

FRAMING MH17: COMPARING STATE-FUNDED PERSPECTIVES ON A PLANE  
CRASH IN AN AREA OF TENSION

by

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Framing MH17: Comparing State-Funded Perspectives On A Plane Crash In An Area Of  
Tension

A Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degrees of Master  
of Science at George Mason University and Master of Arts at the University of Malta

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## **DEDICATION**

This is dedicated to my family who have supported me with all they have (no words can express how grateful I am) to all free thinkers and altruistic visionaries.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I would like to thank my family, friends, classmates, teachers, professors, all university staff from director over secretary to cleaning personnel, my flat mates and all the vegan chefs who have made this happen.

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## LIST OF SYMBOLS

Euro.....	€
Ruble .....	₽

## **ABSTRACT**

### **FRAMING MH17: COMPARING STATE-FUNDED PERSPECTIVES ON A PLANE CRASH IN AN AREA OF TENSION**

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George Mason University, 2016

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This thesis describes how two state-funded international news broadcasters covered the MH17 plane crash that happened on 17 July 2014 in the Donbas region in Ukraine. The two outlets chosen were the Russian broadcaster RT, which has been accused of being a Russian propaganda flagship, and German broadcaster Deutsche Welle as benchmark. Due to the fact that Deutsche Welle's CEO Limbourg had joined into these accusations and Germany's membership to US-led NATO and EU, who have colliding interests with Russia in Ukraine and the conflict going on in the Donbas region, the coverage was examined on conflict framing, human interest framing, economic consequences framing, responsibility framing and propaganda framing. This framing analysis was conducted on the content of the two outlets' online coverage over the first ten days following the incident. This thesis examines whether there is a significant difference in the coverage of events that indicates exclusive and unique propagandistic framing practices of RT.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

*“The smart way to keep people passive and obedient is to strictly limit the spectrum of acceptable opinion, but allow very lively debate within that spectrum....”*

- Noam Chomsky

On 25 February 2015 John Kerry, United States of America Secretary of State, asked the House of Appropriations Committee of the House of Representatives for more money to counter RT stating that Russian News are available in English while the US does not have any Russian-speaking outlet. According to Kerry this was the reason why America was losing a public relations war. He insisted that Russia was spending a lot of money into putting out information in languages that people in other countries understand while the US were not doing so (Russia Today, 2015; Realenlighten, 2015). With regards to the situation in Ukraine just a month later Kerry called RT a “propaganda bullhorn” that “has been deployed [...] to promote president Putin’s fantasy about what is playing out on the ground” (Lord Rothchild, 2014). The author was intrigued by these declarations and decided to conduct a study analysing the media framing of RT. The events of the downing of Malaysian Airlines Flight 17 on 17 July 2014 have been selected for particular attention.

Common understanding of media is that media provide public with the information they need in order to know and understand what is going on in the world and what the

decisions and justifications of governments are based on. Caparini (2004) added to that common understanding of media that they “shape public debate on security policy & decision-making”. Further Caparini argues that propaganda, creation & facilitation of arguments for conflict, media’s influence on people, reinforcement of elite consensus as well as exacerbation of “tensions in certain situations and areas” are the negative side effects of media in conflict.

Nonetheless, media have even been regarded as the Fourth Estate due to its influence as well as its potential and its capabilities to put pressure on people, politicians and elites. Therefore, state-owned media bear potential to be abused to frame (present/withhold selected information) events and developments in a way that is very favourable to the funding state/government and its interests and policies.

With the emergence of radio and broadcasting it has always been in the interest of governments to portray themselves in a certain way and send out messages not only to their own people but also to the people of other nations and languages. Therefore, broadcasters in foreign languages are funded as well. Numerous books have been published already on the role of radio in the history of both world wars and already during World War II, broadcasting even across enemy lines, played a significant role to distribute information and propaganda (Sterling, 2003).

RT was launched in 2005, it was known as Russia Today until 2009, and is one of such international broadcasters that are state-funded with a self-stated budget of 19 billion rubles (RT, n.d.), approx. 255 million euros, as of 2016. RT describes itself as an autonomous non-profit organisation that aims to provide its audience with an “alternative

perspective on major global events” and “acquaints international audience with a Russian viewpoint” (About RT, n.d.).

To enhance the study, a comparative perspective will be sought. The study will compare and contrast the framing analysis of RT with that of Deutsche Welle. Deutsche Welle in this study represents another European state-funded news broadcaster. Deutsche Welle is a public-funded German international broadcaster. Deutsche Welle is self-statedly funded through German taxes with 280 million euros per year as of 2014 (Stevens, 2014).

Deutsche Welle is even listed and cited in RT America’s article *Is RT state-run?* along with the US-funded channel PBS, France-funded channel France 24 and other broadcasters and networks to be equally state-funded and hence comparable. In addition one that may well be assumed to be a counterpart with regards to a potential, respectively assumed, propaganda war between Russia and the West. Another fact that makes Deutsche Welle an interesting counterpart is that Deutsche Welle President Peter Limbourg was quoted to be designing new services to “eventually defy Putin’s propaganda” (‘Deutsche Welle-Chef Limbourg’, 2014) and reportedly “hinting to build up a counter weight to Russia Today” (Gummer, 2015).

## **1.1 Perspectives of (self-)perception**

As Joan DeBardeleben (2013) summarises in *The End of the Cold War, EU Enlargement and the EU-Russia Relationship* the interests and hence agendas of the EU and Russia have been conflicting ever since the fall of the iron curtain. The relations suffered severe tensions over several issues.

An example and noteworthy event for further understanding of the background of this study is the inclusion of Lithuania into the EU. Lithuania's inclusion into the EU bore problems for the citizen of the Russian exclave Kaliningrad Oblast due to harsh visa requirements between Russia and the EU due to Lithuania's inclusion in the Schengen group. DeBardeleben then lists NATO's expansion towards the East against Russia's objections as well as differing interpretations between EU and Russia of the Orange Revolution in Ukraine and eventually turned into a real tension when NATO expansion proposals reached Ukraine and Georgia, who not only directly border Russia (alike the Baltics) but are considered "legitimate sphere of influence" by Russia (De Bardeleben, 2013).

From a conflict practitioner's point of view it should not be neglected that Ukraine is not just a transit country due to its geographical position but also very rich in resources and arable land, which has brought Ukraine the nickname 'bread basket of the Soviet Union' (Bode, 1991) and since 1991 'bread basket of Europe' (Sokolowski, 2015) (Marzalik 2014).

In a speech at the Munich Security Conference 2007 Putin not only hinted at Europe's serfdom to the USA even in circumventing international law (De Bardeleben, 2013) but also pointed out the deep grave between Russia and NATO over the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) (RussianPerspective, 2007) from which Russia suspended following in 2007 "until NATO countries ratify [...] and begin in good faith to execute the document". Russia eventually withdrew from the Convention in 2015 (Kureev, 2015).

Another hint at differences in perception of the self and the perception of one another between Russia and the EU was Russia's rejection of being included into the European Neighbourhood policy as Russia wanted partnership on a level playing field instead (De Bardeleben, 2013).

## **1.2 Case Study**

On 17 July 2014 a Boeing 777-280ER airliner with 298 people on board crashed near Torez (Ukraine) while on its way from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur. Among the 298 people on board were 193 Dutch, 43 Malaysian, 27 Australian, 12 Indonesian, 10 British, 4 Belgian, 4 German, 3 Filipino, 1 Canadian, and 1 New Zealand citizen (Gjorgievska, 2014) (Dutch Safety Board, 2015) (Malaysia Airlines, 2014). The incident immediately caught world-wide media attention (widely referred to as MH17, MAS17, or Malaysian Airlines Flight 17) as Ukraine had already been a prevalent international news issue over the last 8 months, mainly for two reasons:

1. Ukraine's then-president Yanukovych was known to have closer ties with Russia than with the EU. This led to demonstrations as it was a stance that many Ukrainians did not share with him. On 18 February 2014 a shooting on Maidan Square that caused 28 casualties among protestors and police while negotiations between Yanukovych and the opposition led by European mediators were in progress. Four days later Yanukovych left the country and found refuge in Russia (Golubov & Balázs Jarábik, 2015).
2. In the aftermath of the political change Ukraine became politically even more unstable. Riots and civil war in some parts of Ukraine arose. Eastern Ukraine and



the Ukrainian peninsula Crimea are predominantly populated by ethnic Russians who make up for a significantly large minority in the whole of Ukraine.

Especially in these areas people watched recent political development with mistrust. On 11 March the Crimean parliament declared independence and announced a status referendum held by the Supreme Council of Crimea on joining Russia (Walsh et al., 2014). After a 96% vote in favour the peninsula asked Russia for incorporation of Crimea into the Russian Federation (Morris, 2014), which was granted instantly in March 2014 (ABC/wires, 2014). The status referendum of Crimea was declared unconstitutional by the Constitutional Court of Ukraine, hence both the referendum and the incorporation into the Russian Federation were declared illegal by Ukraine. At the same time protests against the Ukrainian government rose in the Donbass region at the Ukrainian-Russian border in Eastern Ukraine. Eventually secessionists proclaimed the Republic of Donetsk in April 2014. 20 days later their neighbours in Luhansk Oblast followed their example and proclaimed the Luhansk People's Republic. The crash site of MH17 is near Torez in Donetsk Oblast, which at the time was controlled by secessionist Donbass militias.

4 months later, when the MH17 tragedy happened in Eastern Ukraine, the civil war between Ukrainian and separatist militias was still ongoing.

These two issues made the incident a highly explosive political object as speculations instantly went wild about the cause of the plane crash. Before investigations had been or

could even possibly have been fully conducted tabloids reported about a shooting of the plane leading to a public discussion about the perpetrators.

The stances of Germany and Russia and how they presented information on the incident is of particular interest. Both countries have been playing an unneglectable role in the Ukrainian political development and hold various interests of economic and security matters in Ukraine.

Germany has been very outspoken about political developments in Ukraine over the past decade and involved in the negotiations with president Yanukovych in February 2014, sending foreign minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier as one of the three EU negotiators (Malik, Gani, & McCarthy, 2014) (Traynor, 2014) to talks with Yanukovych. Further Germany is one of the leading economic powers in the European Union which, after Yanukovych was out of office, intensified contacts and relations with Ukraine resulting in the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement. The political provisions were signed on 21 March 2014 (1 month after Yanukovych) and then fully signed on 27 June 2014 (Delegation of the European Union to Ukraine, 2016). Further Germany is a NATO member and houses 20 US-American & NATO military bases and co-bases including the US Air Force European headquarters in Ramstein (militarybases.com, n.d.). Approaching since the 1990s, NATO and Ukraine have tightened relations since 2014 (NATO, 2016). Germany is therefore a well selected representative of the West for this study. NATO is a reminder of the Cold War Era that ever since the official ending of the Cold War era has not stopped to expand towards Russia. Potential incorporation of Ukraine into NATO along with NATO deploying troops to Eastern Europe might be the reason why Russia

listed NATO as a threat in the Russian National Security Strategy 2016 (Putin, 2015).

Ukraine is the largest European neighbour of Russia and the two countries share a border of more than 2,000 km. Ukraine's incorporation into NATO hence bears potential to be interpreted an act of aggression or even a threat, on behalf of the transatlantic military alliance, by Russia.

Nonetheless Russia is Germany's most important gas and oil supplier and Ukraine is one of the transit countries for Russian gas to Europe (Amelang, 2016).

Russia on the other side has been involved in Ukraine not only due to its geographic proximity and economic ties but also through helping Yanukovych to leave Ukraine and offering him refuge. Russia also had sent Human Rights Commissioner Vladimir Lukin, alongside the aforementioned 3 EU delegates, to the negotiations between Yanukovych and the opposition which led to an agreement on 21 February 2014 (kremlin.ru, 2014). Further Russia has to be regarded as an interest holder due to its, at least perceived, protective role for ethnic Russians over the Ukrainian unrest and civil war in Eastern Ukraine and of course after the incorporation of Crimea into the Russian Federation against Ukrainian law. The largest Russian military base abroad is the Black Sea Fleet in Sevastopol (Klein, 2009) which might be a clear indicator for Russian strategic military interest in political developments in Ukraine as well as the Crimean Peninsula.

### **1.2.1 Selection of media for an analysis**

An analysis of German and Russian state-owned media and how they frame the incident of the MH17 incident matters from a Conflict/Security practitioner's point of view because it can be indicative of the political agenda and the countries' stances in the tense geopolitical field of Ukraine. Ukraine is neighbouring Russia and separated from Germany only by Poland, so both countries are likely to be affected by a crisis. While western countries and institutions openly make deals with the Ukrainian government (which is not capable of providing for safety and security in Eastern Ukraine), relations between Ukraine and Russia worsened over the situation in Eastern Ukraine. Since the beginning of the domestic political Ukrainian crisis, the country has been torn between aligning closer with either Russia or the EU. Concluding both countries, Russia and Germany, can be considered to pay attention to how they present information and frame coverage about a plane that is assumed to have been shot over fiercely disputed territory in Ukraine.

In 2014, in the aftermath of the Maidan shooting in Kiev in February, Germany faced rising numbers in demonstrations. People took to the streets in more than 60 cities every week (under the name 'Mahnwache') to criticise, among other topics, German politicians and German media. By the end of the year the derogative word „Lügenpresse“ (German for 'the lying press') had become of such common use, that in the beginning of 2015 it was awarded the 'ugliest word of the year 2014' by German linguists. In turn a 'dishonourable mention' fell to the derogative term "Putinversteh'er" (somebody who tries to understand the Russian (Putin) point of view). Social media and the internet became more and more relevant sources of information and news for an increasing

number of, mostly young, Germans who felt lied to by German mainstream and state-owned media. That feeling was intensified when media started to report biased, partly even discriminatory about the demonstrations and their participants. Many activists and interested people turned to RT to see another point of view than the one of the German mainstream media.

In fact, RT quickly gained so much attention in Germany, even though information was only available in English and Russian language, that RT then even launched a German-speaking outlet called RT Deutsch in November 2014.

While German politicians have not been speaking about an information war, German media have been addressing the topic (Bittner, 2016) and RT has been reporting about the topic as well. When mentioned it is portrayed as a Russian war of propaganda against the West, not as a bilateral war of propaganda or ideologies.

Therefore, it will be interesting to see if elements of propaganda on any of the two sides can be found in their framing of the coverage on the MH17 incidents.

The research question chosen for this study is as follows:

**How did English-speaking German and Russian state-owned media, Deutsche Welle resp. RT, frame the tragedies of MH17?**

### **1.2.2 Terminology of MH17 in this paper**

For stylistic reasons, in order to maintain a neutral stance and to avoid excessive repetition the downing of the plane MH17 will be referred to as either “MH17”, “the tragedy of MH17”, “the MH17 tragedy”, “the tragedy” or “the incident” in this paper.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

“What is presented in the news is a socially constructed product  
that has been filtered through the national interest.”

- Jin Yang

### **2.1 Theory Introduction**

Media’s development over the last decades has resulted in a force that even political leaders can stumble upon with regards to foreign policy (Entman, 2004). Media determine what topics are brought into the public focus. Media shape opinion and ideologies of their audience by making a selection of what is on the news and what is not. To what extent media influence, impact and shape the audience’s reality depends on the level of trust the reader, viewer, listener or follower has in the particular media outlet. (Dimaggio, 2008). Media’s psychological influence on public belief and attitudes as well as the effects of repeated exposure to certain messages have been demonstrated by Happer and Philo who also mention a relationship between “prior exposure to information [...] and opinions.” (Happer & Philo, 2013) Further, Dimaggio points at Allen McBride and Robert K. Toburen’s work which indicates that media can convince and even manipulate the public in favour of an established paradigm.

Dimaggio observes that “Whatever news medium one chooses to examine, it is undeniable that, when taken collectively, they play an important part in influencing [...] public opinion” (Dimaggio, 2004, p.17). Yang argues that the news is always framed and that national interest potentially influences the framing process, especially in international news. Moreover he declares that “media frames are unavoidably employed by journalists in selecting and presenting media texts” (Yang, 2003, p.235) leading to his conclusion that cross-national media analysis of the coverage of specific events is possible. Henry (Henry, 1981) registered that an event, due to its tangibility, sells better than an idea or a trend.

## **2.2 Framing**

Framing has for a long time been a vague concept, that lacked a common theoretical model or framework to base research on. Having emerged from research across various disciplines and being deeply rooted in psychology and sociology the concept of framing and framing effects has been the matter of academic discussion since its beginning in the 1970s. As Scheufele wrote, framing has been the matter of discussion and dissent among scholars for decades as of how to define and analyse it. Various authors have formulated various theories and definitions of framing in various contexts. For example, framing has been interchangeably referred to with priming and agenda setting but framing has also been described as an extension of agenda setting under the term *second-level agenda-setting*. Therefore Scheufele argued that framing has to be classified by its type of frame and the way the frame is operationalised. (Scheufele, 1999)

Mc Combs found that “The news not only tells us what to think about, it also tells us how to think about it.” (Mc Combs, 1992, 8-9). Scheufele and Iyengar later picked up on McCombs when they elaborated on the necessity for distinction between framing as an applicability effect and agenda setting and priming as salience-based accessibility effects. By that they distinguished that by agenda setting media tell the public what to think about and by framing public is told how to think about, respectively what to associate an information with. (Scheufele & Iyengar, 2014) Therefore we need to distinguish between the two, agenda setting and framing.

### **2.2.1 Defining Framing**

Tuchman’s (1978, p.ix) definition of framing in political communication is that mass media actively set the frames of reference that readers or viewers use to interpret and discuss public events. According to Tuchman “the news frame organizes everyday reality” and that it is “an essential feature of news” (p.193). Therefore framing means that the news set the boundaries of public discourse by determining the spectrum of reality. Gamson and Modigliani (1987, p. 143) defined framing to be an “organizing idea or story line that provides meaning to an upholding strip of events” and that the frame “suggests what the controversy is about, the essence of the issue”. This leads to the assumption that framing, by reporting along a story line that follows an organised concept of interpretation, tells people how to think about and understand what a certain problem or chain of events is about.



Van Dijk (1991) explicitly points out that what is not reported might reveal more than what is reported about, which applied to the political landscape implies that frames serve to “narrow the available political alternatives” (Tuchman, 1978, p.156) and McQuail (1994, p.331) defines ‘framing images of reality’ as mass media constructing social reality in a predictable and patterned way. These two definitions lead to the conclusion that framing is about what information is presented and what information is withheld. All these influential and frequently cited early definitions paint a picture of framing being a very powerful tool that can determine the information spectrum to which people are exposed. Further these definitions assume that by framing news tell their audience how to make sense of the limited information they make accessible to them. Robert M. Entman defined framing as a selection of “some aspects of a perceived reality” which are made “more salient” so that a particular “problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation” are communicated as logical conclusions due to a perceived reality (Entman, 1993, p.52). Scheufele and Iyengar picked up this definition and made a more specific distinction between the salience-based effects, agenda setting and priming, and framing. (Scheufele & Iyengar, 2011) According to Scheufele and Iyengar framing is characterised by the presentation of the information. It is a matter of equivalence, meaning that the same problem, issue or sequence of events can be presented in an equal, similar, slightly different or even totally different light. According to Scheufele and Iyengar a frame can also be set, for instance, by choosing images surrounding the information, the choice of colours, determining where the spotlight is shone upon, or the by the way *how* a person is portrayed (opposed

to merely *who* is presented). Entman found that “the frame determines whether most people notice and how they understand and remember a problem, as well as how they evaluate and choose to act upon it.” (Entman, 1993, p.54) Eleven years later, in 2004, Entman then rephrased his definition into “selecting and highlighting some facets of events or issues, and making connections among them so as to promote a particular interpretation, evaluation, and/or solution” (Entman, 2004, p.5). Entman takes the focus off the audience and shines the spotlight on the information, revelation or exposure. He makes clear that the presentation itself is framing, regardless of the audience. This seems to hint at what Scheufele and Iyengar wrote. (Scheufele & Iyengar, 2011)

The listed definitions are the foundation for the meaning of ‘framing’ in this study.

Applying those definitions leads to the conclusion that **framing refers to media defining a problem and its cause, suggesting what moral conclusions to draw from it, making assumptions on resolution or remedy, preselecting which information is presented to what extent and which is swept under the rug. The frame typically follows a story line which is based on perceived reality that influences this preselection of information. Vice versa the preselection of information also influences the perceived reality.** Framing can be utilised to generate support for a good cause, change initiative, promotion of values and democracy but it can as well be utilised in a deceptive way just as effectively. Cacciatore, Scheufele and Iyengar (2016) argue that framing as a concept should be redefined. They encourage framing analysis to revolve around equivalence framing, the presentation and the non-verbal and visual features, instead of the text and its persuasive content. Framing research should be

distinguished more clearly from other media effect models e.g. agenda setting and priming which they argue is a matter of content analysis. (Cacciatore et al, 2016).

Applying this, presenting information is not a matter of verbal features, hence framing is not related to text. Nonetheless it remains questionable why there is a necessity for a single paradigm to define the broad concept that has developed over more than 40 years from various disciplines.

### **2.2.2 Distinguishing Frame and Schema**

The term schema has been used interchangeably with the term frame in the past.

To clarify terminology, we need to distinguish the two terms. Entman distinguishes between ‘frame’ and ‘schema’, ‘frame’ being the text or message that is delivered.

‘Schema’ on the other hand is an underlying psychological process that connects information nodes (images, keywords, ideas) to a web and evokes an emotional reaction.

(Entman, 2004) Schemas, or schemata, that are already in place in the receiver’s mind are also called ‘pre-existing meaning structures’. Once stored in the long-term memory, this emotional reaction can then be activated by stimulating any of the information nodes.

(Entman, 2004). Programming or adjusting a schema is referred to as priming.

### **2.2.3 Types of Frames**

Entman distinguishes between two classes of framing which he calls substantive framing and procedural framing in order to cover or analyse “political events, issues or actors” (Entman, 2004, p.5). Substantive frames serve those functions explained in the

sub-chapter *Defining Framing* above which are problem definition, cause identification, moral evaluation and remedy promotion. Procedural frames on the other hand “suggest evaluations of political actors’ legitimacy, based in their technique, success and representativeness”. (Entman, 2004, p.6) Scheufele and Iyengar distinguished two forms of framing called equivalence framing and emphasis framing. (Scheufele & Iyengar, 2011) Equivalence framing is the psychology-rooted framing concept about manipulating the presentation of information (e.g. glass half-full vs. glass half-empty or 200 will be saved vs. 600 might be killed). Emphasis framing is the sociology-rooted framing concept about manipulating which information is chosen over other information and then presented to the audience. As indicated in Chapter 2.2.1 Defining Framing, Cacciatore, Scheufele and Iyengar propose to base research on a differentiated model of equivalence framing and emphasis framing instead of using framing as an all-embracing umbrella term.(Scheufele & Iyengar, 2011) (Cacciatore, et al. 2016). They further criticise the inconsistency in framing research caused by researchers defining their own measures for media effects. Matthes and Kohring analysed methodologies and categorised five approaches for content analysis of media frames. These approaches’ value was then assessed based on the main criteria of reliability and validity. They deemed all of these approaches problematic before introducing a labour-intensive self-developed method. (Matthes & Kohring, 2008) One of the lesser problematic categories, according to them, was the ‘deductive approach’. An exemplary study that Matthes and Kohring list for the deductive method is that of Semetko and Valkenburg. Semetko and Valkenburg investigated five news frames that had been set based on research on US-American news

outlets, in Dutch media outlets. Their goal was to see if they were applicable across cultures. Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) could verify four of these frames to apply and therefore these four frames are of interest for this study:

1. **Conflict frame:** conflict between various parties is utilised to generate interest among the audience. Researchers have observed tendencies to outline complex background stories overly simplistic.
2. **Human interest frame:** aims to generate emotional charge in order to gain and keep the audience's interest. The event, story, problem or issue is presented along with an emotionally laden destiny, of an individual or group, that personifies and personalises the news and the fate of those affected.
3. **Economic consequences frame:** The economic consequences of an event, issue or problem to a specific individual, group, country, organisation or region are setting the frame of the story.
4. **Responsibility frame:** Responsibility for the cause or solution of an issue or problem is ascribed to a to a specific interest party. This frame bears potential to individualise a multileveled problem and to overly simplify a conflict or issue to the audience.

