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# **Media framing of the Russian dairy policy after the reciprocal sanctions – a framing analysis of the Russian media 2014-2015**

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## Executive Summary

The recent policy change to import substitution in Russia after the so called 'reciprocal sanctions' in August 2014 was followed by contradicting outputs for the Russian dairy sector. National mass media, as one of the arenas for ambiguity interpretation, has moved in the 2000-s to media autocracy, that implies prevalence of one-sided representations. The analysis of how potential ambiguity in representation of the Russian dairy policy after the food ban is articulated by the Russian media with different forms of ownership, can fill the gap in the studies on media framing, as there has been no comparable research yet in terms of media autocracy. Such an analysis is needed to understand how the form of a newspaper's ownership, led by underlying strategies, can influence the framing of the Russian dairy policy, i.e. the salience of certain issue aspects and speakers. The general research question was "*How is the recent Russian dairy policy after the reciprocal sanctions represented by the Russian media across time?*". It was divided into seven specific questions:

1. What is the difference between generic frames of the recent Russian dairy policy in the Russian newspapers with different forms of ownership?
2. What kind of issue-specific frames can be found in the different newspapers?
3. What kinds of speakers appear in the different newspapers, and are there any dominant types of speakers?
4. Did the media frames of the recent Russian dairy policy shift over time?
5. Is there any frame interaction within or across the different newspapers?
6. How do the media frames relate to the developments and issues in the dairy sector?
7. How can this media framing be explained?

The conceptual framework of this study combined the concept of framing as a process of meaning construction for ideas mobilisation, that implies agency and contention (Benford & Snow, 2000), with analytical categories: frame setting (Scheufele, 1999); standing (Feindt & Kleinschmit, 2011); and interplay of issues (Stoep, van der & Aarts, 2011), revealed in frame parity, dominance or contestation (Entman, 2003). 140 articles of three national business newspapers with different forms of ownership (state-owned, state-aligned, independent) were analysed with the help of a software program Atlas.ti by identifying generic frames (deductively), issue-specific frames, speakers and metaphors (inductively) with regard to the polarity of the statements (politically neutral, pro- or contra-governmental). Then the frequency of the frames, speakers and metaphors was represented in the tables. Lastly, the patterns in framing were found and interpreted as the newspapers' strategies.

The findings showed that the newspapers selected different issues of the dairy policy after the import ban: the state-owned was more focused on consumer prices and issues of milk and dairy production; the state-aligned on various policy measures, and the independent on the consequences of these measures for different stakeholders. The need in state subsidies and the quality of import and domestic dairy were the issues similar across the newspapers. Among generic frames, responsibility was overall the highest articulated frame, focused on the problem identification and solution rather than the need of change. The conflict frame was more articulated in the state-owned and aligned newspapers, and the frame of economic consequences in the independent one. Overall, the lack of morality frame, low presence of human interest frame and avoidance of consumers as speakers and victims indicated that the newspapers tried to avoid mobilisation of the audience. Among issue-specific frames, the frames of state control were mostly articulated in the state-owned and aligned newspapers, and import dependence of the Russian dairy sector in the independent one.

In terms of frames interaction, the state-owned and independent newspapers aligned in strong contestation towards the mechanisms of domestic producer support (particularly state subsidies) and diverged in their interpretation of self-sufficiency and networking within the dairy chain. While the Russian officials gained overall a dominant standing, in the sample of the independent newspaper the speakers of the dairy sector together with the sector associations and science overbalanced officials in the total count.

The findings showed that ambiguity was more or less represented, when politically neutral statements were counterbalanced by contra-governmental ones (*fingerpointing strategy*); and when politically neutral statements were equally contested and supported, in order to balance the stakeholders' interests (*parity, 'call for cooperation'*). One-sided, i.e. official, interpretations dominated, when politically neutral statements avoided to articulate the victims of the represented issues (*downplaying*); and there was alignment with official interpretations, when politically neutral statements were neither contested nor supported (*conformity, imitating contestation*). The fingerpointing strategy of the independent newspaper appeared to be closer to more complex representation of the dairy policy, than the parity strategy of the state-owned one, due to density of the ambiguity articulation, while the state-aligned newspaper tended to show one-sided interpretation. Frames, standing and strategies, used by the newspapers, diverged according to their forms of ownership: the state-owned one appeared as an arbiter among controversies, the state-aligned as a mouthpiece of the official interpretations, and the independent as a watchdog of the policy implementation.

With regard to the actual issues and developments in the dairy sector, such issues as knowledge and technology exchange, as well as the need in alternative investment flows, were low articulated. It was concluded that agricultural education, research and extension, and self-organised networks within the Russian dairy sector could be drivers of change and alternatives to restrictions and limitations of the policy measures. On the basis of conclusions practical recommendations for communication science, the dairy industry and business journalism were elaborated.

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**Key words:** Russian dairy policy, Russian dairy sector, Reciprocal sanctions, Import substitution, Media framing in autocracy, Interaction of media frames.

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## Chapter 1. Introduction.

### Problem definition

This study is aimed to analyse how the recent Russian dairy policy after the ‘reciprocal sanctions’ is articulated by the national mass media. The media create a frame of reference for the audience by reconstructing different aspects of the agricultural policies. Media framing analysis can help to uncover what aspects of the recent Russian dairy policy were selected and interpreted by the Russian mass media considering the raising state control in different spheres of Russian socio-political life.

The Russian dairy policy has been gone through a number of changes that are similar throughout the whole agri-food industry – from Soviet course on subsidization and domestic self-sufficiency to the post-Soviet price and trade liberalization (1992-94); import-oriented consumption due to the prevalence in foreign product quality and quantity (1990-s); return to state subsidies and domestic producer’ protectionism (from 2000-s); the WTO accession to diminish the subsidies (2012); and the recent conversion to import substitution (2014).

The recent policy change to import substitution (named also as domestic production efficiency, or self-sufficiency) took place after the so called ‘reciprocal sanctions’ (August 7, 2014) when Russia banned food imports from the countries that imposed economic sanctions in response to Russia’s annexation of Crimea and deliberate destabilisation of the situation in Ukraine (EU, 2014). The policy implementation was followed by contradicting outputs for the dairy sector: although the domestic milk yields started to increase, this cannot cover the milk consumption deficit; dairy production and the prices on it grew simultaneously, while the quality substantially declined (Rosselkhozadzor, 2015).

The novelty of the recent policy change in Russian dairy sector creates uncertainty and ambiguity in its public interpretation articulated as contested meanings. The potential ambiguity of how to interpret the benefits and implications of the recent Russian dairy policy can be understood by using the concept of framing, that is the construction of social reality by means of selection and salience of particular issue aspects (Entman, 1993; Scheufele, 1999). “Framing has to do with making sense, interpreting, and giving meaning to what happens in the ongoing world” (Arts & Woerkum, 2005).

Media coverage of a new policy impact on Russian dairy sector becomes an arena for the uncertainty and ambiguity interpretation. Frames as cognitive representations and interactional constructions (Dewulf et al., 2011) are “strategically used to gain autonomy, credibility, and legitimacy: in short, power” (Bommel, van & Aarts, 2011). Media framing can influence the audience by reconstructing the reality, i.e. by selecting certain issues and events, making them salient and excluding of others (Entman, 1993). Thus media frames are constructing a specific reality that is adapted to media formats and requirements (Feindt & Kleinschmit, 2011).

The transition of the Russian dairy sector as a part of the agro-food system went along with the transition of Russian mass media system from the communist and non-profit press model to the liberal and market-driven media system of the 1990-s, which moved to media autocracy in the 2000-s. As a result, the majority of Russian influential media appeared to be the so called “mouthpiece of the government” as they are owned, controlled by or aligned with the authorities. That is why media framing in Russia becomes more one-sided, which prevents a critical reflection of the policy, and plurality in its interpretation (Poberezhskaya, 2015; Stier, 2015; Becker, 2004). Therefore it is important to investigate how the ambiguity in representation of the recent Russian dairy policy is articulated by various Russian media (state-aligned versus independent, specialised versus general interest) after the ‘reciprocal sanctions’, and how this media framing evolved over time.

## Research objective

This study is aimed to find out how the recent Russian dairy policy after the reciprocal sanctions is framed by the Russian media across time.

The framing analysis, used to analyse the representation of the policy in the Russia media, is applied to three Russian business newspapers with different forms of ownership: a state-owned *Rossiyskaja gazeta (RG)*, a state-aligned *Izvestia* and an independent *RBC Daily*.

## General research question

**How is the recent Russian dairy policy after the reciprocal sanctions represented by the Russian media across time?**

This general research question can be divided into several specific questions:

**RQ1:** What is the difference between generic frames of the recent Russian dairy policy in the Russian newspapers with different forms of ownership?

**RQ2:** What kind of issue-specific frames can be found in the different newspapers?

**RQ3:** What kinds of speakers appear in the different newspapers, and are there any dominant types of speakers?

**RQ4:** Did the media frames of the recent Russian dairy policy shift over time?

**RQ5:** Is there any frame interaction within or across the different newspapers?

**RQ6:** How do the media frames relate to the developments and issues in the dairy sector?

**RQ7:** How can this media framing be explained?

## Outline of the thesis

This thesis is structured as follows. The first chapter (*Introduction*) gives the problem description, formulates the objective, the general and specific research questions. The increasing state control and its impact on the dairy sector and mass media are reviewed in the second chapter (*The Russian dairy sector and mass media in transition*), where the emergence of import substitution policy and the prevalence of state-owned and aligned media are highlighted. To address the media analysis, the concepts of framing and media framing are introduced and elaborated, and the research questions are operationalised in the third chapter (*Conceptual framework for the media analysis*); methodological considerations are explained in Chapter 4 (*Research methodology*). Chapter 5 (*Media framing of the Russian dairy policy after the reciprocal sanctions*) gives a summary of the main research findings (i.e. the timeline, the main media frames according to the issues and events, and any interaction between them across time, within each newspaper and across them). The thesis ends by discussing and evaluating the findings in, respectively, chapter 6 (*Discussion*) and chapter 7 (*Conclusions and recommendations*).

## Chapter 2. The Russian dairy sector and mass media in transition.

This chapter will highlight the key turns in the development of the Russian dairy sector and mass media considering the increasing state control in Russia.

### 2.1. The Russian dairy sector towards self-sufficiency.

The dairy sector development in the structure of national agriculture is highly dependent on policy changes, set by a dominant political system. The agricultural policy based on net subsidization of agro-food industry is considered to play a substantial role in the collapse of the Soviet economy and initiation of transition in the 1990-s (Brooks & Gardner, 2004). Consequently, the Russian agro-food system in transition had to compensate the population for the missing volumes of domestic production by imports, which made Russia the second largest agro-food importer among emerging market economies (Liefert & Liefert, 2012).

The Russian agricultural policies, started as *transition policies* (1992-94) which almost eliminated the subsidies by changing the allocation of resources, have been followed by *border policies* (2003) and *state budget support* (2005) to promote rural development and increase domestic production. The need to ensure the nation's food security by increasing domestic food production was primarily set into political agenda by president Putin immediately after he came to power (Wegren et al., 2004: 553). The course on self-sufficiency in domestic production became an underlying goal of the Russian agricultural policy and was apparently declared in a number of official documents of a last decade, such as National Priority Project for Development of Agro-Industrial Complex (2006-2008), the State program for Development of Agriculture (2008-2012 and 2013-2020) and the Doctrine on Food Security (2010).

Return to a vertical coordination of industry based on subsidies and protectionism, revealed a short-term economic recovery (Bezlepkina et al., 2005), but has not been effective in the long run as it did not help the Russian agro-food industry to increase domestic production and reach self-sufficiency (Petrick, 2014; Skul'skaya & Shirokova, 2014). On the contrary, it provoked a shortage in physical, commercial and institutional infrastructure of the Russian agriculture (Liefert & Liefert, 2012), and has led to the shortage in the average level of food consumption (meat and dairy products, fruits and vegetables) which still does not reach the rational norms set by Ministry of Health and Social Development in 2010 (Skul'skaya & Shirokova, 2015).

How has the course on self-sufficiency affected the dairy sector? Since 2000-s the Russian dairy sector in the structure of agri-food industry has become inward oriented, as in Soviet time (Steinbach & Rybak, 2015: 196), mainly because of its highly dependence on governmental subsidies and domestic trade protection. As a result, Russia as the 6<sup>th</sup> country in the world milk production (Figure 1) produced only 4% of the world's dairy by 2012, which implies 31, 9 million tonnes (Mt) of total milk production (Haas & Maksimenko, 2011). At the same time Russia is one of the countries with the highest milk deficits (FAO, 2015).

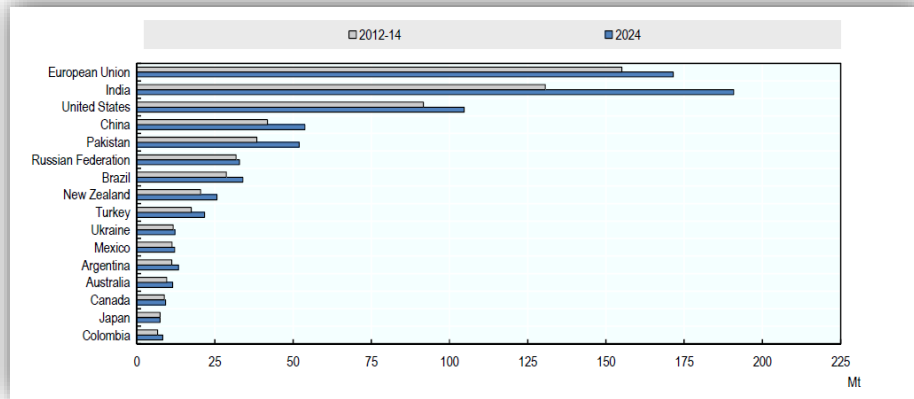


Figure 1. Outlook for milk production (OECD/FAO, 2015).

According to the Federal statistics of the State program Russia's self-sufficiency in the dairy production was estimated in 2012 as almost 80% with the target to achieve 90% of self-sufficiency by 2020 (Figure 2).

Products	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Cereals	98.8	98.4	99.5	99.6	99.6	99.6	99.6	99.7	99.7
Sugar from sugar beet	77.9	79.9	79.3	80.7	82.0	83.5	88.6	91.7	93.2
Vegetable oil	83.6	81.1	83.0	83.8	84.6	85.7	86.4	87.0	87.7
Potatoes	96.8	97.5	98.2	98.5	98.6	98.6	98.6	98.7	98.7
Meat and meat products	74.8	77.8	78.9	80.9	84.3	85.9	86.9	87.8	88.3
Milk and milk products	78.9	76.6	81.0	81.9	83.0	84.3	85.9	87.8	90.2

Figure 2. Self-sufficiency targets for the main food groups in the State Programme. Share of domestic production in total suppliers (percentage) (FAO, 2014: 4).

Milk production and consumption deficiency in Russia made the country the second world's largest importer of the dairy (milk and milk products) after China (OECD/FAO, 2015: 16), and particularly the largest importer of cheese and butter, which are projected to remain the main dairy imports the coming decade (Figure 3). This forecast is understandable: the country's dependency on imports was permanently progressing in the former decade, e.g. import of cheese increased almost fivefold, and in 2012 made up 5.1% of the agri-food imports (Erokhin, 2015). One of the reasons for such a dependency on imports is that milk production in Russia has been decreasing from 55,7 million tonnes (Mt) in 1990 to 31,9 Mt in 2012 (Surovtsev et al., 2015), and "is expected to decline by 2 percent in 2015" (USDA, 2015: 5). The number of dairy cows has also declined from 21 million heads in 1990 to 9 million in 2012 (Surovtsev et al., 2015).



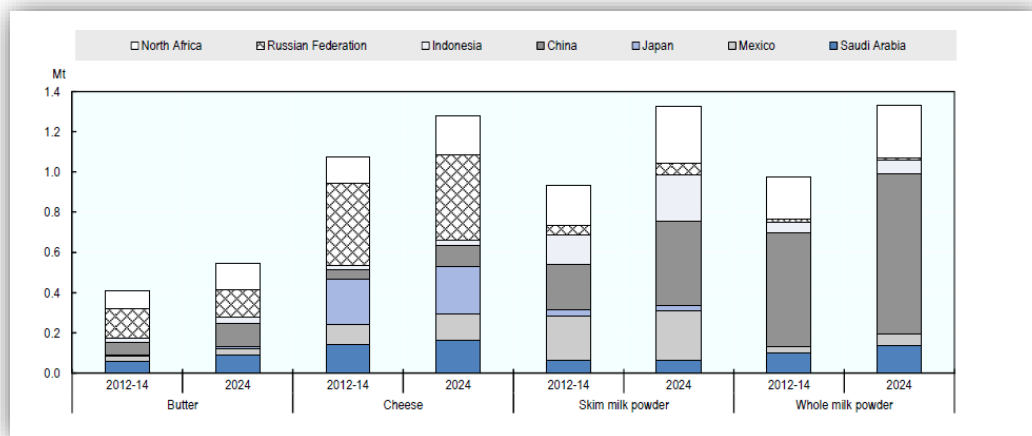


Figure 3. Major dairy product importers (OECD/FAO, 2015).

One of the main changes in the dairy production, caused by agricultural transition, is the emergence of three types of key dairy producers: agricultural enterprises/large private companies/agroholdings (the privatised former state or collective farms), private/smallholder/family farms and household plots (owned by rural population, after work activity, not a part of employment).

The agro-holdings which incorporated agricultural, processing, distribution and retail services, became a new form of vertically integrated enterprises and took a dominant position on the market. The agroholdings' emergence and enlargement was a kind of response to the market concentration, high transaction costs, subsidy and protectionism policy, and infrastructure deficiency (Liefert & Liefert, 2012: 57). On the one hand the agroholdings contributed substantially to the output and became the vehicles of modernization and innovation: they provided the industry with imported investments, better management practices, and superior technology such as higher quality feed, machinery and animal breeding stock. By 2011 the dairy market has been dominated by two processing companies Danone-Unimilk and Wimm-Bill-Dann which accounted for 44% of total milk products (Surovtsev et al., 2015: 119). On the other hand, by minimising service costs, modernising technology and improving milk quality, large agro's have not expended on social services and social security, and gained efficiency by reducing labour; that is why their contribution in the social welfare has been minimal (Spoor, 2012: 181).

