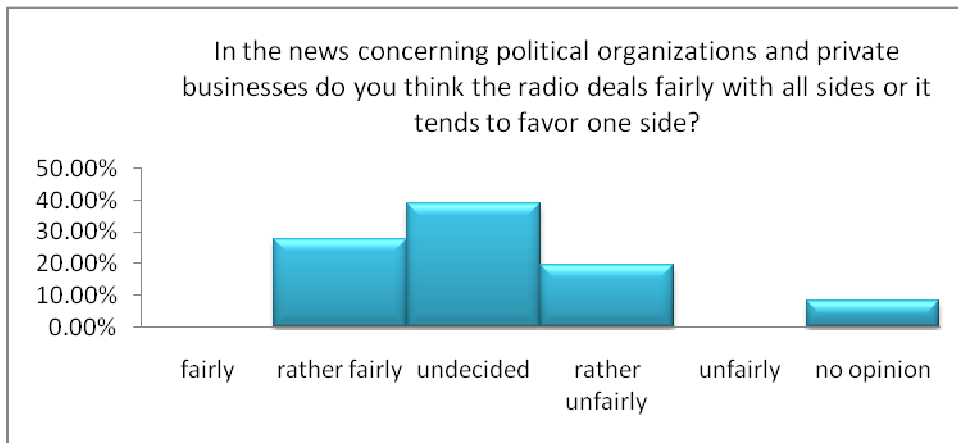
Russian respondents:

Table 7.4.4.1 Radio news ratings according to how fairly it deals with political organizations and private businesses (by percentage)

Fairly	Rather fairly	Undecided	Rather unfairly	Unfairly	No opinion
1	2	3	4	5	N
0.00%	27.78%	38.89%	19.44%	0.00%	8.33%

Graph 7.4.4.1 Opinions on radio news in terms of how fairly it deals with political organizations and private businesses (by percentage)

Mean = 2.91 = "Undecided"



American respondents:

Table 7.4.4.2 Radio news ratings according to how fairly it deals with political organizations and private businesses (by percentage)

Fairly	Rather fairly	Undecided	Rather unfairly	Unfairly	No opinion
1	2	3	4	5	N
0.00%	33.33%	38.89%	22.22%	2.78%	0.00%

Graph 7.4.4.2 Opinions on radio news in terms of how fairly it deals with political organizations and private businesses (by percentage)

Mean = 2.91 = "Undecided" (38.89% - "Undecided")

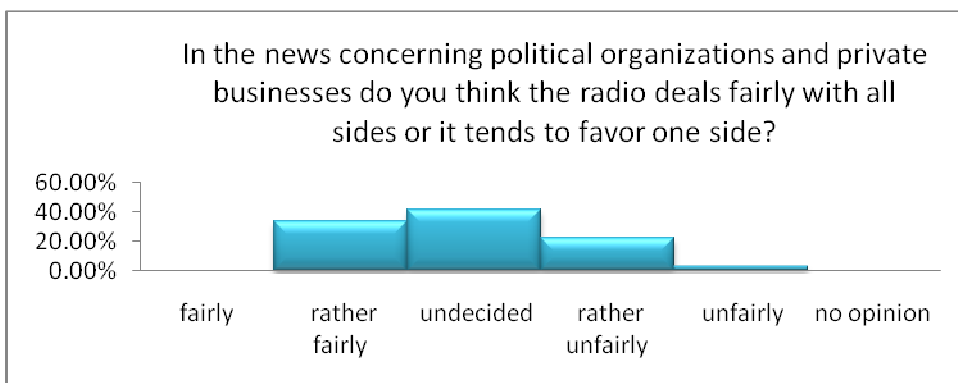


Table 7.4.4.3 T-test. Radio

	<i>Russian respondents</i>	<i>American respondents</i>
Mean	2.91	2.91
Observations	33	36
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.967	
Confidence interval	(2.6378; 3.1803)	2.6321; 3.2011)

The findings suggest that both groups of respondents are very doubtful regarding news impartiality in different media. In case of television, the means (mean = 3.83 on the Russian side; mean = 3.89 on the American side) and confidence intervals (CI = (3.4514; 4.2056) on the Russian side; CI = (3.6944; 4.0833) on the American side) indicate that on average both groups tend to suppose that television deals “rather unfairly” in the news concerning political organizations and private businesses. P value (= 0.77) proves the statistical insignificance of the difference in results.

In case of the print media there is a major shift on the American side towards more credence in news impartiality. Mean = 2.53 = between “rather fairly” and “undecided”. Confidence interval = (3.1876; 3.8409). A half of the Americans (50%) answered “rather fairly”, 38.89% - “undecided”. On the Russian side the mean = 3.51 = between “undecided” and “rather unfairly”. The most popular answer was “rather unfairly” (38.89%). Confidence interval = (2.2921; 2.7633). The P value (= 0.0000006) proves that the difference in answers between two groups is statistically significant.

The values of the average meanings and confidence intervals (the mean = 2.45; CI = (2.2184; 2.6905) on the Russian side; the mean = 2.38; CI = (2.1548; 2.6098) on the American side) reveal that both groups in general rate the Internet political news impartiality between “rather fairly” and “undecided. The most popular answer in both groups was “rather fairly” (50% of Russians; 66.67% of Americans). As many as 33.33% of Russians and 19.44% of Americans answered “undecided”. The P value (= 0.655) proves that in this case the difference in answers is not statistically significant.

The findings regarding radio news impartiality are quite surprising. The mean values on both sides are the same (= 2.91 = “undecided”). The number of the respondents in both groups that chose the most popular answer “undecided” is also the same (39.89%). Logically, the confidence intervals are approximately the same as well (CI = (2.6378; 3.1803) on the Russian side; CI = (2.6321; 3.2011) on the American side). The P value

(= 0.967) proves the statistical insignificance of the difference in results between two groups.

In summary, the findings reveal that both groups of respondents are inclined to judge television news as the least unbiased, and online news as the most unbiased among four named media. The difference in opinions between two groups is significant only in case of the print media, where Americans on average tend to judge the news as considerably more unbiased than Russians. If I rank the media according to their news impartiality based on the results to this questions from the most unbiased to the least unbiased, the list will be “Internet, radio, newspapers and magazines, television” in case of Russians and “Internet, newspapers and magazines, radio, television” in case of Americans.

Summing up the findings to three questions concerning various sides of news credibility (objectivity, accuracy, and impartiality) I can conclude that none of the media was judged as objective, accurate or unbiased. On the Russian side, online news was put at the first place among four media in terms of objectivity, accuracy, and impartiality. The radio news was in the second place, followed by the newspapers and magazines news. The television news was ranked the last out of four media. On the American side, online news scored first in terms of objectivity and impartiality, followed by the print media news, but second in terms of accuracy, where newspapers and magazines news was judged as most accurate out of four media. Radio news was put on the third place, and television news was given the lowest credence across the board. The overall mediocre ratings of news credibility in this survey tend to support other studies that suggest that media are suffering from the crisis of credibility. (Johnson, T., Kaye, B., 1998) Another conclusion, rather surprising, is that, in general, opinions about news credibility are broadly shared among Americans and Russians. The case of Russia the low level of news credibility could be explained by the current situation in mass media where all major media are directly state-owned or indirectly state-controlled. Russians realize that news presented in the mainstream media supports a pro-government position and, therefore, cannot be perceived as credible. Even though the situation about media freedom in the U.S. is undoubtedly better than in Russia, media credibility scores very low. In their book *Manufacturing consent: The Political Economy of Mass Media* (1988), Noam Chomsky and Edward Herman argue that even though American media

in many cases provide critical and detailed information about significant issues that do not involve the U.S. actions, they often fail to provide fair and objective news about the U.S. actions in domestic and foreign affairs. (Chomsky, N., Herman, E., 1988) Low media credibility ratings indicate that Americans are aware of this problem.

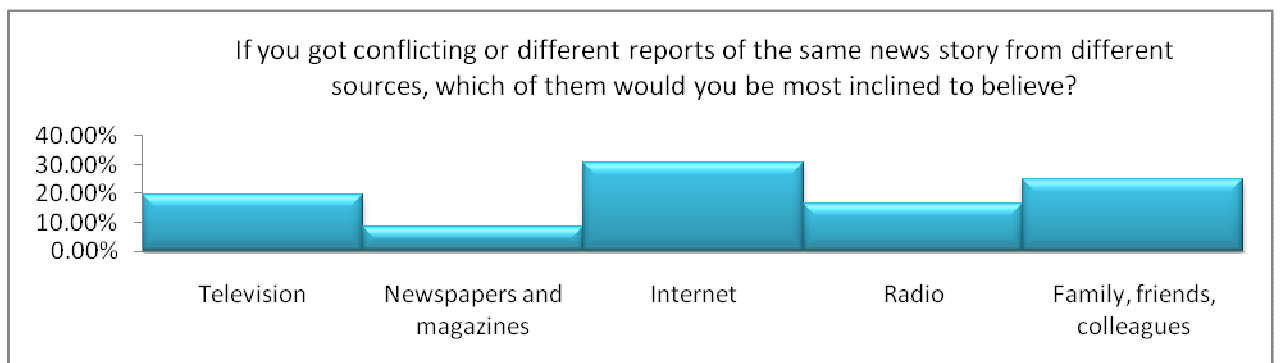
5) If you got conflicting or different reports of the same news story from different sources, which of them would you be most inclined to believe?