The fifth type of frame was the morality frame that investigates religious and moral messages. As it both could not be found in Semetko & Valkenburg's original study and is irrelevant in the case of MH17, it will not be considered in this study.

Matthes and Kohring criticise that Semetko and Valkenburg's method is "quite inflexible when it comes to the identification of newly emerging frames" (Matthes & Kohring, 2008, p.263) and that "deductive studies are limited to already established frames". (Matthes & Kohring, 2008, p.262) However, having a clear idea of the frames that are likely to be encountered beforehand reduces the method's shortcoming to the ordinary risk of human fallibility that is present wherever researchers are analysts, they note. Matthes and Kohring acknowledge this a valid prerequisite for applying this approach.

Therefore can be assumed that having a clear idea of what frames are likely to be encountered makes the deductive approach a good typology of frames to be investigated. A brief explanation about the relevant attributes of inductive and deductive approach can be found in chapter 2.4.2 (Inductive vs. Deductive Approach). Yang's frame analysis is based on keywords, metaphors, concepts, symbols and visual images.

#### **2.2.4 Effects of Framing**

Audiences create their reality by combining personal experience with interpreted selections from mass media and their personal interaction with peers. (Neuman et al. (1992, p.120) Putting this into contemporary perspective raises the question of the role of interactive media and social media in this constructivist media effects model. Gamson (Gamson, 1992) encouraged the development of theories that describe the interplay between active construction of meaning and socio-cultural processes that offer

meanings which are frequently contested. Later research has proven that frames shape and can easily alter public opinion. (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000) Pre-existing meaning structures or schemas influence people's information processing and interpretation (Scheufele, 1999) and the more often they are activated the easier accessible they become. (Entman, 2004) Once a frame is set on a terminology and an attitude is shaped it is hard to change it. (Entman, 1993)

Entman gives an explanation for this phenomenon in his cascade model. Entman lists four influential variables that decide whether or not information spreads as framed. One of these variables he calls cultural congruence. When a stimulus hits pre-existing meaning structures in the mind of the receiver, the resulting internal assessment of the stimulus against existing associations and knowledge will decide whether or not this information is culturally congruent with the receiver.

If cultural congruence is given, the information is treated 'business as usual' and accepted; hence it will spread as intended.

Should the stimulus be totally incongruent to the receivers existing dominant schemas, be too dissonant, too complex or seem irrelevant it is usually blocked out and does not spread as intended.

Incoming information that triggers ambiguous feelings about the congruence with existing schemata remains contested and the receiver will therefore assess the new information based on one of the other three variables Entman lists. (Entman, 2004) Cacciatore, Scheufele and Iyengar agree with this explanation and call it the applicability effect of framing, meaning that incoming information only influences the audience

depending on the resonance with pre-existing meaning structures. (Cacciatore et al., 2016) “The presence of a cognitive schema that matches the frame should produce a framing effect, whereas a mismatch between frame and schema should fail to produce such an effect.” (Cacciatore et al., 2016, p.13) Entman already wrote about this tendency of preference-based reinforcement before the internet became such a customisable prevalent news source. Congruence of a frame with dominant schemas is essential to be successful. Unfamiliarity, complexity, low apparent relevance to values and culturally incongruent interpretations are all factors that block information from wide circulation because “Sometimes the easiest response is to ignore the matter altogether”. (Entman, 2004, p.15) Even Nazi Germany’s propaganda minister Goebbels had to face the fact that a successfully primed schema can backfire. In case of the truth being incompatible with the audience’s belief system, that has manifested from primed meaning structures, the audience blocks out the truth, in favour of pre-existing meaning structures. (Doob, 1950) Besides cultural congruence, Entman identifies a second influential variable that decides whether or not information spreads as framed and works and pulls associations on the inside of the receiver. It is called ‘motivation’ and can be broken down to the simple fact that people tend to decide for the soft option, the path of least resistance or in other words: they want to know what their gain is. When incoming information is in line with the receiver’s core values, is simply understood and does not threaten the receiver’s identity but might even be helpful in order to maintain and enrich interpersonal relationships it is very likely to be spread. When it serves the purpose to be a non-polarising contributor of a discussion at work, with a peer group, family or friends the



information is considered low risk information and spreading it will not do the receiver any harm but can be beneficial. (Entman, 2004)

Cacciatore et al. (2016) address the recent change of the news landscape towards interactive online media encompassing a broader choice of media and sources of information. This shift in the news landscape Cacciatore et al. link to three phenomena: First, media outlets tailor their information “toward ideologically fragmented publics [...] or even toward specific individuals [...] in order to create more lucrative advertising environments” (p.19). Second, in addition to their ideologically resonating choice and interpretation of information, individuals tend to rely on the same self-selected sources for their information which further limits their spectrum of information interpretation variety. In simple words, it is an ideological isolation tactic. Third, news search results personalisation based on algorithms and previous searches as well as customised news interfaces that are customised according to pre-existing knowledge structures narrow the information spectrum. This media effect is called preference-based reinforcement. (Cacciatore et al, 2016)

### **2.2.5 Distinguishing Framing, Agenda Setting, Slant and Priming** **Agenda setting and priming in the news**

The meanings of framing, priming, and agenda setting have been blurred over the last four decades. These three terms have even been used interchangeably over the last four decades of media effects research. Entman sees the three organised under the concept of

bias, priming being a frame-activated schema. (see Chapter 2.2.2 Distinguishing Frame and Schema).

According to his own earlier definition of framing functions (problem definition, causal analysis, moral judgment and remedy promotion) Entman writes that agenda setting is just “another name for successfully performing” a problem definition. (Entman, 2007, p.164). Therefore it is necessary to clarify the distinctions between the three, but this study does not aim to focus on or investigate priming. Hence there is no priming analysis to be found in this paper. This paragraph merely aims to demonstrate and convey understanding and awareness of the different meanings of priming and framing.

According to Cacciatore, Scheufele and Iyengar, the line between framing and agenda setting & priming is drawn between content and presentation. Opposed to the equivalence and applicability-based framing, priming and agenda setting are considered matters of salience and accessibility. (Scheufele & Iyengar, 2014) That means agenda setting and priming are based on repetition. The audience’s exposure to a set of information will make this very set of information more salient in the audience’s mind setting a standard against which new information is validated. It is not necessary to have prior knowledge about this set of information and this applies across all parties and across cultures. (Cacciatore et al., 2016) “In many ways priming can be seen as an extension of agenda setting” (Cacciatore et al., 2016, p.11) Nonetheless they realise that framing effects are difficult to isolate from agenda setting and priming effects. Priming engraves structural connections among a web of information nodes (or schema) in the memory of the mind. (Cacciatore et al., 2016) Through news exposure, which serves as a salience

amplifier, the covered topic becomes a standard which serves as reference point to any incoming information that is connected with any of the nodes in this specific web (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987). Engraved in the long term memory this constructed web of nodes then influences attitudes towards new information.

In short, Repetitive priming causes schemata and agenda setting results in framing.

## **2.3 Propaganda**

“News policy is a weapon of war; its purpose is to wage war  
and not to give out information”

- Joseph Goebbels

Due to John Kerry’s accusations that RT is a propaganda amplifier of the Russian government and its president Vladimir Putin, this study seeks to identify if elements of propaganda can be found in RT’s coverage of MH17. To compare and to have a European point of reference from a self-declared counterpart, which makes very similar accusations towards RT (see Chapter 1), the same applies for Deutsche Welle. Foreign policies guide the news and are based on national interest (Yang, 2003). Assuming this, Russia is not the only country that is likely to utilise state-funded media to promote national interests which means to pursue a national agenda.

Therefore it is important to clarify what propaganda refers to at first.

### 2.3.1 Defining Propaganda

Jowett & O'Donnell (2012) and Vincent (2006) note that since the term 'propaganda' lost its neutrality in 1622 (due to the Vatican's *Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide*), identifying a message as propaganda automatically implies a negative accusation of the message not telling the truth. Vincent states that already by the 18<sup>th</sup> century, propaganda was a term used to deplore secret organisations which sought to undermine or influence foreign affairs. The negative connotation has survived until today. This becomes very clear when having a look at the synonyms for propaganda Jowett and O'Donnell list: "lies, distortion, deceit, manipulation, mind control, psychological warfare, brainwashing, and palaver" (Jowett & O'Donnell, 2012, p.2).

Vincent finds the concept of propaganda such a vague one that it is reflected in his definition of propaganda: "Propaganda has to do with the use of communication channels, through known persuasive or manipulative techniques, in an attempt to shape or alter public opinion." (Vincent, 2006, p.235-236) The fact that Vincent does not know how to define propaganda is evidence for the difficulty of the matter. Reapplying Vincent's vocabulary he later writes that propaganda also has to do with the orchestration of public opinion. Kunczik and Schweitzer cite Jowett and O'Donnell's propaganda definition from 1999 as "the systematic attempt to shape perceptions, manipulate cognitions, and direct behavior to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist" (Jowett & O'Donnell, 1999, p.6 cited in Kunczik & Schweitzer, 2012, p.2) 13 years later Jowett & O'Donnell's definition has not changed: **"Propaganda is the deliberate, systematic attempt to shape perceptions, manipulate cognitions, and direct behavior to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the**

**propagandist**” (Jowett & O’Donnell, 2012, p.7) Therefore their definition, especially since their 2012 work aims to distinguish between propaganda and persuasion, can be assumed to be a strong one that should serve well for this study. Hence this definition will now be elaborated on for further clarification, relevant to this study.

**Deliberate** stands for a strategy, that has been thought through very well in advance and aims to consider all possible outcomes. **Systematic** refers to the precise, structured, regular and organised aspects of the term ‘deliberate’. **Attempt** stands for the pursuit of a predefined objective such as:

**1. Shaping perceptions:** we perceive our environment represented in language and images, by interpreting them via our pre-existing structures of knowledge that are based on our past experiences. Every single person has his or her very unique pre-existing structures. External information is therefore interpreted against an individual mind’s associations and experience with values, roles, group norms and self-image. Symbols or slogans are common tools utilised to shape perception.

**2. Manipulating cognitions:** Cognitive and affective reactions to a stimulus or information are based on pre-existing structures of knowledge. Depending on the level of trust we have into our own senses we form an understanding of, or an attitude towards, a certain issue. Once an attitude or belief is formed, our perception is influenced by it. Very similar to perceptions, cognition is also a complex concept that is based on complex structures in the mind that are formed over time.

**3. Direction of a specific behaviour** refers to what the propagandist aims for. The message and all the play on cognition and perceptions is just a means to an end. And the

end is the desired reaction of the audience. Usually the action that can result from it is based on an aspired belief, attitude or behaviour that the message was supposed to evoke. This can be a lot of work as the propagandist has to analyse his prospective audience carefully in order to tailor the right message.

4. **Achieve a response** can be separated. The response is simply the audience's action or reaction to the propagandistic message; an action that is based on pre-existing structures in the mind. However the response is only an achievement to the propagandist, when the audience's reaction is the propagandist's desired reaction: one that in the end makes the propagandist benefit. That benefit is the sole concern of the propagandist, regardless of the audience's benefits from their own response. (Jowett & O'Donnell, 2012)

The correlation between media and political elites can be demonstrated by many examples, even in the alleged "free" press of the West. The support of national policy has been shown to persist until protest, support for criticism or adversaries comes from within the political elite itself. Herman and Chomsky even observe that the passivity of the media has encouraged crime, which is covered and presented as a proof for the "free press" only once critical position is an elitist interest. (Herman and Chomsky, 1988) The alleged free press of the United States of America has been proven to have failed in the publicly promoted and assumed role of the watchdog as threats to powerful groups are scandalised while media opposition is "muted or absent altogether" "as long as illegalities and violations of democratic substance are confined to marginal groups or distant victims of U.S. military attack, or result in a diffused cost imposed on the general population". (Herman and Chomsky, 1988, p.300)

But propaganda is not only about sending out certain information. Equally well-known is propagandistic formal censorship. This kind of propaganda is easily detectable, especially from the outside of the sphere of influence concerned. Less easily detectable is censorship, when censorship is not an openly formal authoritative act but an organic and structural system of an allegedly free press and private media processing information. The media landscape in the United States for example encourages critical debate as long as the spectrum does not exceed the boundaries set by elitist consensus. (Herman & Chomsky, 1988) “Telling people what to think about is how one exerts political influence in noncoercive political systems” (Entman, 2007, p.165) Indoctrination on such an elitist level of society can be assumed to be thought through carefully and applied according to a strategic plan.

Even though news professionals assess themselves, their network and the outcome of their journalistic work to be objective, they might not realise how the filter mechanisms of modern news media marginalise dissidents. A significant role plays societal status. In *Manufacturing Consent*, Herman and Chomsky (1988) wrote that governmental and corporate officials benefit from their prestigious societal status which not only makes them recognisable but also automatically leads to the assumption that they are credible source of knowledge. Having this beneficial attribute assigned to them, their statuses’ advantage is even amplified by the economic interests of news networks, the journalists’ aspirations to be ‘objective’ (Herman & Chomsky, 1988), journalists’ lack of understanding of framing (Entman, 1993) and the time pressure news professionals operate under. All these factors are obstacles that make it difficult for

journalists to scrutinise the credibility of officials. More about these obstacles can be read in the following sub-chapter.

### **2.3.2a Propaganda's Infrastructure**

Whilst there are models which indicate that media serve the public in its role as information giver, watchdog over the powerful and transmitters of multiple viewpoints so that it is frequently labelled as the Fourth Estate, there are as well controversially discussed models which illustrate that media are not infallible. For this study, one of the latter has been selected. Herman and Chomsky's model is chosen to provide part of the theoretical foundation to identify whether there are indices of potential shortcomings of RT and Deutsche Welle in fulfilling their task, a highly important role that our Western democratic understanding takes for granted oftentimes. Herman and Chomsky drew up a model that is a critical assessment of processes impacting media work and the news resulting from it. Such a critical model that indicates how media can be structurally, even if not deliberately, affected is vital for this study because it allows to examine whether Deutsche Welle could theoretically serve as a propaganda benchmark. This study is not an attempt to show the media's achievements but an attempt to find out if elements of propaganda and manipulative news management can be found that in comparison indicate a significant difference between Russian state-funded and German state-funded media. Since Germany is a democracy built on Western ideals of economic principles, including free market and free media, Herman and Chomsky's theory serves to utilise Germany as a benchmark for an analysis of Russia by pointing out that even in the West there might be mechanisms and powers at work that could impact the distribution of



information. This study seeks to investigate whether Limbourg and Kerry's descriptions of RT as a propaganda stronghold are accurate, especially in view of the fact that their statements seek to inform public to be wary of Russian propaganda made by RT. Moreover, this study seeks to investigate whether Kerry's and Limbourg's statements underlying and implied assumption that propaganda is a technique which is not employed in the USA and Germany respectively but a unique feature of RT is valid and sustainable, at the very least in a comparison with Deutsche Welle.

Herman and Chomsky identify five filters which enable the process described above and which they call "essential ingredients of our propaganda model" (Herman & Chomsky, 1988, p.2).

The first filter is the **power structure of the media**, often controlled by a small number of wealthy and profit-oriented owners. This is a first indicator for close ties with elites and taking an interest in positions on policies, e.g. economic policies.

Filter number two is the vulnerability of media due to their **dependence on income sources**. For private media their primary source is usually advertisement. This is a matter of economic interest again. Do media really dare to bite the hand that feeds them?

Objective reporting would require scrutinising anyone and anything.

Thirdly, media rely on primary information sources such as government and business officials or, secondary sources, often called "experts", which are credible and have access to the knowledge of primary sources or are at least approved by them. not only seems the officials' credibility to be taken for granted. Their presence on the news is unrivalled.

Herman & Chomsky found that more than 2 out of 3 experts in the news were current

government officials, former government officials or members of conservative think tanks. A significant number of the latter were working for an organisation that can be considered a platform of interaction between corporations, the State Department and intelligence services. (Herman & Chomsky, 1988) Yet polls on trustworthiness conducted between 1983 and 2011 indicated that government ministers and politicians were the third respectively second least trusted professionals ‘outscored’ only by journalists. Doctors, teachers, professors clergymen, judges, TV news readers, scientists and police led the trust ranking and scored more than 50% of ‘yes’ responses to the question whether they are believed to tell the truth or not. Another poll conducted in 2013 even indicated that only 1 in 100 respondents had “a great deal of trust” in politicians and less than 10 in 100 “a fair deal of trust”. (Bastow et al., 2014)

Another popular expert opinion is that of defectors whose lack of credibility (even if proven) rarely has consequences in terms of declining demand of their opinion and expertise. (Herman & Chomsky, 1988) Important to notice is, that due to various kinds of pressure (e.g. economic pressure, peer pressure, time pressure) political information is rarely counterchecked even before it is rephrased, passed on or spread further by messengers or media. Due to their **dependence on** officials for ‘**credible**’ **information**, their need to keep costs for sources low as well as their own **need for a credible and good reputation** they desire to avoid spouting waves of public criticism. (Herman & Chomsky, 1988)

This phenomenon occurs along all communication streams and communication levels, e.g. Administration, other elites and influencers, media, journalists and public. (Entman, 2004) This structural mechanism, even if unintended, assists to push through an agenda setting campaign and gives elites, officials and ‘experts’ even more leverage on public opinion and political influence.

Herman and Chomsky (1988) call their fourth filter ‘**flak**’ which stands for **negative responses and what they imply**. While one might assume that negative responses are predominantly a matter of the audience, in fact the most effective producers of negative response are elites. The powerful can utilise their status, position, post, function, influence and connections to either directly or indirectly generate flak. An example for indirect flak can be funding of campaigns that support political actors who, once in power, serve the interest of the responder. The fifth filter is the **ideological filter** as a national religion and control mechanism. Herman and Chomsky, certainly due to the time in which *Manufacturing Consent* was written, call it Anticommunism. Anticommunism bases on the premise that communism, as the counterpart to capitalism, is the ultimate evil because communism is a (perceived) threat to property owners’ class and status. Naturally this makes communism the natural enemy of capitalist elites. Media contributed to establish Anticommunism a first and moral “principle of Western ideology and politics” (Herman & Chomsky, 1988, p.29) by reporting about abuses in communist states constantly. Once established through framing scheming and priming, the ideology could easily be utilised to pit public opinion against an enemy, dissident or simply anyone who dared to question the status quo of property interests. “It therefore helps

fragment the left and labor movements” (Herman & Chomsky, 1988, p.29) making it a very powerful and effective political-control mechanism. Anticommunism could even be utilised to justify support of fascism as a means to counter communism because fascism is merely evil, not the ultimate evil. (Herman & Chomsky, 1988). As a result critical coverage is limited. In addition to that, “journalists, just like everyone else, learn about issues in large part based on the frames that are used to define them.” (Cacciatore et al., 2016) In other words, long-term framing is like a self-fulfilling prophecy.

### **2.3.2b From Herman and Chomsky to Deutsche Welle and RT**

Since Herman and Chomsky primarily analysed privately funded U.S. American media in times of the Cold War, and even this has caused ripples of discussion, this paragraph of the subchapter seeks to identify if their model can as well be applied to the two contemporary publicly resp. governmentally funded broadcasters Deutsche Welle and RT. *Manufacturing Consent* has not only been critically acclaimed but heavily criticised as well. To avoid uncertainty and misinterpretation of this study’s intentions to conduct a valid analysis. a pre-investigation of the applicability of Herman and Chomsky’s model to understand if the model is suitable for this study is necessary. All five filters are evaluated in this subchapter.

#### **1. Power Structure of the Media**

This filter applies since media are organised structurally with gatekeepers and decision makers who are tied with decision makers as this paragraph will illustrate. Peter

Limbou, Director-General of Deutsche Welle, is connected with media elites of both private as well as public funded media outlets and can be assumed to be connected very well with political elites as well as a brief look on a curriculum vitae published on Deutsche Welle indices:

In 1990 Peter Limbourg became DFA's (the German national television news agency) and SAT.1's (private German broadcaster) Europe and NATO correspondent. "In 1996 he became the Head of the ProSieben studio in Bonn, and in 1999 was appointed Co-Editor-in-Chief of N24", a German private news broadcaster "and Head of the Political Department at ProSieben," which is another private German broadcaster "a position which he also took on at SAT.1 in 2001. In 2004/5 and 2008/9 Limbourg was the CEO of Pool TV, a joint venture of private television stations in Berlin. From 2008 to 2010 he was the Editor-in-Chief responsible for N24's programming. He was anchor of SAT.1 news from 2008 and Senior Vice President of ProSiebenSat.1 TV from 2010 to September 30, 2013." ('Director General Peter Limbourg', 2015) The German website of Deutsche Welle further notes that Limbourg is chairman of the Prize for Media of the German Parliament, jury member of the Axel Springer Prize for young Journalists (Axel Springer SE is the largest private publishing group in Germany), advisor to the commission for publications for the German Bishop's Conference (DBK) and vice president of die Malteser (a German Catholic aid agency). ('Intendant Peter Limbourg', 2016) Moreover he is Member of the Board of Trustees of the Civis Media Foundation (European media prize for integration) and chairman of the RIAS Berlin Commission. According to RIAS website they are an organisation that "provides financial support and

awards annual prizes to radio, television and new media productions which contribute to the mutual German-American understanding”. (‘RIAS Berlin Commission’, 2016)

Little credible information can be found online about Limbourg’s counterpart, at least in English language. RT’s Managing Director Alexey Nikolov has, like Limbourg, made his way up the career ladder from private journalism as well. According to RT’s website he started as a sports reporter in his teenage years. In 1997 he contributed launching REN TV which now is one of Russia’s largest private broadcasters. Besides his job as Managing Director he still writes regularly for national newspapers and magazines and is a golf commentator for several sports channels. He is professor for Journalism at Sholokhov Moscow State University for Humanities and has been awarded multiple times by the Russian Union of Journalists. He joined RT in 2005, the same year that his editor-in-chief Margarita Simonovna Simonyan (Маргарита Симо́новна Симо́ньян) acceded office 2005. (‘Management’, 2016) In addition to her position at RT she was also appointed editor-in-chief of the then newly-founded Russian state funded international news agency Rossiya Segodnya (Россия Сегодня) in 2013. (‘RT Head Simonyan’, 2013) Little credible information can be found about her. Nonetheless an interesting statement of Simonyan that is relevant for this study was published on rt.com and predates John Kerry’s accusations of propaganda by approximately a year. “And now we’ve got a genuine war going on – no, thank God, it’s not in Crimea. It’s a media war. Every single day, every single hour the guys who work for us are told, ”You are liars, you are no journalists, you are the Kremlin propaganda mouthpiece, you’ve sold yourselves to the Russians, it’s time you quit your job, and everybody is laughing at you, so change your

mind before it's too late”” (Simonyan, 2014) This statement was a commentary on the on air-resignation of American RT reporter Liz Wahl following a statement by a colleague of her who had condemned the Russian involvement in Crimea that immediately made headlines on American news with that criticism.