Moreover, the policy of increased state regulation and intervention has led to a disproportional distribution of state-owned land and investments among large and small-scale producers: state support has led to land acquisition and concentration of funds by agricultural enterprises that are more likely to get loans than smaller producers (Surovtsev et al., 2015: 118). As a result, starting from 2000-s the agroholdings have got a diverse financial state support, e.g. restructuring of farm debts, reform of credit policy and expanded programme of long-term leasing of equipment (Wegren et al., 2004: 554; Liefert & Liefert, 2012: 58).

In the transition process family farms were meant to be the main beneficiaries of the large-scale agrarian reforms (Bezlepkina & Lansink, 2003: 399), but have got a disadvantage position in the dairy sector. Unfortunately, rural population was not motivated to take advantages out of land privatization, mainly due to the lack of knowledge and information. Therefore the distributive land reform was accompanied by the processes of re-peasantization, de-peasantization and rural poverty growth (Spoor, 2012). Consequently, the small-scale producers (both, plots and farms) were not able to increase milk yields substantially till the 2000-s (Table 4), although the dairy produced by the

household plots can be seen as the means of self-consumption and self-sufficiency for the rural population in terms of Russia’s unstable food procurement.

Small farm business started to revive in the Putin era due to the short-time state/regional credits or support programmes, as “investment funds were allocated to producers according to credit plans approved by national and regional authorities” (Bokusheva, Bezlepkina & Kupavych, 2007). Position of the small-scale family farms in the dairy sector have been recently reconsidered by the government for their importance to the food security: the farms serve as a source of better quality milk, naturally produced and of low price, paid by the processing companies.

The main state programmes to support the dairy producers are “Development of dairy farming and increase in milk output in Russia for 2009-2012” and “Development of family dairy livestock farms on the basis of peasant farms for 2009-2014” (Ministry of Agriculture, 2014). In general, state support to the dairy sector from the federal budget has raised 3.5 times in 2011 compared to 2008 (Surovtsev et al., 2015 [2]: 142), but compared to the developed countries it remained insufficient in the amount and was impractically used both by farms (large and small) and regional authorities: e.g., national milk production in 2012 could not reach the planned 37 Mt (Skul’skaya & Shirokova, 2015: 258).

Although agroholdings provided the greater milk yields in the 1990-s, their share in milk production was largely taken over by household plots in 2000-s. The milk outputs of the household plots have a tendency to decline since 2010, while the share of agroholdings and farms showed a slight growth (Figure 4). The household plots however became the largest milk producers: in 2012 they “accounted for 48.3% of the total number of cows and 48.4% of gross milk output in Russia” (Surovtsev et al., 2015)<sup>1</sup>. In 2015 small-scale producers (both farms and household plots) which still account for about 50% of Russian milk output, have faced “increasing competition from larger more efficient farms” (USDA, 2015: 5).

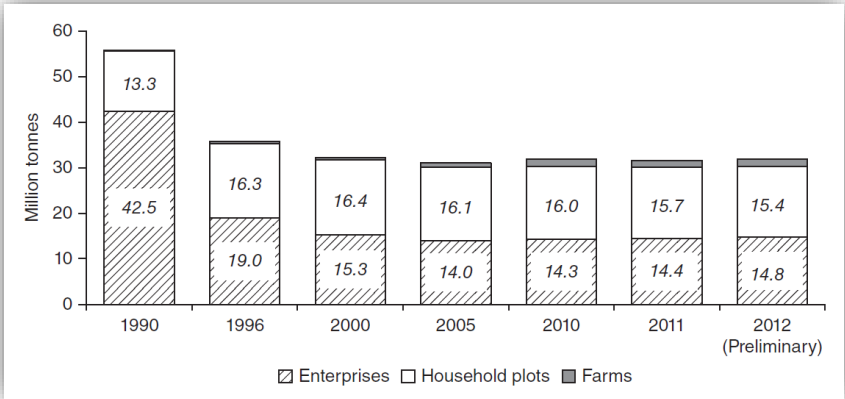


Figure 4. Milk output of agricultural producers in Russia (million tonnes), 1990-2012. (From Federal Service of State Statistics) (Surovtsev et al., 2015).

Russia’s insufficient milk production is caused by continuously shrinking size of dairy herds (Figure 5), that can be explained by low management efficiency, shortage of land for pastures and limited feed

<sup>1</sup> Although the household plots are considered to be the largest milk suppliers, it is not clear from the literature how the data was obtained, and how the plots’ owners participate in the dairy market. In case if they supply their own families and the neighbours, they do not pay the taxes for these transactions, and their participation in the market can be doubtful.

supply, that affects profitability and leads to contraction in dairy herd (FAO, 2013). Another reason is increasing share of concentrates in feed composition. On the one side, the concentrates help to raise milk quality and yields; on the other, – they higher prime cost on milk, affect the cow’s health and lead to low reproduction: e.g., the number of calves per 100 cows decreased from 76 in 2006 to 73 in 2011 (Surovtsev et al., 2015: 120). Besides that, Russian standard of protein content (2.8%), which is the main indicator of milk quality and production efficiency, is lower than the norm of EU (3.1%) (Serjogin & Svirina, 2010: 39).

The development of dairy cattle breeds, imported from the competitive countries, extremely needs state support and integration of Russian breeding organizations with international ones for knowledge and technology exchange (Blokhin & Dunin, 2015). The scholars Birman & Birman (2010) suggest to increase state support proportionally to the GDP costs of the dairy sector in order to renew, select and raise the world-leading cattle breeds in Russia. The subprogramme “Development of the livestock breeding industry, processing and marketing of livestock breeding commodities for 2013-2020” has already been established and accounts 499 billion roubles (Ministry of Agriculture of the RF, 2013), which will possibly lead to dairy herd expansion and rise in milk production in the coming future.

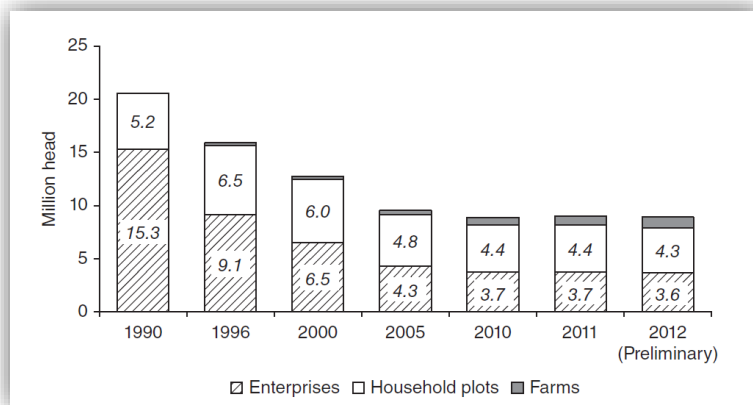


Figure 5. Number of cows in agriculture in Russia (million head), 1990-2012. (From Federal Service of State Statistics) (Surovtsev et al., 2015).

To meet the raising demands of the consumers and achieve the self-sufficiency target, the Russian dairy sector needs not only new technologies for forage crops and breeding, but also dairy product innovations, improved networks, contract and financing innovations.

The course on self-sufficiency on the basis of increasing incentives from the state have caused a number of complications in terms of institutional and physical (machinery and storage) infrastructure. Lack of commercial legal services that could protect property and enforce contracts, lack in market information and programs for agricultural education, extension and research has led to weak institutional infrastructure. According to Liefert & Liefert (2012), weak institutions increase transactions costs and induce weak services such as inefficient equipment and veterinary care, restricted access to credit system, and difficulties to meet the requirements of banks and get finance. Besides, lack of competition between the machinery manufactures and leasers and lack of management competencies has resulted in inadequate physical infrastructure (Swinnen, 2007; Dries et al., 2009). Financing of research centres could provide an independent expertise, invent and explore new technologies or investigate the user’ preferences (Sedik et al., 2015), which are needed

for industry development and innovation emergence and extension. These and other factors provoke unpredictability and unprofitability of dairy production.

After Russia acceded WTO, the agricultural policies of state support were characterized as 'trade and production distorting' (Sedik et al., 2015; Erokhin, 2015: 168). The commitment to restrict market-distorting subsidies, that Russia has made as a part of WTO accession in 2012, will be noticeable only in 2017, but cannot guarantee a systemic policy change (Sedik et al., 2015). The dilemma for Russian policymakers is how to adjust the state support (subsidies and protection) to the WTO obligations which increased the country's dependence on imports, and how to help the domestic producers be competitive within these limits.

Summing up, the Russian dairy sector of the last two and a half decades has been developing as a part of Russian agri-food system under conditions of vertical coordination with enlargement and powerful position of agroholdings and disadvantage situation for small-scale family farms; inequalities in state financing; lack of civic initiatives, independent research and extension organisations; lack of commercial legal consultancy; feed shortage and need in breed renewal. At the same time consumer demands in milk are increasing, while the depressed Russian dairy market has not been able to respond to these challenges. Food and particularly dairy sufficiency cannot be reached without solving these problems in agri-food system.

## 2.2. The sanctions and their impact on the Russian dairy sector.

The course on self-sufficiency in combination with increasing state support and protectionist measures makes the dairy sector vulnerable to economic fluctuations. Therefore the development of effective dairy policy should take into account the negative and unexpected changes in economic situation and socioeconomic policy, as Ksenofontov and his colleagues forecasted (2012). Such changes were latterly caused by the so called 'reciprocal sanctions' and oil price reduction, followed by economy recession, depreciation of rouble and inflation (World Bank Group, 2015).

Recently the government-led Russian agro-food industry, dependent on subsidies and imports, encountered *food embargo* on imported meat and dairy products, fruits and vegetables, fish and seafood. It took place in August 2014 after the reciprocal sanctions, when Russia banned food imports from the countries that had imposed economic sanctions against Russian political elite, financial, energy and defence sectors "in response to the illegal annexation of Crimea and deliberate destabilisation of the situation in Ukraine" (EU, 2014).

The food embargo was presented by the Russian government as an extension of the course to reach self-sufficiency by increasing domestic production ratios to 80-95% in Decree No. 778 of the Government of the Russian Federation (6 August, 2014). When the food import ban was launched, the claim of self-sufficiency was embodied in a policy of *import substitution*. A year later, in August 2015, the policy was extended by a *food destruction program* against illegally imported sanctioned food; the sanctions and the food embargo were prolonged till 5 August 2016. This way "rapid market liberalization and state support of agriculture have been replaced by import substitution and food security provisions in Russia" (Erokhin, 2015: 169).

At the same time "the food ban is a test for the policies and pronouncements made over the past 14 years" (Wegren, 2014: 492). Import substitution is seen as a form of protectionist policy of the Russian government, aimed to promote domestic production sufficiency and independence from foreign suppliers (Elvestad & Nilssen, 2010: 268). Import-dependent Russian agri-food industry, unable to replace food imports, since 2000 has been establishing the policy measures of import substitution by executing different kinds of trade barriers: food import restrictions, prohibits,

exclusion of foreign suppliers from the Russian market. These measures have been enforced by the Russian Federal Service for Veterinary and Phytosanitary Surveillance, or Rosselkhozadzor (hereafter the veterinary service or the VPSS). Founded as external control agency, the VPSS is the main governmental institution, responsible for restrictions on food imports: e.g. it has elaborated certification regime (2008) and got the authority to execute food quality control and regulate the trade on behalf of the government.

Trade barriers on food imports, since 2000-s represented by the Russian government to ensure food safety and protect the domestic producer have not encouraged an increase in agri-food industry (Skul'skaya & Shirokova, 2015) and therefore still cannot guarantee food security, i.e. independence of national food system, food access to all the consumers, food quality and safety. In their research on trade restrictions of Norwegian salmon imports the scholars Elvestad & Nilssen (2010) came to conclusion, that the main driving force of the Russian import substitution policy is to regain governmental control over economic transactions and actors (267), and that this policy performs a new trade control regime where the food safety measures are used as an instrument to gain significant tax revenue, with the role of the VPSS as "a very successful cash cow for the Russian government" (279).

Consumption of dairy products is of high importance for 80% of 140 million Russian population, especially for low-incomers and socially disadvantage groups (Newsletter POWX, 2015). Since the imports supplied about 40% of Russia's domestically produced food (Liefert & Liefert, 2015), the policy of import substitution has affected the Russian agri-food system significantly (about the impact of meat and grain export ban see: Wegren, 2014; Götz et al., 2015; Djuric et al., 2015). The exclusion of the dairy, one of the key agro-food imports, has harmed not only foreign producers, but above all the Russian dairy sector. These recent policy measures and other decrees after the food ban, intended for the development of the Russian dairy sector towards self-sufficiency (understood in this study as *the Russian dairy policy*), caused a number of complications: foreign investments outflow, increase in transaction costs of switching suppliers, high costs for cattle owning and forage, raw milk price reduction for suppliers, increase in prices on the dairy products, reduction in availability of the dairy (especially for the low-incomers), which consequently resulted in low profit and non-profit milk production. At the same time domestic production in Russia grows faster than consumption, and imports continue to decline (OECD/FAO, 2015).

The policy outcomes for the dairy sector turned to be rather controversial and for the producers, and for the consumers. For example, current deficit in milk consumption can be estimated in 5 million tons of milk which requires approximately 500 milliard rouble investments (Babaev, 2015: 6). Although milk yields per cow increased with 5.3% in January-August 2015 compared to January-August 2014, the consumer price index for the dairy also showed the growth of 14.6% simultaneously (Federal State Statistics Service, 2015). Besides, among the products affected by the food embargo, the dairy has the highest price increase – 17% (FAO, 2014). Along with growing amount of domestic cheese production, the price on it rose up to 2.1% within the same time period, while the quality substantially declined. The VPSS reports that after the food embargo Russian market is overflowed with counterfeit products, among which 78.3% of counterfeit cheese and cheese products was detected (Skrynnik, 2015).

Another new trend in the dairy sector induced by import substitution is that some Russian dairy companies try to take advantage of the new policy. They have started production of the most valuable and deficient import substitutes - the cheeses parmesan, mozzarella, or camembert, which represent the analogues of the origins from the banned supplying countries (Gus'kov, 2014; Azar, 2015).

Although the dairy (11%) was the second most important group after fruits (15%) among the food under embargo, the economic value of banned imports was the biggest for the dairy (US\$ 1.78 from total 8.3 billion in 2013) (FAO, 2014). Besides that, the food embargo has become a threshold for foreign investment flows, which were perceived before the sanctions “as an initiator of change and institutional innovation” (Dries, 2009). The most important supplier of the dairy imports in 2013 and thus the biggest loser after the food embargo is EU which provided Russia with 37.4% of the total dairy imports (38.4%) (FAO, 2014). The food ban has excluded the dairy flows from the main supplying countries – Finland (48.6% share of exports to Russia), Lithuania (27.3%), Poland (8.9%) and the Netherlands (3.9%) (EU, 2014). Consequently, Belarus has become the major dairy importer to the Russian market, and it was expected that Belarus will fulfil the supply of raw milk to increase the production of the main dairy deficits in Russia: cheese and butter (USDA, 2015: 5).

The policy of import substitution aimed to protect and stimulate the domestic dairy production after the reciprocal sanctions has already required a number of measures which imply higher state incentives and control. These measures form a vicious circle that might hinder the development of the Russian dairy sector towards food sufficiency.

First of all, the productive cycle in the dairy livestock needs time and investments to increase the production, and regarding the foreign investment outflows, the financial gap might be fulfilled by the Russian government, whose potential is however limited because of Western sanctions on the Russian banking system (FAO, 2014).

Next to that, the Russian government tries to gain control over the dairy quality and the prices fluctuations. Therefore the VPSS and Federal Prosecutor have initiated control over “illegal” price increases, and control of the dairy origin of re-exports from Belarus and Kazakhstan (together with Russia, the members of the Customs Union, which provides lower trade barriers), as these products might be supplied from the banned countries. At the same time the rapid switch to alternative dairy suppliers may lead to cheaper imports of milk and the dairy which may undercut the prices of domestic producers and make them uncompetitive, because of underdeveloped institutional (commercial and logistical) infrastructure of Russia, and low quality and insufficient supplies of raw milk. On the other hand, the logistics from far remoted countries might make the cheaper dairy products too expensive for the Russian customers. As a result, the high food inflation “may change the structure of their diet away from animal husbandry products, just as they did in the 1990s” (Wegren, 2014: 507)

The last “Direct line” with president Putin on 16 April 2015 (annual Q&A TV and radio session to give the government feedback from the society) revealed a number of questions on these problems from the dairy industry. They signalize the need for adaptation of the industry to the policy of import substitution.

### 2.3. Key changes in the Russian media landscape.

The Russian media system has gone through the similar changes as the Russian agriculture and other sectors of national economy: from press liberalisation in the early 1990-s (thanks to adoption of the Mass Media Law in 1991) to commercialisation and concentration of media organisations in the hands of business corporations in the end of 1990-s, followed by increased state control over media freedom in the last 15 years.

The redistribution of media power, silencing the media critical to the government, and thus shrinking of media independence, are characterised by the scholars Akser & Baybars-Hawks (2012) as *media autocracy* at the example of Turkish media, as these features represent the state pressure on the

national media system. Accordingly, the government-led transformation in the Russian media system displays similar features of media autocracy, that has been driven by the changes in the Russian political system.