Russian respondents:

Table 7.5.1 Sources ratings according to their credibility in case of conflicting or different reports (by percentage)

Television	Newspapers and magazines	Internet	Radio	Family, friends, colleagues
19.44%	8.33%	30.56%	16.67%	25.00%

Graph 7.5.1 Opinions on sources ratings according to their credibility in case of conflicting or different reports (by percentage)



American respondents:

Table 7.5.2 Sources ratings according to their credibility in case of conflicting or different reports (by percentage)

Television	Newspapers and magazines	Internet	Radio	Family, friends, colleagues
8.33%	69.44%	19.44%	2.78%	0.00%

Graph 7.5.2 Opinions on sources ratings according to their credibility

in case of conflicting or different reports (by percentage)

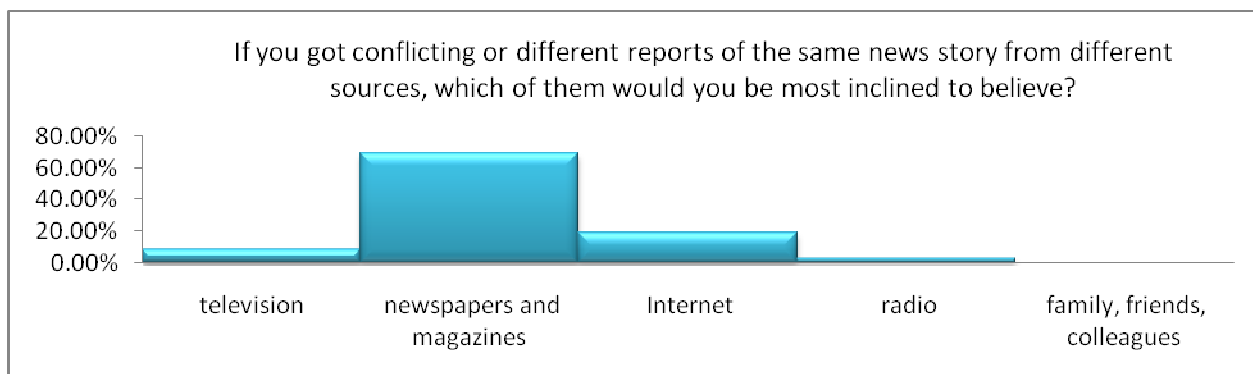


Table 7.5.3 T-test. Television

	<i>Russian respondents</i>	<i>American respondents</i>
Mean	0.194	0.083
Observations	36	36
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.0063	

Table 7.5.4 T-test. Newspapers and magazines

	<i>Russian respondents</i>	<i>American respondents</i>
Mean	0.0833	0.6944
Observations	36	36
P(T<=t) two-tail	5.58294E-13	

Table 7.5.5 T-test. Internet

	<i>Russian respondents</i>	<i>Russian respondents</i>
Mean	0.167	0.278
Observations	36	36
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.012	

Table 7.5.6 T-test. Radio

	<i>Russian respondents</i>	<i>American respondents</i>
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Mean	0.167	0.278
Observations	36	36
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.001	

Table 7.5.7 T-test. Interpersonal channels

	<i>Russian respondents</i>	<i>American respondents</i>
Mean	0.2556	0
Observations	36	36
Confidence interval	(0.1065; 0.4035)	

As it appears, in case of getting conflicting or different reports Russian on average tend to believe more news presented in the Internet (30.56%) or provided by other people (25%). 19.44% of the Russian respondents believe television news, 16.67% - radio, and 8.33% - newspaper and magazines. Such a sharp dispersion in answers indicates that there might be no evident preferences in this issue. The trend in answers of the Americans is very clear. The results show that the press is the most believable source for news for the majority of the American respondents (69.44%). The second popular answer was “Internet” (19.44%). 8.33% believe television news the most, one person (2.78%) radio, and nobody named “family, friends, colleagues”. The most important outcome of this question for the purpose of my thesis is the difference in interpersonal channels credibility ratings as opposed to mass media. ¼ of the Russian respondents and none of the American respondents trust interpersonal channels in purveying the news reports the most. How can we explain such difference? Perhaps, Russians are more relationship-oriented, whereas Americans are rather self-oriented. “Individualism is the one side versus its opposite, collectivism, that is the degree to which individuals are integrated into groups”. (Hofstede, G. Hofstede, G.J., 2005, p. 74) Russia is collectivist/group culture, whereas Americans tend to be individualists. As in any other collectivist country, ties between people in Russia are tight and Russians tend to believe people as mediators of news. In individualist societies the ties between individuals are loose: everyone is expected to look after him/herself. Americans are more inclined towards shaping their opinion based on news from the mass media. In my opinion, these factors explain a preference to believe news mediated by social group members much more in Russia, than the United States.

6) How important for you are the following media in obtaining news on actual events?

**6.1 Television**

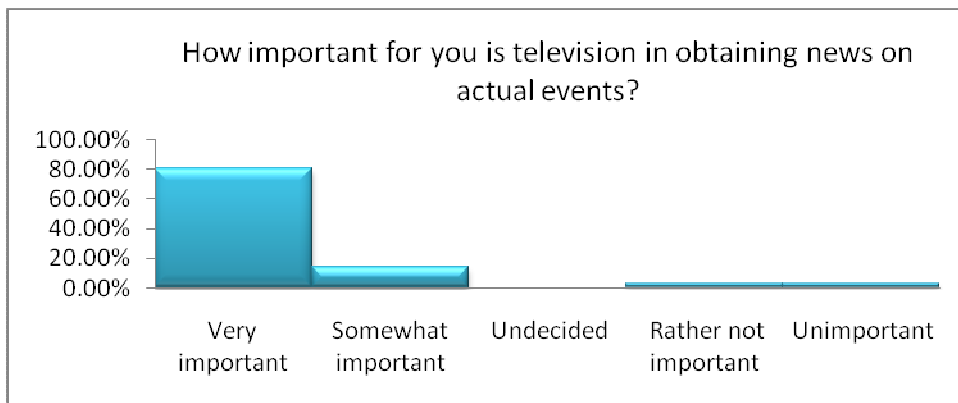
Russian respondents:

Table 7.6.1.1 Ratings for television importance as a news source (by percentage)

Very important	Somewhat important	Undecided	Rather not important	Unimportant
1	2	3	4	5
80.56%	13.89%	0.00%	2.78%	2.78%

Graph 7.6.1.1 Opinions on television importance as a news source (by percentage)

Mean = 1.33 = “Very important”



American respondents:

Table 7.6.1.2 Ratings for television importance as a news source (by percentage)

Very important	Somewhat important	Undecided	Rather not important	Unimportant
1	2	3	4	5
22.22%	44.44%	27.78%	5.56%	0.00%

Graph 7.6.1.2 Opinions on television importance as a news source (by percentage)

Mean = 2.17 = “Somewhat important”



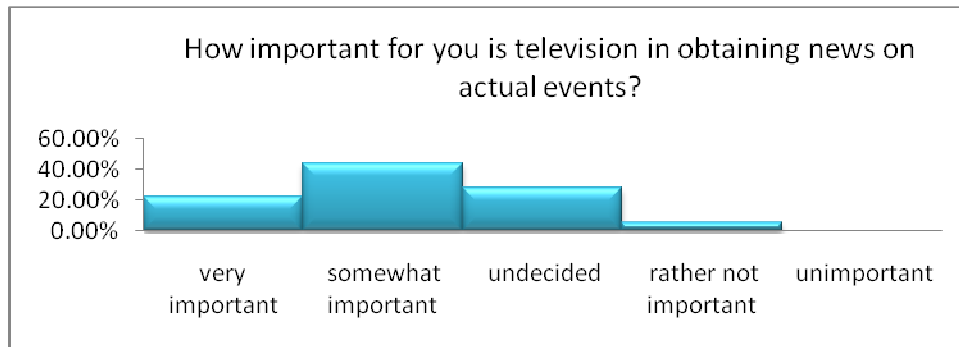


Table 7.6.1.3 T-test. Television

	<i>Russian respondents</i>	<i>American respondents</i>
Mean	1.33	2.17
Observations	36	36
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.000009	
Confidence interval	(1.0417; 1.6249)	(1.8807; 2.4526)

The difference in answers is very sharp. For 80.56% of the Russian respondents and only for 22.22% of the American respondents, television is “very important” as a news source. 13.89% of Russians and 44.44% of Americans judged television as “somewhat important”. None of Russians and 25% of Americans answered “undecided”. One Russian (2.78%) and two Americans (5.56%) answer “rather not important”. One person on the Russian side and nobody on the American side answer “unimportant”. In case of Russians, the mean = 1.33 = “very important”. Confidence interval = (1.0417; 1.6249). On the Americans side, the average is “somewhat important” (the mean = 2.17). Confidence interval = (1.8807; 2.4526). The P value (= 0.000009) proves the statistical significance of the difference in results. The surprising outcome is that even though television was put on the bottom of the list of four main mass media in terms of providing objective, fair, accurate, and unbiased news by both groups; it still remains an important news source. Even though the news audience does not perceive television to be highly credible medium, they still rely on television for news.

## 6. 2 Newspapers and magazines

Russian respondents:

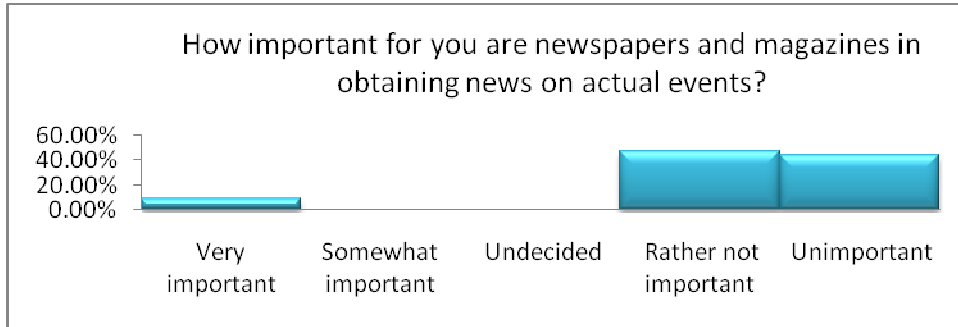
Table 7.6.2.1 Ratings for newspapers and magazines importance as a source news (by percentage)

Very important	Somewhat important	Undecided	Rather not important	Unimportant
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1	2	3	4	5
8.33%	0.00%	0.00%	47.22%	44.44%

Graph 7.6.2.1 Opinions on newspapers and magazines importance as a news source (by percentage)

Mean = 4.22 = “Rather not important”



American respondents:

Table 7.6.2.2 Ratings for newspapers and magazines importance as a news source (by percentage)

Very important	Somewhat important	Undecided	Rather not important	Unimportant
1	2	3	4	5
75.00%	19.44%	0.00%	0.00%	5.56%

Graph 7.6.2.2 Opinions on newspapers and magazines importance as a news source (by percentage)

Mean = 1.42 = between “Very important” and “Somewhat important”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> As it is evident from the chart, in this case the mean cannot be considered representative (due to polarization in answers)

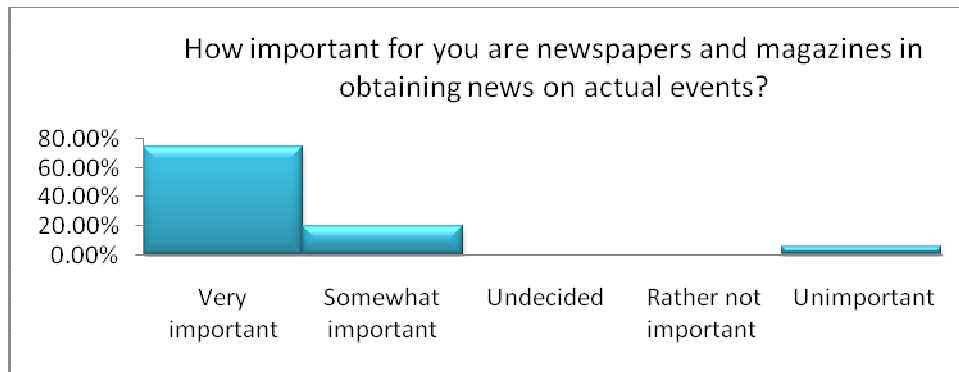


Table 7.6.2.3 T-test. Newspapers and magazines

	<i>Variable 1</i>	<i>Variable 2</i>
Mean	4.22	1.42
Observations	36	36
P(T<=t) two-tail	8.64359E-18	
Confidence interval (3.8505; 4.5938)	(1.0893; 1.7439)	