From assessing the head positions of RT and Deutsche Welle can be concluded that Herman and Chomsky's model applies, since both broadcasters are headed by former private TV network key personnel with at minimum very good connections in the national media landscape.

## **2. Dependence on income sources**

Tax-funded Deutsche Welle published their “federal allowances” in their income statement on their website. The data from 2013-2015 are publicly accessible. In 2013 they received approximately € 294 million, in 2014 €311 million and in 2015 €320 million. In addition to that they list approximately €23 million (2013), €17 million (2014) and €16 million “other operating income”. Nonetheless there was a net loss of approximately

€ 6 million in 2013 and € 2 million in 2015. Only in 2014 a profit of approximately € 2 million was achieved. (‘2014: Income Statement’, 2016) (‘2015: Income Statement’, 2016)

RT has, at least not in English, published such statements but announces a budget of ₺ 19 billion for 2016 on their website, which transfers to approximately € 274 million on 7 October 2016. RT reports that this is a cut of ₺2 billion compared to 2015. (‘RT’s 2016

budget', 2015) It is certain that additional income is, even if meagre compared to the official budget, generated via advertisement. Since advertisement is only a nominal source of income for both broadcasters, they both rely on the government which assigns the lion's share of their income. Remaining in the idiomatic vocabulary of the saying 'to bite the hand that feeds' the government is certainly a 'different hand to another body' than private business and corporations. Nonetheless a powerful one which to bite would is certain to cause a reaction.

### **3. Dependence on 'credible' information & need for a good reputation**

Just like all other news media, RT and Deutsche Welle rely on officials and experts to be willing to cooperate with them. What is very interesting is the aspect of the good reputation, as both define projecting their respective national perspective on world affairs. This is an additional burden, as they need to make sure they are in line with officials in order to fulfil their self-defined mission. Both RT and Deutsche Welle therefore naturally and purposely report according to national interest.

This also narrows the probability for occurrence of

### **4. 'Flak' / Negative responses and what they imply**

even though the structures exist, as just for any other news outlet.

### **5. Ideological Filter**



The Anticommunism ideology that Herman and Chomsky identified does not apply anymore 25 years after the USSR dissolved. Nonetheless a dichotomised environment that is related to the Cold War dichotomy is present. As outlined in chapter 1 and under point 1 of this sub-sub-sub-chapter there is at least an ideological information war between the West and Russia going on. But there is more to the situation in Ukraine than merely an ideological conflict, both sides have geopolitical interests in Ukraine as the following paragraphs will show.

As outlined in chapter 1, the situation we face when analysing MH17 is that of a torn country (Ukraine) and a contested, even embattled region (Eastern Ukraine). The dispute underlying the conflict has been an argument among the Ukrainian population for decades. The conflict is about the decision, which the Ukrainian government had yet to make, whether to make significantly closer economic ties with Russia or to make significantly closer economic ties with the West. Problematic is the unequal ethnic distribution. In South Ukraine and in certain regions in East Ukraine live by far more ethnic Russians than Ukrainians. The ethnic Russians rather wanted to be aligned with Russia or independent, hence the Crimean referendum, declaration of independence as well as the ensuing application to be integrated into the Russian Federation

Zbigniew Brzezinski, the 10<sup>th</sup> National Security Advisor of the USA under President Jimmy Carter, counsellor to the 39<sup>th</sup> US President Johnson and until today highly respected geostrategist, author and political scientist, outlines the situation of Ukraine and

foreign interests in Ukraine in his book *The Grand Chessboard – American Primacy and Its Geostrategic Imperatives* (Brzezinski, 1998) as follows:

Ukraine is, from US-American geostrategic point of view, the largest country of the European bridgehead into Eurasia. He names Ukraine as one of the “critically important geopolitical pivots” (Brzezinski, 1998, p.41) “because its very existence as an independent country helps to transform Russia” (Brzezinski, 1998, p.46) into a democracy. Ukraine’s status of independence, he states, has been the pivot that decides over Russia’s status to either be a Eurasian empire or to cease as an imperial power. The longer Ukraine is separated from Russia the more the latter applies. The formation of Ukraine as an independent state was “a vital geopolitical setback for the Russian state” (Brzezinski, 1998, p.92) as it marked not only a significant decline in Russian trade as well as naval power in the Mediterranean but further the end of Russian dominance in the Black Sea. Subsequently, the Black Sea saw an increase in joint NATO-Ukrainian manoeuvres. Keeping in mind that NATO was once founded to counter Soviet Power and influence in Europe these manoeuvres can be assumed to have added even more fuel to the fire. Brzezinski describes Russian aspirations to regain the status of a Eurasian empire. According to him, one of the requirements to reach that status is an incorporation of Ukraine into the Russian Federation. From this, Brzezinski draws the conclusion that among some Russian elites “even friendly western policy” (Brzezinski, 1998, p.51) is considered a strategic refusal of Russia’s status as a global power. An expansion of Europe’s scope of influence depends “on U.S. security protection” (Brzezinski, 1998, p.59), and is concomitant with an expansion of US-American influence. Brzezinski

identifies Germany as the most influential economic player in Europe. He labels Ukraine, along with Belarus, France, the Baltics and parts of Russia, part of “the zone of special German interest”. (Brzezinski, 1998, p.69) The German zone of special interest combined with the zone of special French interest marks the “eastern and western limits of Europe”. (Brzezinski, 1998, p.69) Due to France’s and Germany’s incapability and weakness rigid and precise American involvement in the construction of Europe is required, Brzezinski adds. He stresses the importance of German-American cooperation in dealing with the matters of a prospective incorporation of the Baltics and Ukraine into the European economic system and further emphasises the importance of European influence expansion in the Eurasian region to the security of the USA. He even deems Ukrainian membership to both NATO and the European Union necessary to be addressed. His prediction in 1998 is that Ukraine might be ready for accession negotiations between 2005 and 2010. Brzezinski summarises The United States’ geopolitical goal in Europe to be to “consolidate through a more genuine transatlantic partnership the U.S. bridgehead on the Eurasian continent so that enlarging Europe can become a more viable springboard for projecting into Eurasia the international democratic and cooperative order”. (Brzezinski, 1998, p.86)

Brzezinski can be regarded a credible and reliable source even for geopolitical change to unfold as many of his predictions in the past have turned out to be reasonably accurate. We can assume that the EU’s and NATO’s expansions towards Russian borders over the last two decades, especially with consideration of the decline of Russian influence after the fall of the Soviet Union, is perceived a provocation from the Russian

perspective. As outlined in chapter 1 the relations between the West and Russia are severely tense, tendency rising. In Ukraine this has manifested in ethnic and regional tensions that have led up to a civil war. There are two main parties that can be identified in this conflict. On the one side there are ethnic Russians living in Ukraine who do not feel represented by the Government in Kiev. They prefer a more Russian-friendly policy or secession from Ukraine. On the other side Ukrainian nationalists, who believe in the unity of Ukraine and want Ukraine to develop in the way Brzezinski described it in the European/US-American interest. That is why each side, while blaming one another to be the cause of the conflict, represents alignment with either Russia or the West, at least in public mood and perception.

Deeply ingrained into contemporary Ukrainian identity is the threat the Soviet Union posed to Ukrainians. In part, of course, through forced displacement and forced settlement as it was common all over the Soviet Union. This was part of the Russification programmes of the USSR which is one of the main causes for the presence of so many ethnic Russians in Ukraine. A conflict between the two ethnic groups is very likely to activate such pre-existing schemas in the minds of the Ukrainian population and public. This schema revives hard feelings and memories of suffering on both sides. Ukraine's turning away from Russia likewise can be interpreted as a threat to the Russian-Ukrainian identity of the ethnic Russians in Ukraine.

Ukraine is not an isolated case. Latvia is another example of identity caused tensions between ethnic Latvians and ethnic Russians. The election of Ušakovs to be

mayor of Riga is by many Latvians perceived a provocation, even a threat to their identity that comes along with fear of a Russian takeover. The alleged intended Russian renewed invasion/takeover is a myth that evokes fear in other eastern European countries with a Soviet history, such as Poland, as well. At the same time ethnic Russians in Latvia perceive the denial of their language to be declared an official language an open provocation and a threat to their identity since more than every fourth Latvian inhabitant is an ethnic Russian and Russian is de facto already the second official language in Latvia, in certain areas even the dominant language.

To use Jowett and O'Donnell's vocabulary: This situation as a starting point is fertile soil for the seed of propaganda, if applied in the aftermath of MH17. When MH17 fell from the sky, it seemed like it had been shot and each of the two sides claimed to be innocent leading to the conclusion that the respective other side must have been involved in downing the civil passenger airplane.

Concluding can be said that the Herman and Chomsky model can be assumed to be applicable for this situation with regards to the dichotomised geopolitical climate.

### **2.3.3 Forms of Propaganda**

Propagandistic attempts can be applied in order to be 'agitative' or 'integrative'.

Propaganda that is agitative seeks to stir up the audience and normally results in considerable change. Propaganda that is integrative is far less inciting as it aims to create a nodding audience of passive tag-alongs as Shanto wrote 1978. (cited in Jowett & O'Donnell, 2012)

Another categorisation is the distinction between black, grey and white propaganda.

**White propaganda** is a message that is not far from the truth, usually accurately conveyed and no fraud is done referencing the source. What the propagandist really is in for is to render oneself to be the smart ‘good guy’ and one’s own political ideology to be the best. This shall generate credibility that can be advantageous later in time. Due to its non-salient nature it can even find its place on regular occasions, such as national holidays or international (purportedly non-political) events.

**Grey propaganda** differs in terms of source and accuracy of the information which are indefinable. Therefore it is hard to be identified as it can, for instance, be a mix of credible source and slightly inaccurate message or vice versa.

**Black propaganda** can be described outright as blunt brazen lying. The source might or not be undisclosed or someone who seems trustworthy or credible might deliberately be accredited fraudulently. Nonetheless black propaganda is like the elephant in the room: drawing the attention (especially when revealed) and the more impudent the message the more likely it is to make believers. Making the credibility of source and information appear valid is the key to make black propaganda successful. **Disinformation** is a sub-form of black propaganda involving secret agents who are journalists and take advantage of their position to purposely place misleading, incomplete or false information in a newspaper for a disguised tasker. While the source now seems credible to the audience, the goal of the message is to harm an opponent of the tasker. According to Merriam-Webster a conspiracy is defined as “a secret plan made by two or more people to do

something that is harmful or illegal” (Conspiracy, 2016) Hence this is a conspiratorial form of propaganda. Pratkanis and Aronson illustrated propaganda tactics such as withholding vital information or using meaningless associations and defined propaganda to be a “mass ‘suggestion’ or influence through the manipulation of symbols and the psychology of the individual”. (Pratkanis and Aronson, 2001,p.11, cited in Jowett & O’Donnell, 2012, p.4)

#### **2.3.4 Strategies of Propaganda**

In his work *Global Communication and Propaganda* Vincent (Vincent, 2006) lists and reviews seven strategies of propaganda, which date back to the publication *The Fine Arts of Propaganda* by The Institute for Propaganda Analysis in 1939. These seven principles have served as foundation for the works of many other authors.

The seven strategies are:

**1. Name calling** refers to labels that are projected on a person, concept, idea or issue making the subject of concern appear disproportionally positive or negative. Often stereotypes are used to denounce an adversary. While the subject is only very superficially evaluated, the propagandist aims to make the audience draw premature conclusions caused by emotional reactions. (Vincent, 2006) name calling is an application of what Bennett refers to as **referential symbols**. These are words that are straightforward and precise, naming specifics and facts and are so clear that their meaning is plain understandable. (Bennett, 1980, cited in Yang, 2003)

**2. Glittering Generality** describes the deliberate use of vague terms that evoke positive associations in the audience, often noble and virtuous terms are chosen but neutral terms can be carefully embedded and be just as effective. Glittering generality is a tool applied in order to arouse faith and respect. (Vincent, 2006) This is an application of what Bennett calls **condensational symbols**. Vague and abstract language is chosen, often ambiguous but emotionally powerful charged concerns and can be embedded in an abstract context. (Bennett, 1980, cited in Yang, 2003) Of course this strategy can as well be applied for the contrary purpose of promoting noble causes, e.g. to present an adversary in a shady, suspect and negative light.

**3. An Image Transfer** is when the good reputation of an entity, concept or issue is transferred to another one. The propagandist creates an association between the two hoping that the good reputations of A will rub off to B in the public perception. This strategy can as well backfire in several forms, e.g. if the association is not credible, or if the association is so successful that it is deeply rooted in the node web structures in the audience's mind followed by a remarkable negative association with either of the two which then rubs off to the other one as well. (Vincent, 2006) An image transfer can just as well be applied for the reversed sake: destroying somebody else's reputation. An example would be to create an association between an unpleasant leader of another country and someone who deeply engraved in the national consent symbolises ultimate evil. In the Western culture this deeply-rooted evil association exists in personified



entities such as Stalin, Hitler, Judas, the devil or Osama bin Laden but also in conceptual entities such as communism (even if a little outdated), fascism, Nazism, dictatorship, terrorism, drugs, rape, paedophilia, slavery, torture, holocaust, genocide, war crime, racism or murder. To creating a frame that links someone with any of these concepts of persons in the media in the West is equals damaging that person's reputation, impairing his or her competitive situation and ruining that person's career.

**4. Testimonial** is self-explanatory and related to image transfer. Entity A testifies for entity B praising the qualities of entity A. Depending on the audience's associations with A and A's credibility this can be successful. Both, popularity and unpopularity can trigger high interest among the audience. (Vincent, 2006) An exemplary situation would be when a successful and popular sports manager with an excellent reputation for being sympathetic, competent, successful, educated and knowledgeable publicly praises the qualities of a politician in an interview or talk show, maybe even enriches his praise with a funny anecdote. This politician has for sure won a number of new sympathisers and most likely even voters.

**5. Plain Folks** strategy is a PR strategy that makes the propagandist, who not the exact average Joe, appear as a very ordinary person by staging, stressing or presenting similarities, shared values or lifestyle choices between the average audience and the propagandist. The propagandist hopes to make the audience identify with him/her. Yet, especially for elites and politicians being the plains folk does not equal a free ticket. It

might even make the audience evaluate achievements with more care. While a credible campaign can turn out successful, a campaign trying to purport an image that is not credible at all can backfire awfully.

**6. Card Stacking** means that the propagandist emphasises some facts while completely ignoring others presenting only that set of preselected information that supports his or her cause while all else is played down, ignored or censored.

**7. Applying the Bandwagon Approach** simply plays on the audience's herd instinct and the fear to be left out of the group. This approach is applied by propagating messages such as "we are all doing it, why do you isolate yourself, are you with or against us?" (Vincent, 2006)

It is an instructive 'go with the flow' strategy, either openly or covert.

Especially during times of conflict, a propagandistic information system distinguishes between **worthy and unworthy victims** while those reporting on and discussing the victims (this includes public) still take the moral high ground. This indicates high effectiveness of a propaganda system. Classification of victims depends on political opportunist potential. Victims of an enemy state are welcome to be extensively covered in a propaganda campaign. This campaign not only demonises the enemy but declares the victims unworthy. Victims to a government or party that is a partner or client of domestic

officials are not likely to be covered extensively, if even. (Herman & Chomsky, 1988)

The whole victim situation can as well be downplayed, neglected or assigned only very little importance to in favour of very different aspects of the issue. An accident in a nuclear plant for example would not lead to public outcry and questions about the employees who have fallen immediate victims or the workers who are risking their lives to fix the leak, but rather cause a storm of interest, questions and worry about the implications for the health of people globally and the ecosystem. Another example would be a famous sports person who has committed a crime. The attention of that personalities sports club's supporters and their adversaries have little interest in the personal consequences of the victim's life. The centre of attention and the focus of public interest would be the implications and consequences the lawsuit has for that sportsperson as this is the information indicating an effect on the audience's lives (hobbies and interests are part of our daily lives).

### **2.3.5 Slant**

Entman mentions the term 'slant' which he defines as a frame that "favors one side over the other in a current or potential dispute" and he notes that "slanted news is not, as journalists tend to insist, the rare exception". (Entman, 2007, p. 165). Slant matters because, as Entman states, regular slant primes audiences. (Entman, 2007) In other words: exposing an audience to a consistent moral judgement favouring one side over another will result in the audience adopting this schema. This implies that by slanting news structurally and across outlets, over time, media have the power to either

support certain political elites or to make life difficult for them. Entman distinguishes between decision bias (what issue/topic/problem is reported about over another one) and content bias (which policy outcomes or political actors are favoured over others). Slant therefore has an influence on the power balance and framing decides which political actor is free to say what they want, opposed to who will be weakened in public discourse, Entman suggests. (Entman, 2007).

If the media are on the agenda of political discourse themselves they “consistently slant in favour of conservatives’ preferred framing” which is a bias that over time gives conservatives an advantage, Entman writes further. (Entman, 2007)

### **2.3.6 Concepts of Propaganda**

Based on the diaries of Nazi Germany’s propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels, Leonard W. Doob, a professor of psychology at Yale University at the time, identified 19 principles that Goebbels had applied to the Nazi propaganda. (Doob, 1950) What Goebbels fascistic National Socialist worldview of the Nazi era had in common with the West of the Cold War era is an enemy: communism that is commanded from Moscow. Further Goebbels sought to stimulate his audience by priming at any given opportunity which is a parallel to the contemporary infiltration of our daily life with information, news and political development. Goebbels utilised cinemas, radio, newspapers, schools and established local as well as federal organisations that sought to indoctrinate every, at least every young, German. Nowadays information is brought to everyone on a more

voluntary basis (schools are still mandatory) but media usage via smart phone, internet and TV is by far more individually tailored.

Nonetheless looking at the principles a psychologist identifies in the diaries of Goebbels can reveal important thought processes that propagandists go through and variables they (have to) consider. Since Doob grouped these principles together based on the diaries of Goebbels one can assume that Goebbels has adjusted his tactics and strategies when non-effective, at least to an extent he was in control of. Goebbels' principles can further indicate the interplay between propaganda and other official institutions like intelligence, government and what makes a campaign valuable or dispensable. Surprisingly, Doob found that Goebbels showed little interest in systematic analysis of intelligence and rather relied on his very own instincts. Being the sole authority of the German propaganda machinery he was in the position to learn by trial and error and enhance his own principles (even though he seems to have sought his mother's advice from time to time) according to his personal understanding. Further his position enabled him to make decisions that were unpopular even among elitists. This is a freedom and privilege of independence that cannot be found in the West nowadays as there is no comparable position. However, Goebbels was operating his machinery in an international climate that was openly and directly hostile towards the Reich. Towards the end of the war there were not many figures left to massage and the scope of opportunities for favourable framing narrowed drastically. This is a situation that neither Russia, nor the West faced to a comparable extent at the time of MH17, hence processes that might only subtly surface in this study might be far more apparent in Goebbels' principles.

The principles Doob identified from Goebbels diaries (Doob, 1950) are:

**1. Propagandists must have access to intelligence concerning events and public opinion**

In order to be strategic in planning and executing propaganda cooperation and information exchange with intelligence and military is essential for a consistent story line.

**2. Propaganda must be planned and executed by only one authority**

- a. It must issue all the propaganda directives
- b. It must explain propaganda directives to important officials and maintain their morale
- c. It must oversee other agencies' activities which have propaganda consequences

Basically, the propaganda machinery was just like the Reich itself an authoritarian structure with a single leader in charge. All campaigns, no matter if it affected culture, news or any other sort of propaganda, had to be perfectly orchestrated in line with the policies that were instructive as every campaign was scrupulously drafted, executed, readjusted, and if applicable terminated. Policies that the propaganda minister himself had to approve, even though he sought Hitler's approval as well.

**3. The propaganda consequences of an action must be considered in planning that action**

An event that already has occurred does not leave many options besides framing it to save what can be saved. Therefore, it is by far more important for Goebbels to be

involved in the planning of an event, even if it was a military action. The potential consequences had to be handled with care as potential scenarios can affect the credibility of the propaganda campaign.

#### **4. Propaganda must affect the enemy's policy and action**

- a. By suppressing propagandistically desirable material which can provide the enemy with useful intelligence
- b. By openly disseminating propaganda whose content or tone causes the enemy to draw the desired conclusions
- c. By goading the enemy into revealing vital information about himself
- d. By making no reference to a desired enemy activity when any reference would discredit that activity

This principle is basically an information war. It is absolutely based on 'us vs. them'. The goal is to prevent the enemies from gaining information is actually credible or representative of reality, in order to not let them draw strategically useful conclusions. Rather let the enemy be in the dark than to let them know about their advantageous or disadvantageous position, so that they cannot apply Goebbels principle 3 successfully. Even though point d seems to be a passive concept, it is also a very good tool to actively prevent being double-crossed by points a, b and c applied by the enemy propagandist. In short: do not try to exploit enemies' setbacks as long as you don't have proof it is actually true. But if so: try to force the enemies into the propagandistic corner in order to make them reveal their setbacks. Do not let the enemies know about your own setbacks or

successfully applied strategies on their behalf and do not brag with success or make loss public, instead let the enemies' intelligence services find out for themselves.

**5. Declassified, operational information must be available to implement a propaganda campaign**

Any operational material has to be based on at least some minimal fact and must not conflict with security regulations. Then propagandistic news can be manufactured through action.

**6. To be perceived, propaganda must evoke the interest of an audience and must be transmitted through an attention-getting communications medium**

Goebbels understood that even enemy listeners' attention could be caught by providing an incentive, something that could affect them personally. He for example provided them with the names POWs. Further Goebbels detected a preference for straight news over talks among the foreign audience. The attentive audience then was subtly influenced by creating a particular atmosphere, rather than by passages of information.

Additionally Goebbels further strongly believed that visual images were always perceived more credible than spoken or written words, regardless of their verisimilitude. What he assumed was that all media (theatre, cinema, newspapers, radio) needed to be brought into line in order to reach all types of audience with the same message.

**7. Credibility alone must determine whether propaganda output should be true or false**

Truth must be applied as frequently as possibly to assure credible reputation. Lies are useful only, if they cannot be disproved. Nonetheless truth can be descriptive of a



temporary condition that later on changes. Further Goebbels had to realise that a successfully primed schemata can lead to blocking of the truth. (see 2.2.4 Effects of Framing).

**8. The purpose, content, and effectiveness of enemy propaganda; the strength and effects of an exposé; and the nature of current propaganda campaigns determine whether enemy propaganda should be ignored or refuted**

This is where Goebbels carefully chooses whether to reply to an enemy statement, to refute it, not to react at all or to counter it. What was always weight against one another was if his counterargument would be stronger or in itself weaken the Goebbels propaganda by wasting energy on irrelevant, stronger or ineffective enemy propaganda. Effective enemy propaganda and “blatant” enemy lies were immediately addressed. Ineffective enemy propaganda and “regular” enemy lies did not require any action he found. Further his primary campaign always had priority hence planning counterpropaganda needed to be planned in a way that did not discredit, or sway attention from, the main campaign.