Since 2000 Russia has gradually been moving to autocracy, revealed in the monopolisation of all the power by the ruling party and the president, appointed to be 'the Guarant of Constitution', the one who takes the main political decisions. The Freedom House ratings of Russia, analysed by Tsygankov & Parker (2015), define the Russian political system as a hybrid regime before 2009 and after that – as a semi-consolidated authoritarian regime, due to limited political competition, media pluralism, NGOs freedom and institutional constraints (p. 82). The autocracy in Russia is being promoted by the government through a number of measures, among which the establishment of foreign trade barriers and repression of alternative communication platforms (Kneuer & Demmelhuber, 2015: 15), which could be seen as the main constraints in the development of the Russian economy and mass media, respectively.

Media autocracy in Russia has been formed by two processes: commercialisation and concentration of the Russian media in the 1990-s, and strengthening position of state-owned or loyal to the government media in the 2000-s. The commercialisation of the post-Soviet media industry was initiated and realised by the most powerful financial and industrial groups (conglomerates) owned by oligarchs, who captured the main position in the Russian media market in the end of the 1990-s. In the concentration process these groups have formed their own media empires, different in the form of ownership (Smirnov, 2006). Among commercial (or private) media holdings, like "Prof-Media", and state-owned, like VGTRK or media group of the Moscow government, the mixed forms of ownership became mainly established in the media market, like "Media-Most", "Gazprom-Media", AFK "Sistema". The mixed forms imply parallel financing of the media by the state and commercial companies. Consequently, the concentration of media companies diminished the number of independent media (Smirnov, 2006). Trying to make a commercial profit and ignoring the standards of Russian information law, the Russian media industry of the 1990-s has negatively affected the journalism as a social institute, and that has led to shrinking of platforms for social dialogue and social control, and transformation of media agenda (Ivanitskiy, 2011). According to the level of media freedom indexed by Reporters Without Borders (2015), Russia has one of the lowest positions (152 of 180 countries).

Starting from the summer of 1999 before the parliament and president elections the media landscape has been considerably changed, when Ministry of Press has abolished the licence of a mixed-owned "Media-Most", which was the beginning of gradual shifts in terms of state regulation of the media industry and 'governmentalisation' of several media companies. As a result, the mixed forms of media empires, dependent on the state financing, have become loyal to government. In the last 15 years the media has been mainly concentrated in the hands of government or business aligned with government, which reveals a new form of media concentration (Super, 2015). State regulation of the mass media system has disturbed the emergence of public media, which could balance the commercial and state media and build the dialogue between the government and the society (Eremin, 2011).

In the 2000-s the state policy towards the Russian mass media has gone through substantial transformations: direct financial state support of the media and tax subsidies were abolished, subsidies on subscription were restricted, new legislation acts to constrain media freedom were adopted (e.g., so called anti-terrorism and anti-extremism laws). From 2016 foreign ownership, previously an important investment source, has to be limited to less than 20% of total shares. These measures represent the form of indirect state control over the media. Besides, the state control over

the content of the Russian media has been achieved by means of contracts payed by the government to the media sources for the information support of their policies. Such a commercialized interaction between media and government on federal and regional levels on the contract basis implies coverage of what the government considers important, and is perceived by journalists as a medium of control over the editor policy and the instrument of censorship (Schepilova & Buryanova, 2014).

Under this governmental constraints the Russian media landscape (Figure 6) is divided between the state-owned and commercial media. The majority of commercial media are state-aligned; the independent media have a minor position in the landscape, and are mainly represented by quality newspapers for business community. The independent commercial media have low circulation, and are challenged to survive and maintain the independence because of advertising slowdown and restrictions on foreign ownership.

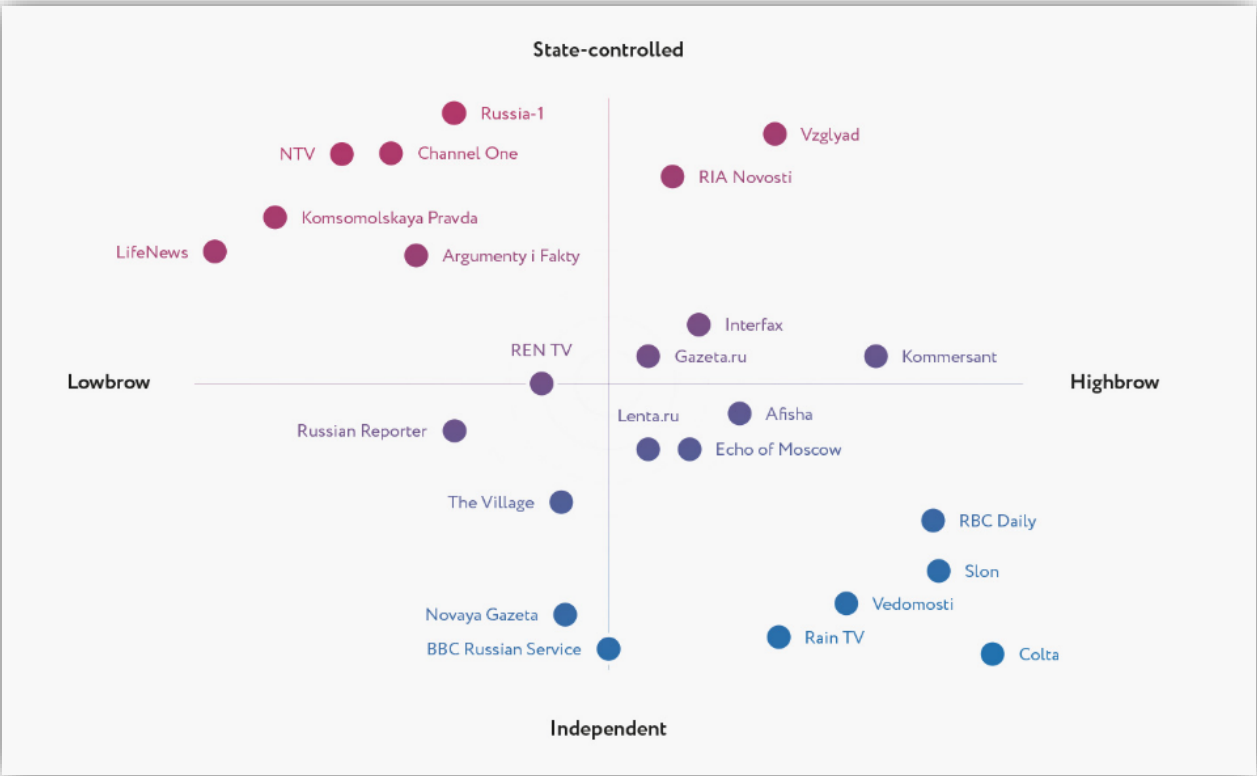


Figure 6. Russian media landscape (Beard et al., 2014).

The recent trends in transformation of the media landscape have also affected the three most prominent independent business dailies aimed to provide the business audience with economic and financial information: “Kommersant”, “Vedomosti” and “RBC daily”. The first one is the property of a loyal to the government, metal industry oligarch Alisher Usmanov, who fired the editor of the weekly Kommersant Vlast (2011) for the article with critics of parliamentary elections, and therefore was accused of censorship. The second one, owned by foreign companies Dow Jones, Financial Times Group and Finnish Sanoma, has been completely sold in November 2015 to Russian businessman, the former CEO of “Kommersant” Dem’an Kudryavtsev. The president of the third newspaper “RBC daily” (a part of mediaholding RBC), a Dutch businessman Derk Sauer, has strengthened the position of the newspaper in the market of business media in the last two years, but had to resign in August 2015 to stop the pro-governmental accusations of his negative foreign influence (Smeets, 2015). According to



these trends, the business dailies will be challenged to make profit and maintain independent editor policy.

**Summary:** The concentration processes and the increasing regulating role of government seem to be similar for both, the Russian mass media and the Russian dairy industry, an important sector in Russian agriculture and economy. They are revealed in the emergence of state-owned or aligned mediaholdings on the one side, and agroholdings dependent on the state support and protectionism, - on the other.

The state policy of import substitution, aimed to provide food security, protect the domestic producer while indirectly regain the state control over the economic transactions, has been implemented since 2000 and became more salient after the reciprocal sanctions and the food embargo in August 2014. Despite the economic incentives throughout the 2000-s to support mainly the large dairy companies, the dairy sector could not reach sufficient dairy procurement. The policy after the food ban has substantially affected the import-dependent dairy sector, as it has already led to controversial outcomes for the dairy producers and consumers. In situation of insufficient dairy consumption the small dairy farmers try to take advantage of the policy, and procure consumers with local dairy products.

The positive and negative changes in the dairy sector after the food ban require interpretation to help the producers and consumers adapt to these changes and contribute to the development of the sector. In terms of shrinking media freedom and increasing media autocracy, accompanied with decrease of independent financing sources, the Russian independent business newspapers represent a small, but more or less trustworthy arena that could provide the actors of the dairy sector and the audience with a diverse interpretation of the arising controversial issues (as they mainly refer to economic news) such as foreign investment outflows, insufficient state subsidies, quality decline of milk and dairy products, opposed to new initiatives of the dairy producers and dairy production increase.

## Chapter 3. Conceptual framework for the media analysis.

This chapter provides the theoretical concepts with which the media analysis is addressed and the general and specific research questions are operationalised.

### 3.1. Media framing and interaction of media frames.

The representation of the dairy policy in Russian media will be explored in this study through the concept of media framing, because it gives an opportunity to reveal the difference in the interpretation across the newspapers and over time.

Media framing studies have become a substantive research branch (Matthes, 2009) where media framing is seen as a “process by which a communication source, such as a news organization, defines and constructs a political issue or public controversy” (Nelson et al., 1997). The way of selecting the certain aspects of the perceived reality and making them more evident or *salient* while omitting the others provides the media source with the power of framing (Entman, 1993: 52, 54). The media make the constructed aspect of reality salient (more noticeable, meaningful and memorable to the audience) by placement, repetition of certain information and its reconnection with culturally familiar symbols (Entman, 1993: 53).

Several insights from the framing theory can help to unfold the concept of media framing with regard to the controversies of the Russian dairy policy.

Benford & Snow (2000), who use the concept of framing for better understanding of social movements dynamics, approach framing as a dynamic and evolving meaning construction process that implies *agency* and *contention* at the level of reality construction (Benford & Snow, 2000: 614). This means that the power of meaning construction is able to bring changes into reality due to framing, when pro and contra ideas encounter each other and mobilise the targeted audience.

Benford & Snow (2000) understand framing as discursive, strategic and contested processes according to the framing function. Strategic framing, i.e. deliberative, utilitarian, and goal oriented (Benford & Snow, 2000: 624), is described as alignment processes, while contested framing is presented as the processes that implies contestation of a certain idea, or counterframing. “The frames that govern our interpretive capacities for the generation of meaning are not fixed, but are contested by collectives that congregate to promote or “subsidize” a specific frame perspective” (Hayden, 2007: 10). On this basis I assume that strategic media framing would imply both alignment of certain frames and discrepancy between them, embodied in opposing framing activity, or counterframing (Benford & Snow, 2000: 617).

‘The continuum of frame contestation’, suggested by Entman (2003), goes further in the explanation of media framing processes. Frame parity appears, when two (or more) interpretations get equal influence, and when the media provide a counterframe “that puts together a complete alternative narrative, a tale of problem, cause, remedy, and moral judgement” that has the same resonance as the dominant frame (Entman, 2003: 418). If frame contests fail to reach frame parity, the contests would stay at the level of contestation, or become dominant by removing the leading frame, or would be dropped out of media coverage by a dominant frame over time. The research was mostly developed for a free press system (particularly in the US), and the dynamics might differ in a more controlled and censored press system.

In terms of social movements “frames are developed and deployed to achieve a specific purpose – to recruit new members, to mobilize adherents, to acquire resources” (Benford & Snow, 2000: 624). Nonetheless, not only social movements as self-organised formations, and policy-makers are

engaged in the strategic process of ideas mobilisation. Barber & Axinn (2004) revealed, for example, that the power of mass media to promote ideas can really lead to social change (from the example of fertility limitation in rural Nepal). Thus framing is also a strategic process for media organisations as they strategically, or purposefully, use framing to make certain issues or events more salient for the ideas mobilisation.

Strategic framing process in media production is revealed in the editorial line (editorial policy) of a news organisation, i.e. a guideline or code of conduct which prescribes standards and requirements, sets ethical and other constraints in the journalist work of selection, analysis and interpretation of the information obtained from the trustworthy sources (e.g., The Guardian's Editorial Code, The Guardian, 2015). Interpretation (framing, meaning construction) is led by the editorial line: it depends on the data that a media organisation is able to discover, the sources of information it relies on, financial resources and time available to deliver and interpret the required data. Prioritization of events, or agenda-setting, and representation of the reality aspects according to editorial policy creates media bias.

In contrast with social movements and policy-makers, that try to articulate issue attributes for ideas mobilization, media sources try to catch the attention of the audience and increase incomes by determining the news value of an issue (Feindt & Kleinschmit, 2011: 189). The following analytical categories will be helpful in understanding of media framing:

- **Frame setting**, “concerned with the salience of issue attributes” (Scheufele, 1999: 116), i.e. prioritization and promotion of a specific issue aspects versus undermining or omitting the others (Entman, 1999);
- **Standing**, or frequency of the speakers' media appearance (Feindt & Kleinschmit, 2011);
- **Interplay of issues** (Stoep, van der & Aarts, 2011), revealed in their alignment or discrepancy (Benford & Snow, 2000); and articulated by frame parity, dominance or contestation (Entman, 2003).

The analysis of ‘meaning construction’ and ‘mobilisation of ideas’ implied by ‘strategic framing’ can help to explain the prevalence of certain media frames regarding the dominance of governmental media in Russia. This study will try to reconstruct the standing of actors, prioritization and interaction of media frames as a response to the controversies in the Russian dairy policy after the reciprocal sanctions.

### 3.2. Media framing in Russia.

Selection and salience of certain issues and events depends not only on the media organisation. Kostadinova and Dimitrova (2012) showed, that the political and media systems, where the media organisations operate, are the main determinants of media framing. On this basis the scholars defined at least three factors, that influence the media framing of issues or events: *individual-level factors* (personal professional features of a journalist), *organizational factors* (type of media, editor policy and reporting conventions) and *system-level factors* (media, political and electoral system). In terms of individual-level factors, the media framing can be influenced by personal professional features of journalists, i.e. their ideological or political orientations, system of values, knowledge background, personal qualities and life experience. In terms of organizational factors, the media coverage can differ in the depth of analysis and audience size. In terms of system-level factors, the media framing can diverge due to the different forms of ownership.

The type of a political regime has impact on the media content, as Whitten-Woodring (2009) and Stier (2015) proved in their comparative analyses of media freedom, or free flows of information, in

democracies and autocracies. “The most illiberal media can be found in communist ideocracies, where the ruling party holds a communication monopoly”, as Stier concluded (2015: 1273). Unfortunately the framing studies in post-communist countries still do not exist, as Kostadinova and Dimitrova (2012: 172) stated. Their study on media framing of economic news in Bulgaria is the first research of post-communist countries, although the findings consider media coverage in a democratic system.

Nonetheless, there is a narrow layer of studies comparing the media framing in democratic countries and in Russia, with regard to its autocratic regime type. For example Lazitski (2014) found out that television framing of presidential election campaigns of 2012 in Russia and United States is based on similar ‘media endarkenment’ technics, such as omission, intimidation, spinning and twisting, entertainment, simplification, and construction of a false reality. The main difference is that media coverage in US is “counterbalanced by the coexistence of liberal and conservative TV channels” (“probably to keep up appearances of democracy” (922), as the author notes), “unlike in Russia where networks establish only one position” (923). Another survey shows the differences in the establishment of alternative viewpoints (or ‘deliberativeness’) in TV news coverage across three types of democracy: a defective one in Russia, a power-sharing one in Germany and a power-concentrating one in the US (Wessler & Rinke, 2014); where the Russian media coverage turned out to be less deliberative.

At the same time there is a raising number of studies devoted to the media coverage of different spheres in the Russian socio-political reality. The common thread in these studies is that the media sources for data collection are mainly chosen with regard to the division of Russian media into state-owned / aligned and independent / oppositional media. For example, in the study of Dubrovskaya et al. (2015), that explored difference in the coverage of a governmental daily versus an oppositional newspaper, the media representation of the judicial power appeared to be consistent with a newspaper’s ideology. The recent changes in migration policy are examined by Tolz and Harding (2014) in the coverage of state-aligned broadcasters, who represented “the Kremlin-endorsed interpretation of Russia’s interethnic relations” (457). The coverage of the climate change issues (Poberezhskaya, 2015), although observed in the newspapers with various ownership structures and advertising policies, did not show substantial differences in coverage across the newspapers, but revealed “media dependence on ‘Russian officials’ as sources of information” (106) instead. There are no studies found (including the digital archive of Russian State Library) concerning the media coverage or framing of the Russian agri-food industry or any sector of its sub-sectors.

Considering the limited media freedom in Russia, the major interpretation of the potentially contentious dairy policy after the ‘reciprocal sanctions’ can be expected to be dominated by the state media, promoting the position of the authorities and state-aligned opinion leaders. Because of a stronger position of pro-governmental media in Russia, there is more one-sided arena for public discussion and less space for interpretation (Dzialoshinskiy, 2015: 232), so that “the authorities interpret themselves through the mass media” (Garbuznyak, 2015). Although the Russian independent quality press is in minority compared to the state-owned/aligned media, it is able to produce a clearly articulated and independent interpretation of events and issues, (alternative to the official position), that can temporally dominate in the media space (Garbuznyak, 2015). The best example is the social anti-corruption campaign called ‘pekhting’ highlighted by the Russian media in February – March 2013, where the Russian quality press took the leading position in interpretation, as it critically addressed the official data by publishing the evidence of corruption from alternative sources (Garbuznyak, 2013).