The difference in results is so sharp, that we can talk about polarization in answers. The average meaning cannot be considered representative for either of two groups. On the Russian side, the confidence interval = (3.8505; 4.5938) indicates that Russians averagely rate the press as “rather not important” source for news. Three Russian respondents (8.33%) judged the press as a “very important” source to obtain the news on actual events, 47.22% of Russians found it “rather not important” and 44.44% - “unimportant”. On the American side, the confidence interval = (1.0893; 1.7439) indicated the tendency to rate the print media importance as a news source between “very important” and “somewhat important”. 75% of Americans consider the print media to be a “very important” source for news, 19.44% - “somewhat important” and only 5.56% - “unimportant”. The P value (= 8.64359E-18)<sup>3</sup> proves the statistical significance of the difference in results. There might be two ways to interpret such findings. We can consider 5.56% on the Russian side who answered “very important” and 8.33% on the American side who answered “unimportant” to be a statistical deviation. (We need to keep in mind that due to the small number of respondents, this sample cannot be considered representative). If so, then we can say that Russian respondents in general prefer to obtain news from other media rather than print media, therefore, they tend to rate the press as “rather not important” or “unimportant” source

<sup>3</sup> 8.64359E-18 = 0.00000000000000000864359

for news; whereas American respondents tend to rely on newspapers and magazines in obtaining news. The second way to interpret the answers might be to assume that 5.56% are the only part of Russian respondents who can access the print media of their interest any time of their choice. These people read the press, trust it, and find it important. The majority of the respondents might tend to consider the press “rather not important” or “unimportant” not because they *prefer* not to use it but simply because they cannot access (afford) it; therefore, it cannot play an important role in obtaining the news. If we apply the same thinking on the American group, then we can assume that for 8.33% of the respondents the press is “unimportant” source because they don’t access it. While television, radio, and Internet are overall accessible for all respondents, the print media might be not. The figure out if the lack of access should be taken into consideration, I included in my survey the following question # 7, whether people would buy the print media more if they could afford it.

These findings indicate that the print media play a much more significant role as a news source for America than for Russians. In this case, the exposure to the press news correlates with the credibility of the print media. In their answers to the first question of this survey, none of Russians and 77.78% of Americans rated the print media as the source for most reliable news and reports on actual events. While in case of television, exposure to the news was found to be insignificantly connected to perceptions of trustworthy and credibility of the medium; in case of the print media, news exposure seems to be significantly related with trust. We can assume that people read the news in the press because they trust them.

### 6.3 Radio

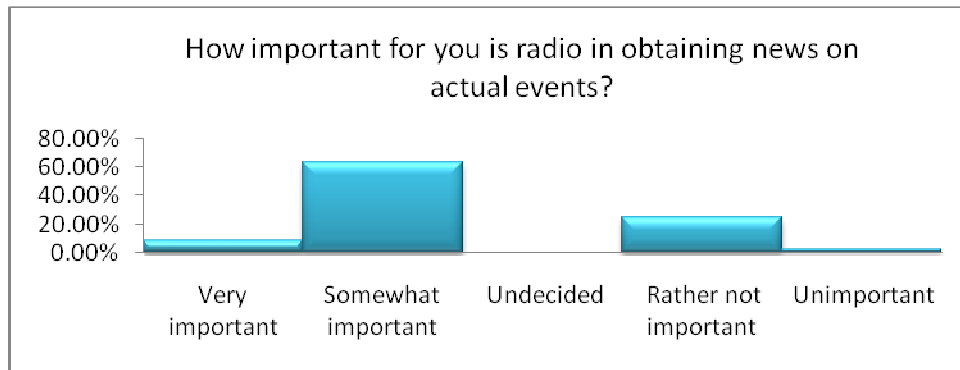
Russian respondents:

Table 7.6.3.1 Ratings for radio importance as a news source (by percentage)

Very important	Somewhat important	Undecided	Rather not important	Unimportant
1	2	3	4	5
8.33%	63.89%	0.00%	25.00%	2.78%

Graph 6.3.1 Opinions on radio importance as a news source (by percentage)

Mean = 2.45 = “Somewhat important”



American respondents:

Table 7.6.3.2 Ratings for radio importance as a news source (by percentage)

Very important	Somewhat important	Undecided	Rather not important	Unimportant
1	2	3	4	5
0.00%	8.33%	13.89%	52.78%	25.00%

Graph 7.6.3.2 Opinions on radio importance as a news source (by percentage)

Mean = 3.99 = "Rather not important"

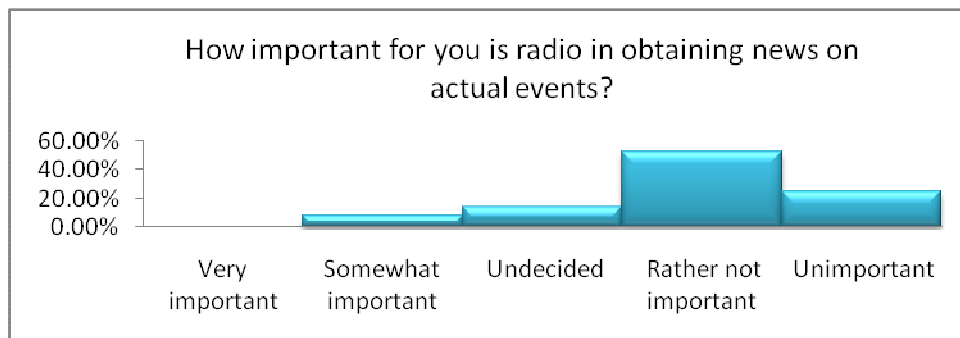


Table 7.6.3.3 T-test. Radio

	<i>Russian respondents</i>	<i>American respondents</i>
Mean	2.45	3.99
Observations	36	36
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.0000000004	
Confidence interval	(2.0872; 2.8015)	(3.7089; 4.2909)

As it appears from the survey, for the Russian group of respondents radio is a significantly more important source for news than for the American one. The majority of the Russian respondents (63.89%) considered radio to be "somewhat important", 25% - "rather not important", 8.33% - "very important", and one person (2.78%) -

“unimportant” source for news. The mean = 2.45 = “undecided”; CI = (2.0872; 2.8015) on the Russian side None of Americans answered “very important”, only 8.33% answer “somewhat important”, 13.89% - “undecided”, 52.78% - “rather not important” and 25% judge radio as “unimportant” source for news. The mean = 3.99 = “rather not important”; CI = (3.7089; 4.2909) on the American side. The P value (= 0.0000000009) proves the statistical significance of the difference in answers. The results show that on average Russian respondents tend to judge radio as more important source for news than Americans. One explanation of such outcome could be the fact that due to the lack of access to the press media many Russians perceive radio as the major alternative news source. Unlike the print media, radio is affordable for everyone and, in fact, commonly used. In my opinion, another explanation might be connected to the historically different role the radio played in Russia (Soviet Union) and the United States. In the Soviet Union radio and television broadcasting were not the entertainment media but the main means for the political propaganda. Radio content (like all other media) was strictly controlled and censored by the Communist party. Radio content included mainly news, cultural, and scientific programs. Even though today the number of commercial radio channels focused on music and entertainment significantly prevails over the number of informative channels with open debates and discussions; the radio has not lost its authority and weight in society as the medium creating public opinion on topics of current interest. According to the article *Broadcasting timeline: History of American radio* (2008), from its beginning radio in the United States has been used primarily for entertainment. The American radio content included mainly comedy, drama, music, and sports reporting. (“Broadcasting timeline: History of American radio”, 2008)

#### 6.4 Internet

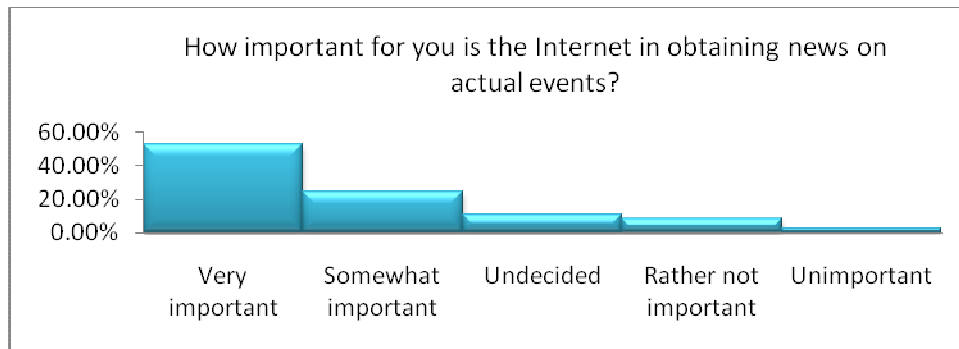
Russian respondents:

Table 7.6.4.1 Ratings for importance of Internet as a news source (by percentage)

Very important	Somewhat important	Undecided	Rather not important	Unimportant
1	2	3	4	5
52.78%	25.00%	11.11%	8.33%	2..78%

Graph 7.6.4.1 Opinions on Internet news importance as a news source (by percentage)

Mean = 1.83 = between “Very important” and “Somewhat important”



American respondents:

Table 7.6.4.2 Ratings for importance of Internet as a news source (by percentage)

Very important	Somewhat important	Undecided	Rather not important	Unimportant
1	2	3	4	5
41.67%	50.00%	0.00%	8.33%	0.00%

Graph 7.6.4.2 Opinions on Internet news importance as a news source (by percentage)

Mean = 1.75 = between “Very important” and “Somewhat important”

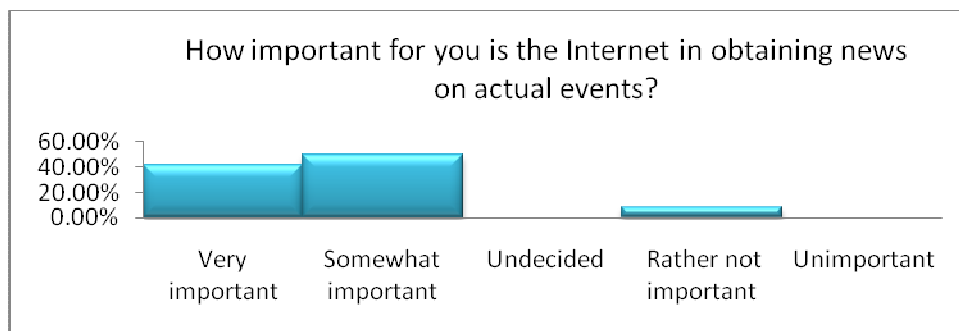


Table 7.6.4.3 T-test. Internet

	Russian respondents	American respondents
Mean	1.83	1.75
Observations	36	36
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.72	
Confidence interval	(1.4582; 2.2083)	(1.4654; 2.0345)

From the tables we can see that the Internet is averagely judged between “very important” and “somewhat important” (with the inclination towards “somewhat important”) by both groups (the mean = 1.83 on the Russian side and the mean = 1.75 on the American side). Confidence intervals are very similar: CI = (1.4582; 2.2083) on the Russian side; CI = (1.4654; 2.0345) on the American side. The P value (= 0.72) proves that the difference is statistically insignificant. Such results are in line with the findings to the previous questions (questions N° 1-4) where online news were judged as

most fair, objective, accurate and unbiased among four main media. As we can see, there is a notable linkage between the credibility of the Internet as a medium and its importance as a news source. Relatively high credibility perception of the Internet leads to reliance on it for news and this, in turn, increases the exposure to online news.