**9. Credibility, intelligence, and the possible effects of communicating determine whether propaganda materials should be censored.**

This principle is about finding a balance for what information is made public and which is kept secret or censored. Further it is about distinguishing what information is in line with frames and campaigns domestically and what information is in line with international frames and campaigns. However it is necessary to provide information as Goebbels registers that “the hunger for news must be satisfied”. (Doob, 1950, p. 431) The

decision on whether information is ready to be shared also depended on Goebbels confidence of the credibility of the facts. Presenting erroneous facts that he would have believed to be true would have severely impaired his precise planning as mentioned in principle 2.

**10. Material from enemy propaganda may be utilized in operations when it helps diminish that enemy's prestige or lends support to the propagandist's own objective.**

In short, Goebbels browsed enemy media in order to find messages or statements that he could employ for his own campaigns.

**11. Black rather than white propaganda may be employed when the latter is less credible or produces undesirable effects.**

Goebbels applied disinformation campaigns because he was aware that certain messages would not be lent credence to if coming from government officials. Official statements in order to tackle rumours for example he believed had low credibility and could make them seem to be true all the more. Only when Goebbels was 100% certain that all the facts stood against the rumour he turned to official statement.

**12. Propaganda may be facilitated by leaders with prestige.**

Leaders with a great prestigious reputation, Goebbels believed, were not only authoritative figures the Germans would be submissive to but also set an example of faith into and loyalty to the government. Therefore he stylised certain leaders to heroes while those who he considered incompetent were simply declared too ill to continue in office.

This method should prevent public to identify any trace of incompetency among the regime's elites.

**13. Propaganda must be carefully timed.**

- a. The communication must reach the audience ahead of competing propaganda.
- b. A propaganda campaign must begin at the optimum moment
- c. A propaganda theme must be repeated, but not beyond some point of diminishing effectiveness

Goebbels understood that once a frame is set, it is difficult to alter or change it. Whenever news was decided to be reported he wanted German officials to be the first to make a statement so that the enemy was not given the chance to set the frame.

With regards to optimal timing and dimension of a campaign he was aware that moderation was the key. His timing was completely based on intuition though. The extent of a campaign Goebbels knew had to consider that a campaign that is launched too impulsively bears potential to be less credible. He understood the necessity of repetitive propaganda in order to prime the audience effectively, meaning that their schemata would be as easily accessible as possible. Wasting resources on accomplished priming or to bore the audience with unimpressive information however he sought to avoid.

**14. Propaganda must label events and people with distinctive phrases or slogans**

- a. They must evoke desired responses which the audience previously possesses
- b. They must be capable of being easily learned

- c. They must be utilized again and again, but only in appropriate situations
- d. They must be boomerang-proof

Goebbels understood that name calling as well as referential and condensational symbols are tools that can, if effectively employed, shape perception. He also understood that visuals and personal experiences are far stronger than words, but that words have the power to make meaning of the event.

a: When an unforeseen or unplanned event had taken place already, immediate linking of the event to phrases, slogans or keywords could still set the frame for the audience's experience and takeaways of the event.

b: Since the masses were Goebbels most-desired target audience, not intellectuals, he manufactured simple messages that were supposed to facilitate learning. Preferably he painted a world in black-and-white. Yet he was thoughtful enough to understand when the enemy had chosen the most effective words for their purpose which to counter would not be psychologically effective. In that case his handling of the matter was ignoring it.

c: This is where Goebbels connects image transfer, name calling and moderate repetition. Further he recognises the power of exclusivity of labels being put on very specific and unique entities, events or concepts. The latter equals to what is known in business language as *unique selling point*.

d: Again, Goebbels wants to make sure that whatever public announcement is made falls in line with his overall strategy, hence smart and precise selection of labels is essential.

**15. Propaganda to the home front must prevent the raising of false hopes which can be blasted by future events.**

In order to prevent what he referred to as ‘false illusions’ as well as losing credibility by making wrong predictions, he gave orders to maintain a degree of humility when informing about successes or communicating anticipated successes.

**16. Propaganda to the home front must create an optimum anxiety level.**

- a. Propaganda must reinforce anxiety concerning the consequences of defeat
- b. Propaganda must diminish anxiety (other than concerning the consequences of defeat) which is too high and which cannot be reduced by people themselves

a: To keep morale high among civilians and German resistance Goebbels aimed to maximise their awareness of the threat the enemy posed to their lives and identity.

Regardless of his assumption that the suffering over the aftermath of World War I had created significant meaning structures in the Germans’ minds that would make them resist intentionally, Goebbels worried that peace terms of the enemy propaganda might eventually have a priming effect.

b: When morale was impaired by military setbacks Goebbels sought to play down the importance of the event. By employing the term ‘ultimate victory’ set out as the final goal of all military efforts, he drew a larger but abstract picture around the loss. Now, the event did not seem of great relevance anymore.

**17. Propaganda to the home front must diminish the impact of frustration.**

- a. Inevitable frustrations must be anticipated
- b. Inevitable frustrations must be placed in perspective

This principle combines nine of the principles explained above (1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 13, 14, 15 and 16). In order to keep moral in the Reich high Goebbels needed to keep a close eye on what information was given to the Germans and which had to be withheld. If personally tangible frustration was inevitable, people should not be additionally taken by surprise or shock, but rather be mentally prepared. On the other hand Goebbels reversed this principle if anticipated frustration could be linked to the regime itself, as it would prolong the state of discontent and therefore have an impact on schemas associated with the government. As long as the Germans were willing to make sacrifices for the ultimate victory, they would be supporting the government. To maintain faith in the government Goebbels provided the people with a propagandistically framed overview about the war.

**18. Propaganda must facilitate the displacement of aggression by specifying the targets for hatred.**

German aggression or aggression of the regime against certain groups in the Reich and its occupied territories was sought to be accompanied by propaganda campaign that would blame the enemy that suffered from the aggression.

**19. Propaganda cannot immediately affect strong counter-tendencies; instead it must offer some form of action or diversion, or both.**

Doob writes that Goebbels regretfully identified six variables his propaganda machinery could not gain control over to a satisfactory extent:

- sex drive
- hunger
- the negative consequences on morale by air raids

- industrial productivity
- religious beliefs
- lack of overall military success

Realising the limitations of his work he had to accept that these variables could not be swayed with a smart propaganda strategy, Goebbels turned to distinguishing two components of morale called *Haltung* and *Stimmung*. *Stimmung* stands for the mood, spirit and the feelings that impact the state of morale. *Haltung* refers to composure and the represented attitude to the outside world. While Goebbels believed that *Haltung* was vital as loss of *Haltung* could lead to willingness to surrender, he abandoned efforts to affect the volatile *Stimmung* that he lost control over due to increasing air raids by the allies. In short, Goebbels expected the Germans to drag on even though they had lost the spirit.

Goebbels principles provide an insight into the ‘behind the scenes’, the ideation process and the mastermind behind the Nazi propaganda. While Herman and Chomsky described the infrastructure of propaganda in the allegedly free press, Doob illustrates based on which concepts Goebbels, who did not have to prove anything to any interest holders and had to represent nobody’s interests but Reich’s. Goebbels is the perfect example that news management and regulation of information is absolutely essential for defending national interests.

### 2.3.7 Principles of War Propaganda

Anne Morelli is a historian at Université libre de Bruxelles and author of the book *Principes élémentaires de propagande de guerre* which was published in 2001. The book was also translated into German and published as *Die Prinzipien der Kriegspropaganda*. The book has not been published in English yet but the book title translates to ‘The Principles of War Propaganda’ and is based on the work of Lord Arthur Ponsonby who was a British politician and author and Morelli’s own historic research. Ponsonby (1871-1946) was born in Windsor Castle because his father was Queen Victoria’s principal private secretary. He is renowned for having been one of the few MPs who openly opposed Britain’s entry into World War I and established his reputation as a firm pacifist. In 1928 Ponsonby published the book *Falsehood in Wartime, Containing an Assortment of Lies Circulated Throughout the Nations During the Great War* of which an updated edition titled *Falsehood in Wartime: Propaganda Lies of the First World War* was published after World War II. In the book he illustrated lies that circulated during the First World War. The book published by Morelli categorises ten principles of propaganda from the work of Ponsonby to which she refers to as the ‘commandments of propaganda’. Historian Morelli substantiates each principle by giving examples from real conflicts, such as World War I, World War II, the Vietnam War, the US-Invasion in Panama, the War in Yugoslavia, the Gulf War and the most recent invasion in Iraq, for an entire chapter. Her principles are therefore not merely based on Ponsonby’s examples from World War I but on repetitive pattern she illustrates. Further these principles have provided the foundation for a study in Switzerland that will be outlined in chapter 2.4.3. Morelli’s ten principles (Morelli, 2001) are as follows:



### **1. We do not want war** (implies: actually we want peace)

Before entering a war, officials of the conflicting parties usually reaffirm their peaceful intentions, sometimes even in the declaration of war itself.

### **2. The enemy alone is responsible for the war**

Every war party stresses that they have been forced into the war by the enemy.

Unfortunately this war is an inevitable evil, necessary to wipe out any further conflict potentials. The enemy is the aggressor and they do not respect, in fact even breach existing treaties. Moreover they manipulate peace negotiations. ‘They need to be punished for that and we are just responding to their aggression. It is their aggression that forces us into this this war. Reluctantly we enter it because of the relentless provocations on behalf of our enemy, who is mistreating our innocent and peaceful partners. Therefore this war is just a measure of defence and responsibility/duty towards our partners. This war prevents intolerable protraction of mischievous action of the enemy. They have tried our patience for too long.’ Being ‘encircled’ by a hostile environment also serves as a justification for not having any other option. Even unilateral attacks are framed ‘retaliations’. In short: “They started it.”

### **3. The enemy is the incarnation of evil** (especially their leader)

To hate the entire population of a country or an entire group of people is an abstract concept. Because of that is far more effective to personify evil, preferably in person of the leader of the country or group to provide a concrete and simple canvas for hate to be projected on. War is not waged against the Serbs, but against Milosevic, for instance, since hating the Serbs is too abstract. Milosevic seems a more rational hate subject. For

this principle all sorts of name calling and attributes of evil sound reasonable for as long as they portray the leader in a monstrous, ferocious or deranged way. Yet, the most effective and frequently applied name calling of all is still: Hitler. Whoever dares to question or argue against these allegations or the portrayal as incarnation as evil is immediately publically disqualified, regardless how unfounded the name calling is (see principle 10 as well).

#### **4. We fight for a noble cause, not for our own interest**

People are not willing to kill and die for the benefits and interests of the elites. They need to be convinced that their efforts follow high morale that either serves to wipe out militarism and violent conflict in the future, to defend a small oppressed nation or to pave the way for the spread of democracy in the world. In short: this is a crusade for peace, freedom and democracy. Economic interests are not admitted before the war is over.

#### **5. The enemy purposely commits atrocities, our blunders happen by accident**

It is in the nature of the criminal, unscrupulous and lawless army of the enemy to commit atrocities because their members are beasts. All atrocities that have occurred are their faults. Even occasional blunders on our side were in fact planned by them and we had no other choice and got trapped by them. Our army is a noble one that not only defends and serves our own people but also the people of the country where they are employed.

Civilians welcome our army with open arms.

Morelli, just like Herman and Chomsky, notes that victims on the enemy's side are not even worthy of sympathy or any other sort of empathy. Legends about atrocities committed by the enemy are fabricated and forged in the blackest sense of propaganda

possible. These fabricated legends serve only one purpose: to fan fear among both soldiers and civilians. This is a very essential principle of war propaganda and does heavily rely on priming by selection of labels. What is called a 'mass grave' on one side can be a 'cemetery' on the other side even though all have been buried equally. (Forced) 'resettlement' on the one side can be called 'ethnic cleansing' on the other side. What is called 'information' on the one side might be referred to as 'propaganda' on the other side.

#### **6. The enemy employs unlawful weapons**

In contrast to our honourable troops, who respect international law, treaties and martial law, the enemy refuses to acknowledge these regulations.

Morelli writes that a blitz, effectively employed is considered a highly intelligent strategy to catch the enemy by surprise. If employed by the enemy however, a blitz proves nothing but the enemy's cowardice.

#### **7. Our number of sustained casualties is low, the enemy suffers heavy casualties**

To keep morale and support for the government high, public needs to be assured to be on the right and safe side: the one that is winning. In order to make the government's decision to enter the war appear a competent, wise and well-thought through one, it can be important to massage figures into a favourable direction. Another important factor is the economic perspective: public opinion is driven by prospects of golden times rather than by heavy financial burdens brought upon the treasury that will have to be compensated by a tax raise.

#### **8. Our cause is supported by artists and intellectuals**

Artists and intellectuals are employed to publicly align and speak out for the war because they are creative and well-versed in composing words to a convincing piece or work. PR agencies are employed to plan and launch campaigns and all-in-all the overall goal is to appeal to and play on the emotional filters of perception of the audience. Critics are weeded out and then deliberately given the silent treatment in terms of media presence, without any official order to be issued. This is due to the self-strangling mechanism in place in the allegedly 'free' press, which is controlled by the interests of elites as Herman and Chomsky illustrate (Herman & Chomsky, 1988) but can apply to academia, too.

#### **9. Our mission is sacred**

In the most literal sense of the word sacred, a war is justified by religion. The 'good mission' is to defend God and [enter religion of choice here] against the heathens. God appears to be the impartial universal sponsor of all war parties.

The sacred mission motive is not limited to religion in the sense of, for instance, Christianity, Catholicism, Islam or Sunnism. The sacred motive is employed for secular religiously-followed causes such as democracy, freedom of speech [or freedom itself] or market economy just as well. What matters is that the warring party fights for a just mission, that is appropriate to counter the evil that is causing havoc in the host country and further has been decided, pronounced and written down in law by an authority who considers war the last resort.

#### **10. All who doubt our coverage are traitors**

Just like Herman and Chomsky, Morelli observes that media are dependent on political officials to such a degree that maintaining a pluralist perspective is impossible for them in

times of conflict. Those, who want to hear both sides of the story before making up their minds or dare to question statements and ‘facts’ presented by officials, are immediately regarded as accomplices of the enemy; even those who go to see the conflict zone for themselves with their own eyes and later report critically based on factual personal experience.

Consequences for these who choose to not blindly follow the flock are diverse as examples Morelli illustrates. From suspension of teachers to throwing lateral thinkers into jail, from permanent police surveillance to legal prohibition of any organised activity, from labelling them ‘traitor’, ‘anti-democratic’, ‘anti-[insert nationality or sphere of influence of choice here]’, ‘revisionist’, or ‘[insert demonised enemy leader of choice here]-sympathiser’ to abruptly interrupting live television interviews with them as soon as they speak their critical minds.

As simple and self-explanatory these principles seem, there is no reason to treat the information that has provided the foundation for Morelli’s principles less credible than the study based on the diaries of Goebbels. Certainly, Morelli’s principles of war propaganda do not indicate whether the messages investigated are truthful or credible and neither does she intend to indicate who is responsible for the conflict. All that Morelli shows is according to which principles war is typically propagandistically framed and lists ten frames that can serve to identify war propaganda. Morelli summarises, that Ponsonby’s principles are most easily pointed out by examples of ‘hot wars’, however they are employed in ‘cold’ and ‘lukewarm’ wars as well as in social conflicts just as effectively. All seven of Vincent’s strategies of propaganda are reflected in Morelli’s

principles. Slant is obvious. Herman and Chomsky also write about hypocrite judgement of dichotomies in the media, and identify numerous cases in which United States news framing applied the principles of war propaganda. Morelli takes this monopolistic prerogative of interpretation of public opinion in favour of elites to an international and universal dimension in western democracies. All forms of propaganda identified in chapter 2.3.3 can be applied to these ten principles and without a doubt the Nazi propaganda made by Goebbels is an example that perfectly embodies all of Morelli's 10 principles of war propaganda. With reference to Goebbels, Morelli remarks that contemporary techniques of propaganda are far more effective in creating the illusion of being on the good cause's side which is fighting the evil, than Goebbels did in his days. Nonetheless Morelli reflects, that it cannot be proven whether application of the principles is a deliberate action or not.

## **2.4 Existing Literature and Research**

### **2.4.1 Existing Relevant Literature on MH17 and RT**

The MH17 incident has not been subject of an academic comparative media framing analysis of English speaking state-owned media from Germany and Russia so far. There are almost no academic primary sources on media coverage of the MH17 plane crash that can be found through SAGE research or George Mason University library or University of Malta library. The only relevant article is Open BUK: Digital Labor, Media Investigation and the Downing of MH17 by Matt Sienkiewicz, an article that investigates an event that followed MH17 and sought to investigate MH17. Sienkiewicz seeks to

describe Ukrainian efforts to counter Russian propaganda and since RT is subject of his article it eventually becomes relevant to this very research as well.

***The event:***

On 18 July Ukrainian Interior minister Avakov posted a video on facebook, annotating that this video was shot on a street that passes through Krasnodon (Eastern Ukrainian city near the Russian border) in direction of the Russian border. The video shows a truck carrying a BUK missile system. Such a missile system was at the time suspected to have shot down MH17.

***The Media Effect:***

Even though not considered an official statement the video immediately caused enormous interest. Sienkiewicz states that this was merely an effort to find “outside observers who could testify to Kiev’s interpretations of the video” (Sienkiewicz, 2015, p.210).

Regardless of the non-official status of Avakov’s statement the video immediately caused enormous interest. Sienkiewicz states that this was merely an effort to find “outside observers who could testify to Kiev’s interpretations of the video” and describes this as a low budget effort to combat Russia’s well financed PR machinery and so-called “troll army”.

Sienkiewicz continues with a digression into digital labour by briefly explaining the Huffington Post’s pre-2011 model of legal wage dumping for digital freelancers which is called hope labour. Hope labour being the United states post-9/11 business model of employing thousands of “unpaid unintelligence officers” for digital promotion campaigns and “duties of homeland security”. Hope labour was also applied by the British government’s way of reducing police cost through employing citizen volunteers

to identify shoplifters on video, and the Boston police's to involve public into a manhunt after the attacks of 2013. At least the latter application is acknowledged to have led to doubtful right up to misleading results. Nonetheless Sienkiewicz argues that this proves the "significant degree of communicative and investigative power the government was willing to grant to unpaid digital laborers". A mix of these business models and utilising the internet for international relations for Ukraine is according to Sienkiewicz what Avakov successfully applied by uploading this video as this lead to investigation efforts of the video's validity among the online community. Eventually Sienkiewicz explains how Russia has employed a digital "troll army" that is paid for flooding the internet with unofficial public relations in disguise. Sienkiewicz describes such a pattern occurring the day after Avakov's post and further 2 days later RT picking up on the story that the internet was flooded with and exonerated the Pro-Russian rebels.

Following this, Sienkiewicz describes how online researchers and journalists, similar to the Huffington post business model, refuted the story broadcasted by RT and affirmed by Russian representatives. The location where the video was shot, according to an unpaid volunteer digital labourer, managed to create consensus among non-Russian investigators.

Moreover, Sienkiewicz concludes that "cross-border discursive interventions" as well as Russia's impact strategy of soft power & misinformation campaigns have resulted in the Crimean secession. The cause he argues lies in Ukraine's incapability to keep up with Russia's information war and hence "failed to maintain the support of the population". Therefore he argues that the principle of 'forensic' 'hope labor' and cross



border advocacy turned out to be Ukraine's weapon to counteract Russia's public relations machinery (Sienkiewicz, 2015).

#### **2.4.2 Framing Research**

##### ***Inductive vs. Deductive Approach***

Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) distinguish two approaches for analysing frames in the news which are called inductive and deductive approach. While the inductive approach starts with a very loose concept of frames the deductive approach predefines those frames that are likely to be found. The inductive approach can detect more frames due to its rigid detailed and open search for them. A deductive frame analysis requires a clear pre-conceptualisation and might overlook frames that are not sought for. On the other hand it can easily detect differences in media and is therefore a great approach for a comparative research.

#### **2.4.3 Propaganda Research**

Morelli's ten principles of propaganda have been applied in a study conducted by the organisation 'Swiss Propaganda' that investigated propagandistic elements in the NZZ's coverage of the conflicts in Syria and Crimea. NZZ (Neue Zürcher Zeitung) is a German-language Swiss newspaper with a circulation of approximately 120,000 in 2015. (SCHWEIZER MEDIEN, 2016) The study found that Morelli's principles were applicable and in detail published their extensive findings of pro USA/NATO slanted propaganda on their website. In an attempt to illustrate that even in allegedly-neutral Switzerland media are not free from propaganda by applying Morelli's ten principles,

Swiss Propaganda found that 89% of NZZ's coverage on Syria (92%) and Ukraine (88%) featured pro-USA/NATO elements of propaganda. Moreover they found that 11% of NZZ's coverage on Syria (8%) and Ukraine (12%) contained USA/NATO-critical elements of propaganda. (Swiss Propaganda, 2016) Even though Swiss Propaganda is not an academic project, their research should not be discarded. Their study shows that in fact the Morelli principles can be applied in order to identify frames of war propaganda in contemporary Western media.

### **3. RESEARCH METHODS**

“Content analysis may be conducted on written text, transcribed speech, verbal interactions, visual images, characterizations, nonverbal behaviors, sound events, or any other type of message.”  
(Neuendorf, 2002, p.24)

In order to address the research question a quantitative content analysis was applied for this study. The study seeks to identify the overall frames in the written and online-published news editorial content of a German state-funded international news broadcaster and a Russian state-funded international news broadcaster. Moreover the study investigates if propagandistic elements can be identified in their coverage of MH17. The German state-funded international news broadcaster is Deutsche Welle. The Russian state-funded international news broadcaster is RT. The issue chosen to be investigated is the MH17 tragedy and only those articles reporting on this matter are considered relevant for this study.

#### **3.1 Determining the frame scope**

Taken note of Cacciatore, Scheufele and Iyengar’s proposed paradigm shift (Cacciatore et al., 2016) of the framing concept (see Chapter 2.2), this study nonetheless

does not apply their understanding of framing. This is due to this study's premise to analyse the text. Therefore the lines between framing and agenda setting might be not as clear as Cacciatore, Scheufele and Iyengar hope to initiate future research to go, but nonetheless this study is in line and based on previous framing analysis concepts to ensure coherence, which is another point of criticism they made about academic works on framing. (Cacciatore et al., 2016) In other words, this study considers their initiative and picks up on their point that framing research should be focused on equivalence framing. Both news outlets' coverage of the very same event is investigated over the same exact time frame. Nonetheless Matthes and Kohring's criticism of a deductive approach that analyses predefined frames is noted. However, this study aims to analyse specific frames that are very likely to be covered and further does not aim to compare several periods of coverage. The latter was Matthes and Kohring's main point of critic towards the deductive approach as they indicate this method to be incapable of detecting framing changes. (Matthes & Kohring, 2008)

In order to apply an approach to analyse frames that is reproducible and has already been applied successfully by other researchers in the past, the choice of method was made to apply Semetko and Valkenburg's types of frames and their question catalogue. Semetko and Valkenburg's method has shown to apply in across cultures, therefore their method of investigating the questions has only been slightly adjusted and supplemented with an additional category that aims to identify propaganda. As Matthes and Kohring pointed out, this is possible, as from the utterances of John Kerry and Peter Limbourg it might be possible that significant slant might be found at least in RT's

coverage. Nonetheless it is noted, that Limbourg's statement was made 2 months after MH17 and therefore after the time frame which is covered in this study (see chapter 3.1.1). Kerry's statement was made even later. Nonetheless it cannot be assumed, that Kerry and Limbourg were discussing a very sudden and recent change in RT's style of coverage. This is also illustrated by the Simonyan quote in chapter 2.3.2b, when the RT editor-in-chief addressed a "media war" in March 2014 (4 months before MH17). Further Limbourg's statement in September 2014 to eventually stand up against Putin's propaganda underlines the assumption that Propaganda comes unilaterally from Russia, therefore, if Limbourg is right, Germany can be assumed a good benchmark to compare RT with.