### 3.3. Operationalisation of the research questions.

In the situation of a changing media landscape and limited press freedom, the Russian media have less opportunity to represent the contested issues of the dairy sector after the food ban, and thus to signal the policy controversy and raise a public discussion. With regard to system-level factors (Kostadinova & Dimitrova, 2012), I assume that the choice and the salience of issues, events and speakers in media framing of the recent Russian dairy policy can differ in the newspapers with different forms of ownership (state-owned *RG*, state-aligned *Izvestia*, and independent *RBC daily*). The state-owned or aligned newspapers are assumed to be less critical to the policy decisions and issues in the Russian dairy sector.

Any statement of an actor consists of all his utterances and represents a frame aspect, that is a building element, which influences the emergence and diffusion of concrete media frames as “the most salient clusters of messages” (Entman, 1993: 57), or meaning constructions which can influence the audience minds. To analyse the salience of certain issues and speakers in media texts, this study will primarily apply generic frames, which offer a greater internal validity than issue-specific frames (Matthes, 2009). The scholars Semetko & Valkenburg (2000) identified 5 types of generic frames, frequently applied in media framing studies: attribution of responsibility, conflict, human interest, economic consequences and morality frames. Actors who speak on issues articulate responsibilities to other stakeholders by establishing causal relationships, and these causal attributions indicate core framing tasks: culprits are indicators of diagnostic framing, problem solvers – of prognostic framing, and victims – of motivational framing (Benford & Snow, 2000; Feindt & Kleinschmit, 2011). Identification of these attributions can help to find out how the responsibilities for Russian dairy policy issues (their causes, consequences and possible solutions) were represented in the media.

With regard to **the first research question** “*What is the difference between generic frames of the recent Russian dairy policy in the Russian newspapers with different forms of ownership?*” this study will try to find the differences in the articulation of generic frames within each newspaper and across them.

**The second research question** “*What kind of issue-specific frames can be found in the different newspapers?*” is aimed to analyse the media frames, i.e. the interpretations of the recent Russian dairy policy articulated by the speakers in their statements, with regard to the issues and events which unfolded after the food embargo. Identification of media frames with regard to issues and events caused by the dairy policy after the ‘reciprocal sanctions’ helps to reconstruct a timeline – to trace what kind of frame aspects, when and in what newspaper became salient, and shaped the statements into a concrete media frame. This analysis can reveal certain patterns in media frames within each newspaper and across them.

The difference in media framing depends also on the appearance of speakers in the media, who gain ‘standing’ by defining, explaining or supporting concrete issues or events. The concept of standing reflects what kind of speakers are mainly selected and allowed to be voiced by a concrete media source. Thus, “standing can serve as an indicator of perceived power” (Feindt & Kleinschmit, 2011: 189), and helps to understand who controls the framing of issues (Entman, 1993: 57). With respect to **the third research question** “*What kinds of speakers appear in the different newspapers, and are there any dominant types of speakers?*” this study will try to reveal the frequency of media appearance and prevalence of certain speakers involved in the media framing of the dairy policy after the sanctions.

As Entman (1993) points out, the media frames register the identities of the actors. In other words, the speakers in media texts represent their own identities. Considering the wide variety of

stakeholders in the Russian dairy sector, it is interesting to observe, what kind of identities mainly appear and prevail in the research sample. During the pre-screening of the articles the identities are revealed according to the stakeholders variety: politicians, journalists, state representatives (authorities), dairy farmers, dairy cooperatives, dairy agroholdings, vending companies (retailers), associations, banks, health care organisations, scientists, consultancy agencies, environmentalists or NGO's, local people, civil society.

Due to the timeline any development, i.e. any kinds of shifts and transformations (i.e. slight and substantial changes) in the newspaper framing of the policy can be revealed. According to Fishman (1977), a frame can be picked up by another media news wave. This implies that the meaning produced by a media frame on one issue or event, referred to the recent dairy policy, can be later 'awaked' by another issue, event or new data, attributed and reproduced by the speakers of the same or another media, and even transformed into a new media frame. This assumption leads to **the fourth research question** "*Did the media frames of the recent Russian dairy policy shift over time?*"

The salience of a certain issue, event or their aspects can be also produced in the interaction of media texts (Entman, 1993: 53). Such an interaction can occur when media frames counter or align with each other within one newspaper or across them. Clearly articulated alignment of frames or counter-framing could reveal the interaction of media frames, and which newspaper has a leading position in this frame interaction. The frame interaction can indicate the resonance of certain frames, and thus can enter or activate public discussion, which is important in terms of limited press freedom. This can be observed in the chosen newspapers to answer **the fifth research question** "*Is there any frame interaction within or across the different newspapers?*".

Consequently, the findings obtained by the quantitative and qualitative analyses need to be evaluated. Firstly, I will compare the developments and issues in the Russian dairy sector with the representation of these issues in the Russian media, and possibly reveal the bias between them by assessing if and how the media address these issues. Particularly, the disruptions or inconsistencies in the media framing of the policy need to be emphasised. The conclusions will form the answer to **the sixth research question** "*How do the media frames relate to the developments and issues in the dairy sector?*".

Secondly, I will reflect on how the state of affairs in the Russian dairy sector is represented in the Russian newspapers to answer **the seventh research question** "*How can this media framing be explained?*". Therefore I will shortly evaluate how the forms of ownership (in terms of system-level factors) influence media framing of the Russian dairy policy, e.g., how generic and issue-specific frames were attributed and became salient across time and newspapers, according to the forms of ownership; what kind of speakers dominated and could influence the potential shifts in the newspapers' framing and interplay of the key media frames within the established timeline; and what kind of consequences this media framing of the Russian dairy policy might induce to the dairy sector. The recommendations will focus on how media framing of the recent dairy policy could help to improve the sector.

**Summary:** The concept of media framing can help to find the differences in the interpretation of the Russian dairy policy across time, within each newspaper and across them. Framing is understood by the scholars as a dynamic process of reality construction for ideas mobilisation that implies agency and contention. *Strategic framing* is revealed when the journalists select and prioritise the issues according to the editorial policy. Media framing includes **frame setting, standing and interplay of issues**. In other words, media framing concerns the speakers who articulate the issues, what issue

aspects are articulated, and how these issue aspects are interconnected (counter, dominate or align with each other).

With regard to media autocracy, media framing in Russia is dominated by one-sided interpretation of reality, and there is a less opportunity for the Russian media to represent the contested issues of the Russian dairy sector after the reciprocal sanctions, and thus to signal the policy controversy and raise a public discussion. Nonetheless, the independent quality media (mainly press) try to gain the space by establishing the evidence from alternative information sources.

To analyse the media framing of the Russian dairy policy after the food embargo, the main concepts were operationalised into seven specific research questions, aimed to uncover the difference between media frames in the newspapers with regard to the forms of ownership. The methods of data collection and analysis are explained in the next chapter.

## Chapter 4. Research methodology.

This chapter highlights the major methodological considerations on data collection and analysis.

The thesis represents an interdisciplinary study where the knowledge from different fields in the social sciences is required, such as studies of agricultural policies in countries with former state-controlled economies (with a focus on the Russian dairy sector), media and communication studies. Therefore the literature on framing theory and on the Russian dairy policy, dairy sector and media system is reviewed. On the basis of an elaborate conceptual framework a framing analysis of Russian newspaper articles is executed.

### *Data collection*

The data for empirical research constitutes the articles on the Russian dairy policy, derived from three Russian daily national business newspapers. The business newspapers are chosen as they highlight a wide range of economic news, and the issues and events in the dairy sector are expected to be mainly related to economic developments.

*Rossiyskaja gazeta (RG)*, a state-owned quality daily, is an official newspaper of the Russian government with the highest circulation among Russian business dailies: the average number of readers (AIR) is 960.800 people, or 1.6% of the market, according to TNS Russia National Readership Survey in March – July 2015 (TNS Russia, 2015).

*Izvestia*, a respected Soviet brand, is since 2011 a state-controlled competitor to business newspapers, a daily broadsheet of National Media Group. The paper is partly owned by the structures of billionaire businessman and financier Yuri Kovalchuk, Chairman of the Board of Rossiya Bank, one of the largest in Russia, and a personal friend and banker of Putin; and partly – by editor-in-chief Aram Gabrelyanov who claimed that his newspaper has three forbidden topics: the president, the prime minister, and the patriarch (Khvostunova, 2013). *Izvestia* is considered to be mouthpiece for the secret services (Bidder & Schepp, 2015) and has a high circulation of 312.000 AIR, 0.5% (TNS Russia, 2015).

*RBC Daily* is a business quality daily of the RBC Group (RosBusinessConsulting), a business-focused media consortium privately owned by Russian tycoon Michail Prokhorov, who recently took the role of constructive opposition to the Kremlin: in 2012 he ran as an independent candidate for president, and now he is creating a party the Civic Platform and considers himself an alternative to the current regime, without challenging it (Soldak, 2013). The annual report 2013 of the newspaper claims the independence of the journalists' team and the editor policy from any business or political interests of the owner (RBC Annual report, 2014). The circulation of the newspaper has one of the highest positions in the niche of business quality newspapers: 261.400 AIR, or 0.4% (TNS Russia, 2015).

The three business newspapers were chosen due to the system-level parameters, particularly due to the difference in the form of ownership: state-owned, state-aligned and independent newspapers. Next to that I am particularly interested in textually articulated media frames, as only the Russian state-owned audio-visual business media have a national coverage, that could make the study less reliable.

All the articles are derived from the newspapers' digital archives. Thus, the sample was drawn by using search functions on the websites of the chosen newspapers, by means of selection of digital versions of articles on the Russian dairy policy. The keywords searched for in the articles and used to generate the sample were: "dairy sector" and "milk production" in combination with words "sanctions" and "import substitution" (in Russian: «молочная отрасль», «молочная продукция»,



«санкции», «импортозамещение»). The articles are added to the sample if they include more than one paragraph on the dairy policy. The sample size includes 140 newspaper articles.

For the media framing analysis the following time frame was chosen: 1 July 2014 – 31 October 2015 (approximately one month before the reciprocal sanctions and three months after the start of import food destruction). The framing analysis can help to reveal any changes in media attention and compare media frames across time and across newspapers. Research unit in this study is any statement articulated by any speaker in the sample, i.e. the articles that met the selecting criteria.

### *Data analysis*

Each of the articles was first derived from the newspapers digital archives and copy pasted into a separate Word document, the title of which included the date of publication and the number according to the order of its appearance. The articles of each newspaper were organised in three maps. Hereafter, the articles of each newspaper were uploaded into three hermeneutic units of a software programme Atlas.ti, that is used to facilitate a qualitative data analysis.

The elements of the conceptual framework formed the basis for the data analysis. The analysis of articles consisted of deductive and inductive coding. The generic frames (responsibility, economic consequences, morality, conflict and human interest) were coded deductively. The responsibility frame was identified in cases when the speakers were represented as victims, culprits or problem solvers, as it is described in the studies of Benford & Snow (2000) and Feindt & Kleinschmit (2011). The frame of economic consequences was identified as in the study of Kostadinova & Dimitrova (2012), that is any economic impact of the policy on the dairy sector and its stakeholders. The human interest frame was defined according to the presence of curiosities that engage the reader directly with personal accounts of events (Kostadinova & Dimitrova, 2012). The conflict frame was found in cases when conflict solution or conflict of interests were defined in a specific context. The morality frame was expected to be identified in the statements that articulate morality issues, such as dignity, respect, feeling of guilty and others. The issue-specific frames, speakers and their identities, metaphors were extracted inductively along with registration of issues and events that helped to reconstruct the timeline.

With regard to agency and contention implied by framing in terms of Benford & Snow (2000), generic and issue-specific frames and metaphors were distinguished according to the pole of their representation in the articles, as supporting or contesting the official interpretation of the policy, i.e. *pro-* and *contra-governmental poles*, and as *politically neutral* in case when none of poles is articulated.

First, the sample of Izvestia was coded: the generic frames were found along with inductively extracted issue-specific frames, speakers and their identities, metaphors. These were defined according to the poles of utterances. Besides that, the issues were registered. After that, the coding process was repeated two times for the self-control of the procedure, and to refine and aggregate initial, inductively found, codes. This way, several issue-specific frames were inductively revealed: innovation transfer, foreign investment and state control that consists of product quality, consumer and domestic producer support. A wide range of the speakers' identities was merged into four main groups: officials (or authorities), the dairy sector, science and associations/organisations. The analysis was followed by creating outputs for each code (generic and issue-specific frames, for speakers and metaphors). Then the outputs were exported into Word documents with the help of search function in Code Manager. The documents on each output showed codes connected to certain quotes, according to the date of their appearance that was in the title of each code. Then the codes were analysed quantitatively, and the frequency of the frames, speakers and metaphors was represented

in the tables. Lastly, the patterns in Izvestia framing were found and interpreted as the newspaper's strategies. At the example of Izvestia coding and analysis procedure, the samples of RG and RBC daily were iteratively coded and analysed. Lastly, the codes were compared within each newspaper and across them to evaluate differences and similarities, and to draw the conclusions.

**Summary:** The chapter opens with the description of five Russian national dailies, selected for the data collection according to the form of ownership and level of specialisation. The research sample is composed of the articles from the newspapers' digital archives according to the keywords (referred to import substitution and the dairy industry), the selecting criteria and the time frame.

The media framing of the recent Russian dairy policy is assessed by means of a qualitative data analysis, facilitated by a software programme Atlas.ti. The analysis goes through several steps: generate and merge the codes on the basis of deductive (by relating the raw data with generic frames) and inductive analyses (by coding of frames, issues and events, speakers and their professions, and metaphors/symbols *from scratch*); reflect on the analyses in memos and comments; interpret the codes by linking them into networks and tracing the patterns.

This procedure relates to research objective unfolded in specific research questions. The tool allows to find out the frequency of generic frames, the speakers' appearance and their professions, and compare them across time and newspaper type. Besides it helps to uncover what kind of media frames are articulated by the speakers in their statements within the timeline; how these media frames shifted and linked to each other across time and newspaper type. The tool facilitates also the process of interpretation to draw the conclusions.

## Chapter 5. Media framing of the Russian dairy policy after the reciprocal sanctions.

### 5.1. Framing analysis of the Russian dairy policy in RG.

#### *Coverage dynamics and issues overview*

The sample of 107 RG (Rossijskaja gazeta) articles has the peaks of coverage in July and August 2014, before and right after the sanctions (13 articles each month), in September 2014, February and June 2015 (8 articles each month), followed by a certain increase in September 2015 (11). A huge sample size and rather extended size of the most articles show a greater attention of RG to the dairy sector after the recent policy change, compared to Ivestia and RBC daily. Consequently, the range of issues and events covered by RG is also higher.

Throughout the observed period there is a gradual transition from external issues to the domestic ones. Before the sanctions such external problems as the increase of the dairy imports and cheese counterfeit from Ukraine were covered; although some domestic problems were also raised like droughts and lack of feed for the dairy livestock. When the imports were banned, RG gave a more detailed overview of the problems inside the Russian dairy sector: the raw milk deficiency, its low quality, and its price decline despite the season of high yields (August 2014, May and June 2015), prices increase on the dairy products (from October 2014) and cows number decline (December 2014).

The need to increase dairy production and therefore to get state subsidies (restricted after WTO accession) are the main issues covered by RG throughout the whole observed period. The issues differ geographically: for some regions the issue of raw milk deficiency is highly articulated (e.g., in Crimea, Smolensk, Ural, Far East), for others – milk surplus (overproduction) and lack of processing companies (e.g., in Kostroma, Altaj). After the sanctions the problem of the dairy sector's backwardness was also raised (e.g., old equipment, expensive energy), and the interest in new technology has been actualised.

Within the observation period the issue of the dairy imports quality control (to stop counterfeit dairy imports, i.e. with palm oil or antibiotics content) has been transformed into the issue of a new regulation – labelling of domestic and imported dairy products with palm oil content (September and October 2015). The need to control domestic dairy production has become inevitable after Russia was announced as the leader in palm oil import that was used to increase the dairy production (July 2015), after the food destruction to eliminate illegal imports (August 2015); and after the VPSS report (the Federal Service for Veterinary and Phytosanitary Supervision) on high level of domestic cheese counterfeit (October 2015).

#### *Generic frames*

In this sample 84 generic frames were coded (Table 1). The responsibility frame (55) dominates in the whole RG coverage of the dairy policy after the food ban, compared to rather low articulation of conflict (16), economic consequences (10) and insignificant representation of human interest (3). The frame of **responsibility** in this sample shows that the speakers represented themselves and others as culprits, victims, or problem solvers mainly in politically neutral (31) and contra-governmental (15) statements (Table 1 and 2). The federal and local authorities are almost equally represented as problem solvers (7) in pro-governmental statements, and as culprits in contra-governmental utterances (8), e.g., in the case when local authorities set barriers to start a new dairy farm: *“We have been going through the chain of command for two years, and there is no end to this outrage!*

The farmer bought the land on his own money, demands nothing, except – not to disturb him. Instead, local officials lead him around” (26-08-15).

<b>Generic frames</b>	<b>Pro-gvt.</b>	<b>Contra-gvt.</b>	<b>Pol. neutral</b>	<b>Total</b>
<i>Responsibility</i>	9	15	31	55
<i>Conflict</i>	1	7	8	16
<i>Economic consequences</i>	2		8	10
<i>Human interest</i>			3	3
<b>Total</b>	12	22	50	<b>84</b>

Table 1. Frequency of generic frames in RG, 1 July 2014 – 31 October 2015.

Overall the dairy companies are represented as the main culprits (13) and thus responsible for decrease of the dairy product quality: “The processing companies are not quite fair to the milk producers: the more subsidy from the budget they get, the lower price on milk they set” (30-04-15). Over time the framing of culprits has shifted from foreign dairy companies to the domestic ones: both were represented as responsible for adding palm oil in the dairy without reporting on the package. “Dishonest suppliers of cheese - mostly Ukrainian - have established a smuggling transfer of “pseudocheeses” to Russia in response to the ban. Cheese products produced using palm oil, are registered at the border as commodities that do not belong to the category of milk. And inside the country they are sold as cheese” (08-07-14). The retailers are mainly accused for setting up too high prices on the dairy products.