It is known that the perception of every medium constantly changes over time. Every new medium inevitably changes the perception of the traditional media. I assume that if people are exposed to a new medium, they tend to distrust more the older media. In this case, if Russians are exposed to online news media (as the Internet in Russia is still a very recent medium, which spreads only now), they tend to distrust more the traditional media. Today traditional media in Russia tend to be conservatism and ideologically controlled by the dominant political power. Therefore, people tend to perceive the Internet news as an alternative source of information and the opportunity to obtain a variety of opinions. This, in turn, might have an influence on their perception of traditional mass media. Another explanation of high reliance on the Internet as a news source might be connected to the context of the Internet use. This context may differ from the context of other media use. People often rely on the online news when other media are not available (for instance, at the workplace). Compared to the traditional sources, online news sites also provide readers with such distinctive functions as interactivity and flexibility in story selection: they can access a news source for a topic of their interest any time they choose. Many people read the Internet news because of the higher source variety compared to traditional media.

## 6.5 Interpersonal channels

Russian respondents:

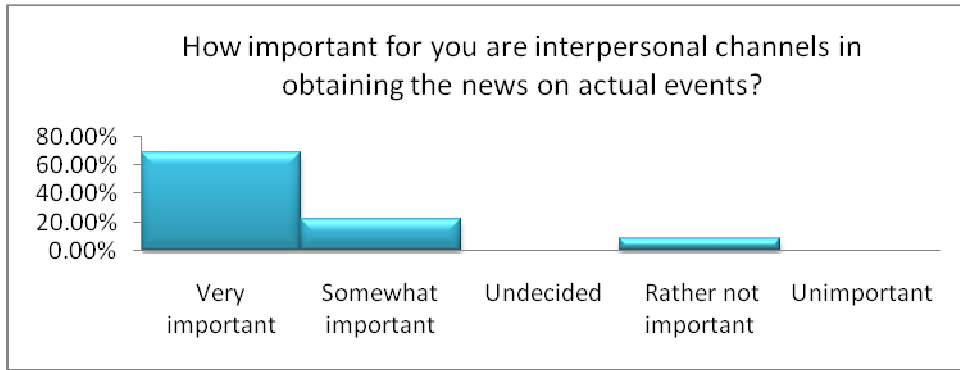
Table 7.6.5.1 Ratings for important of interpersonal channels as a news source (by percentage)

Very important	Somewhat important	Undecided	Rather not important	Unimportant
1	2	3	4	5
69.44%	22.22%	0.00%	8.33%	0.00%

Graph 7.6.5.1 Opinions on interpersonal channels importance as a news source (by percentage)

Mean = 1.47 = between “Very important” and “Somewhat important”





American respondents:

Table 7.6.5.2 Rations for importance of interpersonal channels importance as a news source (by percentage)

Very important	Somewhat important	Undecided	Rather not important	Unimportant
1	2	3	4	5
22.22%	33.33%	25.00%	19.44%	0.00%

Graph 7.6.5.2 Opinions on interpersonal channels importance as a news source (by percentage)

Mean = 2.42 = “Somewhat important”

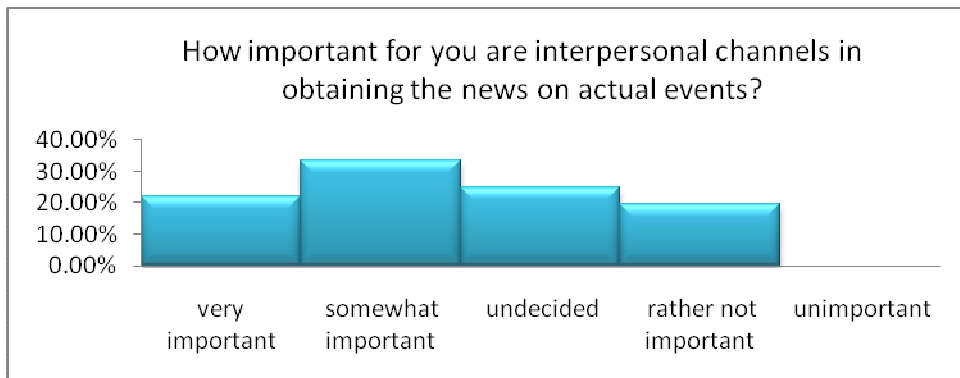


Table 7.6.5.3 T-test. Interpersonal channels

	<i>Russian respondents</i>	<i>American respondents</i>
Mean	1.47	2.42
Observations	36	36
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.000009	
Confidence interval	(1.1751; 1.7692)	(2.0606; 2.7726)

As it appears from the results, interpersonal channels are judged more important in gaining the news in Russia than in the U.S. 69.44% of Russians and 22.22% of Americans find interpersonal channels to be “very important”. 22.22% of Russians and

33.33% of Americans rate interpersonal channels as “somewhat important”. None of Russians and 25% of Americans answered “undecided”. 8.33% of Russians and 19.44% of Americans answer “rather not important”. Nobody answered “unimportant”. On the Russian side the mean (= 1.47) and confidence interval = (1.1751; 1.7692) indicate the average answer between “very important” and “somewhat important”. On the American side the mean (= 2.42) and confidence interval = (2.0606; 2.7726) indicate that the average answer is “somewhat important”. The t-test (P value = 0.000009) proved the statistical significance of the difference in answers. The smaller confidence interval on the Russian side as opposed to the American side points to the smaller dispersion in opinions of the Russian respondents as opposed to American respondents. We can conclude that there is no common opinion about interpersonal channels importance as a news source among the American respondents.

Such findings could be explained by the differences between two countries in terms of such cultural dimensions as individualism vs. collectivism and large vs. small power distance. Being an individualist society, Americans rely more on themselves than on other members of the society. People tend to obtain information from the primary source rather than mediated by the “third” part. The relations between social group members are loose and interpersonal channels are not as important source for information as in collectivist society. Power-distance Index measures “the extent to which the less powerful members of organizations and institutions (like the family) accept and expect that power is distributed unequally. This represents inequality (more versus less), but defined from below, not from above. It suggests that a society’s level of inequality is endorsed by the followers as much as by the leaders.” (Hofstede, G., 2005, p. 40) Hofstede (2005) divides societies into two groups: small and large power distance countries. According to Hofstede (2005), the United States is a country with a small power-distance, whereas power-distance in Russia is big. In small power-distance countries people relate to one another more as equals regardless of formal positions. Inequalities between people are usually minimized. In large power-distance societies, as Russia, inequalities in the social order are expected and desired. Respect and authority often come automatically from the formal positions on the hierarchical ladder. It is expected that the less powerful are dependent on the more powerful. (Hofstede, G., 2005) Russians might tend to trust information provided by people with more power „automatically“, only because of the respect to their formal position in the social order.

In general, as for the need for news, on the Russian side television is the most important medium (80.56% of the respondents ranked it as a “very important” medium; the mean = 1.33) followed by interpersonal channels (69.44% rated it as “very important”; the mean = 1.47), Internet (52.78% - “very important”; the mean = 1.83), radio and print media (even though both were ranked as “very important” media by 8.33% of the respondents, the significant difference in the average meaning (the mean for radio = 2.44; the mean for print media = 4.1) indicates a large shift towards radio as a more important news medium). In case of Americans, the print media were judged as most important news source (75% ranked it as “very important; the mean = 1.44), followed by the Internet (41.67% - “very important”; the mean = 1.75), television (22.22% - “very important”; the mean = 2.16), interpersonal channels (22.22% - “very important”; the mean = 2.41), and radio (nobody ranked it as “very important”; the average rating = 3.99).

In summary, the findings from this question show that mass media credibility perception and mass media use for gaining news are not necessarily linked. In case of the press, radio, and the Internet there is a significant linkage between media credibility and media use for news. If people perceive the news media to be highly credible, they tend to rely on these media for information. This link, however, does not exist in case of television. Low credibility perception of the television as a medium does not impact on the television use as the source for news.

The question that naturally rises is why people watch what they don't trust? One answer could be that news gratifies diverse needs even when trust is missing. Even when we don't trust the news, news gratify our “need for cognition”, which is “the need to think, to understand, to make sense of the world, and to learn about various points of view”. (Tsfati, Y., Cappella, J., 2005) This need motivates us to watch the news regardless of whether the news media are perceived trustworthy or not. One of the definitions of trust in the news media is that it is based on our belief in the professionalism of journalistic practice (Liebes, T., 2000). If we assume that the motivation for news exposure is the rational decision to learn about the world, the audience would benefit very little from exposure to mistrusted sources. However, motivations for news exposure are diverse, and obtaining accurate and objective information on actual events is only one of them.

In general, television is considered to be the least specialized medium that serves a range of different personal and social needs. (Katz, E., Haas, H., Gurevitch, M., 1973)

People follow the news for multiple reasons. Some of us want to understand the world better. Some people watch the news to gratify their cognitive needs. They want to understand the world better and obtain the latest news on actual events. Other people follow the news to fulfill their social integrative needs. These people are not interested in what is happening in the world; for them watching the news is the way not to lose the contact with other people. For other people the news fulfill surveillance function. They get pieces of information necessary for their daily lives. In his research, Wenner (1985) offers a list of need gratified by news exposure that contains 16 different motivations, including ego-defense, expressive, tension reduction, and so on. (Wenner, L. A., 1985)

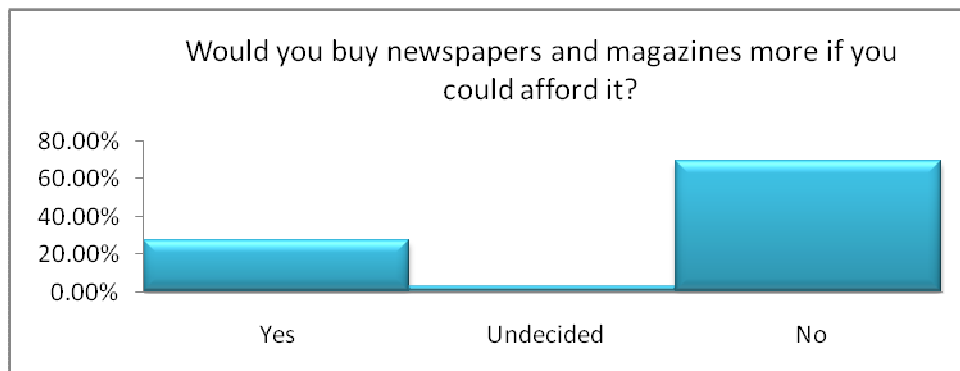
7) Would you buy newspapers and magazines more if you could afford it?  
Russian respondents:

Table 7.1 Ratings for respondents' wish to buy newspapers and magazines more

(by percentage)

Yes	Undecided	No
1	2	3
27.78%	2.78%	69.44%

Graph 7.1 Opinions on satisfaction with access to newspapers and magazines (by percentage)



American respondents:

Table 7.2 Ratings for respondents' wish to buy newspapers and magazines more

(by percentage)

Yes	Undecided	No
1	2	3
8.33%	5.56%	86.11%

Graph 7.3 Opinions on satisfaction with access to newspapers and magazines (by percentage)

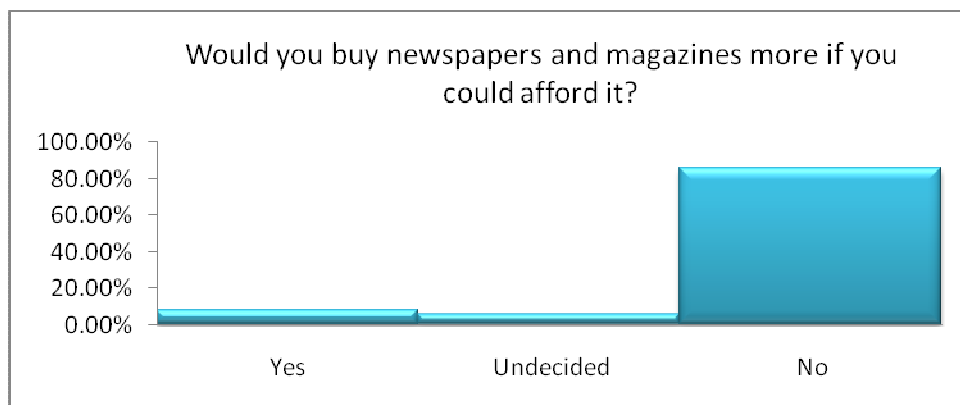


Table 7.3 T-test. Newspapers and magazines demand

	<i>Russian respondents</i>	<i>American respondents</i>
Mean	2.41	2.78
Observations	36	36
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.04	
Confidence interval	(2.1034; 2.7166)	(2.5801; 2.9799)

This question was included into my survey to find out whether both Russian and American respondents are satisfied with their access to the press or they would buy and read the press more if they could afford it. Almost one third of the Russian respondents (27.78%) would buy print media more if they could afford it. This implies that they are generally interested in reading the press but their current financial situation does not allow them to read it as much as they wish. Apparently, this part of the respondents values the press as a source for information. Whereas television and radio are the media available and affordable mainly for everyone, the press and the Internet might be not. This circumstance might result in a lower popularity, esteem, and trust of the print media in the Russian society. As far as American group of respondents is considered, only 8.33% of Americans would buy newspapers and magazines more if they could

afford it. It appears that the major part of the respondents (86.11%) is satisfied with their access to the press. Based on these findings I can make an assumption that lower credibility of the press in Russia as opposed to the U.S. might be related to some extent to the poor financial situation in Russia.

8) Does your opinion on actual events coincide with opinion of your family, friends, colleague, neighbors, etc.?

Russian respondents:

Table 8.1 Opinion coincidence ratings (by percentage)

Always	More often than not	Sometimes	Rather not	Never
1	2	3	4	5
8.33%	83.33%	8.33%	00.00%	0.00%

Graph 8.1 Results on opinion coincidence (by percentage)

Mean = 2.17 = "More often than not"



American respondents:

Table 8.2 Opinion coincidence ratings (by percentage)

Always	More often than not	Sometimes	Rather not	Never
1	2	3	4	5
0.00%	5.56%	58.33%	36.11%	0.00%

Graph 8.2 Results on opinion coincidence (by percentage)

Mean = 3.31 = “Sometimes”

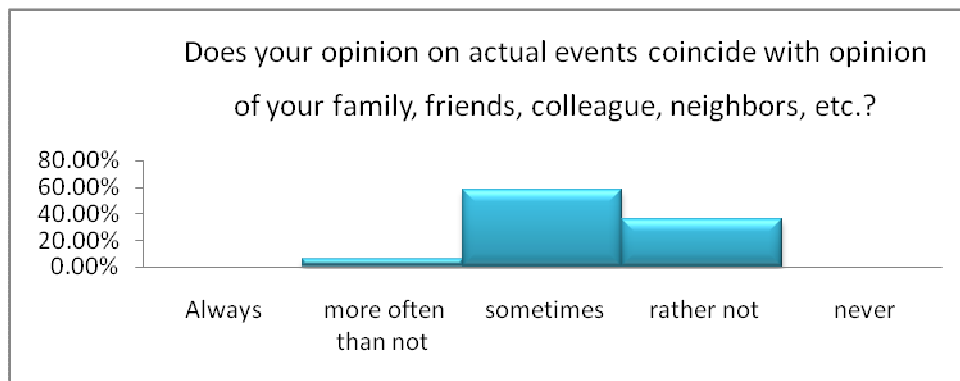


Table 8.3 T-test. Opinion coincidence

	<i>Russian respondents</i>	<i>American respondents</i>
Mean	2.17	3.31
Observations	36	36
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.036	
Confidence interval	(2.0265; 2.3067)	(3.1104; 3.5006)

“Cultural norms refer to collective expectations of what constitute proper or improper behavior in a given situation...”. (S. Ting-Toomey, 1999, p. 11) As it appears from the research (the mean equals 2.17 = “more often than not”) Russian respondents more often share their opinion with the opinion of their community as opposed to American respondents (the mean = 3.31 = “sometimes”). The P value (= 0.036), shows that the difference is statistically significant; therefore, the hypothesis is proved. In this case Americans again prove themselves to be rather individualist. Individualist societies are characterized by relatively loose bonds between members of a community; people rely more on themselves than on other members of the society. Individual freedom in shaping and expressing own opinions is highly valued in individualist cultures. In this dimension Russia again proved itself to be a collectivist culture. What does it mean to be a collectivist culture? Hofstede (2005) argues that collectivist society is one in which “people from birth onwards are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups, often extended families (with uncles, aunts and grandparents) which continue protecting them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty.” (Hofstede, G., 2005, p. 74) In this type of society many ways of behavior are prescribed by the culture in order to maintain group harmony, for that reason people tend to avoid conflicts and keep the agreement within their social group. The conformity in opinions is viewed to be one of the ways to

maintain peace in the social community. As any other collectivist country, Russians care more about social harmony, whereas Americans are more inclined towards self-expression. According to Geert Hofstede (2005), in any collectivist society group harmony and stable relationships are more important than a task. It is considered more appropriate to suppress personal opinion than to show it to everybody and ruin existing social peace. Social harmony can be called the number one cultural value in traditional societies. In individualistic societies, on the contrary, individual opinion is more valuable than social harmony within a community, since individual interests prevail over collective ones. Therefore, people do not necessarily suppress their opinion and are not afraid to face the disagreement. (Hofstede, G., 2005)

## **9. OVERVIEW OF SURVEYS ON MEDIA ATTITUDES AND USAGE**

Due to the small number of respondents in my questionnaire (36 people from each side) the sample size cannot be considered representative. Therefore, I would like to briefly review several large surveys on attitudes and usage of different media, which were conducted in last 10 years in Europe and United States. This overview will help to understand better the attitudes towards media and the situation with media credibility in different countries. I will also compare the findings of these surveys with my own to see whether my results support or confront them.

One of the surveys I would like to have a look at is the survey “Media More Trusted Than Governments” conducted by *GlobeScan*, Global Public Opinion and Stakeholder Research. This survey was carried out in March-April 2006 with a total sample of 10 230 people in 10 countries in different parts of the world. According to the findings of this survey, across the countries surveyed the media is averagely trusted more than governments. Media is trusted by an average of 61% of the respondents opposed to 52% for governments. However, two countries that deviated from this trend were the United States (67% trust in government vs. 59% in media) and Great Britain (51% trust in government vs. 47% trust in media). Trust in media was highest in Nigeria (88% trust in media vs. 34% trust in government) followed by Indonesia (86% trust in media vs. 71% trust in government), India (82% trust in government vs. 66% trust in media), and



Russia (58% trust in media vs. 54% in government). (“BBC/Reuters/Media Center Poll: Trust in the Media”, 2008)

According to the findings of the same survey, for American citizens most important news sources were television (mentioned first by 50% of respondents), newspapers (21%), Internet (14%), and radio (10%). What I find especially interesting is the fact that, according to this poll, Americans (87%) are in the second place only after Germans in preferring to check several sources of news rather than relying only on one. (“Country Profiles”, 2008)

When American respondents were asked about how much they trust different news sources, they give the highest trust ratings to local newspaper (81% answered “a lot” or “some trust”), friends and family (76%), national television (75%), national / regional newspapers (74%), and public broadcast radio (73%). The news Internet sites were rated as trustworthy only by 55% of the respondents. (“Country Profiles”, 2008)

I would like to highlight that compared to the respondents in other countries Americans tended to express much less confidence in accuracy of media news reports. Only 51% of American respondents agreed with the statement that media reported news accurately and as many as 49% disagreed with the same statement. Only 29% agreed and 69% of American respondents disagreed that media reported all sides of a story. (“Country Profiles”, 2008)

In case of Russia, as most important news sources in a typical week were referred television (mentioned first by 74%), newspapers (9%), and radio (6%). As most news sources they trust the majority of Russian respondents named in the first place national television (84% of respondents answered „a lot“ or „some trust“) and friends and family in the second (81%). News websites and radio scored surprisingly low: Internet web sites were mentioned only by 22% and commercial radio by 29% of the respondents. (“Country Profiles”, 2008)

In Russia by far the largest percentage of respondents among all surveyed countries – 3% – answered that they did not trust any news source. The survey results also presented the high level of skepticism about press freedom expressed by Russians: only 25% of respondents agreed that journalists were able to report news freely. (“Country Profiles”, 2008)

In my paper I made a cross-comparison review only of two countries – United States and Russia. However, I would like to briefly look at the results and situation about media trust in two other countries – Germany and Great Britain. The comparison with other countries will help to notice whether there are any major differences or particularities in media situations in Russia and the United States. According to the findings of the *GlobeScan* survey, Germans were the only nation among all countries surveyed that named a newspaper as their most important news source more often than television (45% answered “newspapers” and only 30% “television”). Other important news sources mentioned were the Internet and radio. However, both of them rated significantly lower: 11% - “Internet” and 10% - “radio”. In case of Germany, the most trusted news sources were public broadcast radio (83% answer „a lot“ or „some trust“), national television (81%), national / regional newspapers (80%) and local newspapers (74%). Friends and family and online news sources scored considerably lower: “online sources” were referred by 38% and “friends and family” only by 25% of the respondents. (“Country Profiles”, 2008) 80% of German respondents followed the news every day and as many as 91% preferred to check several sources while acquiring their news. A majority of 54% disagreed that the media news reported all sides of a story. Germans, however, expressed confidence in independence of their media from government and foreign influence. (“Country Profiles”, 2008)