To conduct this study, predefining a propaganda frame is necessary.

### **3.1.1 Semetko and Valkenburg's four types of frame**

To measure the four types of frames (conflict frame, human interest frame, economic consequences frame, and responsibility frame) each article is read under the preface to answer questions that had been developed beforehand. Each question was a binary question that had to be answered either 'yes' or 'no'. (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000) The questions that applied were:

#### ***Conflict frame:***

**"Does the article report a conflict or disagreement between 2 or more interest parties or interest groups?"** (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000, p.98)

1. Does the story reflect disagreement between parties/individuals/groups/countries?
2. Does one party/individual/group/country reproach another?

3. Does the story refer to two sides or to more than two sides of the problem or issue?
4. Does the story refer to winners and losers? (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000, p.99)

The questions in this frame type identification dimension aim to identify if the stories suggest that there is a disagreement between two or more parties, if the stories suggest that finger-pointing is in place and if the stories suggest that there is a prevailing party.

***Human interest frame:***

**“Does the article emphasise the fate of individuals affected or groups affected by the issue or problem?”** (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000, p.98)

5. Does the story provide a human example or “human face” on the issue?
6. Does the story employ adjectives or personal vignettes that generate feelings of outrage, empathy, caring, sympathy, or compassion?
7. Does the story emphasize how individuals and groups are affected by the issue/problem?
8. Does the story go into the private or personal lives of the actors?
9. Does the story contain visual information that might generate feelings of outrage, empathy, caring, sympathy, or compassion? (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000, p.99)

The questions in this dimension seek to identify whether the stories are humanised in order to pull the trigger on emotional reactions in the audience by providing details about individual fates and the consequences the reported story has for those individuals. Further if these emotional reactions are amplified by employing visuals.

***Economic Consequences frame:***

**“Is there a mention of financial gains or losses now or in the future?”** (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000, p.98)

10. Is there a mention of (financial) losses or gains now or in the future?
11. Is there a mention of the costs/degree of expense involved?
12. Is there a reference to (economic) consequences of pursuing or not pursuing a course of action? (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000, p.99)

This frame dimension ought to identify if the stories indicate whether there are benefits at stake, expenditures involved or if speculations about consequences of a potential (lack of) exertion of influence are illustrated.

***Responsibility frame:***

**“Does the story suggest that some level of the government is responsible for the issue/problem?”** (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000, p.98)

13. Does the story suggest that some level of government has the ability to alleviate the problem?
14. Does the story suggest that some level of government is responsible for the issue/problem?
15. Does the story suggest solution(s) to the problem/issue?
16. Does the story suggest that an individual (or group of people in society) is responsible for the issue/problem?

17. Does the story suggest that the problem requires urgent action? (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000, p.99)

The fourth frame dimension seeks to identify whether the coverage mentions scapegoats in the sense that governmental decisions or other interest holders have caused to the situation, whether governmental decisions can have a positive influence on the situation, whether the article suggests specific remedy for the problem and whether the audience is told that immediate action is required.

This catalogue of questions has been applied by several previous studies which agree that these questions indicate the four frames. (Dirikx & Gelders, 2010)

### **3.1.2 Developing a fifth type of frame**

The additional self-defined fifth type of frame is a war propaganda/slant frame.

Entman defines the 'slant' frame as an indicator for bias in media coverage as an influential tool on the distribution of power (Entman, 2007).

As Matthes & Kohring (2012) pointed out, in order to identify a frame in a deductive approach, it has to be predefined as propaganda can be found in specific context. Jowett & O'Donnell (2012) clearly outlined that a clear understanding of the situation is required to analyse propaganda. With regards to that requirement, the big picture that surrounds RT, Deutsche Welle and MH17 has to be drawn and interpreted. That is why before defining a propaganda frame another evaluation of the circumstances surrounding the MH17 tragedy has to be made.



### ***Evaluating the situation***

With regards to the situation in Ukraine, where the MH17 incident happened and which sets the atmosphere for this study an interest of either sides (the West and Russia) can be identified. How exactly this unfolds into a dichotomised geopolitical climate of information war is described in detail in chapter 2.3.2b under point 5, Ideological Filter.

### ***Identifying (at least) two camps***

The propaganda frame is based on the assumption that there is an information war going on between the West and Russia, with similar camps to the Cold War era. Therefore, slant would always advantage the camp's perspective over the other camp's perspective. This frame is set up to identify propagandistic elements on both sides. The elements are based on chapter 2.3.

Therefore, if either side writes propagandistic articles on the events of MH17, Deutsche Welle can be assumed to take an interest in representing the interest of the Kiev Administration and opposition until the ousting of Yanukovych. In addition Deutsche Welle, being a representative for the German perspective, has to consider its political alignments within the EU and NATO. RT can be assumed to take an interest in representing the Eastern Ukrainian and Crimean point of view of the Ethnic Russians and secessionists. Russia is neither member of NATO nor EU. Therefore the two camps identified are

- 1) Deutsche Welle, Germany, the Ukrainian Government in Kiev, EU and NATO
- 2) RT, Russia, Secessionists in Crimea and ethnic Russians in Ukraine

As Morelli described there has to be illustrated an environment hostile to the propagandist and its associates in the very beginning of any war propaganda campaign. This hostile environment consists of at least one dangerous individual, or group of people, embodying a threat to the propagandist's identity group or camp. This is the foundation for all other principles of war propaganda. Identifying such tendencies can be considered a credible indicator for the presence of war propaganda, even before the war, or its emergence, is obvious to the masses. At the time of the MH17 tragedy, there was a civil war going on in Ukraine already. Yet, Germany and Russia (the two countries of origin of RT and Deutsche Welle) were not officially entangled in acts of war in Ukraine, regardless of their involvement in the Ukraine conflict. Consequently, the slant frame seeks to identify if the articles suggest that there is a threatening enemy, if stories are building up on the demonisation of a leader or slanting the coverage. This propaganda frame, if found in the articles, would enrich the investigation of potentially present conflict, human interest, economic interest and responsibility frames by shedding a first light on their targeted direction.

The propaganda frame that has been developed for this study, based on the model of Semetko and Valkenburg is as follows:

***The Propaganda frame***

**“Does the story suggest that there is a threatening enemy?”**

18. Does the story suggest that the other side is a threat to one own camp's identity, security or lives?

19. Does the story present exclusively the own camp's position enriched with, if at all, only threatening statements and actions from an outsider or outgroup?
20. Does the story present the own camp's activities and statements?
21. Does the story critically assess activities and statements carried out by the own camp?
22. Does the story employ slanted generality (glittering for own side and shady for the other side) and/or slanted name calling?
23. Does the story project the responsibility for actions of many of the other camp on one representative leader?

This new fifth type of frame seeks to identify whether the stories suggest that there is a hostile environment to the nation, peer group or identity group of the writer's camp, if one representative of the other camp is hyped and could therefore serve for Morelli's third principle in order to present personified evil to the audience now or later. The propaganda frame type also seeks to identify whether slanted priming is employed and if actions from one's own camp are critically assessed or not. The latter serves as a balancing factor to this frame type. While question 20 assess whether official statements from the own camp are presented, question 21 serves as an inverted counter, relativising the propaganda frame a little bit as a critical assessment of statements made from officials of the own camp are counted as an indicator for a reflected unbiased analysis. Questions 22 aims to identify slant, other than the labelling of Eastern Ukrainian militias. These are assumed to be labelled universally as "pro-Russian" on Deutsche Welle's behalf and as a regional force with noble intentions for its people by RT anyway. To be able to identify

further slant this question does not consider labelling these forces except if it is explicitly contrasted with the labelling of a militia of the other camp in the same article.

## **3.2 Data Collection**

### **3.2.1 Sample Size**

In order to determine the sample for this study, the search engines on the respective websites of RT ([www.rt.com](http://www.rt.com)) and Deutsche Welle ([www.dw.com](http://www.dw.com)) were employed to identify all articles in the respective archives. All articles published between 17 July 2014 and 23 August 2014 containing the keywords “MH17”, “Malaysian Airlines”, “MH-17” or “flight mh17” were considered to create a list with all links to and titles of the articles, sorted by date. This way double reference to an article could be eliminated. A table was created that shows how many relevant articles were published per day. Articles that featured no information about MH17 were not included in the list. For instance an article published on Deutsche Welle that investigated MH370 was brought up by searching for the keyword “Malaysian Airlines”.

A total of 235 relevant articles could be identified, 109 on RT and 126 on Deutsche Welle. As outlined in chapter 3.2.2 the timeframe was then determined to be 17 July 2014 until 26 July 2016 which made the sample size 139 articles (65 from RT and 74 from Deutsche Welle). Throughout the research 1 further articles was sorted out. The RT article “Malaysia Airlines MH17 plane crash in Ukraine LIVE UPDATES” published on 17 July 2014 contained (as the headline states) a live update and the news collection was updated far into August 2014, meaning the article did not fit the time frame (see

below) determined for this study anymore. Final sample size:

138 articles (64 RT, 74 Deutsche Welle)

### **3.2.2 Time Frame**

The time frame is 17 July, the day when the MH17 tragedy happened, to 26 July 2014. Over the first ten days after the incident (17 July 2014 and the following 9 days) 65 articles relevant articles were published on RT and 74 on Deutsche Welle. This is the last day on which the difference in number of relevant articles per outlet is  $<10$ . It is also the period of time which sparked most interest and throughout which the two outlets produced most articles on the issue.

Over the following ten days (27 July 2014 up to including 5 August 2014) Deutsche Welle produced only 39 and RT 29 relevant articles about MH17 and the tendency declined. Throughout days 21-30 (6 August up to including 15 August) only 13 (RT) respectively 10 (Deutsche Welle) further articles concerning the MH17 tragedy were published.

Hence the time frame was set to analyse the first ten days after the incident which implies that only articles published on 17 July 2014 up to including 26 July 2014 are considered relevant for this study. The amount of articles published throughout the first ten days compared to the later declining frequency of reports on MH17 led to the assumption that each outlet set their news frames on the events by day ten. In addition to that the time limit for this study did not leave room for a more extensive research.

### **3.2.3 The Research**

All articles were carefully read through by the researcher and keywords indicating slanted generality or slanted name calling were highlighted. Then all 23 questions defined in the 5 types of frames were answered ‘yes’ or ‘no’. The results for each article were collected individually and moreover coded by date. A table for RT and a table for Deutsche Welle was made to keep results separate. Each question’s results were added up per news outlet. At first, five articles of each outlet were examined then the research started with the examination of all DW articles and was finished by examining all RT articles. The initial examination showed that there was a big difference in how these outlets published their news. In order to be able to catch and examine the overall frame of each article the decision was made to examine and include video and radio content embedded in the articles as well. The only criteria in the questions catalogue that dealt with images was question 9, the 5<sup>th</sup> question for the Human Interest frame “Does the story contain visual information that might generate feelings of outrage, empathy, caring, sympathy, or compassion?”. The answer to this question considered all visual impressions per article including videos. The exception were hyperlinked advertisements and images to further articles which were not considered. The rest of the video and image content was merely assessed on the message it conveyed. To illustrate the differences in the content tool chosen each article was also coded by word count, number of images as well as number of videos and audio tracks embedded. For videos and audio tracks the length of each element was registered.

### **3.2.4 Limitations**

This study is the Master dissertation/thesis of a post-graduate student and was therefore written within a clearly determined time limit, that would allow the student to graduate at the end of the semester. The study is limited to news that were published in RT's and Deutsche Welle's websites and does not examine televised content, other than which is embedded in the online publications. Further, the student was responsible to examine all content by himself and does not have sufficient command of the Russian language. Video and radio content featuring Russian language therefore could not be assessed or the student had to rely on the translations provided in the video and radio content itself as well as the visual impressions. However, this limitation does not impact the study as it aims to examine how both countries presented their point of view of the MH17 tragedy to an (predominantly non-German and non-Russian speaking) international audience. The language barrier was a factor over the preliminary stages that had to be conducted for this study nonetheless. When assessing the political and partially cultural situation, the environment and the structural background of the two outlets, the student could rely on information available in English and his mother tongue German. Since English is not the native language of the student, identifying slant in form of name calling or glittering generality might as well not be 100% accurate. Since this study does not intend to make an assessment or put a value on which outlet is propagandising more than the other one, the results of the fifth frame do not stand and fall with question 22. The frame was intentionally defined more extensive than by just three question, which would be the minimum of questions per frame recommended by Semetko and Valkenburg.

The articles of RT were often supplemented with visual content. Often the content of individual images was not visible which is most likely related to the fact that this study was conducted more than 2 years later to their publication date. Nonetheless the labels of these pictures were still visible. Oftentimes however the labels did not even indicate what their content might have shown, therefore all these non-visible visuals were merely registered as “former video” or “former image” and considered non-relevant to the five frames apart from that. The time frame limited the research to the ten days following the incident and does not reflect how the issue has been framed in the long-term. Applying a deductive approach further does not go beyond delivering results to the five frames pre-defined.



## 4. FINDINGS AND DATA

### 4.1 Data Overview

Over the course of the research on 138 relevant articles 55:59 minutes of audio tracks (29:18 on RT and 26:41 on Deutsche Welle) as well as 2:50:35 hours of video content (2:49:59 on RT and 0:00:36 on Deutsche Welle) were examined in total as can be seen in *table 1*. 64 of these 138 articles were articles published on [www.rt.com](http://www.rt.com) and 74 of these articles were published on [www.dw.com](http://www.dw.com). *Table 1* shows which means of communication each outlet used apart from written words. An overview of all articles examined can be found in Appendix II.

The articles added up to an aggregate word count of 78,804 (40,065 on RT and 38,739 on Deutsche Welle) as *table 2* shows.

Table 1: Media content embedded in articles on Deutsche Welle and RT

Media Embedded in Content		
Outlet	Deutsche Welle	RT
Audio Tracks Embedded	5	1
Audio Length Total	00:26:41	0:29:18
Audio Tracks Average Length	00:00:22	00:00:27
Videos Embedded	2	47 (+2)
Video Length Total	00:02:59	02:49:59
Video Length Avg. Per Article	00:00:00	00:02:39
Articles containing audio (%)	5 (6.8%)	1 (1.6%)
Articles containing video (%)	1 (1.4%)	31 (48.4%)
Images Embedded	132	79 (+96)
Images per Article (Average)	1.8	1.2 (2.7)

Table 2: Articles published and word count per outlet & day

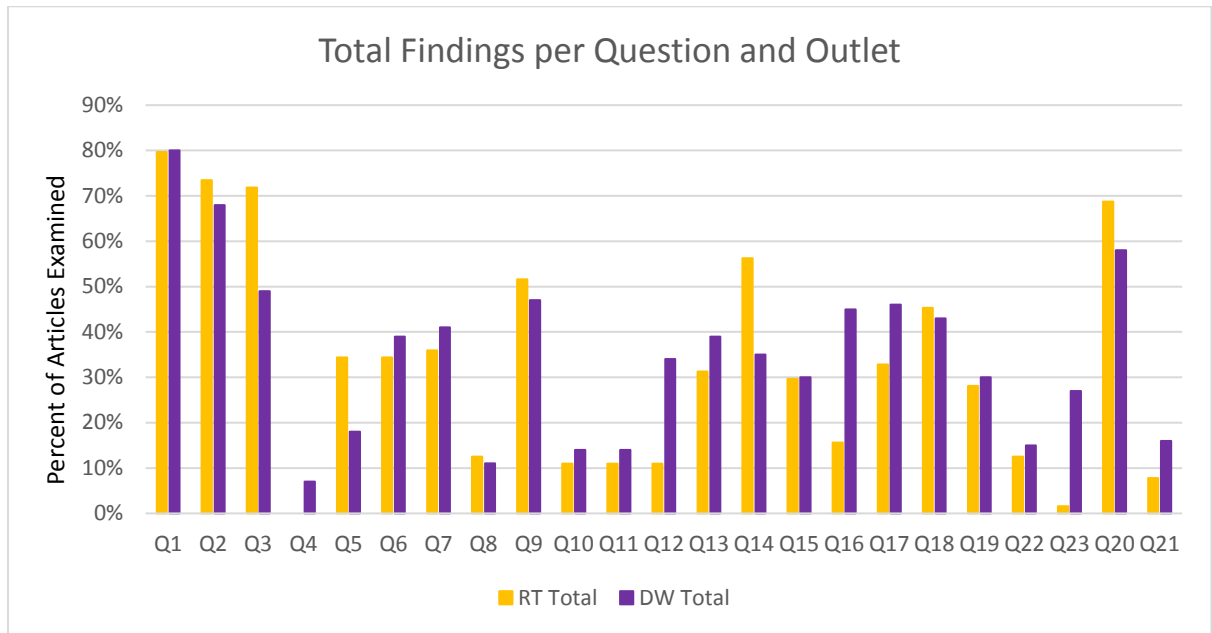
Articles published and Word Count per day						
Date	Deutsche Welle	RT	Total Articles	Word Count DW	Word Count RT	Total Word Count
17 July 2014	3	6	9	1595	3695	5290
18 July 2014	14	13	27	9344	6895	16239
19 July 2014	7	2	9	3742	992	4734
20 July 2014	7	5	12	3799	3987	7786
21 July 2014	9	7	16	4448	5279	9727
22 July 2014	6	13	19	3773	8081	11854
23 July 2014	7	5	12	3414	3037	6451
24 July 2014	11	6	17	4756	3253	8009
25 July 2014	7	3	10	2590	2599	5189
26 July 2014	3	4	7	1278	2247	3525
Total	74	64	138	38739	40065	78804

## 4.2 Findings by Question

*Table 3 and figure 4* illustrate, which question was how often answered ‘yes’ and show where the differences are. The deviation between questions 3, 5, 12, 14,16, 17, 20 and 23 is higher than 10% and therefore indicates a significant difference. These questions will be examined in detail in the following sub-chapter 4.2.1.

**Table 3: Questions answered ‘yes’ per outlet in comparison**

Frame Type	Question	DW Total	RT Total	Difference
Conflict Frame	Q1	80%	80%	0%
	Q2	68%	73%	5%
	Q3	49%	72%	23%
	Q4	7%	0%	7%
Human Interest Frame	Q5	18%	34%	16%
	Q6	39%	34%	5%
	Q7	41%	36%	5%
	Q8	11%	13%	2%
	Q9	47%	52%	5%
Economic Consequences Frame	Q10	14%	11%	3%
	Q11	14%	11%	3%
	Q12	34%	11%	23%
Responsibility Frame	Q13	39%	31%	8%
	Q14	35%	56%	21%
	Q15	30%	30%	0%
	Q16	45%	16%	29%
	Q17	46%	33%	13%
Propaganda Fame	Q18	43%	45%	2%
	Q19	30%	28%	2%
	Q22	15%	13%	3%
	Q23	27%	2%	25%
	Q20	58%	69%	11%
	Q21	16%	8%	8%



**Figure 1: Visual comparison of questions answered ‘yes’ per outlet**

#### 4.2.1 Significant Differences by Question

**Question 3 (Difference 23%): Does the story refer to two sides or to more than two sides of the problem or issue?**

This question refers to the opinions expressed, not necessarily statements. That means, for getting marked ‘yes’ more than the opinion of one side had to be outlined, or at least several camps to the conflict had to be clearly assigned a role in the conflict. The significant difference might occur because Deutsche Welle seemed to conclude that the other camp was to blame and moved on to the aftermath of the incident, while RT kept examining the incident and asking questions as of who was to blame. This also reflects in the responsibility frame results (*see figure 2*) which clearly indicate a 10% preponderance of RT over Deutsche Welle.

**Question 5 (Difference 16%): Does the story provide a human example or “human face” on the issue?**

This question answers whether the article managed to humanise the issue instead of reporting on the issue in a rational way predominantly stating logical facts and numbers. This question relates to both visual as well as verbal stimuli. RT embedded by far more visual stimulus by embedding images and videos, oftentimes this amplified the humanising process if showing people. Even though Deutsche Welle more often employed an emotion triggering stimulus, their layout style and comparatively little use of visual content, made it easier for the audience to keep distance and think rational. It is almost a logical consequence that RT’s rate in question 5 is almost twice Deutsche Welle’s rate on question 5 (*see table 3*) even though Deutsche Welle’s human interest frame rate is higher than RT’s (*see figure 2*).

**Question 12 (Difference 23%): Is there a reference to (economic) consequences of pursuing or not pursuing a course of action?**

Deutsche Welle connected economic consequences of an action significantly more often to MH17 than RT (*see table 3 and figures 1*). One of the big side topics that Deutsche Welle connected were sanctions against Russia and the negotiations within the EU that would eventually lead to sanctions. With regards to the sanctions, Deutsche Welle reported on possible effects on and ramifications for the German economy and German trade. Further a deal between France and Russia was matter of concern among European leaders. Deutsche Welle reported that France was building a war craft carrier for Russia that cost more than a billion euros. This was an aspect that was picked up on and

discussed more than just once on Deutsche Welle while RT only reported on this deal once.

**Question 14 (Difference 21%): Does the story suggest that some level of government is responsible for the issue/problem?**

**&**

**Question 16 (Difference 29%): Does the story suggest that an individual (or group of people in society) is responsible for the issue/problem?**

The reference to government level decisions as root cause for the issue is tremendously higher in Deutsche Welle partly because Deutsche Welle relatively quickly concluded who was the perpetrator, as already indicated in question 3. Deutsche Welle concluded that the Eastern Ukrainian militias were most likely the perpetrators and Deutsche Welle did not recognise their self-proclaimed country/state, these militias were considered a group of people or rebels but not a level of government. RT on the other hand sought to find answers by pressing on the Ukrainian government in Kiev and recited Russian officials frequently, who at least partly blamed the Ukrainian government. Further references were made.

**Question 17 (Difference 13%): Does the story suggest that the problem requires urgent action?**

This question refers to the overall approach each outlet took towards the MH17 incident. While Deutsche Welle, just like the whole West, adopted the Ukrainian story and blamed the Eastern Ukrainian militias, RT rather reported about finger pointing in the West and mostly refrained from naming a perpetrator. Therefore, Deutsche Welle's coverage partly

revolved around what urgent action should be taken against the perpetrator and his camp while RT's coverage focused on the investigations of the crash site and the perpetrator. Since the investigation was going on and RT did not make further demands, there was no reason for RT left to suggest any further urgent measures to be taken.