Surprisingly, in the end of the observation period the consumers were firstly represented by officials as problem solvers (“The consumer demand would regulate the market”, 28-09-15), and later as culprits, who have to be more attentive to the product quality and check the information on the package: “The consumers themselves contribute to the reduction of product quality. Aimed to save money, they buy cheaper products in retail outlets, that even do not have a signboard” (20-10-15).

	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Problem solvers</b>	<b>Culprits</b>	<b>Victims</b>	<b>Total</b>
<i>Local authorities</i>	4	4			15
<i>Federal authorities</i>	3	4			
<i>Dairy producers and associations</i>	2		13	2	17
<i>Retailers</i>			5		5
<i>Consumers</i>	2		1		3
<b>Total</b>	11	11	27	2	<b>40</b>

Table 2. Frequency of responsibility framing by the speakers in RG, 1 July 2014 – 31 October 2015.

The role of victims is articulated in politically neutral statements twice – in relation to a vulnerable position of domestic dairy producers in the market: “Local producers are pushed aside by aggressive competitors from neighbouring regions and Belarus” (19-08-14). With regard to the problem of raising prices on the dairy, the consumers were expected to be represented as victims as well. However, RG highlights the link between the issue and the consumers politically neutrally, by setting

consumers into active position, as in this example: *“Some consumers worry that (...) embargo may negatively affect their wallets”* (12-08-14).

**Conflict** frame (16) reflects in this sample the clash of interests between officials, dairy producers, consumers and various associations around the dairy sector. The frame is represented in almost equal number of politically neutral (8) and contra-governmental statements (7). The only one pro-governmental statement reflects the conflict solution by local authorities: *“Once they [Tumen dairy factories] took large loans, and now the officials help them to pay the debts”* (22-01-15).

Throughout the observation period politically neutral statements reflected the uncompetitiveness of domestic dairy products towards the cheaper imports (example above: 19-08-14). The tension between domestic producers and foreign rivals has been transformed into politically neutral representation of the dairy sector’s disagreement with the state regulations, such as intention to adopt the mechanism of fixed purchase prices on milk, that would restrict the competitiveness (2-06-15); and unavailability of the declared state subsidies for small farmers: *“State support is not available to most of them, because the criteria of the program are impossible to fulfil”* (26-08-14).

The confrontation takes also place when officials and consumers counter one another. First it was represented politically neutrally, in a form of conflict refutation by officials: *“The problem of goods deficit is fictional”* (12-08-14), and later in contra-governmental utterances by refutation of the official data: *“The data of the official monitoring of prices are contrary to the information of public observers”* (23-09-14); *“Why the officials do not hear indignant consumers”* (11-09-15). Although contra-governmental statements increased in the end of the observation period, they were counterbalanced by politically neutral ones in the total count, and therefore have less impact on the newspaper’s framing process.

Compared to the frames of responsibility and conflict, **economic consequences** (10) are mainly politically neutrally and sparsely articulated, despite the issues of high importance that they represent, such as prices increase on the dairy. By representing negative economic trends *politically neutrally*, the newspaper inclines to avoid evaluation of them: *“According to statistics, consumer prices on almost all dairy products gradually grew since the beginning of the year, did not stop and not rolled back even in the summer, in the peak of raw milk production”* (12-08-14).

Besides that, the frame of economic consequences tends to align with other frames, e.g., with the responsibility frame, like in this pro-governmental statement: *“Kostroma became one of the first Russian regions, whose government officially announced the actual premises of higher prices for meat and dairy products. At the same time it proposed a number of emergency measures to stabilize the market”* (23-09-14). In this case the officials take on the responsibility to represent the problem and take preventive measures against negative economic consequences; however there are no articles in this sample reporting on how these measures were implemented.

The **human interest** frame (3) is the least articulated, and is expressed in politically neutral mentioning of various curiosities like local soft cheese made for spacemen (17-05-15), dairy beauty salon (29-08-15); or getting virtual citizenship of the Dairy land by drinking a glass of milk at the dairy festival (13-08-14).

### *Issue-specific frames*

In the RG sample 117 statements with inductively found frames were coded (Table 3). Politically neutral statements dominate throughout the coverage, and are enforced by pro-governmental statements in the frames of **self-sufficiency**, **product quality** and **domestic producer support**. The

number of contra-governmental utterances which are supposed to counter official interpretation of import substitution policy, is rather low, and cannot have a significant influence on official interpretations.

The frame of **self-sufficiency** implies the expression of competitiveness of the Russian dairy production and successful transition to import substitution. Politically neutral statements prevail in the total count and are almost not undermined by contra-governmental statements throughout the observation period. Pro-governmental statements align with the politically neutral ones. For example, a politically neutral expression “*Russian dairy market is 95% self-sufficient*” (12-08-14) aligns with a pro-gvt. statement: “*The reciprocal restrictions set by Russian government on food imports from the leading European countries give a chance to raise the Russian agricultural production (...) to become a huge exporter of agricultural products, as it had been before*” (28-08-14). Such statements create the image of prosperity and represent the speakers’ expectations, that are however not based on facts.

Another example: a politically neutral expression “*Russian companies cannot supply the consumer with cheese, entirely made from domestic ingredients*” (17-03-15) could be countered by contra-governmental statements that domestic dairy producers, not the imports, are those who are substituted: “*The process of substitution of Smolensk producers*” (05-09-14), and that import substitution is not feasible: “*The agricultural program of import substitution presumes that import dependence of domestic food market from milk and the dairy products will decrease from 23.6 to 16.6%. But in this situation it is not possible to reach these indicators*” (24-03-15). However, contra-gvt. utterances (2) are too few to counter the pro-gvt. statements in the self-sufficiency frame (22).

<b>Issue-specific frames</b>	<b>Pro-gvt.</b>	<b>Contra-gvt.</b>	<b>Pol. neutral</b>	<b>Total</b>
<i>Self-sufficiency</i>	8	2	12	22
<i>Innovation transfer</i>	1		11	12
<i>Dairy sector cooperation</i>	2	1	7	10
<i>Production deficiency</i>		1	7	8
<i>Foreign investment</i>			2	2
<b>State control:</b>				
<i>Product quality</i>	6		17	23
<i>Domestic producer support</i>	11	8	15	34
<i>Consumer support</i>	2		4	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>117</b>

*Table 3. Frequency of issue-specific frames in RG, 1 July 2014 – 31 October 2015.*

The statements of the **innovation transfer** frame are mainly politically neutral as they try to indicate the needs and difficulties of dairy producers in adapting knowledge and technology (e.g., sowing machine, tractors, milking equipment, pipelines) from the foreign countries: Ukraine, Belarus, Germany, the Netherlands, Denmark and Iceland. Besides that, the process of innovation transfer has almost no influence from the government, and therefore is politically neutrally expressed, except

one pro-governmental utterance which assumes the main role of government in the transition to innovations: *“With the start of the national project “Development of agriculture” in our region, the transition to high-tech manufacturing has been started, but the process is not as fast as we would like”* (19-08-14). Politically neutral statements represent mainly the difficulties: e.g., to transfer a foreign milking parlour, the labour needs to learn how to apply the newest technologies: *“How can a farmer, used to work with hands, switch to work with the software and special literature?”* (21-08-14); *“This is the result of scientific work, but not of ours. The Crimea scientists look at this [foreign] technology with open eyes; before they saw it only in the picture”* (18-06-15).

The frame of **dairy sector cooperation** represents the statements that foster negotiations and agreements between milk producers, dairy processing companies and retailers. The most statements are politically neutral, they express the concern of dairy producers to get access to retail market: *“You will succeed only if you will process milk and sell the products yourself”* (14-08-14); *“The lack of direct links between dairy producers and retail chains inhibits import substitution”* (9-04-15). The role of state is reflected in two pro-governmental statements on the development of state-private partnerships in Crimea (12-02-15; 7-05-15). Only one utterance counters the officials for promoting small farming which remains unprofitable and unequal in the market: the large farmers get a higher milk price (30-04-15).

The frame of **production deficiency** reflects the utterances on various issues in the dairy production and processing such as feed and cows number decrease, too expensive maintenance of dairy cows, shortage of labour, low raw milk quality and its deficiency. Although the context of the frame is rather confrontational (e.g., compared to the self-sufficiency frame), the issues of production deficiency are articulated politically neutrally, except one contra-governmental statement which represents the discrepancy between the state goals and its real implementation: *“All rushed to “substitute the imports”, but at a price twice as high as the imports, resulting in warehouses filled with cheese before the end of the year”* (11-06-15).

The **foreign investment** frame, consisted of only two politically neutral statements, has apparently the least importance in the coverage of RG.

The frames of **state control** have a leading position in the total statements count (62 out of 117), that indicates the importance of state intervention into the dairy sector by means of policy measures such as ban and destruction of dairy imports, permissions, restrictions and fines for violation of quality demands, new labelling of the dairy with palm oil content, and state subsidies to protect producers and consumers, and guarantee the product quality.

The **product quality** frame has the highest count of politically neutral statements (17) and a relative high number of pro-governmental statements (6), which are not countered. The statements articulate mainly the controlling measures of the dairy imports without considering the domestic product quality (only from July 2015): *“We are reported about a rapid import substitution of cheese by 30%; although milk production has less than 3% increase. Question – what are these cheeses made of?”* (14-08-15).

The frame of **domestic producer support** includes the highest number of total (34) and contra-governmental statements (8). They are counterbalanced by politically neutral (15) and pro-governmental utterances (11), that assert and praise the mechanisms of state support, respectively. Very typical example of a pro-governmental statement: *“Good subsidies await those who at least do not reduce production and support high-quality products. In addition, the solid budgetary funds began to invest in the creation and development of family farms - a phenomenon relatively new to the region”* (19-08-14).

However, contra-governmental statements show the disagreement of the dairy producers on the subsidizing and protectionism measures of the state policy, that is perceived as a stumbling-stone of the Russian dairy sector development. These expressions give a considerable insight on how the state interventions were interpreted by dairy producers, and how this interpretation changed over time. Some of them are pessimistic about the subsidies: *“Working with large investors and the measures of state support to the agricultural producers has not yet helped to drastically change the situation”* (23-09-14); *“The best way to raise domestic production is not a state support, but a good purchase price. If it is suitable, the volume of food will increase. It cannot always go up, we are still in WTO. Milk should be competitive”* (28-10-14). Others, on the contrary, consider that the state support is insufficient: *“Today it is essential to return the subsidies to Russian companies, that the government owes them”* (24-03-15).

In the end of the *observation period* there are more articles with the messages protesting against the subsidies, e.g. that they destroy the dairy farming in the Altaj region because of imperfect mechanism of giving subsidies – the farmers are accused for illegal use of them “for private needs” (4-06-15). Besides that, the state support is perceived as unreachable for the small farmers: *“Today the state support is delivered to large producers, while small farms stay aside”* (16-04-15). The articles highlight the issue of inequality between large and small dairy producers through the voices of small farmers from different regions:

*“I asked for support at all the levels – no one hears. All the slogans – do not let small farms die – are just words, - bitterly says the head of the farm”* (30-04-15); *“I tried to enter a union of agricultural producers to get grant money, but I was told: “Where are you getting? You will not be able to win, when rivals are former collective farms and big farms!” So she caught on to the idea of crowdfunding”* (23-09-15).

Compared to the issues of dairy producers, the interests of consumers are less important due to a low statements count (only 6). The frame of **consumer support** includes politically neutral (4) and pro-governmental statements (2) on policy measures to stabilise the prices on the dairy, such as a ‘hot’ phone line to let the consumers report the prices increase (23-09-14); restrictions of a dairy producer for illegal price increase (5-02-15); introduction of food cards for the low-incomers (28-05-15); more attention to social responsibility of dairy producers (9-06-15); and labelling of the dairy, as in this politically neutral statement: *“New label on the left side of the package “The product contains palm oil” would help the consumer in his choice of the dairy”* (28-09-15).

According to the analysis, the frames of state control got a greater space in the interpretation of the dairy policy after the food ban. This complies with the findings that officials are the main actors who take the responsibility for the problems’ solution. However, officials shift the responsibility to other stakeholders who are seen as culprits. This way officials represent themselves as responsible for the development of the dairy sector only in cases of making decisions and looking for solutions, but not in their implementation.

### *Standing*

As expected, federal and local authorities gained a dominant standing in the RG coverage of the import substitution (53 and 34 respectively); they appear in the articles twice more than the rest of the speakers (Table 4). According to RG, officials are important actors in the issues coordination, although they are sometimes perceived as culprits when the policy measures do not achieve their goals (with regard to the findings on the responsibility frame).



The representatives of the dairy sector (breeding, processing and packaging companies, cooperatives, farmers, retailers), science (research institutions) and associations (farmers, producers, retailers, entrepreneurs, consumers) have a relatively low standing compared to officials. This explains why contra-governmental statements have a minor position in the RG coverage. Civic observers as the only representatives of civil society appear once in the whole coverage to resonate to the official data.

<i>Speakers</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Federal authorities</i>	53	87
<i>Local authorities</i>	34	
<i>Dairy sector</i>	23	40
<i>Science</i>	14	
<i>Associations/Organisations</i>	13	
<i>Others</i>	8	8

Table 4. Standing: frequency of speakers in RG, 1 July 2014 – 31 October 2015.

*Metaphors*

Politically neutral statements (9) prevail almost twice contra-governmental metaphors (5); pro-governmental ones are absent in the sample (Table 5).

Both types of metaphors articulate some of the shifts after policy change of the federal level, such as the dairy import ban (*“holes from cheese”*), the discussion around a new mechanism to regulate the prices on the dairy (*“prices corridor”*), and the permission of the lactose-free dairy that gave access to falsified imports and was perceived as a legislative mistake of the government (*“loopholes”* and *“legislation gap”*). Two politically neutral metaphors address the issue of palm oil content in the dairy: *“pseudocheese”* – towards the dairy imports in the beginning of the observation period, and *“Milk rivers – palm banks”* – towards the domestic dairy in the end of the coverage. This complies with the shift from external to domestic issues; and with politically neutral articulation of the product quality frame.

The majority of metaphors reflect the outcomes of the policy change of the local level. Some are *politically neutrally* represented, e.g., in case of a social event – a festival *“Dairy country”*, and innovations successfully applied at a *“clever farm”*. Contra-governmental metaphors address the issues that resonate with the policy outcomes and are addressed to the officials as responsible for the problems, e.g., against the financial instability and dependence of dairy companies on state support (*“negative profitability”*).

There is also ambiguity found in the interpretation of one and the same issue – a company shutdown. In case of a private dairy company the issue was represented as politically neutral (*“Milk river’s rapids”*), and as a contra-governmental metaphor (*“Milk break”*) in case of a state-based ‘milk kitchen’ that fulfils social needs. This can mean that issues around social needs can raise more contestation than that of private business. The same ambiguity was found in the articulation of the feed deficit issue, that was expressed in a politically neutral (*“Cow on a diet”*) and in a contra-governmental metaphor (*“Flying cows”*).

Pro-gvt.	Contra-gvt.	Pol. neutral
	<i>Flying cows</i> (no access to pasture and feed)	<i>Pseudocheese</i> (cheese counterfeit)
	<i>Milk break</i> (‘milk kitchen’ for kids to be closed)	<i>Holes from cheese</i> (dairy import ban)
	<i>Loopholes</i> (in Russian legislation)	<i>Prices corridor</i> (mechanism to regulate the prices)
	<i>Legislation gap</i>	<i>Dairy country</i> (festival)
	<i>Negative profitability</i> (state subsidies delay)	<i>Milk priority</i> (need to support dairy producers in the Crimea)
		<i>Cow on a diet</i> (feed deficit)
		<i>Milk river’s rapids</i> (dairy farm to be closed)
		<i>Milk rivers – palm banks</i>
		<i>Clever farm</i> (innovations applied)

Table 5. Metaphors in RG coverage, 1 July 2014 – 31 October 2015.

Besides that, there are two symbols found in the sample of RG, articulated by the speakers *politically neutrally* and implicitly (not included in the Table 5). One of them is the symbol of a *vicious circle* that maintains ineffective dairy production. It appears twice in *politically neutral* statements to indicate deeper problems in the system, where the dairy sector’ stakeholders are interconnected, but are not able to change the ongoing situation<sup>2</sup> (8-07-14, 26-08-15). Another one is “*Olekma cheese*”, defined by the speakers as an indicator of problems in the dairy sector: “*a good example of how difficult it is to realize the chances even with the support of a rich enterprise*” (04-12-14).

On both levels (federal and local) politically neutral metaphors tend to signalise the issues of the policy change, while contra-governmental metaphors uncover disagreement with the policy outcomes. The lack of pro-governmental metaphors can be explained by the shift to the coverage of domestic issues, and by the ambiguity articulated towards some of these issues.

**Summary:** Generic and issue-specific frames found in RG addressed a wide range of issues in the Russian dairy sector after the reciprocal sanctions. Officials gained the standing; they are represented as the main problem solvers and at the same time as the second important culprits after the dairy sector’ speakers. The responsibility frame has the highest count of statements among generic and issue-specific frames, and it is the most contested frame: a high number of contra-governmental statements in this frame overbalanced the total count of the pro- ones in the generic frames. Among the issue-specific frames, the frame of domestic producer support has the highest level of contestation, but the number of pro-governmental utterances in this frame overbalanced the contra-ones. Some outcomes of generic and issue-specific frames contradict one another and represent ambiguity in understanding of the dairy sector’s situation after the sanctions, that is reflected in metaphors as well. While a prevailing count of contra-governmental statements in the conflict frame

<sup>2</sup> Full quote: “*In order to sell somehow their products, domestic dairy producers have to reduce the costs. Mainly on the raw milk. Processors “knock” the price on it, refusing to buy it from producers above a certain level. The last have to make concessions, as the shelf life of raw milk is strictly limited. When prices are too low, farmers start to slaughter the cattle. And it reduces the production of raw milk. This leads to an even greater deficit of the dairy in the domestic market, higher prices and an increase in costs of processors. The import of milk powder helps the situation partially. But it is not a panacea. In this situation, the retail prices in the country will grow rapidly, making the market more attractive for imports. And the circle is closed*” (8-07-14).

contested the competitiveness of the Russian dairy sector, the overwhelming number of pro-governmental utterances in the self-sufficiency frame stated the opposite. Despite the fact that the frames of product quality and production deficiency are rather highly articulated, only the dairy producers, not the consumers, were sparsely assigned as victims in the sample. However, according to RG, the responsibilities for the policy change, attributed mainly to officials, need to be divided among diverse stakeholders for better collaboration around the complex issues towards the development of the Russian dairy sector.