The most important news sources named by citizens of the United Kingdom were television (mentioned first by 55%), newspapers (19%), radio (12%), and the Internet (8%). In the question regarding which news sources they trusted the most, UK citizens gave the highest ratings to national television (86% answer „a lot“ or „some trust“), friends and family (78%), national / regional and local newspapers (both 75%), public broadcast radio (67%), news web sites on the Internet (44%). (“Country Profiles”, 2008) What is interesting to point out is that UK citizens are remarkably similar to respondents in the United States regarding many aspects of their attitudes to the mass media. For example, like American respondents, they expressed much more skepticism about objectivity of the mass media stories: 64% of UK respondents disagreed that the media news reported all sides of a story. 43% also disagreed that the media reported news accurately. (“Country Profiles”, 2008)

In relation with the purpose of my paper the most interesting findings of the *GlobeScan* survey could be the following ones. Even though the opinions about the news accuracy among Russians and Americans are similar, the attitudes towards news impartiality differ significantly. 64% of Russians and only 29% of Americans, 41% of Germans, and 32% of the British agreed that the news reported all sides of a story. It proves that Russians are inclined to believe more in media impartiality than other nations. Another interesting moment is that among four mentioned countries Russians are the only ones who believe more in accuracy than impartiality of media news (54% agree that media reports news accurately and 64% agree that media news reports all sides of story). There were also considerable differences in interest in news and preferences in media usage. Russians show significantly less interest in following the news: only 55% of Russians (opposed to 72% of Americans, 80% of Germans, and 72% of the British) followed the news every day. Russians also are much less inclined to get news online: only 25% (opposed to 60% of Americans, 52% of Germans, and 57% of the British) liked to get news over Internet. Compared to other mentioned nations Russians (50%) tended much less to check several sources of news (opposed to the United States (87%), United Kingdom (79%), and Germany (91%). We can only guess the reasons of such findings. One possible explanation could be that to use the one news source is sufficient for Russians to receive all necessary information. Another possible explanation could be that Russians do not check several sources because they do not believe in news diversity among different media.

	Russia		USA	
	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
Reports news accurately	54	34	51	46
Reports all sides of story	64	22	29	69
Journalists able to reports news freely	25	47	38	50
I follow the news every day	55	32	72	27
Value opportunity to get news over Internet/wireless	25	43	60	24

Prefer to check several source of news	50	31	87	12
Have stopped using media source because it lost my trust	10	73	32	60

Table 9.0 Attitudes towards Media „Agree“ vs. „Disagree“, by country (in %) (“Countries Profile”, 2008)

	Germany		United Kingdom	
	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
Reports news accurately	58	36	51	43
Reports all sides of story	41	54	32	64
Journalists able to reports news freely	33	59	45	44
I follow the news every day	80	18	72	27
Value opportunity to get news over Internet/wireless	52	40	57	22
Prefer to check several source of news	91	8	79	18
Have stopped using media source because it lost my trust	15	82	29	64

Table 9.1 Attitudes towards Media „Agree“ vs. „Disagree“, by country, (in %) (“Countries Profile”, 2008)

The findings of national *Time Use Surveys* (TUS) (Aliaga, C., Winqvist, K., 2008) provide data useful for understanding how much time people in European Union countries devote to watching television compared to other media. According to data in national Time Use Surveys, free time (including sports, hobbies, socializing time, and time devoted to television-video and other media) in ten countries of European Union is

between 4.5 and 6 hours on average per day. Watching television is undoubtedly a significant share of free time. Depending on a country, watching television occupies around 40% in the majority of the countries. This share is below 40% in Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Finland, and Slovenia and exceeds 50% in Hungary. Time devoted to other media occupies on average from 10 to 15%. (Aliaga, C., Winqvist, K., 2008),

The next survey I would like to briefly review is the one about media usage and opinions on the Internet and Internet users in Russia, which carried out by *Russian Public Opinion Research Center* in October 2006. ("Что мы думаем об Интернете и Интернетчиках?", 2008). According to the data of this survey, the majority of Russians (85%) prefer to receive information from central TV programs. Central newspapers as the source for news are used by 31% of the respondents. The Internet is used only by 13% of Russians, which is comparable with the number of local radio stations users. The largest share of people (26%) who use the Internet as the source for news lives in Moscow and Saint Petersburg. There is a correlation between a size of towns and a share of Internet users as the news source. The larger settlement is the higher share of people receiving news online is. In capital cities and cities of 100 000 and more inhabitants the share of Internet users occupies around 16-18%. In small towns and villages this share is between 7 and 10%. During 2006 the number of people using television as the source for news significantly increased: from 76% in 2005 up to 85% in 2006. ("Что мы думаем об Интернете и Интернетчиках?", 2008)

The number of people using the Internet for news increased considerably less: from 10 to 13%. Nevertheless, according to data in 2006, the Internet was used by 25% of Russian population, 5% of which used the Internet daily, 8% - a few times per week, 6% - a few times per month, and 4% - only occasionally. The majority of Internet users needed it for work or school purposes. In 2006 44% of Internet users in Russia used it for sending emails and reading news. 20% of the respondents used the Internet to listen to music and watch movies. There was a correlation between the average month income and Internet usage of respondents. People with higher month income used the Internet more often. When asked about the role of the Internet as a news source, 44% of the Russian respondents agreed that Internet was a powerful resource for quick and trustworthy information. At the same time 27% of the respondents were very careful about the Internet as the news source. The lack of control upon the information online

was named to be the main argument for this caution. The majority of Russians (54%) agreed that Internet had a large influence on various life spheres. Only 19% of Russian population perceived the Internet as an „entertainment“. ("Что мы думаем об Интернете и Интернетчиках?", 2008)

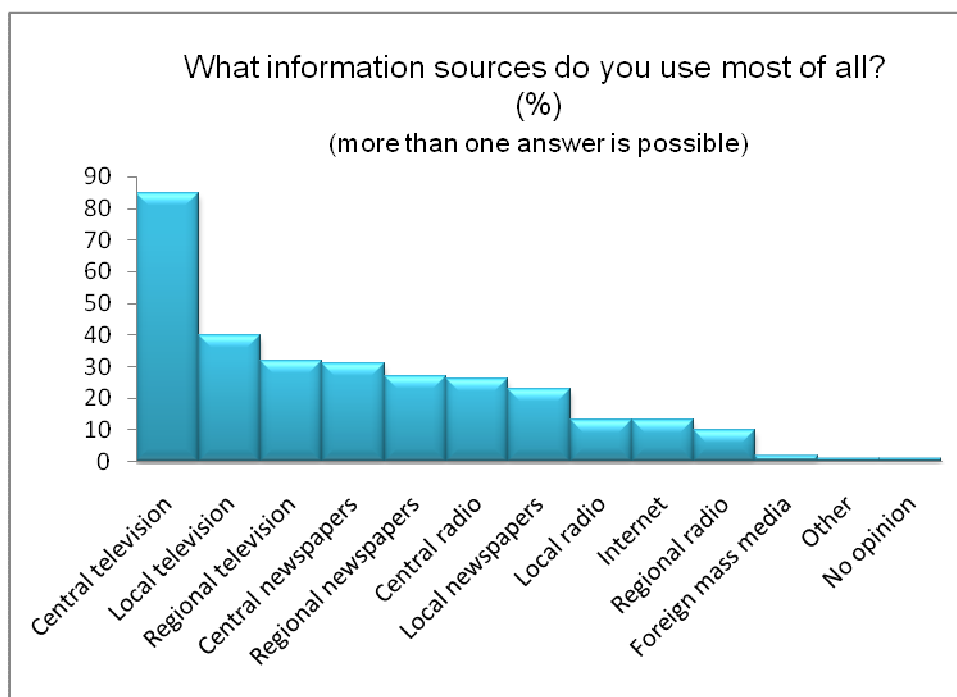


Table 9.2 What information source do you trust most of all? ("Что мы думаем об Интернете и Интернетчиках?", 2008)

If these findings are compared to the results of my survey, I can state that in my survey among four mentioned media (television, press, radio, Internet) Russian respondents rated the Internet as the most reliable news source (55.56%). Television was placed in the second place by 38.89% of the respondents.

In my survey I asked the question regarding what source a respondent would be most inclined to believe in case of receiving conflicting or different reports on the same news story from different sources. On average Russians tend to believe more news presented in the Internet (30.56%) or provided by other people (25%). 19.44% of the Russian respondents believe television news, 16.67% - radio, and 8.33% - newspaper and magazines. Such a sharp dispersion in answers might indicate that there might be no evident preferences in this issue.

I find it interesting and useful for the purpose of this paper to have a brief look and compare how much people use Internet in Russia, United States and European countries.

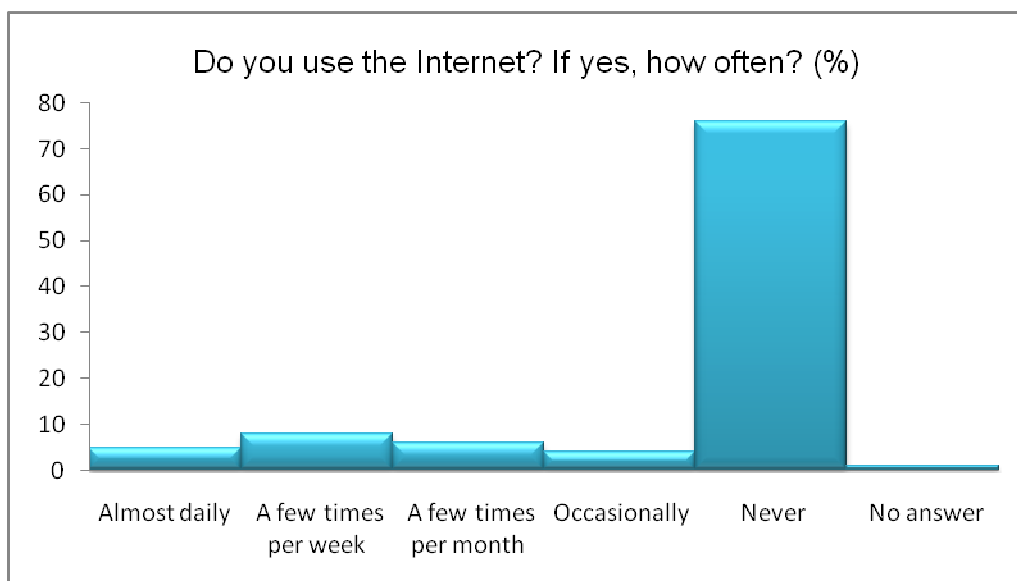


Table 9.3 Internet usage in Russia, ("Что мы думаем об Интернете и Интернетчиках?", 2008)

All Russian respondents I interviewed for my survey have experience with using the Internet. 52.78% of them judged the Internet as a “very important” and 25% as “somewhat important” news source.