**Question 20 (Difference 11%): Does the story present the own camp's activities and statements?**

Even though both outlets cited officials from their camp on the matter frequently, RT did so about 10% more often than Deutsche Welle (*see table 3*). RT very often cited officials or showed statements of them in videos.

**Question 23 (Difference 25%): Does the story project the responsibility for actions of many of the other camp on one representative leader?**

The significant difference between the two outlets with regards to this question is related to question 16. Since Deutsche Welle had soon decided that Eastern Ukrainian militias, who Deutsche Welle portrayed as dependent and supported by Russia, were the perpetrator their actions were projected on the Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Further observation: Deutsche Welle tagged many articles, amongst other keywords, with 'Vladimir Putin' in some cases even though the Russian President was not mentioned in the article. On the other hand, there was at least one non-Putin-tagged articles naming 'Putin' in the headline. More detailed tables about the results grouped per day can be found in Appendix I.

#### **4.2.2 Remarkable differences**

**Question 13 (Difference 8%): Does the story suggest that some level of government has the ability to alleviate the problem?**

The difference in the results for this question might as well be linked to questions 23 and 16. Deutsche Welle suggested Eastern Ukrainian militias were involved in MH17 and supported by Russia thus logically the Russian government can make a difference.

**Question 21 (Difference 8%): Does the story critically assess activities and statements carried out by the own camp?**

As described in chapter 3.1.2 this question aimed to balance question 20 which indicates how often statements and activities of the own camp were presented. Question 21 sought to find out if the own camp was, even if only shallowly, scrutinised or generally taken face value. The numbers in *table 3 & figure 1* clearly show that Deutsche Welle more often endeavoured to put the own camp's action into perspective.

**Question 4 (Difference 7%): Does the story refer to winners and losers?**

Not even once did RT make a reference to winners and losers which is a remarkable observation. The winner-loser frame is also Deutsche Welle's least frequently applied frame of those examined.

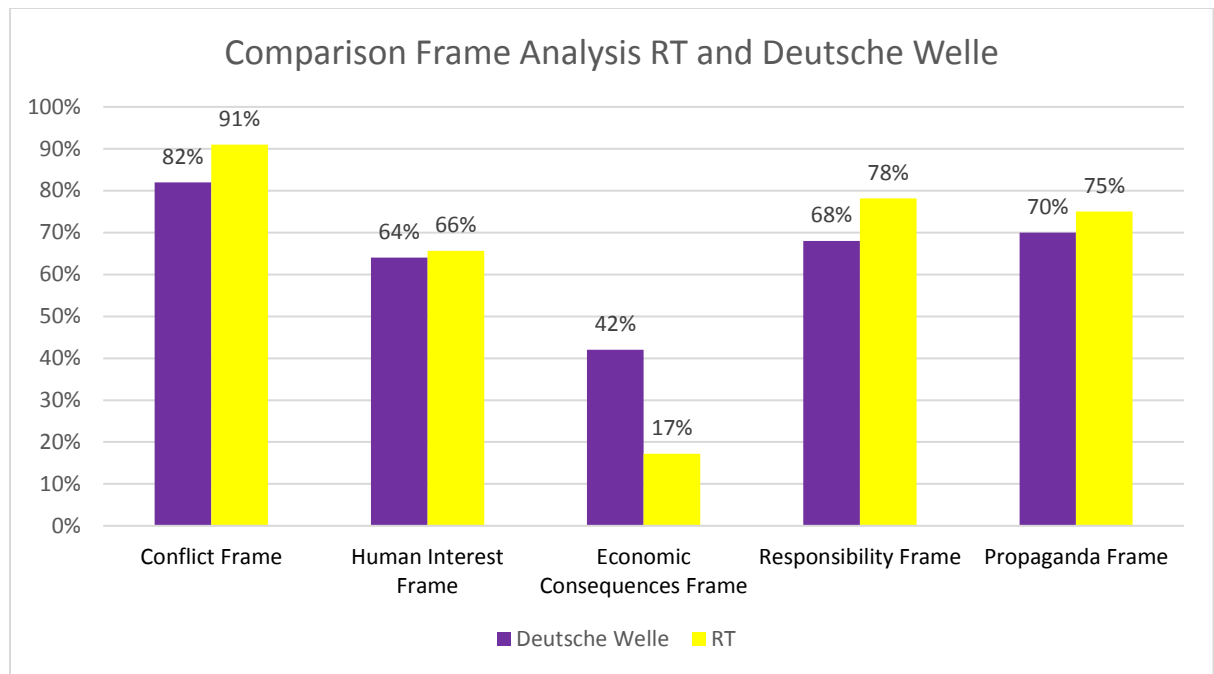
#### **4.2 Findings by Frame**

*Figure 2* shows in how many articles at least one of the questions linked to each frame type was answered 'yes'. The most frequently found frame type is the conflict frame while both outlets linked the MH17 tragedy least frequently to economic consequences. Furthermore the economic consequences frame is the frame type most



differently frequented among the two outlets. RT showed little interest to link the incident with economic matters, therefore was very eager to make use of the conflict frame and the responsibility frame. Even though RT was not making hints at a potential perpetrator as frequently as Deutsche Welle, RT's coverage of Western theories and allegations against Russia as well as Russia's pressure on Ukraine surely drove up the frequency rate of the conflict and the responsibility frame. Even though RT applied each question of the responsibility frame less frequently than Deutsche Welle on average (*see table 4*), the total findings of the frame type in articles of RT are 10% higher than in Deutsche Welle's articles. Same applies vice versa for the human interest frame, which overall was applied to notably more articles by Deutsche Welle than by RT although each frame question was less often applied on average by Deutsche Welle.

The self-defined fifth propaganda frame type was in total found in 5% more articles in RT than in Deutsche Welle, but on average each frame type element was found 4% less frequent in RT compared with Deutsche Welle.



Outlet	Conflict Frame	Human Interest Frame	Economic Consequences Frame	Responsibility Frame	Propaganda Frame
Deutsche Welle	0.82	0.74	0.42	0.68	0.7
RT	0.91	0.66	0.17	0.78	0.75

**Figure 2: Comparing of Deutsche Welle and RT by Frame Type (excl. question 21)**

**Table 4: Frame Types Found at least one question answered ‘yes’**

### Frame Types Found in total % of Articles

Frame Type	Questions	Average DW	Average RT
Conflict Frame	Q1-Q4	51%	56%
Human Interest Frame	Q5-Q9	31%	34%
Economic Consequences Frame	Q10-Q12	20%	11%
Responsibility Frame	Q13-Q17	39%	33%
Propaganda Frame	Q18-Q20 & Q21-Q22	35%	39%

The total frame count illustrated in *table 5* shows that more frames could be identified in Deutsche Welle and the dominance of the conflict frame type in both outlets over all article followed by the responsibility frame, human interest frame, propaganda frame and eventually the economic consequences frame. The latter frame was found substantially rarer than all other frames. The propaganda balancing effect of question 21 not only slightly reduced the total frame count but in this case also creased the difference between the two outlets. *Table 5* shows that even though in both news outlets frames can be found that might be linked to propaganda.

**Table 5: All frame type criteria answered ‘yes’ and their average per article**

<b>Absolute Frame Count</b>			
<b>Frame Type Count</b>	<b>DW</b>	<b>RT</b>	<b>Difference</b>
<b>Per Article</b>			
<b>Conflict Frame</b>	<b>150</b> <b>2.03</b>	114 2.25	<b>0.22</b>
<b>Human Interest Frame</b>	115 1.55	108 1.69	<b>0.14</b>
<b>Economic Consequences Frame</b>	45 0.61	21 0.33	<b>0.28</b>
<b>Responsibility Frame</b>	114 1.95	106 1.66	<b>0.29</b>
<b>Propaganda Frame excl. Q21</b>	128 1.73	100 1.56	<b>0.17</b>
<b>Frame Count excl. Q21</b>	582 7.86	479 7.48	<b>0.38</b>
<b>Propaganda Frame incl. Q21</b>	116 1.57	95 1.48	<b>0.09</b>
<b>Total Frame Count</b>	<b>570</b> <b>7.7</b>	<b>474</b> <b>7.4</b>	<b>0.3</b>

#### **4.2.1 Frame Combinations**

The following *figures 3 & 4* illustrate which other frame type could be found in the same article by at least one ‘yes’ combined with a ‘yes’ of the frame type itself. The percentage indicated for the frame type itself indicated how often it was found overall.

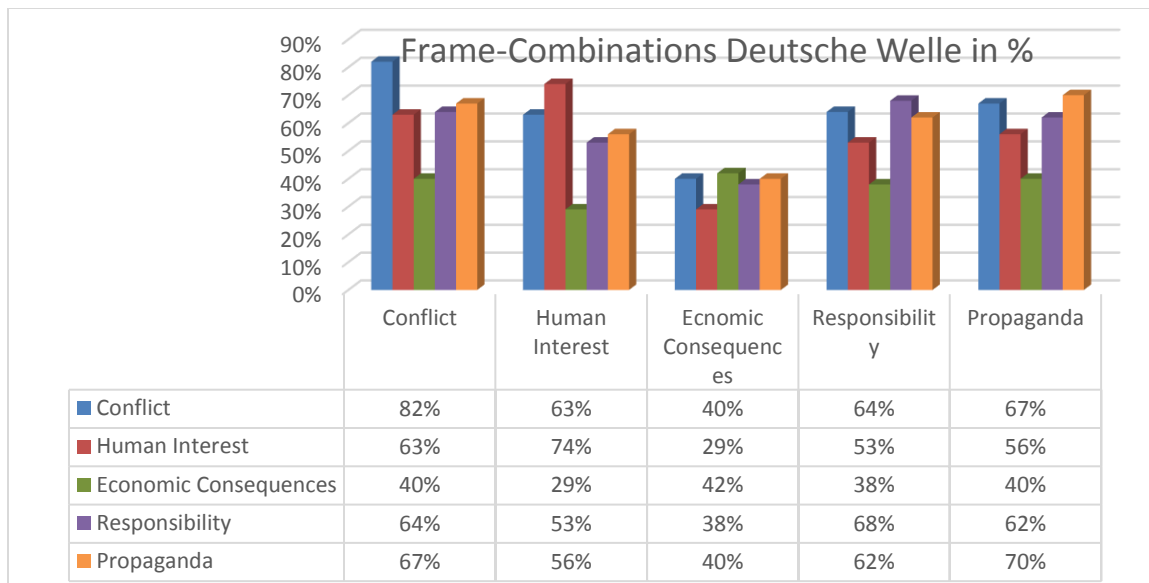


Figure 3: Frame types that could be found in the same article Deutsche Welle

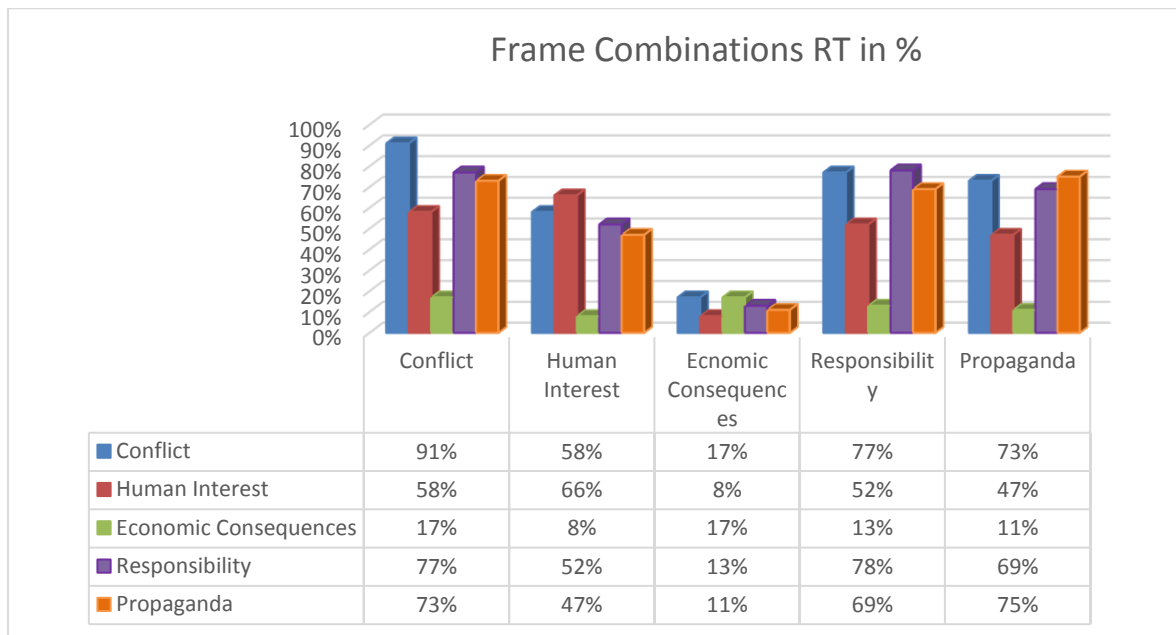


Figure 4: Frame types that could be found in the same article Deutsche Welle

As *figures 3 and 4* show, the coverage of MH17 was dominated by the conflict frame in both outlets. Only the frame type economic consequences was found equally often in combination with the propaganda frame type as with the conflict frame type in Deutsche Welle. With regards to the fact that economic consequences were generally more often referred to in Deutsche Welle, there are no significant differences in the frame combinations applied by RT and Deutsche Welle. There are two noteworthy differences in the frame type combinations found in RT and Deutsche Welle:

Firstly, the conflict frame type was found most often in combination with the responsibility frame type in RT while the conflict-propaganda combination was found more often than the conflict-responsibility combination in Deutsche Welle.

Secondly, the human interest-propaganda combination was found more often than the human interest-responsibility combination in Deutsche Welle while the human interest-responsibility combination was found more often than the human interest-propaganda combination on RT.

The fifth frame was hoped to return further information, especially on the conflict and responsibility frame as question 18 was linked to the conflict frame and question 19 to the responsibility frame. *Figures 3 & 4* show that a strong conflict-propaganda and responsibility-propaganda score in both outlets.

#### **4.2.2 Further Observations:**

It could be very clearly and quickly determined that there is a big difference in the layout and content composition between RT and Deutsche Welle. In general, Deutsche

Welle presents its information more like a regular serious daily newspaper enriching it with few images. In 44 out of the 74 articles on Deutsche Welle, there was only one image right between lead and body. Images in general, but especially images of the plane wreckage, were chosen very decent compared with RT and the resolution of the images was higher on Deutsche Welle than on RT. RT's visual impressions were focused more on triggering emotions and eye-catching. Due to the noticeable advertisements and consistently same visual links to other articles on the side bar the layout slightly reminded of a tabloid.

While RT reports about Russian officials frequently and cited them extensively, Deutsche Welle rarely cited German officials. On the other hand, RT also frequently cited or showed videos of statements made by officials from the other camp, even videos showing sequences of US State Department press conferences, sometimes entire articles were dedicated to nothing but the statements made by officials from the other camp or reported allegations against Russia and the rebels in Eastern Ukraine. Unfortunately, the predefined questions of this study did not allow to keep track of how frequently officials from the other camp were cited.

Inconsistency in naming and labelling the Eastern Ukrainian militias was found on both sides.

Neither RT nor Deutsche Welle were consistent in their references to the Eastern Ukrainian militias and their officials as well as the contested regions (Luhansk oblast and Donetsk Oblast. Even though Deutsche Welle was consistent in not recognising the regions as autonomous entities, Deutsche Welle once wrote about their Prime Minister

without any further explanation while Russia referred to the leaders of the militias as Prime Minister more frequently.

RT embedded a total of 96 images and two videos that the RT website did not, or at least no longer, display when this study was conducted. All content was still accessibly and visible on the Deutsche Welle website.

Deutsche Welle also reported on an International AIDS Conference in Australia which lost several delegates on MH17 as they were on their way to attend the event. Further Deutsche Welle made the connection between MH17 and MH370 (a Malaysian Airlines passenger aircraft that had disappeared 5 months prior to MH17) as well as an Air Algerie passenger aircraft crash in Mali on 24 July 2014 were drawn. RT only made the connection between MH17 and MH370. RT's predominant topic were allegations made against Russia and the rebels in Eastern Ukraine and official statements of their own government and military officials.

From an examiner point of view, going through all Deutsche Welle articles in chronological order first and then through all RT articles in chronological order felt like a total perspective change. The tragedy felt totally different when seeing it through one frame or the other and so did the political aftermath and finger pointing that followed the plane crash. There was a general feeling of being closer and more involved in the issue through the RT perspective which is because of the extensive video content and the official statements from both camps that were portrayed on RT. Having extensive access to statements from both sides made the information seem reflected, self-critical, honest and considered from all (relevant) sides.



## **5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The deductive approach after Semetko and Valkenburg (Semetko and Valkenburg, 2000) came along with the criticism of Matthes and Kohring who pointed out that this is not a flexible method to identify a variety of frames. (Matthes and Kohring, 2008) Indeed, many other framing patterns were noticed but remained untracked. The predefined frames did however indicate what types of framing were applied. Weeding out Semetko and Valkenburg's fifth frame type of morality was an accurate prediction as there were no references made to any supernatural entities, traditions, moral suggestions or religious tendencies in Deutsche Welle's and RT's coverage of MH17.

Both outlets have put their mark on the MH17 coverage in their very own way. The examiner of the articles felt the strength of both outlet's framing as written in chapter 4.2.2. Especially the selected communication means (written text, images, videos, audio tracks) made an enormous difference not only with regards to the content but also to the presentation of the news which reflects on Scheufele & Iyengar's definition of framing described in chapter 2.2.1. (Scheufele & Iyengar, 2011) Question 9 about the employment of visual images is not merely a matter of framing but also a matter of style, especially in times when imagery and visual effects dominate our everyday life and environment.

Another question that needs to be addressed is in how far cross-referencing to other articles via hyperlinks impacts the audience. But the discussions about the neutrality of images is not the matter of concern here. Question 9 only indicates whether visual content was portrayed that would be likely to trigger emotions and have an impact on the perception of the human dimension to MH17.

RT certainly framed the events in a more humanised perspective than Deutsche Welle, alone with the many videos of mourning relatives, residents near the crash site and the video coverage on statements from officials embedded in RT's articles. The impressions and priming going along with such a frame are assumed to be very strong as they were showing plenty 'plain folks' (Vincent, 2006) and illustrate why RT could tremendously increase its audience over the Ukraine crisis. Regardless of this, the verbal content of both outlets provided a solid framing on MH17. This finding underlines Goebbels premise that visuals are more powerful than words but that words make meaning of an event as explained in chapter 2.3.6 (Doob, 1950).

Deutsche Welle put the incident into a by far more economic perspective than RT. RT on the other hand framed the tragedy even more conflict-related than Deutsche Welle even though Deutsche Welle's conflict frame was distinct already. The results of question 18 enrich the almost omnipresent conflict frame with a side note that the adversary camp is the aggressor in this conflict.

Responsibility related framing was found more often in RT's coverage of MH17 than in Deutsche Welle's reporting and both outlets framed MH17 to an almost equally propagandistic and human interest elements related extent, though.

Even though the MH17 incident fell in line with only four former incidents of shot civilian airliners in aviation history, the story was quickly revolving around a shooting rather than an accident. The circumstances of the region and the entire political background in the region set the stage and therefore question 19 aimed to substantiate the expectedly strong responsibility framing on both sides. Scoring less-than-average in Deutsche Welle and RT, question 19 is an indicator that the declared information war was not escalating to a stage from where it would be taken to the bitter end, at least in the time frame examined.

In chapter 2.3.1 Jowett and O'Donnell's definition of propaganda was explained in detail (Jowett & O'Donnell, 2012) and from having examined both perspectives on the coverage on MH17 in RT and Deutsche Welle can be constituted, that the coverage immensely shaped audience perception of the political discussion surrounding MH17. The statistics of this study show that this was a systematic attempt on behalf of both outlets. Both outlets directed the audience in their direction (RT put pressure on Ukraine; Deutsche Welle guided towards sanctions). Examining responses was not part of this research project, nonetheless at least RT was gaining momentum in terms of audience growth over the Ukraine conflict as explained in chapter 1.2.1.

This study shows that both outlets intentionally and strategically selected the information if it was eligible to be published or not. Entman's understanding of framing, based on selection, salience and repetition is found applicable to this study. (Entman, 2004) Deutsche Welle's repetitive mentioning of the Eastern Ukrainian militias and Putin as reference points for the cause of the MH17 tragedy is a priming process that ultimately

rewires pre-existing meaning structures in the audience's minds. (Entman, 2004) These schemata substantiate the assumptions made in the articles (Cacciatore et al., 2016) and make this framed perspective on the event the standard frame on the story (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987) as there was barely any information that suggested that there is another side of the story.

This study did not investigate which specific interest groups might have impacted the coverage or an interest in framing the events in the two outlets. However, if Herman and Chomsky are not mistaken, this one-sided perspective on the events, deputising for Germany, reflects the explanation of the Herman and Chomsky model (Herman and Chomsky, 1988) of how media decide which information is shared and which is not as outlined in chapter 2.3.2. Doob wrote that censorship is about sharing information that is in line with international frames and then finding a balance for what information is made public and which is kept secret. (Doob, 1950) While Deutsche Welle cited conclusions of U.S. officials, RT even showed their oral statements including their explanations of what led to these conclusions in video format. The video content revealed to the audience that these officials were not willing to provide any further sources for their allegations against the Eastern Ukrainian militias and Russia than social media posts and “common sense” as Marie Harf, U.S. State Department, is explaining in one of her press conferences shown by RT. At the same time RT extensively covered official statements and presentations by Russian officials who presented their side of the story substantiated with satellite photos, radar measurements and flight data.

This extensive and visualised coverage of both sides by RT not only primes the human dimension but also aims for gaining the audience's trust and making the audience feel to be informed. This study does not indicate whether either, both or neither of the two covered the events appropriately or accurately and neither sought to nor could (even if intended) identify what really happened and who is right to report or make statements on what.

However, following Goebbels ninth propaganda concept, RT spared little to no efforts to satisfy their audience's "hunger for news". (Doob, 1950, p 431) Deutsche Welle seems to have strategically selected to share less information. This refers to the very same ninth concept of Goebbels as explained in chapter 2.3.6.

Further RT's tackling of the allegations against their camp with extensive coverage of the official statements of both camps refers to Goebbels eleventh and twelfth concept, that if one's own argument is believed to be stronger it shall be published by prestigious leaders.

Applying Goebbels 14<sup>th</sup> concept of labelling events and people distinctively was already explained to have been a struggle for both outlets, as for instance their inconsistency of referring to the Donbas region and their representatives. On the other hand, this could as well be an indicator that this 14<sup>th</sup> concept was not applied. In contrast to that conclusion stands the fact that Deutsche Welle kept referring to the militias consistently as 'pro-Russian' while RT kept referring to them consistently as 'self-defence' forces. Neither of them chose for a neutral term like Donbas rebels or Donbas militias. The terminology for the militias was expected to be consistent and slanted

beforehand and was therefore not taken into account for the results of question 22, otherwise, the rate would have been even higher on both sides.

The point made in chapter 3.2.4 about probable limitations in identifying slant in forms of name calling and labelling needs to be considered when looking at the statistics. The slant frame was not identified as often as the other frames within the propaganda frame type group, but that can as well be an indicator for a relatively low slant employment on either side. The most obvious similarity between the coverage of RT and Deutsche Welle is that although split between two interest camps, both outlets reported about ‘unworthy victims’, as Herman and Chomsky call them, and emphasised on the misfortune and evil that had happened to demonstrate solidarity with the victims.