## 5.2. Framing analysis of the Russian dairy policy in Izvestia.

### *Coverage dynamics and issues overview*

The sample of Izvestia consists of 18 articles, that is a rather low coverage in comparison with RG. Within the observation period Izvestia established two peaks of coverage: before the sanctions – in July 2014 (5 articles), and in the end of the observation period – in October 2015 (5). There was an evident decrease in the coverage of the policy change after the food ban: only 9 articles appeared from August 2014 to August 2015; and half of a year in the observed period (September, November 2014; February, March, June and July in 2015) the newspaper had no publications concerning the dairy sector after import ban.

To highlight the dairy policy after the reciprocal sanctions, the newspaper selects the issues and events, that uncover various measures of state control (ban of counterfeit dairy imports, transition to digital certification of dairy products, demand to discount milk prices for the countries of the Custom Union) and protectionism (state subsidies to the top dairy farms to increase milk yields, holding a dairy farm in state property, refutation by officials of high level of domestic cheese counterfeit).

The issue of counterfeit dairy imports prevailed in the coverage of Izvestia, and, in contrast to RG, has been slightly transformed from external to domestic issues. In the beginning of the observation period the newspaper highlighted counterfeit imports from Ukraine (July 2014) and Finland (October 2014), and counterfeit lactose-free dairy imports from Europe (August, January, April and August 2015) in connection with quality issues (antibiotic and palm oil content). In the end of the observation period a high amount of domestic cheese counterfeit on the basis of palm oil was uncovered (October 2015), but later refuted by officials.

Among the issues which do not imply control is the emergence of new dairy initiatives caused by import substitution policy, that were covered in the end of the observation period. These are two initiatives to set a dairy plant that would increase domestic dairy production (one is by a Russian individual, ex-mayor of Moscow, another – by a Vietnam dairy company); and production of banned cheese (parmesan and mozzarella) in household conditions.

Notable is that the newspaper did not highlight the impact of sanctions on the Russian dairy sector in August 2014, when the sanctions were announced, and a year later, when they were extended by a new law which permits the destruction of banned food imports. Lack of coverage concerning these important policy changes and their possible impact on the dairy sector can be interpreted as a probable understatement of these issues.

### *Generic frames*

In this sample 42 statements on generic frames were coded; the frame of morality was not found. (Table 1). The most striking point is that no pro-governmental statements are defined.

The **responsibility** frame prevails (30); it is mainly expressed in politically neutral utterances. Throughout the observation period officials are represented as problem solvers in politically neutral

statements (9) and as culprits in contra-governmental utterances (4) (Table 2). The officials appear as problem solvers when they try to manage problem situations by setting policy measures, e.g., by taking or implementing decisions (bans or permissions). The statements are mainly connected with the ban of the dairy of insufficient quality (before the sanctions – from Ukraine, later – concerning the import of permitted lactose-free dairy from Europe):

*“The decision is taken, Ukrainian colleagues are informed about it; next hour this decision will be formalized” (25-07-14);*

*“The relevant government decree [permission of lactose-free dairy], signed by Prime Minister of Russia Dmitry Medvedev, is placed on the official website of the Cabinet” (20-08-14);*

*“Officials closed laboratories that certified imported cheese as lactose-free, and the products are withdrawn from retail due to false declarations” (20-08-15).*

<b>Generic frames</b>	<b>Pro-gvt.</b>	<b>Contra-gvt.</b>	<b>Pol. neutral</b>	<b>Total</b>
<i>Responsibility</i>		5	25	30
<i>Conflict</i>		3	4	7
<i>Economic consequences</i>		1	2	3
<i>Human interest</i>			2	2
<b>Total</b>		9	33	<b>42</b>

*Table 1. Frequency of generic frames in Izvestia, 1 July 2014 – 31 October 2015.*

According to Izvestia, officials try to keep the arising issues under control by taking certain policy measures. In one of the articles they try even to regain control over a problem situation by shifting responsibility to media for exaggerating the research results on a high level of counterfeit, and at the same time by expressing “serious concern” about it:

*“The data on high level of falsification of domestic cheese with vegetable fats was misinterpreted by the media. This statement was made by the representatives of the Federal Service for Veterinary and Phytosanitary Supervision [the VPSS]. At the same time, they note that high level of cheese counterfeit is an issue of serious concern” (4-10-15).*

<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Problem solvers</b>	<b>Culprits</b>	<b>Victims</b>	<b>Total</b>
<i>Authorities</i>	10	4		14
<i>Dairy producers and associations</i>	2	3	4	18
<i>Importers</i>	1	8		
<i>Consumers</i>	1			1
<b>Total</b>	14	15	4	<b>33</b>

*Table 2. Frequency of responsibility framing by the speakers in Izvestia, 1 July 2014 – 31 October 2015.*

The manner of informing the audience about the decisions, taken by officials to improve problem situations, signs that the newspaper tends to combine conformity and downplaying strategies in

articulation of the officials' responsibility. The conformity strategy is expressed mainly in politically neutral statements of various speakers that display their compliance with the measures of officials. This could also explain the lack of pro-governmental utterances in the whole sample of Izvestia. However, in some cases the decisions contradict the outcomes, represented by Izvestia: the goal to support domestic producers has been implemented only for the top large farms; the ban of imports, that would guarantee sufficient quality and quantity of the dairy, has led to the raise of domestic counterfeit and emergence of 'homemade cheese' initiatives.

When Izvestia uncovers the gaps in controlling measures and unsolved issues, the officials are presented as culprits (4). This is mainly articulated in contra-governmental statements (4), in cases such as transition to digital certification without a test period: *"According to market stakeholders, the industry will collapse within one year due to the new order of Ministry of Agriculture"* (13-08-14); delay of a state dairy farm renovation (29-10-14); and lack of clear demands to lactose-free dairy imports: *"The exception of the government for lactose-free dairy is actively used by cheese importers – lack of clear demands to lactose content in cheese allows them continue export to Russia"* (19-01-15).

In this sample dairy producers (18) are represented by domestic ones and importers. Domestic producers are more introduced as victims (4), than as culprits or problem solvers. They are the victims of officials in case with digital certification: *"Producers of milk were let down due to veterinary certification"* (13-08-14); and due to external causes, such as *"prices discrepancy"* that makes milk production unprofitable (14-05-15), and *"difficult economic situation"* that makes the dairy sector unattractive to new investments (15-09-15). The role of culprits has been given only to importers in the first part of the observation period (8), and shared with *"dishonest"* domestic dairy producers – in the second part, e.g., in case with falsified cheese and cheese slices, that could be illegally produced in or supplied to Russia.

*"General Director of "Unipro" Alexej Lochmel in conversation with Izvestia said that 90% of Russian cheese is made of vegetable fat. "At the stage of milk the milk fat is substituted by palm oil as it is cheaper (...)". He does not think it is enough to prohibit cheese-alike imports from Europe, since Russia makes its own cheese with palm oil content"* (6-04-15).

*"Since the sanctions were imposed, the dishonest manufacturers and importers have used this loophole and declared a regular cheese as a dietary without any tests and studies, thereby bypassing the embargo"* (20-08-15).

Dairy producers are performed as problem solvers by the end of the observation period, when the dairy association Milk Union asked officials for protectionism measures, e.g., to stabilise the prices within the Custom Union (14-05-15), and when a dairy producer takes initiative to start substitution of cheese imports (2-10-15). A foreign producer was presented as problem solver only once, when a Vietnamese dairy company made investments to set up a new plant in Moscow region (22-10-15). Remarkable is that consumers also appear only as problem solvers and only once in connection with raising amount of internet requests on homemade cheese (17-09-15).

Throughout the observation period Izvestia represents a very narrow range of responsibilities that is almost equally shared by officials (as problem solvers) and importers (as culprits). After the imports are banned and all the necessary measures to prevent illegal import flows are taken, officials appeared to be the most responsible for the policy change.

The **conflict** frame is much less articulated in the sample of Izvestia (7) and appears mainly in the end of the observation period. Politically neutral and contra-governmental statements almost

counterbalance one another. Politically neutral utterances (4) express the conflict of domestic interests towards the culprits outside Russia, i.e. between officials and illegal importers of falsified lactose-free cheese (*“declared war to lactose-free cheese”*; 20-08-15) and cheese slices (21-10-15). Besides that, the reduction of dairy prices within the Custom Union, that makes the domestic dairy production unprofitable, is also covered politically neutrally (14-05-15);

The contra-governmental statements (3) of the conflict frame pay more attention to domestic problems and reflect the conflict of interests, for example, between officials and domestic dairy producers who face the difficulties of a new certification procedure:

*“But the most serious problem, according to the industry representative, is that the digital certification is induced since 2015 without a transition period and testing. Although none of the plants have ever had any experience in such documents”; “We are set in conditions that are simply not feasible”* (13-08-14).

Another domestic issue, covered in *contra-governmental* statements, is the shortage and lack of raw milk for the dairy production revealed in the disruption between the declared goals and the current data: *“In the “expected results” of the program is declared that by 2020 Russia will annually produce 38.2 million tons of milk”,* that is opposed to 30.6 in 2014 (15-09-15).

Besides that, officials tend to counter other officials by refuting the official data, when a high level of domestic cheese counterfeit was articulated. For example, in one of the articles (4-10-15) the ambiguity towards the domestic conflict is articulated: a politically neutral statement with refutation of official data is followed by a contra-governmental utterance that undermines the officials who are responsible for the released data.

*“1<sup>st</sup> of October the assistant head of department Alexey Alekseenko said that, according to the survey, in some regions of Russia, the share of fake cheese is 50 to 78%. Later, the Minister of Agriculture Alexander Tkachev has denied the information about mass falsification of Russian cheese”. (Politically neutral statement.)*

*“The prime-minister Dmitry Medvedev, commenting this topic, also doubts that the most of the cheese in the market is fake. He also urged officials to be careful in their statements”* (contra-governmental statement).

The frame of **economic consequences** is modestly represented in the sample of Izvestia (3). A contra-governmental statement concerns the dairy companies that would have to make extra expenses on digital veterinary certification (*“According to Danilenko [Milk Union], the additional costs of a dairy factory, according to preliminary calculations, will be about 12 million roubles a year, that would lead to a significant increase of prices on the dairy products, that are in the list of socially important goods”*; 13-08-14). Politically neutral utterances articulate that the dairy producers would suffer from too low milk import prices set by the Custom Union (*“prices discrepancy”* would lead to domestic production decline; 14-05-15), and make profit from state subsidies in situation of less attractive investment climate for the dairy livestock (*“difficult economic environment”*; 15-09-15). In that sense, politically neutral utterances of the economic consequences frame coincide with the responsibility frame, where domestic dairy producers are presented as victims. This signs that they are facing economic difficulties due to the differences in market prices and the lack of investments. In general, economic consequences are not accentuated by Izvestia as an important issue in the development of the dairy sector after the reciprocal sanctions.

The **human interest** frame is the least represented in Izvestia. It appears twice in the end of the observation period, in the context of high internet requests to make banned parmesan in household conditions (17-09-15); and in connection with the title of new cheese that ex-mayor of Moscow was going to produce (2-10-15). The articulation of the human interest frame in the end of the observation period can sign articulation of the policy outcomes via new details that could be entertaining to the broader audience and easy to understand and identify with.

*Issue-specific frames*

Overall a very low count of issue-specific frames is found in Izvestia (Table 3). Remarkable is that these frames are almost overall expressed in politically neutral statements, except one pro-governmental utterance towards the frame of consumer support. The frames of **state control**, although infrequent, prevail significantly in the total statements count of issue-specific frames (13 out of 16), that can sign high importance of state intervention into the dairy sector.

The frame of **domestic producer support** is articulated in 3 politically neutral utterances that reflect protectionism measures, such as stabilisation of prices (“*Milkmen offered to harmonize the prices on milk across the Customs Union and to introduce protective duties for importers*”; 14-05-15), and introduction of extra state subsidies to support several top large dairy companies: “*Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev signed a decree to reach out the regions 5.1 billion roubles in 2015 for building and reconstruction of dairy farms*”; “*Currently, the state is focused on large dairy producers, it supports them*” (15-09-15).

<i>Issue-specific frames</i>	<b>Pro-gvt.</b>	<b>Contra-gvt.</b>	<b>Pol. neutral</b>	<b>Total</b>
<i>Innovation transfer</i>			2	2
<i>Foreign investment</i>			1	1
<b>State control:</b>				
<i>Product quality</i>			5	5
<i>Domestic producer support</i>			3	3
<i>Consumer support</i>	1		4	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>		<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>

*Table 3. Frequency of issue-specific frames in Izvestia, 1 July 2014 – 31 October 2015.*

The statements of the **product quality** frame highlight the issues of dairy quality (sanitary issues and palm oil content) before the sanctions and in the end of the observation period: “*Rosselkhoznadzor [the VPSS] has decided to strengthen control over the quality of raw materials used for the production of dairy products*” (1-10-15).

Similarly the **consumer support** frame appears before the sanctions only towards the dairy imports of insufficient quality with a clear articulation of the goal to protect the consumers (“*violation of the law on consumer rights protection*”; 4-7-14); and in the end of the observation period – towards the facts of domestic cheese counterfeit that “*perform threat to the peoples’ health*” (21-10-15).

Combination of the product quality and consumer support frames is found in a politically neutral statement in the beginning of the observation period and after the sanctions: “*We are particularly*

concerned about the situation in the cheese market. According to our data, 78.3% of production, presented to consumers as cheese, is falsified with vegetable fat”, [the VPSS said] (1-10-15). All three frames of state control appear in one pro-governmental statement, the only in the whole sample of Izvestia. It reflects the intention of the government to support domestic producer and consumer and provide product quality (i.e. “food safety”, 29-10-14).

The frame of **innovation transfer** was articulated twice and matches with the human interest frame, i.e. in case of raising human interest in receipts of banned cheeses (17-09-15) and in relation to ex-mayor of Moscow (2-10-15). Looking for the most suitable ways of domestic cheese production he follows workshops of the foreign dairy producers (2-10-15). **Foreign investment** frame is expressed politically neutrally only in relation to the Vietnamese dairy company that invested 500 million dollar in a new plant in Moscow region (22-10-15). Remarkable is that the frames of human interest, foreign investment and innovation transfer appeared in the end of the observation period, while the frames of state control were presented mainly by the product quality and less by the domestic producer support frames. The articulation of the domestic producer and consumer support frames is significantly diminished by the end of the observation period.

### Standing

The authorities (14) gained the standing in the coverage of Izvestia (Table 4) by taking responsibility to manage the arising issues after the food embargo. The representatives of the dairy sector (mainly the dairy producers), science and associations altogether (9) have a rather low standing compared to officials.

<i>Speakers</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Authorities</i>	14	14
<i>Dairy sector</i>	4	9
<i>Associations/Organisations</i>	4	
<i>Science</i>	1	
<i>Others</i>	1	1

Table 4. Standing: frequency of speakers in Izvestia, 1 July 2014 – 31 October 2015.

Moreover, associations, represented only by Milk Union, and science try to lobby protectionism measures, that align with the policy of the officials. For example, a representative from science (Institute of Agricultural Market, IKAR) appears in Izvestia only once (15-09-15), when the top agroholdings got the state subsidies, and excuses the official decision to support the top large producers and thus to increase milk yields in situation of foreign investment outflows. It is notable that this interpretation of the policy decision was not undermined by other actors in Izvestia, for example, to support the most vulnerable indigent farmers instead of the most successful ones.

Although the civil society does not appear in Izvestia, a representative from Public Chamber (an official organisation that links the interests of society and government) appears once (21-10-15) in the context of protectionism, to represent new controlling measures of cheese slices.

This confirms the use of conformity strategy by Izvestia, as the speakers tend to comply with the decisions of officials and imitate contestation by using the order-giving, or commanding style of officials (e.g., by using lobby). This explains the lack of pro- and contra-governmental statements



among issue-specific frames (especially the frames of state control), and their minor position among generic frames. This signs that Izvestia gives almost no standing to the speakers that could resonate the official interpretation of issues and events.

*Metaphors*

9 metaphors, found in the sample of Izvestia, are mainly expressed politically neutrally (5). Politically neutral metaphors try to articulate the issues of insufficient quality (particularly palm oil content) and refer first to importers (“*pseudocheese*”) and later in the observation period – to domestic producers (“*cheese substitutes*”, “*cheese counterfeit*”). Two politically neutral metaphors in one text, connected with high internet requests on homemade cheese receipts, articulate alternatives to the insufficiency of import substitution: “*import substitution gastronomy*” and “*domestic import substitution*” (17-09-15).

Contra-governmental metaphors are less numerous (3) and appear to counter policy measures of officials. For example, in the beginning of the observation period a contra-governmental metaphor “*milk crisis*” (13-08-14) was used to characterise the tremendous consequences of the transition to veterinary certification. In the second part of the observation period a metaphor “*loophole in Russian embargo*”, used twice (6-04-15; 20-08-15), was aimed to articulate how importers used the lactose-free dairy permission for illegal purposes, i.e. to sell cheese with palm oil content.

A pro-governmental metaphor “*white gold*” (15-09-15) articulates the power of state investments in the top dairy farms, that would be able to increase milk production.