The following table gives us a brief picture of what specific Internet-related activities are performed by citizens of European Union countries. The statistics show how many percents of all people interviewed have ever carried out any Internet-related activities.

	<b>Use a search engine to find information</b>	<b>Send email with attached files</b>	<b>Chat room, newsgroups, online discussion</b>	<b>Peer-to-peer files sharing for music, movies</b>	<b>Create a webpage</b>
EU 27	57	50	24	13	10

Table 9.4 Individuals who have ever carried out specific Internet related activities, EU 27, 2007, (%) (Smihily, M., „Internet Usage 2007. Households and individuals“, 2008)

As we can see, two by far most popular activities performed in the World Wide Web are information search and using email.

According to Nielsen in *Net Ratings Research* data, in the United States in 2007 there was 70.2% of the population using the Internet. In June 2008 this number increased up to 72.5%. („Internet World Stats“, 2008)

	<b>Use a search engine to find information</b>	<b>Send email with attached files</b>	<b>Chat room, newsgroups, online discussion</b>	<b>Peer-to-peer files sharing for music, movies</b>	<b>Create a webpage</b>
USA	89	60	29	15	12

Table 9.5 Individuals who have ever carried out specific Internet-related activities in the USA, 2008 (%) („IT facts“, 2008)

If we compare the number of Internet users (including active Internet users and people having little experience with Internet-related activities) in Russia, EU countries and USA, the United States has the highest amount, while Russia is on the bottom of the list.

The last survey I would like to reviews is the World Values Survey. ([www.worldvaluessurvey.com](http://www.worldvaluessurvey.com)) The World Values Survey is a non-profit association of social scientists arranged as a network with a central body with a seat in Stockholm, Sweden. Since 1981 interviews on various topics have been carried out on a regular basis (every 3-5 years) to discover what people value and want out of life. World Values Surveys show the basic direction of the values changes and trends. The nationally representative sample sizes in all countries participated in the surveys exceed 1000 people.

In 1999 and 2005 the surveys about confidence in press and television were conducted. In both cases the question remained the same:

„I am going to name a number of organizations. For each one, could you tell me how much confidence you have in them: is it a great deal of confidence, quite a lot of confidence, not very much confidence or none at all?“



- 1 A great deal
- 2 Quite a lot
- 3 Not very much
- 4 None at all

	United States
A great deal	6.1%
Quite a lot	18.3%
Not very much	56.8%
None at all	17.9%
Don't know	0.9%
No answer	0.0%

Table 9.6 Confidence in television, 1999 (“Data bank”, 2008)

	Russian Federation	United States	Slovenia	Great Britain	France
A great deal	5.3%	2.1%	3.4%	2.8%	3.1%
Quite a lot	38.9%	21.2%	30.2%	27.8%	31.3%
Not very much	38.5%	59.6%	56.8%	49%	42.7%
None at all	14.9%	14.3%	7.7%	16.8%	22.1%
Don't know	2.2%	0.9%	1%	2.3%	0.2%
No answer	0.2%	1.9%	0%	1.3%	0.4%

Table 9.7 Confidence in Television, 2005 (“Data bank, 2008)

Unfortunately, the findings of the survey regarding confidence in television in 1999 are available only for the United States. Compared to 1999 in 2005 there is a decline in confidence in television among the US respondents (“a great deal” 6.1% in 1999 vs. 2.1% in 2005). In 2005 Americans seem to be the most skeptical if compared to respondents from Russia, Slovenia, Great Britain and France (only 2.1% of Americans answered “a great deal”). However, the largest number of respondents expressing “none at all” confidence was in France (22.1%) and the littlest in Slovenia – only 7.7%. If we compare the average meanings of Russia and the United States the tendency appears to be quite similar towards “not very much” confidence (mean = 3.6 in case of Russia and mean = 3.8 in case of United States). (“Data bank”, 2008)

The same survey was conducted regarding confidence in press.

	Russian Federation	United States	Slovenia	Great Britain	France	Czech Republic
A great deal	4.6%	6.4%	14%	1.3%	2.4%	3.8%
Quite a lot	24.7%	20.2%	46.4%	14.4%	32.9%	33.3%
Not very much	42.4%	54.7%	33%	48.1%	41%	52.4%
None at all	26.2%	18.2%	5.6%	35%	22.8%	9.2%
Don't know	2%	0.5%	0.4%	0.9%	0.6%	0.5%
No answer	0.1%	0%	0.3%	0.4%	0.3%	0.8%

Table 9.8 Confidence in Press, 1999 (“Data bank, 2008)

According to this survey conducted in 1999 the largest number of respondents who have none confidence in press live in Great Britain (35% answered „none at all“ and at the same time the littlest amount of respondents who answer „a great deal“ - only 1.3%. Russians also prove to have less confidence in the press compared to other mentioned

countries (the second highest rating after Great Britain of answers „none at all“ - 26.2%).

	Russia	United Sates	Slovenia	Great Britain	France
A great deal	3.1%	2.1%	2.8%	1.4%	2.3%
Quite a lot	33.4%	21.3%	24.5%	11.6%	35.8%
Not very much	42.8%	58.5%	58.1%	52.8%	42.7%
None at all	19.4%	15.2%	12.5%	31.6%	19.0%
Don't know	0.7%	0.8%	1.5%	1.2%	0.2%
No answer	0.5%	1.9%	0.6%	1.2%	0.0%

Table 9.9 Confidence in Press, 2005 (“Data bank, 2008)

In 2005 British respondents again proved to have the littlest confidence in the press (only 1.4% answered “a great deal” and by far the highest amount - 31.6% - answered “none at all”). Generally, we can see that there was no significant difference in changes and trends regarding confidence in television and press between Russia, United States, and European countries. The overall trend in answers of Russian respondents was similar to the one in France, while the average tendency in the United States was closed to the one in Slovenia. Compared to the findings in 1999 we see the sharpest decline in confidence in press in Slovenia (“a great deal” – 14% in 1999 versus 2.8% in 2005). If the average meanings of five mentioned countries are compared, we see the tendency toward less confidence in press on the sides of respondents in Great Britain and the United States (mean = 3.6 in case of Great Britain and mean = 3.7 in case of United States = between “not very much” and “none at all”). (“Data bank, 2008)

If we compare the ratings of Russian respondents in 2005 regarding confidence in television and press, we see that 5.3% of people had “a great deal” of confidence in television and only 3.1% had “a great deal” of confidence in press. 38.9% of Russians trusted “quite a lot” in television and only 33.4% have “quite a lot” of trust in press.

14.9% have “none at all” trust in television and 19.4% - in press. So on average I can state that according the findings of World Values Survey in 2005 Russians proved to have more confidence in television rather than the press. In my survey I did not ask in general about confidence in television or press. However, I asked the respondents about which source of news they are more likely to believe in case of getting conflicting or different reports of the same news story from different media sources. In case of getting conflicting or different reports the Russian respondents on average proved to believe more news presented in the Internet (30.56%) or provided by other people (25%). 19.44% of the Russian respondents believe television news, 16.67% - radio, and 8.33% - newspaper and magazines. So if we compare trust in news reports presented in television and press, Russian respondents appeared to have more trust in television rather than the press ones. However, in questions regarding objectivity, accuracy, and impartiality, the news in the press was judged more positively than television ones. The television news was ranked the last out of four media (television, Internet, radio, and press). Summing up, I can conclude that the results of my survey partly accord and partly confront the findings of World Values Survey.

If we compare the findings of World Values Survey regarding confidence in television and press among American respondents in 2005 we can see that 2.1% of Americans had “a great deal” of confidence in television and 6.4% had “a great deal” of confidence in press. Almost the same amount of respondents 21.2% in case of television and 21.3% in case of press had “quite a lot” of confidence. 14.3% of American respondents had “none at all” confidence in television and 15.2% had no confidence in press. So in case of Americans there was no sharp difference between levels of confidence in these two media. The findings of my survey show that the press was the most believable source for news for the majority of the American respondents (69.44%). Only 8.33% believed television news the most out of television, press, radio, and the Internet. In my study I asked about which source gives you most reliable news and reports on actual events the press news reliability ratings strikingly exceeded television news reliability ratings on the American side. 77.78% of the respondents judged the press as the source of the most reliable news and nobody named television. Summing up, I can state that the findings of my survey support the findings of the World Values Survey in case of the United States.

If we compare the level of confidence in television and press in European countries in 2005 according to data provided by World Values Survey, we can state that on average there is slightly more trust in television rather than in press but in general confidence levels for both media are quite low. The findings of my study in case of Russia and the United States are in line with this tendency.

## **10. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

The purpose of this study was to check whether media credibility perception in Russia and the United States differs or not. The findings of the conducted provide support to for the proposed hypothesis that the media credibility in these two counties would differ. However, the hypothesis about the general tendency towards higher media credibility perception on the American side was proved only partly. In general, this study supports the findings of the previous surveys that discovered differences in news credibility in different media but a general skepticism towards all mass media. (Johnson, T. J., Kaye, B. K., 1998); (Flanagin, A. J., Metzger, M. J., 2000). Even though it is important that we acknowledge that there are multiple points of view about media credibility, we should keep in mind that as Russians as Americans have serious reservations about mass media credibility in general. In summary, I can conclude that Russian respondents tend to give higher credence to online news before radio stories, and news in newspapers and magazines before television news. American respondents put online news at the first place and the press news at the second place in terms of objectivity and impartiality, but the print media news scored higher than online news in terms of accuracy. Radio news was in the third place and television news was on the bottom of the list across the board. The overall perceptions of media credibility by two groups of respondents are fairly uniform in case of television and Internet, although some distinctions are made in case of radio, print media and interpersonal channels. There is a significant shift on the American side towards higher credence in news stories in the print media, whereas Russian respondents tend to trust radio more than Americans.

Another proposed hypothesis about interpersonal channels being judged as a more importance source for news on the Russian side as opposed to American side has been proved by the findings to this survey. There is a sharp difference in opinions in regard with interpersonal channels credibility: one fourth of the Russian respondents and none of the American respondents trust interpersonal channels in purveying the news reports most as opposed to mass media. Such results indicate that social network in Russia performs the surveillance function to a large extent. In the United States, on the contrary, interpersonal channels are not considered to be important in terms of its news or informative function. There is a major tendency among Russian respondents towards opinions coincidence compared to American respondents. From this point Russian respondents proved to be the members of a rather collectivist society, while American respondents' answers exposed their individualist cultural background.