With the finding that elements of propagandistic framing were found in both outlets, a closer look at Morelli gives further insights. The propaganda frame type questions were based on her ten principles of war propaganda (Morelli, 2001) and even though only certain aspects of Morelli’s principles were summarised and reflected in questions 18-23 of this research, several examples could be listed to illustrate existing applicability of the Morelli model to the articles examined in this research.

RT for instance emphasised on the responsibility of the Ukrainian government, that had purposely enforced the situation in Donbas creating the environment that led to the MH17 tragedy (principles 1+2). Reports about Ukrainian military deliberately shelling even the international investigation committee (principle 5) and the necessity for self-defence fighters to protect the civilians from relentless attacks of the Ukrainian army (principles 2, 4, 5 and 6) frame the circumstances surrounding the tragedy.

Deutsche Welle already implies the conflict by applying words such as ‘pro-Russian separatists’ and moreover conveying uncritical reports about the Ukrainian stance on the Eastern Ukrainian conflict. This implies that strives for autonomy, secession, federalisation or even just rebellion against the new Ukrainian government by the rebels in Luhansk and Donetsk are unlawful and root cause for the conflict. Enriching this by suggesting that the militias are the assumed perpetrators (principle 1), sanctions are then employed as a symbolic act of providing a non-violent solution for the problem (principle 2). Styling Putin to be the dominant figure whom all responsibility of organised or structural failure and aggression can be projected on (principle 3), makes him the sole significant representative of the other camp. He is then presented as seeking to undermine the West’s attempts to bring democracy and peace to Ukraine (principle 4) what sets the scene for principle 6 (shooting down a passenger plane) to round up the frame.

This is not an evaluation of Morelli’s principles but a substantiation of the findings of this study that hopefully encourages further studies on RT and Deutsche Welle based on Morelli’s principles. The question whether RT is a “propaganda bullhorn” to a degree beyond any comparability with any counterpart in the USA and Germany, as John Kerry and Peter Limbourg’s statements suggested, can be answered with a clear ‘no’. From this study emerges no evidence for significantly higher appearance of propagandistic elements in the coverage of RT than in Deutsche Welle. Each outlet, depending on which statistic is looked at, can be identified with more propaganda frame findings than the other. Nonetheless both outlets clearly contained

frames that can be linked to propaganda and further studies could show whether RT is more aggressive than American or German outlets or not. A study based on the Morelli principles would show how and to what extent the two outlets propagandise (Morelli, 2001) (Swiss Propaganda, 2016). That study can then be closer linked to the information war that was described in chapter 1 and inspired this study. Obvious elements reflecting Morelli's principles of war propaganda could not be recorded by the methods chosen for this study but further investigation that focuses purely on the Morelli model could.

If Yang is right that national interest influences especially the international news frames and Goebbels concepts are still applied nowadays concerning home news, there might be a difference in the framing of news domestically or internationally. This study does not examine whether RT and Deutsche Welle are representative for public opinion influenced by mass media in Germany and Russia or if their coverage takes a more diplomatic tone of voice compared to what shapes the opinion of people when news information is spread domestically. Therefore, a comparison between the MH17 coverage of (state-funded) leading domestic and state-funded international news would be recommended. In Germany this could be a comparison between eg. Deutsche Welle, ARD, Süddeutsche, and BILD. A comparable study in Russia could e.g. be conducted comparing RT, Вечерняя Москва (Vechernyaya Moskva), and Московская правда (Moskovskaya Pravda). In order to analyse the relation between foreign policy and the state-funded international broadcasters, further research and analysis is required as well.



## **6. CONCLUSION**

Media impact our daily lives and shape our reality by providing us with information that they think is relevant for us and we rely on media to provide us with the information we need to be informed about the world we live in. This relation puts media into a powerful position that, if abused or manipulated, could lead to disinformation, lack of relevant information or information that serves those in control of the media. In the end, it is the media themselves who tell us about the media. Especially in times of conflict media tend to draw an image that shapes perceptions and reality of their audience in a very structured way that often is black and white. Even the free press in the West is confronted with accusations of not being very free after all while supporters remind critics of the conditions journalists have and had to work in other countries, times or political environments where censorship is common, practiced openly and state propaganda controls the range of press freedom and investigative journalism.

This study started from the allegations that Russia might have launched an information war by means of the news broadcaster RT against at least Germany and the United States of America. Since national interest plays a role in international news, this study examined whether a comparative research on a Russian state-funded international news broadcaster and a German tax-funded international news broadcaster (represented by Deutsche Welle) serving as benchmark, could prove that RT indeed is a “propaganda bullhorn” of

the Russian president. A deductive frame type analysis was applied consisting of five pre-defined frames and the tragic crash of the MH17 in Ukraine on 17 July 2014 was the issue the two outlets' coverage was compared on. The analysis shows how RT and Deutsche Welle framed the MH17 tragedy differently from each other but applied similar frame type pattern in their respective information content. In terms of presenting the information each outlet has its own style. While both embed images into their articles, RT utilises a host of video content to bring their perspective and message across to the audience.

The MH17 incident was framed in a dominant conflict context by both outlets and both outlets made clear that the victims and their bereaved are respected.

Disagreement between parties and countries could be proven, as was assumed due to the geopolitical situation that has divided the actors into two camps. Russia and the Donbas militias on one side and Ukraine, the EU and USA-led NATO on the other side.

Both outlets framed the tragedy in a humanised manner even though RT brought the fate of individuals closer to the audience by applying videos as a means of communication.

Financial matters were more dominant in Deutsche Welle's coverage and mostly related to upcoming sanctions against Russia issued by the EU, how these would impact the German economy and the political aftermath of the tragedy. RT applied significantly less economic framing on MH17.

Even though RT and Deutsche Welle both frequently applied this frame, their framing could barely differ wider. With regards to national interest and two political camps standing ahead of each other this expected observation manifested in two very

distinct frames. While Deutsche Welle assumed the Donbas militias were the perpetrators in the case of a shoot down and drew the lines of responsibility up to the Russian President Vladimir Putin it took the Ukrainian camp's stance without hesitation. RT suggested that the rest of the world's finger pointing might have been conducted too fast and presented a comprehensive variety of information on the responsibility question even though the contextual suggestion was that Ukraine was responsible for MH17's crash.

The propaganda frame criteria set out for this study were met by both outlets approximately equally. There was no significant difference in occurrence of propagandistic framing elements between RT and Deutsche Welle even though their framing varied significantly. RT and Deutsche Welle both referred to the other camp as a threat in nearly every second article and labelled the Eastern Ukrainian militias in Donbas according to their own camp's political interest and understanding. Differences are that Deutsche Welle more frequently than RT made a critical assessment or remark to statements by officials of their own camp. RT on the other hand dedicated entire articles to shining a light on, outlining and refuting the other camp's side of the story. Another difference is that Deutsche Welle found a projection surface for responsibility of the events unfolding in the Russian president while RT was zealous to make clear that the responsibility question was not decisively answered yet.

This study could show almost equal indications for propaganda frames in both outlets which is not a measure of propaganda but an indicator, that from a scientific point of view shows that concerns towards press freedom and propaganda are not absurd neither in Russia nor in the free press of the West. This study has shown that both, the

German and the Russian state-funded news outlet were following a structured political frame containing elements of propaganda. It does however not analyse to what extent this is deliberate pure propaganda or not. Further research can take this question from here by analysing news outlets on detailed propaganda principles, concepts or strategies, for instance taking a deductive approach based on the ten principles of propaganda that Anne Morelli formulated based on the works of Arthur Ponsonby. The most valuable takeaway from this study is that the world is not as black and white as some officials paint it in their own interest and there is not a propaganda flagship in Russia that has declared an information war on a defenceless free press that is untainted by propaganda itself. This paper concludes with a question that might inspire someone else's study: If news framing and propaganda are such basic and necessary forms of news management to ensure national interests, is propaganda even an indicator for an extraordinary situation of news framing and a specifically evil power in charge or are there various levels of propaganda?

## 7. APPENDIX

### Appendix I. Research Results per Publishing Day

#### Appendix I.I. Research Results per Publishing Day RT

Frame Types Identified per day and question RT 1/2													
Date	Conflict Frame				Human Interest Frame					Economic Consequences Frame			Articles Examined
Question	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	
17-Jul-14	6	4	5	0	3	3	3	0	3	0	0	0	6
18-Jul-14	11	8	10	0	6	5	6	4	8	0	1	0	13
19-Jul-14	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	2
20-Jul-14	5	4	4	0	2	2	2	1	3	0	0	0	5
21-Jul-14	6	6	6	0	2	3	2	1	5	0	0	0	7
22-Jul-14	9	12	8	0	4	4	1	0	5	4	3	3	13
23-Jul-14	3	2	3	0	1	1	3	0	3	1	1	1	5
24-Jul-14	5	5	5	0	1	1	2	0	2	1	1	1	6
25-Jul-14	3	2	2	0	0	1	1	0	2	0	0	0	3
26-Jul-14	2	3	2	0	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	4
Total	51	47	46	0	22	22	23	8	33	7	7	7	64
Percentage	0.80	0.73	0.72	0.00	0.34	0.34	0.36	0.13	0.52	0.11	0.11	0.11	

Frame Types identified per day and question RT 2/2												
Date	Responsibility Frame					Propaganda Frame						Articles Examined
Question	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16	Q17	Q18	Q19	Q22	Q23	Q20	Q21	
17-Jul-14	3	4	3	1	3	2	3	3	0	6	0	6
18-Jul-14	1	8	3	3	7	5	3	1	0	9	2	13
19-Jul-14	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	2
20-Jul-14	2	1	5	2	5	1	1	1	0	5	0	5
21-Jul-14	3	4	2	1	0	5	3	1	1	7	1	7
22-Jul-14	3	9	3	2	4	7	4	0	0	9	2	13
23-Jul-14	2	3	1	0	1	2	1	0	0	1	0	5
24-Jul-14	4	3	0	0	1	3	1	0	0	3	0	6
25-Jul-14	2	1	2	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	3
26-Jul-14	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	2	0	4
Total	20	36	19	10	21	29	18	8	1	44	5	64
Percentage	0.31	0.56	0.30	0.16	0.33	0.45	0.28	0.13	0.02	0.69	0.08	

## Appendix I.II. Research Results per Publishing Day Deutsche Welle

Frame Types Identified per day and question Deutsche Welle 1/2													
Date	Conflict Frame				Human Interests Frame					Economic Consequences Frame			Articles Examined
Question	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	
17-Jul-14	3	2	1	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	0	0	3
18-Jul-14	12	8	11	1	2	7	8	3	7	3	3	5	14
19-Jul-14	6	7	5	0	0	1	1	0	7	0	0	1	7
20-Jul-14	2	3	2	0	3	6	3	1	2	0	0	1	7
21-Jul-14	6	6	4	0	1	3	3	0	4	1	2	4	9
22-Jul-14	6	6	4	1	2	2	2	1	3	0	2	4	6
23-Jul-14	7	7	4	1	1	3	2	0	2	4	1	4	7
24-Jul-14	10	6	2	2	2	4	3	2	3	1	1	3	11
25-Jul-14	4	3	3	0	2	2	5	1	5	0	0	1	7
26-Jul-14	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	3
Total	59	50	36	5	13	29	30	8	35	10	10	25	74
Percentage	0.80	0.68	0.49	0.07	0.18	0.39	0.41	0.11	0.47	0.14	0.14	0.34	

Frame Types Identified per day and question Deutsche Welle 2/2												
Date	Responsibility Frame					Propaganda Frame						Articles Examined
Question	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16	Q17	Q18	Q19	Q22	Q23	Q20	Q21	
17-Jul-14	3	3	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	3
18-Jul-14	12	8	4	2	3	6	5	2	5	4	1	14
19-Jul-14	6	5	3	0	1	2	3	1	3	0	0	7
20-Jul-14	4	3	1	0	1	1	2	0	2	0	1	7
21-Jul-14	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9
22-Jul-14	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
23-Jul-14	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7
24-Jul-14	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11
25-Jul-14	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7
26-Jul-14	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Total	29	26	22	33	34	32	22	11	20	43	12	74
Percentage	0.39	0.35	0.30	0.45	0.46	0.43	0.30	0.15	0.27	0.58	0.16	

## Appendix II. Overview of all articles considered

### Appendix II.I Deutsche Welle

*17 July 2014*

#### **Malaysian airliner reportedly crashes in eastern Ukraine**

A Malaysian airliner has crashed in eastern Ukraine near Donetsk. The Boeing 777 was flying from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur. Malaysia Airlines says it has lost contact with its Flight MH17.

#### **Kyiv, rebels deny link to Malaysian airliner crash**

A Malaysia Airlines plane carrying 298 people has crashed in rebel-held eastern Ukraine in an apparent shooting down. Responsibility has been denied by rebels and Ukraine's Kyiv-based government.

#### **'Commercial jets have no chance'**

A missile attack is suspected in the crash of a passenger aircraft in eastern Ukraine. Until now, altitudes above 10,000 meters have been considered safe, aviation expert Heinrich Grossbongardt tells DW.

*18 July 2014*

### **Investigation into Malaysia Airlines crash in Ukraine**

An international investigation has been launched into the crash of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH17 in Eastern Ukraine. It is suspected the plane with 298 people on board was shot down by a missile.

### **Previous cases of civilian aircraft downed by missiles**

If the Malaysian airliner was indeed shot down by a missile, it would not be the first commercial aircraft to suffer this fate. There were some previous cases:

### **Rebels guarantee access to Malaysia Airlines crash site**

The OSCE has said that pro-Russian separatists in eastern Ukraine have pledged to give a team of investigators safe access to the debris of a Malaysia Airlines jet. Some have suggested the jet may have been shot down.

### **Merkel calls for independent investigation into Malaysia Airlines crash**

German Chancellor Angela Merkel has spoken to reporters in her annual summer press conference. The session was dominated by the Malaysia Airlines crash in Ukraine and Israel's ground offensive in the Gaza Strip.

### **Grief and anger in Asia over plane tragedy**

Kuala Lumpur has demanded an international inquiry into the crash of a Malaysian Airlines plane allegedly shot down over eastern Ukraine. Nations in the Asia-Pacific are shocked at the tragedy.

### **Leads point to missile downing MH17**

There is growing evidence that Malaysian Airlines flight MH17 was shot down by a missile. Ukraine has accused pro-Russian separatists in eastern Ukraine of downing the plane, while the rebels blame Ukrainian forces.

### **Analyst: Malaysia Airlines 'unlikely to survive in present form'**

As Malaysia reeled from the disappearance of Flight MH370, another disaster hit its national airline. Aviation analyst Mohshin Aziz tells DW the firm's future looks dire after one of its planes was downed over Ukraine.

### **Malaysia Airlines says plane had clean maintenance record**

A Malaysia Airlines representative has said the Boeing 777 that crashed in eastern Ukraine had a clean maintenance record. Pro-Russian separatists have said they are allowing experts to access the crash site.



### **Eurocontrol: State decides on airspace safety**

The downing of a plane over eastern Ukraine has raised questions as to why a civilian airline was flying over the conflict zone. Ken Thomas of air safety organization Eurocontrol says it's up to states to close airspace.

### **Accusations and speculation about MH17 abound**

The plane was shot down over eastern Ukraine on Thursday. None of the almost 300 people on board seem to have survived. Ukrainian officials and separatists deny responsibility, but social media posts raise questions.

### **Opinion: Consequences of MH17 for Ukraine are huge**

All the evidence so far suggests that MH17 was accidentally shot down by pro-Russian separatists in eastern Ukraine. If that turns out to be true, the political implications are immense, says DW's Ingo Mannteufel.

### **UN calls for investigation into Malaysia Airlines crash in Ukraine**

The UN has called for a full, independent international investigation into the crash of Malaysia Airlines flight MH17 in Ukraine. US President Obama has said the plane was likely downed by a surface-to-air missile.

### **Growing doubts about Malaysia Airlines' future**

Struck by two disasters in less than five months, Malaysia's national airline is facing an unprecedented situation. With its image tainted, experts say the firm will have to reinvent itself to regain customer confidence.

### **Merkel annual summer press conference raises main issues**

In an annual summer press conference, German Chancellor Angela Merkel has addressed the latest spy row with the US, the Malaysia Airlines crash in Ukraine and Israel's ground offensive in Gaza.

*19 July 2014*

### **Gunmen block OSCE access to Ukraine MH17 crash site**

Monitors from the OSCE are to return to the site of the crashed Malaysia airliner in eastern Ukraine a day after they were blocked by gunmen. The missile was fired from rebel-held territory according to the US.

### **MH17 crash: Russia in the dock**

Russia has to take political responsibility for the crash of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH17, US President Barack Obama said. As international tension increases, calls for additional sanctions could grow.

#### **Australia seeks answers after MH17 crash in Ukraine**

Of the nearly 300 people killed in the MH17 plane crash, 28 were Australian nationals. As the country takes part in a day of mourning, the government is pointing the finger at Russia for its role in the tragedy.

#### **Ukraine says evidence proves Russians behind MH17 attack**

Ukraine's counterintelligence chief has said his country has proof that Russian citizens were behind the missile attack that brought down MH17. Pro-Russian separatists are reportedly hindering the crash investigation.

#### **'Hardly any doubt the plane was shot down'**

All parties involved in the Ukraine conflict could be responsible for the crash of the Malaysian passenger jet, says Russian military journalist Alexander Golz. It appears that the plane was shot down from the ground.

#### **Dutch PM: Russia must take 'responsibility' in plane crash**

The Netherlands' Prime Minister Mark Rutte has urged Russia to "take responsibility" after pro-Russian separatists hindered access to the site where Malaysian Airlines flight MH17 crashed killing 298 people.

#### **Pressure grows on Russia to reduce tensions in Ukraine**

There is growing international pressure on Moscow to use its influence on pro-Russian separatists following the shooting down of flight MH17 in eastern Ukraine. A reduction of tension in Ukraine is being urged.

*20 July 2014*

#### **Workers find 196 bodies at MH17 crash site in Ukraine**

Emergency workers in Ukraine have said 196 bodies have been recovered from the crash site of Malaysia Airlines flight MH 17. The bodies have also been reportedly removed from the site, but details remain unclear.

#### **Lessons from the MH17 crash**

Choosing a flight route to a desired destination is a question of profitability for airline, although pilots can choose to detour in case of threat. Some in the industry see continued problems - is it time for a rethink?

### **Bodies removed from site of Malaysia Airlines crash**

Pro-Russian rebels in eastern Ukraine have said they have recovered objects which may be the black boxes of flight MH17. Meanwhile, recovered bodies have been moved to a nearby train station.

### **HIV research and action in light of tragedy**

At least six top AIDS experts were killed in the Malaysia Airlines passenger plane crash. The International AIDS Conference is taking place regardless - DW reviews the key topics being discussed.

### **'Father of AIDS research' dead in MH17 crash**

Among the passengers on flight MH17 were renowned AIDS researchers and activists. They were on their way to the International AIDS Conference in Melbourne - now grief and dismay overshadow the conference.

### **Kerry: MH17 should be 'a wake-up call' for EU on sanctions**

US Secretary of State John Kerry has called the aftermath of the crash of flight MH17 in eastern Ukraine "the moment of truth for Russia." He said he hoped the crash would make European countries more open to sanctions.

### **AIDS conference opens with a minute's silence for MH17**

The 20th International AIDS Conference has opened in Melbourne with a minute's silence for six delegates who died on flight MH17 on their way to Australia. An estimated 35 million people currently have HIV/AIDS.

*21 July 2014*

### **UN to vote on resolution demanding MH17 crash site access**

The UN is set to decide on a resolution demanding international access to the crash site of a downed passenger jet in Ukraine. Meanwhile, fresh fighting has erupted between government and rebel forces near Donetsk.

### **German DIHK trade group warns of Russian sanctions fallout**

Germany as a leading trading nation is suffering from the adverse effects of sanctions against Russia, the commerce lobby group DIHK has said. Exporters doing business with both Russia and the US are especially hit.

### **Ukraine willing to hand MH17 crash investigation over to West**

Kyiv has said it is willing to hand control of the MH17 crash investigation over to Western authorities. Amid fresh fighting in Donetsk, Dutch investigators have arrived in east Ukraine to inspect recovered bodies.

#### **Friedemann: Flight recorders can't answer all questions**

German experts will be involved in the process of clearing up the details of the Ukraine plane crash. Jens Friedemann from the German Federal Bureau of Aircraft Accident Investigation lays out the various challenges.

#### **Investigators hoping to move MH17 bodies soon**

Dutch investigators have said that their priority is identifying the victims of the Malaysia Airlines crash in Ukraine and sending them home. The Dutch government has launched a war crimes investigation into the crash.

#### **Rebecca Harms: 'They're covering the tracks'**

Rebecca Harms, co-chairwoman of the Greens in the European Parliament, believes the separatists were behind the shooting down of flight MH17. She also calls for international control of the Ukrainian-Russian border.

#### **Obama demands full cooperation with MH17 investigators**

The US president called on his Russian counterpart to instruct separatists in Ukraine to ensure investigators full access to the wreckage of flight MH17. He also described the chaos surrounding the site as an "insult."

#### **Malaysian PM wins guarantees regarding bodies, black boxes**

The Malaysian prime minister has said that rebels in eastern Ukraine have agreed to hand over bodies of the victims of last week's plane crash to the Netherlands. He also said they would hand over the black boxes.

#### **UN Security Council demands safe access for MH17 investigators**

The UN Security Council has passed a resolution calling for an international investigation into the downing of flight MH17 over eastern Ukraine. Permanent member Russia was among those who supported the resolution.

*22 July 2014*

#### **Ukraine rebels turn over MH17 black boxes, remains of victims**

Rebels in eastern Ukraine have handed over the black boxes from downed flight MH17 and released a train carrying the remains of many victims. Earlier, the UN Security Council called for an investigation into the tragedy.

### **Putin and Rutte discuss MH17 site access**

The leaders of Russia and the Netherlands have again discussed the crashed flight MH17 in eastern Ukraine, agreeing on the need for "direct and full access of experts to the tragedy site," according to the Kremlin.

### **'Shock and horror' in Malaysia after MH17 Ukraine crash**

The downing of Flight MH17 marks the second tragedy to hit Malaysia within a span of few months. Jahabar Sadiq, editor of The Malaysian Insider, tells DW that the mood in the Southeast Asian nation is grim.

### **EU discuss punishing Putin following MH17 crash**

The EU's foreign ministers have met to discuss new sanctions on Russia following the destruction of the MH17 passenger plane. Only the Netherlands - of all nations - has been delaying proceedings.

### **Ukraine receives Malaysia MH17 bodies from separatists**

Bodies recovered from the downed Malaysian flight MH17 will next head to the Netherlands for identification. A first train carrying passengers' remains has arrived in the Ukrainian city of Kharkiv.

### **EU ministers consider Russia sanctions over downed MH17**

The EU has threatened to impose tougher sanctions on Russia. The new measures could further damage Russia's economy following the downing of a Malaysian airliner in Ukraine.

*23 July 2014*

### **US intelligence: MH17 likely shot down by pro-Russian rebels by accident**

US intelligence officials believe that pro-Russian rebels accidentally shot down flight MH17 over eastern Ukraine. They have no evidence that directly links Moscow to the tragedy.