Pro-gvt.	Contra-gvt.	Pol. neutral
<i>White gold</i> (subsidies to large dairy farms)	<i>Loophole in Russian embargo</i> (2) (counterfeit cheese sold as lactose-free)	<i>Pseudocheese</i> (palm oil or antibiotic content)
	<i>Milk crisis</i> (transition to digital certification)	<i>Cheese substitutes</i> (palm oil content)
		<i>Cheese counterfeit</i> (palm oil content)
		<i>Import substitution gastronomy</i> (homemade cheese)
		<i>Domestic import substitution</i> (homemade cheese)

*Table 5. Metaphors in Izvestia coverage, 1 July 2014 – 31 October 2015.*

**Summary:** Officials gained the standing in Izvestia in the observed period. They tried to keep the arising issues under control and are mainly represented as problem solvers. In contrast to the frame of responsibility, the frames of state control were however sparsely articulated. Some of the speakers of the dairy sector, associations and science tried to counter officials in contra-governmental statements, but politically neutral statements prevail in the total count, as they tend to comply with decisions of officials and imitate contestation by using the order-giving, or commanding style of officials. This imitating (seeming) contestation could explain the lack of pro- and contra- governmental statements in the frames; and the compliance of speakers with officials reflects the use of conformity strategy by Izvestia. Domestic dairy producers appear as the only victims, while importers – as the main culprits, that is referred to the product quality frame as the second most represented. The articulation of other state control frames (domestic producer and consumer support) diminished over time, while the frames of human interest, foreign investment

and innovation transfer appeared in the end of the observation period. This could be the first sign of the audience mobilisation around the issues that officials cannot solve, such as product quality (e.g., consumers appeared once as problem solvers).

5.3. Framing analysis of the Russian dairy policy in RBC daily.

*Coverage dynamics and issues overview*

The sample of RBC daily is the smallest, it consists of 15 articles. The coverage is overall very low, with maximum of 1 till 3 articles per month, and the peak is June 2015 (3). Several months (January, February, April and May of 2015) the newspaper had no coverage of the dairy policy after the food ban at all.

Throughout the observation period RBC daily tries to uncover the import dependence of Russian food industry, by paying attention at the consequences of a new policy for various stakeholders: officials, retailers, dairy farmers and dairy companies, research organisations and farmers associations. Before the sanctions the newspaper covers import ban as an incredible scenario of the policy development. Later a rather small range of issues and events was highlighted: the need to raise subsidies to support dairy producers, prices increase on the dairy, difficulties of retailers to substitute the suppliers, restrictions of lactose-free cheese, high level of domestic cheese counterfeit, food destruction and the enlargement of agroholdings. At least two articles (December 2014 and March 2015) represented Belarus as a transition centre for the banned dairy and raw milk for processing. Despite the small sample, the newspaper tries to cover these issues and events by providing space to various actors to express their positions.

*Generic frames*

In this sample 50 statements on generic frames were coded (Table 1). Among all the frames responsibility (30) was mostly articulated in RBC daily, while the frames of human interest and morality were not found in the sample.

<b>Generic frames</b>	<b>Pro-gvt.</b>	<b>Contra-gvt.</b>	<b>Pol. neutral</b>	<b>Total</b>
<i>Responsibility</i>	2	8	20	30
<i>Economic consequences</i>		3	11	14
<i>Conflict</i>		2	4	6
<b>Total</b>	2	13	35	<b>50</b>

*Table 1. Frequency of generic frames in RBC daily, 1 July 2014 – 31 October 2015.*

According to the share of **responsibility** statements among the actors (Table 2), officials (18) are articulated as the most responsible for the policy change. They are represented as problem solvers in politically neutral and pro-governmental statements, and as culprits – in contra-governmental utterances. These responsibilities are shared equally (9 statements each); and in several cases the ambiguity in representation of the officials’ responsibility is found. For example, before the food embargo the ambiguity is expressed in one article, first in a politically neutral sentence: “*However Ministry [of Agriculture] promised that it [the food ban] will not lead to deficit*”, and then in a contra-governmental utterance: “*In order to change the situation, the government should have a more or less clear program in the long run*”; “*The state should reduce the administrative barriers and reduce*

the cost of credit and fuel prices, provide farmers with direct access to market, and eliminate the pressure of the wholesale dealers” (25-07-14).

Later in the observation period the ambiguity is found in one utterance where officials are represented as problem solvers for supporting farmers with subsidies to ensure import substitution, and at the same time are perceived as culprits, if food embargo would be withdrawn: “The government keeps saying that it will maintain domestic production because of reciprocal sanctions and to replace forbidden imports, and people begin to believe it. The mood is such that they are willing to give up almost all, if the sanctions are cancelled” (24-06-15).

In the end of the observation period the ambiguity appears already in one sentence, e.g., “The problem of falsification of cheese and other dairy products would cease to exist, if the companies got for it a serious fine” (02-10-15). In this example officials are perceived as culprits because they did not set up high fines for counterfeit production, and as problem solvers because they are still able to change the situation. This signs that newspaper tries to readdress the problem to the policy makers in order to force its possible solution, that can be interpreted as a fingerpointing (or naming&shaming) strategy.

<i>Responsibility</i>	<b>Problem solvers</b>	<b>Culprits</b>	<b>Victims</b>	<b>Total</b>
<i>Authorities</i>	9	9		18
<i>Dairy producers and associations</i>	3	6	3	12
<i>Retailers</i>	2	2	2	6
<b>Total</b>	14	17	5	<b>36</b>

Table 2. Frequency of responsibility framing by the speakers in RBC daily, 1 July 2014 – 31 October 2015.

The newspaper presented officials only as culprits, when they are blamed for switching the suppliers to the ones who were restricted before the sanctions (10-10-14), for the lack of milk imports (13-11-14), for restriction of food transition from Belarus, expressed by the president Lukashenko: “The behaviour of Russian authorities does not only surprise me, but makes me disappointed... we're not puppies to lead us by the collar” (26-12-14). Besides that, the statements of authorities are contested by alternative voices from the government, e.g., the critic of food embargo by a group of three parliament members (31-03-15), and an opinion of another parliament member who counters the policy decision that the outlets should provide 30-50% of domestic products, and who established alternative policy measures to protect the suppliers: “Such a restriction, in my opinion, could lead to the fact that entrepreneurs will repackage products, and thereby increase adulteration and counterfeiting. Therefore, I consider this initiative inappropriate” (07-10-14).

The dairy producers (processing companies and farmers) are mainly articulated as culprits in politically neutral utterances (totally 6) with regard to the issue of increasing counterfeit. However in a half of these utterances foreign producers (importers) are mentioned as culprits. For example, the suppliers from Belarus are accused of using food embargo for transition of the banned imports, mainly raw milk, to increase dairy production for export to Russia, and therefore “did not take into account that the elasticity of the Russian market has its limits. The rise in prices has led to a decrease in consumption” (31-03-15). Besides that, the responsibility is addressed to domestic producers for low quality and quantity of the dairy, e.g.:

“According to the executive director of the Association of Retail Companies (AKORT) Andrey Karpov, “Russia does not have the required number of domestic manufacturers to provide trading networks;

*and the quality of their products, as well as the security of supply often leave much to be desired". The share of imported goods in the premium class supermarkets today is not less than 65%, in the rest – about half, he estimated" (7-10-14).*

The dairy farmers (opposed to large producers) are politically neutrally presented as victims of the government and retailers; the least were accused of "discrimination": *"After the sanctions retail chains simply replace the banned imports to the other. For example, the European to the Brazilian. As a result Russian producers do not benefit from the measures taken by the government" (07-10-14).* Later in the *observation period* the dairy producers (large and small farmers and associations) are presented as problem solvers in case when Milk Union succeeded to lobby restriction for lactose-free dairy falsification: *"Milk producers have achieved their goal" (24-06-15); "We are glad. All we asked for was taken into account by the government in the new sanctions list" (26-06-15);* and in case when farmers try to find access to retailers themselves: *"After the sanctions only lazy farmers still have problems with sales" (24-06-15).* Remarkable is that the consumers are not present in the sample.

Retailers (5) are equally articulated as problem solvers, culprits and victims in politically neutral utterances. In the beginning of the observation period they share the roles of victims and culprits depending on the situation. They are represented as culprits towards the dairy farmers (example above). The victim role is caused by changes in law (30-50% of domestic food in outlets) and is expressed before and right after the sanctions: 1) *"The Law "On Trade" may be amended, that will oblige the retailers to purchase products from Russian farmers - from 30 to 50%" (25-07-14);* 2) *"In case of adoption of this law all retailers will be affected, including discounters - different categories of domestic products of the right quality and quantity are simply not available" (7-10-14).*

Retailers appear as problem solvers later in the observation period, when they present the issue of import substitution as their own responsibility:

*"There is no significant narrowing in the range [of products] noticed in the outlet chain "Okay", because we worked mainly with Russian suppliers and distributors before [the sanctions], says the representative Artem Glushchenko. X5 Retail Group (...) and "Dixi" (...) also found alternative products" (23-09-14). "Today the substitution can be considered successfully completed (...) We had to act very quickly" (26-12-14).*

Summing up, victim and culprit roles of dairy farmers and retailers has been transformed in the observation period towards the role of problem solvers who try to manage the raising problems themselves. That can be interpreted as a tradition of healthy entrepreneurship and active position on the market, that possibly aligns with the editorial line of RBC daily as an independent business newspaper. On this basis the pattern of self-responsibility has been identified and introduced as an issue-specific frame.

In some cases the frame of responsibility aligns with economic consequences frame and state control (issue-specific) frame in one *politically neutral* utterance; that confirms the use of a fingerpointing strategy: *"According to estimates of the Ministry, if not to pour additional funds into the Russian agro-industrial complex, the replacement of imported products on the shelves of Russian stores will go very slow" (25-08-14).*

The frame of **economic consequences** is more articulated in politically neutral (11) than in contra-governmental statements (3). Politically neutral statements represent the issues of food deficit and prices increase (5) as the consequences of import substitution, e.g., *"But if you look at certain product groups, it is clear that the import ban of some products from Europe, the USA, Canada, Australia and Norway, led to higher prices on "forbidden" items" (5-09-14); "The prices are increasing*

even on substituted products” (23-09-14); “(...) the complexity of the supply chain [through alternative channels] can lead to price increase of the final product on the shelves” (10-10-14); “According to research company “Romir”, in the first half of 2015 compared to the same period last year, Russian citizens have increased milk consumption by 2%, although the average price on milk grew by 10%” (15-09-15). The common in these representations throughout the observation period is that the newspaper tries to uncover the pattern of prices increase by describing how the supply chain has been affected and transformed by the sanctions.

The contra-governmental utterances on economic consequences address such issues as the lack of federal budget to compensate the interest rate for investment projects (25-08-14), negative impact on trade turnover caused by restriction of lactose free dairy (24-06-15), and prices inflation, higher than the government forecasted: “Since January the price increase has achieved 6.5%, thus inflation exceeded the forecast made at the beginning of the year; now Ministry of Economic Development says about 7-7.5% in the second 2014” (10-10-14).

**Conflict** frame is least of all attributed in the sample of RBC daily. Although politically neutral utterances prevail (4), one of the issues – refutation of official data is covered equally in both politically neutral and contra-governmental statements. For example, the contra-governmental statements try to contest the data, represented and interpreted by officials: “The Russians depend on imports according to Rosstat data (...). But officials continue to talk about the return of the market to domestic producers”; “Representatives of industry associations point out that the Rosstat figures do not convey the real picture of the industry” (25-07-14).

Besides that, conflict frame appears in politically neutral statements as conflict of interest. For example, the conflict of interest is found in the interpretations of palm oil content used in the dairy. Two controlling organisations, that influence the permission or restriction of palm oil use, interpret differently the concept of product quality – product safety versus domestic origin of raw material: “For Rospotrebnadzor [Consumers rights protection] it is important that the product is safe, but for the Rosselkhozadzor [the VPSS] and Ministry of Agriculture the most important is that the product is made from domestic raw materials. And Russia does not produce palm oil” (02-10-15).

In another example the state representative refuted the conflict of interest in the alignment of his state position and his dairy agroholding business that started to enlarge: “Tkachev [Minister of Agriculture] has admitted that his relatives owned agricultural enterprises, but he did not see a conflict of interest. “This is (...) an average agricultural production. Companies I have created in 1995-1996 are small, more than 20 years old. Do I have to sell it? The relatives should take the decision... It is absolutely normal - these enterprise, factories. What is the conflict here?”- He explained” (15-09-15). These two examples, where the conflict of interest is involved, can sign that the responsibilities of the officials in some cases are not clear defined and divided.

### *Issue-specific frames*

In the sample of RBC daily 52 statements with issue-specific frames are coded (Table 3). Politically neutral statements (34) prevail in the whole coverage, and are reinforced by contra-governmental utterances (12) mainly in the frames of **import dependence** and **domestic producer support**. The number of pro-governmental utterances is rather low to counterbalance politically neutral statements. A rather high number of statements indicates that several different frames were articulated by different stakeholders in one article, and even in one stakeholder’s utterance.

The frame of **import dependence** has a leading position among the issue-specific frames (22); it implies the articulation of the dairy sector’ dependence on imports, and various difficulties in the

process of import substitution. Politically neutral statements of this frame prevail (13) and articulate infeasibility and barriers of import substitution, on the basis of speaker’s professional experience and data. For example, difficulty to substitute certain sorts of cheese (23-09-14); transformation of import substitution into switch of importers, or importers’ substitution (07-10-14); unclear definition of domestic production (*“Retailers define as domestic all products made in Russia, including those under foreign brands and from imported raw materials”, 25-07-14*); too low state support and dependence of domestic producers on it (*“Imports of dairy products with the current amount of state support, according to Fedorov [The Minister of Agriculture], would even increase”, 25-08-14*). The last example represents a combination of two frames in one utterance: the contra-governmental one with state control and the politically neutral one with import dependence.

<b>Issue-specific frames</b>	<b>Pro-gvt.</b>	<b>Contra-gvt.</b>	<b>Pol. neutral</b>	<b>Total</b>
<i>Import dependence</i>	3	6	13	22
<i>Production deficiency</i>	1		3	4
<i>Self-responsibility</i>			3	3
<b>State control:</b>				
<i>Domestic producer support</i>	2	5	11	18
<i>Product quality</i>		1	4	5
<b>Total</b>	6	12	34	52

*Table 3. Frequency of issue-specific frames in RBC daily, 1 July 2014 – 31 October 2015.*

Contra-governmental statements (6) indicate how the consequences of import substitution were gradually comprehended by different actors: retailers, officials, parliament members, etc. For example, these utterances uncover how sensitive the food embargo is for consumers (*“Officials promised in August that consumers would barely feel the import restrictions”, 10-10-14*) and dairy producers who were passed over by more competitive importers (according to a parliament member, *“Russian food embargo has not led to the stated goals, but allowed to earn Belarusian entrepreneurs and dispersed the food inflation”, 31-03-15*). Besides that, in some cases the policy change is not clear even to officials who are responsible for it, as for example in the statement that combines the frames of import dependence and production deficiency:

*“I would lie if I say that I understood the mechanism of cheese substitution in Russia, - the head of the Rosselkhoz nadzor [the VPSS] Sergey Dankvert said at a press conference on October 30. - If it is old stock [what is sold in retail after the embargo], then by the New year we will feel the shortage” (13-11-14).*

Remarkable is that pro-governmental statements on import dependence (3) reflect how different dairy producers interpret the policy change through the prism of their personal benefits: e.g., as an opportunity to raise a dairy company’s competitiveness after some foreign ones (such as Finnish Valio) left the market: *“Before [the sanctions] we sold most of the raw material to our partners - Danone, Ehrmann and Campina; and now we use this raw material to create our own products” (26-12-14)*; as a raising consumer demand on domestic dairy: *“Currently there is a high interest in our products, especially cheese, although we produce only 150 kg cheese per day. This year we sell more than last year, despite problems with credits” (24-06-15).*

One of the pro-governmental statements on import dependence represents the problem acknowledgement, but interprets it from the perspective of state support as a condition of successful import substitution in the dairy sector. In this sense import dependence frame aligns with the frame of domestic producer support: *“In general, the emphasis [state subsidies] in the development of the industry is correct, - the expert of the Institute for Agricultural Market Studies Daniel Khotko said. - Dairy cattle is the most import-dependent, because the return on long-term projects takes about 8-10 years” (25-08-14).*

The frame of **production deficiency**, that indicates the issues of unprofitable or insufficient dairy production and quality, is rather low represented in this sample. It is interpreted only in politically neutral (3) and pro-governmental utterances (1). A pro-governmental statement appears only in the beginning of the observation period and is focused on possible solutions articulated by officials: *“There are almost always alternative countries, alternative regions that can quickly begin deliveries of those products, for which we expect the emergence of a possible deficit” (25-07-14).* The politically neutral ones appear later in the observation period and represent the problem of deficiency in order to prescribe the measures of state support:

*“This will lead to dairy cattle decrease in Russia and the fall of the already weak production of raw milk”, - the head of the association does not hide the anxiety. He believes that the state should intervene in the situation by introducing a minimum purchase price for Russian milk producers or to compensate for the possible collapse of the market at the expense of state subsidies for the industry” (31-03-15).*

Although the frame of **self-responsibility** is least presented (3), it appears only in this sample. It reflects politically neutrally the ability of actors to manage the rising issues independently: *“Retailers say that they increase purchases of Russian goods without orders from above” (25-07-14); “We succeeded to substitute the most [imports] by Russian counterparts, or by products from countries which are allowed to import from” (23-09-14).*

The frames of **state control** have a minor position in the total statements count (23 out of 52); that can sign less importance of state intervention into the dairy sector. However the frame of **domestic producer support** is the second most common frame among the issue-specific ones (18); the overwhelming number of politically neutral statements (11) is slightly countered by contra- (5) and pro-governmental ones (2). In the beginning of the observation period officials represented new policy change as *“return of Russian market to domestic producers”*, both politically neutrally and in contra-governmental utterances (25-07-14; 25-08-14). The statement was politically neutrally commented on in a prescriptive form that complies with fingerpointing strategy: *“The government should reduce administrative barriers, credit costs and fuel prices, provide farmers with direct access to markets and eliminate the pressure of the wholesale dealers” (25-07-14).* Besides that, the politically neutral utterances reflected transition process in the small dairy farming enforced by state grants: *“Russian peasants have become farmers” (24-06-15).*

Contra-governmental statements counter the measures of domestic producer support, e.g., by criticising the switch to alternative dairy suppliers that is harmful for domestic producers (10-10-14); against a new regulation that the outlets should have 50% of domestic products: *“I doubt that our legislators filled their refrigerators with at least 50% of domestic products”, - sums up Yakovlev from “Globus Gourmet” (7-10-14);* against state restriction of lactose-free dairy: *“Such certification would mean a ban on the supply of cheeses from Europe, says a senior dairy market expert at the Institute for Agricultural Market Studies (IKAR) Alim Ayubov” (24-06-15);* and against too low fines for cheese

falsification, expressed in a prescriptive form: *“The problem of cheeses and dairy falsification would cease to exist if the companies got serious fines for that”* (2-10-15).