The findings suggest that mass media credibility perception and mass media use for gaining news are not necessarily linked. Importance of the media as a source for news is not necessarily related to media credibility perception. There is a significant linkage in case of the press, radio, and Internet news: if individuals perceive a medium to be credible, they tend to use it as a source for news. This link, however, does not exist in case of television. Low credibility perception of the television and low ratings of television news in terms of its objectivity, accuracy, and impartiality do not impact on the television use as the source for news. This finding suggests that a medium importance as a news source, in other words, the degree to which people rely on a medium for news, is related to the medium credibility perception only to some degree. This indicates that media credibility is not only an attribute of the medium but is also related to other factors, such as respondent's orientations including his access to media, his preferences in media use, and the amount of exposure to a medium. Therefore, we can state that when people select media, trust in the news media is likely to interact with other circumstances.

Four main limitations should be acknowledged. First, the findings from this study are limited by the small sample size that cannot be considered representative. Second, because the survey was completed mainly among University teachers and students, generalization to the findings to other media audiences should be done only with caution. Third, my survey has underscored the complexity of the media credibility

concept itself. It did not make a distinction in terms of the credibility of the medium, the source, and the message. Forth, I was asking about news content in a universal sense. Thus, I compared media news objectivity and importance, but I am not certain which specific news programs were actually watched. This approach could be problematic because, there are important differences in the types of news programs in Russia and the United States.

However, the results of the comparative survey reported here provide a useful framework for examining the differences in media credibility in different countries. Findings of this study provide insights into important issues regarding the cultural differences in credibility perception of mass media and interpersonal channels and media importance as sources for news. This study highlights the cultural presuppositions in media credibility perception. Future research could be conducted to examine why differences in the assessed media credibility and importance as news sources occurred as they did.

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## 11. APPENDIX

### QUESTIONNAIRE

My name is Olga Volobueva and I study at Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic. For my master thesis I am currently conducting research on “Media Credibility: cases of Russia and the United States”. Your answers to the following questions will help me to find out the prevailed attitude to mass media in these two countries. To complete the questionnaire will take you less than 5 min. Your info will be kept confidential and will be used only to get average statistical data.

**Thank you in advance for your contribution!**

**Your age:**

**Gender:**

**Country of origin:**

**The highest level of education you have completed:** high school, bachelor, master, PhD

**Your occupation:**

In the following questions please indicate your opinion by marking the answers bold.

**1) Which source do you think gives you more reliable news and reports about actual events? (More than one answer is possible)**

Television	Newspapers and magazines	Radio	Internet	Other (specify which .....)
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**2) Do you agree that most news in the following sources is presented in a fair and objective way?**

2.1 Television

yes, always	yes, more often than not	sometimes	rather not	no, never	no opinion
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2.2 Newspapers and magazines

yes, always	yes, more often than not	sometimes	rather not	no, never	no opinion
-------------	--------------------------	-----------	------------	-----------	------------

2.3 Internet

yes, always	yes, more often than not	sometimes	rather not	no, never	no opinion
-------------	--------------------------	-----------	------------	-----------	------------

2.4 Radio

yes, always	yes, more often than not	sometimes	rather not	no, never	no opinion
-------------	--------------------------	-----------	------------	-----------	------------

**3) Do you agree that the news story itself in the following sources is accurate as to its facts?**

3.1 Television

agree	rather agree	undecided	rather disagree	disagree	no opinion
-------	--------------	-----------	-----------------	----------	------------

3.2 Newspapers and magazines

agree	rather agree	undecided	rather disagree	disagree	no opinion
-------	--------------	-----------	-----------------	----------	------------

3.3 Internet

agree	rather agree	undecided	rather disagree	disagree	no opinion
-------	--------------	-----------	-----------------	----------	------------

3.4 Radio

agree	rather agree	undecided	rather disagree	disagree	no opinion
-------	--------------	-----------	-----------------	----------	------------

**4) In presenting the news concerning political organizations and private businesses do you think the following sources deal fairly with all sides or they tend to favor one side?**

4.1 Television

fairly	rather fairly	undecided	rather unfairly	unfairly	no opinion
--------	---------------	-----------	-----------------	----------	------------

4.2 Newspapers and magazines

fairly	rather fairly	undecided	rather unfairly	unfairly	no opinion
--------	---------------	-----------	-----------------	----------	------------

4.3 Internet

fairly	rather fairly	undecided	rather unfairly	unfairly	no opinion
--------	---------------	-----------	-----------------	----------	------------

4.4 Radio

fairly	rather fairly	undecided	rather unfairly	unfairly	no opinion
--------	---------------	-----------	-----------------	----------	------------

**5) If you got conflicting or different reports of the same news story from different sources, which of them would you be most inclined to believe?**

Television	Newspapers and magazines	Radio	Internet	Family, friends, colleagues
------------	--------------------------	-------	----------	-----------------------------

**6) How important for you are the following media in receiving the news on actual events?**

6.1 Television

Very important	Somewhat important	Undecided	Rather not important	Unimportant
----------------	--------------------	-----------	----------------------	-------------

6.2. Newspapers and magazines

Very important	Somewhat important	Undecided	Rather not important	Unimportant
----------------	--------------------	-----------	----------------------	-------------

6.3. Radio

Very important	Somewhat important	Undecided	Rather not important	Unimportant
----------------	--------------------	-----------	----------------------	-------------

6.4 Internet

Very important	Somewhat important	Undecided	Rather not important	Unimportant
----------------	--------------------	-----------	----------------------	-------------

6.5 Interpersonal channels

Very important	Somewhat important	Undecided	Rather not important	Unimportant
----------------	--------------------	-----------	----------------------	-------------

**7) Would you buy newspapers and magazines more if you could afford it?**

yes	undecided	no
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**8) Does your opinion on actual events coincide with opinion of your family, friends, colleague, neighbors, etc.?**

always	more often than not	sometimes	rather not	never
--------	---------------------	-----------	------------	-------

**9) Have you had some previous practical experience in watching television, reading press, listening to the radio, and using the Internet?**

АНКЕТА

Меня зовут Ольга Волобуева и я учусь в Карловом университете в Праге, Чешской республике. Для своей дипломной работы я провожу исследование на тему “Доверие к

средствам массовой информации: примеры США и России”. Ваши ответы на последующие вопросы помогут мне определить преобладающее отношение к средствам массовой информации в этих двух странах.

Вам понадобится менее 5 минут для заполнения этой анкеты. Вся информация останется строго конфиденциальной и будет использована только для получения среднестатистического результата.

**Спасибо Вам заранее за Ваше участие!**

**Ваш возраст:**

**Пол: мужской/женский**

**Место рождения (страна):**

**Законченное образование:** средняя школа, среднее специальное, высшее, докторское, другое

**Ваша профессия:**

В следующих вопросах, пожалуйста, отметьте жирным шрифтом или цветом ответ, который соответствует вашему мнению.

**1) Какой источник, по вашему мнению, предоставляет вам наиболее достоверные новости и репортажи об актуальных событиях?**

Телевидение	Газеты и журналы	Радио	Интернет	Другое (уточните, что конкретно .....
-------------	------------------	-------	----------	---------------------------------------

**2) Согласны ли вы, что большинство новостей в следующих источниках объективны и непредвзяты?**

2.1 Телевидение

да, всегда	скорее да	иногда	скорее нет	нет, никогда	не знаю
------------	-----------	--------	------------	--------------	---------

2.2 Газеты и журналы

да, всегда	скорее да	иногда	скорее нет	нет, никогда	не знаю
------------	-----------	--------	------------	--------------	---------

2.3 Интернет

да, всегда	скорее да	иногда	скорее нет	нет, никогда	не знаю
------------	-----------	--------	------------	--------------	---------

2.4 Радио

да, всегда	скорее да	иногда	скорее нет	нет, никогда	не знаю
------------	-----------	--------	------------	--------------	---------

**3) Согласны ли вы, что новости в следующих источниках передают точные факты событий и происшествий?**

3.1 Телевидение

совершенно согласен/а	скорее согласен/а	не решено	скорее не согласен/а	Совершенно не согласен/а	не знаю, нет мнения
-----------------------	-------------------	-----------	----------------------	--------------------------	---------------------

### 3.2 Газеты и журналы

совершенно согласен/а	скорее согласен/а	не решено	скорее не согласен/а	Совершенно не согласен/а	не знаю, нет мнения
-----------------------	-------------------	-----------	----------------------	--------------------------	---------------------

### 3.3 Интернет

совершенно согласен/а	скорее согласен/а	не решено	скорее не согласен/а	Совершенно не согласен/а	не знаю, нет мнения
-----------------------	-------------------	-----------	----------------------	--------------------------	---------------------

### 3.4 Радио

совершенно согласен/а	скорее согласен/а	не решено	скорее не согласен/а	Совершенно не согласен/а	не знаю, нет мнения
-----------------------	-------------------	-----------	----------------------	--------------------------	---------------------

**4) Считаете ли вы, что, передавая новости о политических организациях и частных предприятиях, следующие источники обращаются со всеми сторонами одинаково справедливо или же они поддерживают только одну из сторон?**

#### 4.1 Телевидение

совершенно справедливо	скорее справедливо	не решено	скорее несправедливо	совершенно несправедливо	не знаю, нет мнения
------------------------	--------------------	-----------	----------------------	--------------------------	---------------------

#### 4.2 Газеты и журналы

совершенно справедливо	скорее справедливо	не решено	скорее несправедливо	совершенно несправедливо	не знаю, нет мнения
------------------------	--------------------	-----------	----------------------	--------------------------	---------------------

#### 4.3 Интернет

совершенно справедливо	скорее справедливо	не решено	скорее несправедливо	совершенно несправедливо	не знаю, нет мнения
------------------------	--------------------	-----------	----------------------	--------------------------	---------------------

#### 4.4 Радио



совершенно справедливо	скорее справедливо	не решено	скорее несправедливо	совершенно несправедливо	не знаю, нет мнения
------------------------	--------------------	-----------	----------------------	--------------------------	---------------------

**5) Если вы получите разные или противоречивые новости или репортажи из разных источников, которому из них вы скорее будете доверять?**

Телевидение	Газеты и журналы	Радио	Интернет	Члены семьи, друзья, коллеги
-------------	------------------	-------	----------	------------------------------

**б) Как важны для вас следующие источники для получения новостей о последних событиях?**

6.1 Телевидение

очень важно	достаточно важно	не решено	скорее не важно	неважно	не знаю, нет мнения
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6.2. газеты и журналы

очень важно	достаточно важно	не решено	скорее не важно	неважно
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6.3. радио

Очень важно	часто	иногда	редко	никогда
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6.4. Интернет

Очень важно	часто	иногда	редко	никогда
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6.5. Члены семьи, друзья, коллеги, и т.д.

Очень важно	часто	иногда	редко	никогда
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**7) Стали ли бы вы покупать больше газет и журналов, если бы вы могли это позволить с финансовой точки зрения?**

да	не знаю	нет
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**8) Совпадает ли ваше мнение об актуальных событиях в России и мире с мнением ваших друзей, родственников, коллег, и т.д.?**

да, всегда	часто	иногда	редко	нет, никогда
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**9) Есть ли у вас предыдущий опыт использования средств массовых информационных (с телевидением, чтением газет и журналов, радио и Интернетом)?**