### **German industry warns against tighter sanctions**

The EU's discussion about expanding its sanctions against Russia is alarming parts of Germany's business community. Industry associations are expressing fears of a serious slump in the country's exports.

### **Opinion: Final deadline for Russia approaching**

The EU is once again threatening Russia with sanctions over its role in the Ukraine Crisis. Europe needs to put its money where its mouth is if it is to retain credibility, writes DW's Europe correspondent Bernd Riegert.

### **Separatists shoot down two Ukraine military jets**

Separatists have shot down two Ukrainian fighter jets just under a week after the crash of Malaysia Airlines flight MH17. According to reports, the two pilots managed to parachute out.

### **German politicians mull stripping Russia of World Cup**

German lawmakers in Chancellor Angela Merkel's ruling conservative party are questioning whether Russia should be stripped of the 2018 FIFA World Cup. The debate follows the downing of an airliner in east Ukraine.

### **First bodies of MH17 victims arrive in Netherlands**

Military planes carrying some of the bodies of victims from crashed flight MH17 have arrived in the Netherlands. The bodies were given a high-level official reception before being taken away for identification.

### **Opinion: Call for World Cup boycott a nod to populism**

German politicians are questioning Russia's suitability to hold the 2018 FIFA World Cup. Some argue the country should be stripped of the tournament, but the chance of this happening is slim, writes Sabine Faber.

*24 July 2014*

### **Commonwealth Games open in Scotland**

Athletes from 71 nations have begun the 20th Commonwealth Games in Scotland. A minute of the opening ceremony was dedicated in silence to victims of the Malaysia Airlines disaster over Ukraine.

### **Putin's choice: 'Confronting the extremes'**

After the downing of flight MH17, Russian President Vladimir Putin is under intense domestic and international pressure. Which way will he turn? William Pomeranz of the Wilson Center in Washington told DW what he thinks.

### **Dutch-led force hopes to secure Malaysia crash site in eastern Ukraine**

The Dutch and Australian foreign ministers are to visit Kyiv to press for proper security at the Malaysian MH17 crash site in rebel-held eastern Ukraine, so official probes can begin and remaining bodies repatriated.

### **Dutch mourn crash victims**

The Netherlands observed a minute of silence to honor Dutch victims on flight MH17, which was apparently shot down over eastern Ukraine last week. Experts say identifying the crash's victims could take weeks.

### **MH17 crash from a Ukrainian perspective**

In Ukraine, separatists fighting Kyiv's government claimed on Wednesday that they had shot down two Ukrainian warplanes. DW correspondent Roman Goncharenko, himself from Ukraine, joined Emma Wallis in the studio. He says the shock of the Malaysian airliner being downed in Ukraine has not stopped the conflict.

### **MH17 victims arrive in the Netherlands**

The bodies of those killed in the shooting down of MH17 arrived in the Netherlands on Wednesday to begin the long process of identification. Most of the victims were Dutch. And it's the Netherlands which is now leading not only the investigation into the disaster but also calls to impose tougher sanctions to try and end the conflict. Jonathan Groubert sent this postcard from the Netherlands.

### **Russian reaction to downing of MH17**

There has been shock in Russia following the downing of flight MH17 last week. But the Kremlin has been busy trying to promote its version of events that day in the skies over eastern Ukraine as Charles Maynes reports from Moscow.

### **'Wreckage as far as the eye can see'**

Shortly after Malaysian Airlines flight MH17 crashed in Ukraine, OSCE observers headed to the crash site. Michael Bociurkiw from the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine talks about what the team has seen so far.

### **Ukraine PM resigns as battle rages around MH17 site**

Ukrainian Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk has announced the resignation of his government after two pro-Western parties left the ruling coalition. Battles have raged around the eastern city of Donetsk.

### **No evidence of tampering with MH17 black box in Ukraine**

Officials searching for clues about the fate of Malaysia Airlines flight MH17 have said there is no evidence black boxes were tampered with. The recorders were handed over by separatists who controlled the crash site.

### **MH17 disaster: few hard facts so far**

As mourning continues for the 298 people killed in the Malaysia Airlines crash in Ukraine, few hard facts about the disaster's causes are available. DW reviews the past week's mix of sketchy details and speculation.

*25 July 2014*

### **US accuses Russia of firing across border at Ukraine military**

The United States claims Russia is firing artillery from its side of the border targeting Ukrainian military forces. Moscow also plans to give pro-Russian separatists heavier and more powerful weapons, says the US.

### **Deadly 'hail' falls over eastern Ukraine**

Fighting in eastern Ukraine continues after a passenger airplane was allegedly shot down. One weapon in particular keeps coming into play: the Grad rocket launcher. Kyiv accuses Moscow of supplying it to the separatists.

### **Hollande: 'No survivors' in Air Algerie crash**

French President Francois Hollande has said that nobody survived the Air Algerie plane crash in Mali. He said rescue staff had recovered one of the plane's 'black box' flight recorders.

### **HIV activist onboard MH17**

298 people onboard the MH17 flight died when it was shot down in Ukraine. Some were HIV activists on their way to a conference in Australia. Pim de Kuijer, from the Dutch charity Stop Aids Now, was one of them.

### **MH17 facts mission**

Europe's security watchdog OSCE continues to gather information about the Malaysian airliner which shot down near Donetsk last week. Michael Bociurkiw, spokesman for the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, gives an update from the MH17 crash site.

### **UN: 230,000 people have fled Ukraine fighting**

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees in Geneva estimates that 230,000 people have been displaced by the conflict in Ukraine, with a small majority of them fleeing into Russia, rather than relocating within the country.

### **International AIDS Conference wraps up with a warning**

The 20th International Aids Conference has wrapped up with a warning that laws in many countries were making it more difficult to combat the disease. The next conference is to be held in two years' time.



*26 July 2014*

**Poor weather given as likely cause of Air Algerie crash**

Bad weather has been cited as a likely cause of the crash of Air Algerie flight AH5017, which killed at least 116 people. French troops have secured one of the plane's black boxes, to be examined by investigators.

**EU moves to widen sanctions against Russia over Ukraine**

The EU plans to increase sanctions against Russia because of its actions in Ukraine. Proposals include restricted access to EU capital markets and an embargo on future contracts for weapons and high-tech goods.

**EU adds to Russia sanctions list, prepares new measures**

The EU has extended sanctions imposed on Russian individuals, organizations and businesses over the conflict in Ukraine. EU foreign ministers have also agreed on proposals to impose tougher sanctions on Russia.

**Appendix II.II RT**

*17 July 2014*

**Malaysian airliner crashes in E. Ukraine near Russian border, 298 people on board**

A Malaysia Airlines' Boeing-777 with over 290 people on board has crashed in Ukraine, close to the border with Russia. Both Kiev and the opposition deny involvement in the incident.

**Malaysia Airlines MH17 plane crash in Ukraine**

A Malaysia Airlines plane en route from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur has crashed in eastern Ukraine. There were 283 passengers and 15 crew members on board the Boeing-777 aircraft.

**Flights rerouted: Planes avoiding Ukraine airspace after Malaysia Airlines crash**

International passenger flights are avoiding Eastern Ukrainian airspace, following the crash of a Malaysian Airlines plane in Donetsk.

**Reports that Putin flew similar route as MH17, presidential airport says 'hasn't overflowed Ukraine for long time'**

Malaysian Airlines MH17 plane was travelling almost the same route as Russia's President Vladimir Putin's jet shortly before the crash that killed 298, Interfax news agency reports citing sources.

### **Gruesome images of Malaysia MH17 plane crash in east Ukraine appear online**

Malaysia Airlines flight MH17 was traveling from Amsterdam to Malaysia when it went missing near Donetsk in eastern Ukraine on Thursday. There were 283 passengers and 15 crew members aboard the Boeing-777.

### **Kiev deployed powerful anti-air systems to E. Ukraine ahead of the Malaysian plane crash**

The Ukrainian military has several batteries of Buk surface-to-air missile systems with at least 27 launchers, capable of bringing down high-flying jets, in the Donetsk region where the Malaysian passenger plane crashed, Russian Defense Ministry said

### **Malaysia Airlines MH17 crash caught on film (VIDEO)**

The moment when the Malaysia Airlines MH17 plane hit into the ground in Eastern Ukraine was allegedly caught on film by local residents.

*18 July 2014*

### **Tragic history of passenger planes shot down**

In the history of civil aviation there have been a number of tragic incidents when passenger planes have been shot down, often accidentally, even as recently as 2001.

### **Putin: Thorough investigation of Malaysian airliner tragedy in Ukraine required**

The crash of a Malaysian Airlines plane in eastern Ukraine must be investigated thoroughly and objectively, Russian President Putin said in a statement. The tragedy underlines the urgent need for a peaceful resolution of the armed conflict in Ukraine

### **Ukrainian Buk battery radar was operational when Malaysian plane downed - Moscow**

On Thursday, when a Malaysian Airlines plane was apparently shot down over Ukraine, a Ukrainian Buk anti-aircraft missile battery was operational in the region, the Russian Defense Ministry said, contradicting Kiev's statements.

### **Questions over why Malaysian plane flew over Ukrainian warzone**

As the world tries to cope with the tragic loss of almost 300 people in the apparent downing of a Malaysian Airlines plane over Ukraine, questions have arisen over why the civil aircraft was directed over a war zone.

### **Lavrov: Russia won't take control of Malaysian plane's black boxes**

Moscow has no plans to seize the flight recorders from the Malaysia Airlines flight MH17, which crashed in eastern Ukraine on Thursday, Sergey Lavrov, Russia's foreign minister, told Rossiya 24 channel.

**'If it disappears': Passenger posts joke photo of flight MH17 shortly before crash**

We get a closer glimpse into the tragedy of flight MH17 on seeing a young passenger's photo of the aircraft, joking about a nightmare scenario minutes before boarding it with his girlfriend. "Should it disappear, this is what it looks like," it read.

**Moscow: No Buk missile systems or other weapons crossed Russia-Ukraine border**

The Russian Defense Ministry has said that neither the Buk missile defense system, nor any other military equipment, has crossed the Russian border into Ukraine.

**US confident surface-to-air missile brought down MH17 - Obama**

President Barack Obama called for a cease-fire between Ukraine and pro-Russian separatists in the east of Ukraine to allow a complete investigation into the downing of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH17.

**Moscow calls for intl probe into Malaysia MH17 flight crash – Russia's UN envoy**

Russia urges an impartial and open investigation into the Malaysian Boeing 777 crash in Ukraine and an international commission to be set up. Addressing the UN, Russia's envoy Churkin said a probe into Ukraine's aviation authorities is also necessary

**Unverified tape released by Kiev presented as 'proof' E. Ukraine militia downed MH17**

The Ukrainian Security Service has released what it calls "intercepted phone conversations," which are supposed to prove that Donetsk self-defense forces shot down Malaysia Airlines MH17 flight on Thursday – presumably, by mistake.

**Malaysia MH17 crash: 10 questions Russia wants Ukraine to answer**

Some Western states and Kiev rushed to find Russian involvement in the MH17 crash having no evidence to back their claims, Russia's Deputy Defense Minister told RT. He invited Ukraine to answer 10 questions to prove their commitment to an impartial p

**'Somebody watching over us': British family cheats death on flight MH17**

A British family narrowly escaped death after airport staff told them there weren't enough seats on doomed Malaysian Airlines flight MH17.

**Double grief: Australian family loses loved ones in both Malaysian plane tragedies**

An Australian family, who lost their son and daughter-in-law in the disappearance of Malaysian flight MH370, has suffered another stroke of fate, with their loved ones being aboard the Malaysian jet shot down over Ukraine.

*19 July 2014*

### **Malaysian jet tragedy propagandized – Ron Paul**

Referring to the tragic downing of a Malaysian Airlines plane over eastern Ukraine, former Texas congressman Ron Paul warned against jumping to conclusions over the culprits.

### **'They were falling from the sky:' Witnesses of MH17 crash tell their stories**

Remains of the bodies, crashed parts of the plane, still burning engines – that was the dramatic and gruesome picture that local residents saw when the Malaysian plane crashed in the sky over Donetsk Region in eastern Ukraine.

*20 July 2014*

### **World mourns MH17 crash victims as body recovery continues**

Malaysia MH17 crash victims are being mourned around the world as well at the gruesome site of the tragic accident. Rescuers in the meantime continue removing bodies from the wreckage monitored by OSCE observers.

### **What could be MH17 data recorders found in E. Ukraine, taken to Donetsk – militia**

Items presumed to be the data recorders from the crashed Malaysian plane have been found and delivered to Donetsk, eastern Ukraine, according to the leader of the self-proclaimed People's Republic of Donetsk.

### **Donetsk militia put MH17 bodies on train amidst concerns over intl experts' absence**

The bodies of 196 MH17 crash victims have been placed inside refrigerated train carriages, according to the leadership of the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic, who also wonders why international experts are still not at the crash scene.

### **Australian PM hints Putin may dropped from G20 summit over MH17 crash**

The prime minister of Australia, currently presiding over the G20, has hinted the Russian president could be dropped from the next summit in Brisbane over the MH17 crash in Ukraine. This came even before international investigators made it to the scene.

### **Putin: Taskforce at Malaysia MH17 crash site not enough, full-scale intl team needed**

The tragic Malaysian MH17 flight crash must not be politicised and the international experts on the scene should be able to carry out their work in complete safety, Russian President Vladimir Putin said.

*21 July 2014*

### **Kiev forces attack city of Donetsk, civilian casualties reported**

A heavy firefight is underway in a section of the city of Donetsk, with cannonade heard downtown. Self-defense forces report pro-Kiev armored vehicles and infantry trying to cut through defenses next to the central railway terminal.

### **Dutch experts check train with bodies of MH17 victims in E. Ukraine**

The first international investigators have arrived in eastern Ukraine to assess the aftermath of the Malaysian plane crash. The Dutch forensic experts have seen the train carrying the remains of the victims and will view the crash site later on Monday

### **Ukrainian Su-25 fighter detected in close approach to MH17 before crash - Moscow**

The Russian military detected a Ukrainian SU-25 fighter jet gaining height towards the MH17 Boeing on the day of the catastrophe. Kiev must explain why the military jet was tracking the passenger airplane, the Russian Defense Ministry said.

### **Malaysian experts arrive in E. Ukraine's Donetsk to look into MH17 tragedy**

Malaysian aviation experts have arrived in Donetsk, eastern Ukraine, to investigate the crash of the MH17 flight. Earlier local militia said they found presumed data recorders at the site and would hand them over to international investigators.

### **Ukrainian militia hand over MH17 flight recorders to Malaysia**

The Ukrainian militia have handed over to Malaysian experts the black boxes from the Malaysian Boeing-777 airliner that crashed in east Ukraine on July 17.

### **Perverved truth: How rebel mourning MH17 victims was turned into looter with trophy**

Twitter is quick, but too quick sometimes – recently it burst with photos of an evil Ukrainian militiaman who took a teddy bear from the victim of Malaysia plane crash as a trophy. But the full video shows he was just paying the tribute to the dead.

### **10 more questions Russian military pose to Ukraine, US over MH17 crash**

Russia has released military monitoring data, which shows Kiev military jets tracking the MH17 plane shortly before the crash - and posed yet another set of questions to Ukraine and the US over the circumstances of the tragedy.

*22 July 2014*

### **'Kiev will have to answer many questions' as UN urges intl MH17 crash probe – Moscow**

The UN Security Council has condemned the downing of Malaysia Airlines flight MH17 over Ukraine and called for an international probe into the incident in a unanimously adopted resolution.

**Ukraine air force strikes 30km from plane crash site despite ban - reports**

Tensions are running high near the Malaysia plane crash site after the Ukrainian military carried out an attack 30 kilometers away. The rumble of "Grad" RM systems can be heard in the vicinity - all despite the 40-kilometer ceasefire zone.

**Green light to Alexander Litvinenko death public inquiry**

A public inquiry has been ordered into the death of former KGB spy Alexander Litvinenko, who died in 2006 in a London hospital after he was poisoned with radioactive polonium.

**Expert access to MH17 crash site 'fairly good' - OSCE mission**

A spokesman for the OSCE mission monitoring the Malaysian Boeing 777 crash site told RT that international experts had problems getting to it safely through the warzone, but that their access to the site itself has been fairly well organized.

**Putin: West should demand Kiev obey ceasefire during plane crash probe**

Russian President Vladimir Putin believes it is necessary to call on Kiev to observe the ceasefire, which should last while investigations into the MH17 crash are ongoing.

**US coy on Malaysian plane evidence, points to social media and 'common sense'**

Evidence from social media and "common sense" indicate Ukrainian militia shot down the Malaysian Airlines plane, the State Department says. The US also cites its own intelligence which it has refrained from revealing to the public.

**Claims about MH17 that MSM fails to question**

Before any investigation into the MH17 crash even started, Western politicians and the media were quick to pin the blame for the tragedy on Russia. The parts of the story that do not support the theory seem to have been simply disregarded.

**EU to present extended Russian sanctions on Thursday – Ashton**

The EU Council did not agree to new Russian sanctions on Tuesday. However, EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton said an extended 'black list' will be published on Thursday. It will include the energy, and defense sectors, and financial markets.

**UEFA sides with Shakhtar Donetsk as club's players go AWOL**

European football's governing body UEFA has sided with Ukrainian club Shakhtar Donetsk in their dispute with six South American players who refused to travel back to Donetsk, citing safety reasons, following a training camp in Switzerland.

**France to deliver Mistral warship to Russia despite US, UK criticism**

France will go ahead with the delivery of the first of two Mistral warships to Russia – despite protests by the US and UK, prompted by Moscow's stance in the Ukrainian crisis. The ship is nearly completed and will be presented in October.

**Fake MH17 tributes on Facebook linked to porn, gambling sites**

The crash of Malaysia Airlines flight MH17 on Thursday has inspired several scammers to set up fake tribute Facebook pages in an effort to capitalize on the tragedy.

**US intelligence: No direct link to Russia in Malaysia plane downing**

Unnamed US officials are telling Associated Press that their intelligence suggests Malaysia plane shot down by anti-Kiev militia, no link to Russia found.

**'We will react to NATO build-up!' Key Putin quotes from defense policy address**

Moscow will respond to NATO's expansion towards Russia's borders, President Vladimir Putin said at the emergency Security Council meeting in Moscow. Here are his key quotes on Russia's defense, Western sanctions, and violence in eastern Ukraine.

*23 July 2014*

**\$200 per barrel oil if Russia sanctions escalate- Oxford Economics**

If the standoff with Russia and the West reaches a point where the EU has to completely cut trade with Russia, oil prices could soar above \$200 per barrel, sparking a global economic crisis, says Adam Slater, senior economist at Oxford Economics.

**Bogus photos of 'Russian' air-defense systems in Ukraine debunked by bloggers**

Ukraine continues to concoct 'evidence' a Russian air defense system brought down Flight MH17. Ukraine's secret service published as 'proof' month-old photos of a Ukrainian BUK-M missile system, claiming it is Russian.

**Moscow blasts Kiev's false accusations and lack of cooperation with air crash investigators**

The Russian Foreign Ministry has said Ukrainian authorities refuse to hold peace talks or help the international investigation of the Malaysian airliner disaster, preferring to throw absurd and unfounded accusations against Russia.

**Tweet gone wrong: Outrage over AP post saying plane with bodies 'from Flight 17 crash lands in Eindhoven'**

The Associated Press Twitter account took heat across the social media site Wednesday morning when it blasted out an errantly-worded tweet announcing supposed "breaking" news regarding the transport of Flight MH17 crash victims.

**Netherlands takes lead in MH17 crash investigation as bodies arrive home (PHOTOS)**

The bodies of the first victims from Malaysia Airlines flight MH17 have arrived back in the Netherlands following the crash in eastern Ukraine last Thursday. Investigators say they have found no evidence that the black box recorder was tampered with.

*24 July 2014*

**Kiev sabotaging probe into downed Malaysian plane – self-defense leader**

Kiev is not interested in a fair and unbiased investigation into the downing of the Malaysian plane over Ukraine, so it is sabotaging the work of international experts, one of the self-defense forces leaders said on Wednesday.

**If Russia is behind MH17 crash, where's the evidence? – Defense Ministry**

Russia has so far been the only nation to release evidence related to the MH17 crash, the Defense Ministry said, urging other countries to follow suit. Though there have been a lot of claims of Russia's involvement, none have been backed by proof.

**Sanctions 'wrong signal amid Kiev's punitive' military op - Amb**

Russia's ambassador to the UK hit out at planned sanctions on Moscow today, saying that they would be 'illegal, unreasonable and counter productive'.

**Cameron claims export licenses allowing UK arms sales to Russia don't breach embargo**

UK Prime Minister David Cameron says Britain has not breached an embargo by selling military equipment to Russia, following MP demands to clarify the government's position on UK-Russian arms deals.

**State Dept. accuses Russia of firing artillery into Ukraine, refuses to provide any evidence**

Government officials in the United States said Thursday that Russia is firing artillery across the border into Ukrainian territory, but refused to provide any evidence when grilled by an Associated Press reporter.



*25 July 2014*

**Armed Australian soldiers, police to deploy to MH17 crash site**

A proposed multinational force to further secure the MH17 crash site in eastern Ukraine will now include over 100 armed Australian police and soldiers. The move comes shortly after 40 unarmed Dutchmen had been deployed to “further stabilize the area.

**Censorship or error? Internet criticism for BBC removal of MH17 report**

BBC Russian has come under fire from internet users after deleting its report on the MH17 crash for not meeting ‘editorial values.’ The reporter questioned says that local militia fired the missile, with locals talking about Ukrainian army planes.

**Malaysian Boeing disaster – Russia’s questions to Ukraine**

Russia’s Air Transport Agency has prepared a number of questions for Ukraine seeking to clarify the situation surrounding the crash of flight MH17.

**Moscow refutes Washington’s ‘innuendos,’ says US shares blame for E. Ukraine crisis**

Russia's Foreign Ministry said Moscow is outraged by the US State Department's "unfounded public innuendos." Moscow criticized Washington’s attitude, saying it is pushing the new regime in Ukraine towards a "massacre of the Russian-speaking population

*26 July 2014*

**EU economic sanctions on Russia won’t affect gas sector – Van Rompuy**

EU sanctions on Russia will cut Moscow's access to “sensitive” technologies in the oil sector, according to European Council head Herman Van Rompuy. The gas sector – which Europe depends on – will be unaffected, including Gazprom's South Stream pipeline

**White House says Russia ‘culpable’ of MH17 downing, cites ‘social media reports’**

Washington has claimed that Moscow is ‘culpable’ in the Malaysian plane crash in Ukraine, as it was Russian authorities that gave the rebels heavy weapons and training. However, the claim was only backed up by reports in social media.

**EU adds Russia’s intelligence director, Chechnya leader to its sanctions list**

New sanctions against Russia have been detailed: this time the EU targeted top intelligence chiefs for allegedly fueling separatism in east Ukraine. Moscow responded the union is working towards a total break off in international security cooperation

**‘She might be still alive!’ Parents of MH17 victim arrive at crash site in Ukraine**

The parents of 25-year-old Fatima, who was among the passengers on board the tragic Malaysian plane, don't want to believe their daughter is dead. They have arrived at the crash site in eastern Ukraine, and are determined to look for her.

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