The **product quality** frame has a rather low count of statements (5), and appears mainly in the end of the observation period. Politically neutral statements on product quality prevail and cover various issues around dairy counterfeit, e.g. new regulations towards imported lactose-free dairy (24-06-15), destruction of counterfeit dairy (10-08-15) and high level of domestic cheese counterfeit (26-06-15; 2-10-15). A contra-governmental statement appears only once, in one text where the restriction of lactose-free dairy was politically neutrally presented. According to new regulation, it should be treated as medical and treatment product: *“Importers will have to prove that imported cheeses have a healing effect”* (24-06-15). It was countered by a contra-governmental statement that this restriction does not make sense: *“In general, almost all cheese making technology is originally lactose free, that is why lactose-free cheese is a rather strange formulation”* (24-06-15).

The frame of consumer support, that refers to state control frame, has not been found in the sample. Innovation transfer is absent as well. Although technology innovations for the dairy sector were mentioned in several articles in the observed period, they were not included in the sample as they did not show any connection with sanctions or import substitution (e.g., “30Sec Milk” portable milking, pasteurising and packaging technology, designed by two Russian scientists, that try to find access to European market, 5-03-15).

*Standing*

Authorities are represented only by the federal ones (30); the dairy sector – mainly by retailers (14), only two farmers and one dairy factory (Table 4). Although the authorities have the highest number of appearance in RBC daily (31), the speakers of the dairy sector together with science and the sector associations overbalance this count (40). This is possibly achieved by involving a relatively high number of speakers from the sector and other associations, among which the Committee of civic initiatives is present.

<i>Speakers</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Dairy sector</i>	17	40
<i>Associations/Organisations</i>	16	
<i>Science</i>	7	
<i>Authorities</i>	31	31
<i>Others</i>	5	5

*Table 4. Standing: frequency of speakers in RBC daily, 1 July 2014 – 31 October 2015.*

This can sign that the newspaper tends to give more space to the speakers aligned with the dairy chain than to officials. These speakers are possibly perceived as the driving force in the policy change, as they try to resonate the official information and take their own responsibility in solving of issues. This can also explain why the number of contra-governmental statements is relatively high compared to the pro- ones.



## Metaphors

The sample of RBC daily consists of 8 politically neutral metaphors (Table 5). There are no pro- and contra-government metaphors found, that aligns with the prevalence of politically neutral statements in the sample. The metaphors “*appetite decrease*” and “*moderately optimistic scenario*” appeared in the beginning of the observation period, when the officials articulated themselves the limits of state financing. Representation of these metaphors by the newspaper can be related to a fingerpointing strategy, that was found in connection with the frames of responsibility, production deficiency and domestic producer support and that prescribes officials to enforce certain policy measures (in this case – constraint of state subsidies by the government).

Pro-gvt.	Contra-gvt.	Pol. neutral
		<i>Appetite decrease</i> (less state subsidies)
		<i>Moderately optimistic scenario</i> (less state financing)
		<i>Window to Russia</i> (transfer of illegal dairy via Belarus)
		<i>Russian, but not cheese</i> (counterfeit cheese)
		<i>Cheese economy</i> (making profit from adding palm oil in the dairy)
		<i>Loophole for dishonest importers</i> (2) (importers of falsified lactose-free dairy)
		<i>Hole in law</i> (counterfeit cheese sold as lactose free)
		<i>Minister of milk</i> (owner of a large dairy agroholding)

Table 5. Metaphors in RBC daily coverage, 1 July 2014 – 31 October 2015.

Several metaphors reflect shifts and outcomes of the dairy policy after the food ban, such as growing number of counterfeit production; first – towards imports (“*window to Russia*”, *blaming importers for counterfeit transfer*); and later – towards domestic dairy (5). Two of these metaphors reflect the issue of domestic dairy production with palm oil content (“*Russian, but not cheese*” and “*cheese economy*”). Three of them uncover the issue of lactose-free dairy that gave access to counterfeit production: “*loophole for dishonest importers*”, mentioned twice, and “*hole in law*”. Another example of metaphor on the policy outcome is “*Minister of milk*”, that articulated personal involvement of the Minister of Agriculture in the enlargement of dairy agroholdings after the reciprocal sanctions. The metaphors “*hole in law*” and “*Minister of milk*”, although expressed politically neutrally, try to uncover violation of law.

**Summary:** Although officials gained the standing, the representatives of the dairy sector together with the sector associations and science overbalance it. The prevalence of contra-governmental statements above the pro- ones is overwhelming in generic frames and twice more in issue-specific ones. This signs that RBC daily tries to resonate the policy change by opposing the policy measures of officials in order to force further development. Besides that, the newspaper addresses the problems to officials as the main culprits and solvers. This strategy was defined as fingerpointing (or naming&shaming); and it was identified throughout the coverage. The representation of dairy farmers and retailers, on the contrary, has shifted from victims and culprits to problem solvers who

try to manage the raising problems themselves. This was reflected in the frame of self-responsibility. The intersection of different frames and representation of ambiguity in one utterance are also found.

The findings of this chapter point out the main issues, frames, speakers and their metaphors found in three newspapers with different forms of ownership. Relation between pro-, contra-governmental and politically neutral statements in representation of metaphors, generic and issue-specific frames helped to outline the differences in coverage. These findings are compared within each newspaper and across them in the *Discussion* chapter to answer the research questions and draw the conclusions and recommendations, represented in the last chapter.

## Chapter 6. Discussion.

In this study the question was posed how the recent Russian dairy policy after the reciprocal sanctions is represented by the Russian newspapers across time. This study investigated how the ambiguity in representation of the recent Russian dairy policy is articulated by the state-owned *RG*, the state-aligned *Izvestia* and the independent *RBC daily* after the food embargo, and how this media framing evolved over time.

The research pointed out that the newspapers are dealing with the ambiguity around the dairy policy differently, depending on what kind of speakers gained standing, what kind of issue aspects (frames) are articulated and how these are interconnected (counter, dominate or align) within each newspaper and across them (Table 6).

### *Framing within each newspaper*

State-owned *RG* (*Rossijskaja gazeta*) has covered a high range of issues and events due to its most extensive coverage. Throughout the coverage authorities gained a dominant standing in the sample. In terms of responsibility they are almost equally represented as problem solvers and culprits regarding the way they execute the policy measures towards the issues of the dairy sector. On the one hand, the role of officials as problem solvers correlates with the dominance of the frames of self-sufficiency, product quality and domestic producer support. The politically neutral representation of policy measures towards self-sufficiency, product quality and producer support is mainly endorsed by pro-governmental statements and less contested in contra-governmental utterances. On the other hand, officials as culprits are highly present in the frames of responsibility, conflict and domestic producer support as well, concerning for example decrease of product quality. These frames were mainly contested in a higher count of contra-governmental utterances, compared to the pro-governmental ones.

In other words, *RG* displays the ambiguity towards the policy measures of officials (subsidies and protectionism) and the issues of the dairy sector (competitiveness of domestic dairy, consumer prices increase for the dairy products) by as much supporting as contesting them. The main peculiarity in articulating ambiguity by *RG* is that support (or *agency* in terms of Benford & Snow, 2000) and contestation are balancing across (appear in) different articles. To articulate the ambiguity, the newspaper used a parity strategy by as much amplifying as contesting the policy measures and the competitiveness of the dairy production; and a downplaying strategy by neutrally representing the issues of consumer prices increase and production deficiency, and avoiding to present consumers as victims, while barely addressing it to domestic producers. Besides that, the newspaper used a 'call for cooperation' strategy in the framing of dairy sector cooperation and innovation transfer, that displays the need in networking and dividing responsibilities among diverse stakeholders for better collaboration around the complex issues of the Russian dairy sector.

Authorities dominated as speakers in the sample of the state-aligned *Izvestia* as well. However, in terms of responsibility they appear as the main problem solvers and less as culprits, that implies a greater emphasis on the implementation of policy measures, taken by officials to keep the arising issues under control and even regain the control. This correlates with the prevalence of state control frames (product quality, domestic producer and consumer support). The coverage of *Izvestia* gives barely space for ambiguity interpretation; it is reduced to neutral interpretations, low count of contra-governmental and the lack of pro-governmental utterances towards the dairy policy.

*Izvestia* pursued a conformity strategy by reporting the policy measures of officials (ban, permission, subsidies) and compliance of other speakers with them in politically neutral utterances in order to

keep the issues under control. By contesting the policy measures of officials, the speakers of the dairy sector, associations and science express demands to improve the policy measures by using the order-giving, or commanding style of officials, e.g., lobbying activity of Milk Union and Public Chamber. This strategy of imitating contestation, based on political neutrality, explains the lack of pro- and contra-governmental statements among issue-specific frames (especially the frames of state control), and their minor position among generic frames. The underlying purpose of the strategy is obviously to keep to political neutrality and neither to align nor to contest the policy measures of officials. This indicates that Izvestia gives almost no standing to the speakers that could contest the official interpretation of issues and events.

Besides that, Izvestia used a downplaying strategy by neutrally representing the issues of dairy quality decrease (i.e. counterfeit) and attributing it to causes outside Russia (i.e. importers who appeared as culprits) instead of domestic consumers who are supposed to encounter the issues of product quality in everyday life. Although domestic producers are presented as victims, they align with officials in the interpretation of policy measures by supporting subsidies and protectionism. Thus, the downplaying strategy in Izvestia implies shifting of responsibility attribution from domestic causers to those outside Russia.

In the independent *RBC daily* the speakers of the dairy sector together with the sector associations and science overbalanced the highest standing of officials. This correlates with high frequency of two frames: domestic producer support and import dependence of the Russian dairy sector. Politically neutral utterances of these frames represent barriers in transition to import substitution, e.g. unclear definition of domestic production, switch to alternative importers, dependence of domestic producers on state support. Politically neutral statements are reinforced by the contra-governmental ones, that reflect the producers' concerns towards the consequences of import substitution. The responsibility is mainly addressed to officials who are displayed equally as culprits and problem solvers, if they manage or not to implement certain policy measures (mainly state subsidies). By attributing responsibility to officials and ambiguity towards the policy implementation, the newspaper tends to foster possible solutions of issues in a prescriptive ("*should*") or subjunctive form ("*if*"), that is reflected in a fingerpointing (or naming&shaming) strategy. It was found across different frames, such as responsibility, economic consequences, production deficiency and the frames of state control. The main peculiarity is that ambiguity is articulated in RBC daily by representing differences (e.g., culprits versus problem solvers, pro- versus contra-governmental statement) within one article or even one sentence. By this RBC daily articulates the issues caused by officials to the business community, and prescribes officials to set significant fines for dairy counterfeit, increase state subsidies, and set a minimum consumer price.

Although the newspaper addressed the consequences of the policy measures, there is a low count in representation of domestic producers and retailers as victims. The coverage of RBC daily concerns the interests of entrepreneurship rather than those of consumers. This explains a low attribution of the production deficiency and product quality frames. However, this correlates with self-responsibility frame, mainly articulated by retailers: it implies their independence in solving problems.

Summing up, the ambiguity articulation shifts in RG from one article to another, in RBC daily – appears in one article or sentence, and Izvestia gives no space for ambiguity articulation.

### *Framing across newspapers*

The peaks of coverage differ across the three newspapers, as they select different issues of the dairy policy after the import ban: RG is more focused on prices, milk and dairy production; Izvestia – on various policy measures, and RBC daily on the consequences of these measures for different stakeholders. Although the newspapers have different peaks of coverage, they highlighted some similar issues within the observed period, such as need in state subsidies and the quality of import and domestic dairy. The main difference is that RG coverage shifted from external (dairy imports quality) to domestic issues (domestic dairy quality; but also low dairy production, cows number and raw milk quality, rising consumer prices); Izvestia covered mainly the issues of external cause (quality of dairy imports, refutation of the high level of domestic dairy counterfeit), and RBC daily, in contrast, – issues of domestic cause (such as rising consumer prices, domestic dairy counterfeit, difficulties of retailers).

Responsibility is the highest articulated frame across the newspapers. Victims of the policy change, that indicate a motivational frame in terms of Benford & Snow (2000: 617), imply need of change, or rationale for engaging in action, for a subtle transition to import substitution. Overall dairy producers are rather modestly displayed as the only victims, except in RBC daily, where retailers are represented as victims as well. The main difference: Izvestia articulated domestic producers as victims of mainly external causes; in RBC daily dairy producers and retailers are victims of domestic causes (particularly new policy regulations) only in the beginning of the timeline. The only utterance in RG about dairy producers as victims indicates that the newspaper is downplaying the need of change that could foster the development of the dairy sector. This means overall low articulation of what could be changed, especially in RG, with difference that Izvestia slightly articulates the need for change outside Russia, and RBC daily – for domestic change.

None of the newspapers represented consumers as victims, although the issues of product quality were highly articulated by RG and sparsely by Izvestia and RBC daily. Three business newspapers referred the issues to importers as culprits (Izvestia), importers together with domestic producers as culprits (RG), and domestic producers as culprits twice more than victims (RBC daily).

Naming of culprits indicates a diagnostic frame, that implies problem identification and attributions in terms of Benford & Snow (2000). In this study responsibility for issues is unequally attributed to three main actors: officials, dairy producers and retailers. In RG and Izvestia importers are much more problem causers than authorities and domestic producers. The difference in RG is that framing of culprits shifted from importers to domestic producers, retailers are less culprits than producers and officials; and consumers shifted from problem solvers to culprits as they have to take responsibility for the dairy quality when they make choices in supermarket. On the contrary, officials are the main culprits in RBC daily, a little more than dairy producers (equally importers and domestic) and retailers. This indicates that the state-owned and aligned newspapers tend to attribute the cause mainly to the dairy producers for insufficient dairy quality, while the independent newspaper to officials for imperfect policy measures.

Defining problem solvers as indicators of a prognostic frame implies “articulation of a proposed solution to the problem” (Benford & Snow, 2000: 616). All three newspapers refer problem solving potential more often to officials than to producers and retailers. The difference is that RG and Izvestia attribute problem solution to consumers as well in the end of the timeline. In RBC daily the articulation of producers and retailers as victims and culprits shifted to problem solvers who try to find their own solutions in the face of imperfect policy measures of officials (e.g., they try to manage sufficient supply of domestic dairy). This indicates that the range of possible solutions in the state-

owned and aligned newspapers is constrained to setting and implementing policy measures by officials towards better dairy quality, while the independent newspaper tends to articulate solutions within the dairy chain itself towards its better functioning.

With regard to other generic frames, RG and Izvestia tend to articulate more the conflict frame than the frame of economic consequences, in contrast to RBC daily. RG displays conflict solution by means of state support, and neutrally reflects disagreement of the dairy producers with the state regulations. Besides that in RG officials and consumers counter one another around the issue of the consumer price increase by means of conflict refutation by officials and refutation of official data by consumers. In Izvestia doubts about official data are articulated by officials themselves towards the dairy quality, while in RBC daily it is articulated by dairy producers towards declared self-sufficiency. The commonality is that conflict of interest in Izvestia and RBC daily is inward articulated towards better product quality. That means that by representing conflict the state-owned newspaper tends to balance between the interests of officials versus producers and consumers; while the state-aligned Izvestia tries to protect officials, and the independent RBC daily – to criticise them.

The frame of economic consequences is more articulated in RBC daily. However all the three newspapers align in the statements that are aimed to display the issue of prices increase and negative impact of the policy on financial flows within the dairy chain. The difference in the coverage is that the state-owned and aligned newspapers report the issues without any evaluation, while RBC daily tends to refer them to the underlying reasons and patterns.

Human interest is overall the least articulated frame and is present only in the coverage of RG and Izvestia, that implies their focus on curiosities and entertainment. This refers also to overall low levels of consumers' representation. By avoiding to link the issues or events with the human interest frame, the newspapers avoid mobilisation of the audience around the policy change. The exception is that the statements on this frame in Izvestia were focused on alternatives of dairy production and are connected with innovation transfer. The overall absence of morality frames could signal that the newspapers avoid to appeal to emotions that could mobilise the audience; they circumvent to evaluate the issues from a moral point of views, or relate them to any moral judgements or behaviour of the actors.

In terms of inductively found frames, the state control frames were the most articulated in RG and Izvestia, that means they pose high importance of state intervention into the dairy sector by means of policy measures. The frame of domestic producer support prevailed in RG and RBC daily, where the mechanisms of state support have got a high level of contestation (i.e. high number of contra-governmental utterances). On the contrary, Izvestia articulated equally and neutrally the frames of product quality and consumer support, that are interpreted in the same way as officials represented the policy goals: as protecting consumers from illegal dairy imports. This indicates a strong support of alleged consumer protecting measures in the state-aligned newspaper, in contrast with the state-owned and independent newspapers that presume a certain level of contestation towards domestic producer support.

Among the issue-specific frames, different in each newspaper, the frame of import dependence dominates in the coverage of RBC daily with a certain level of contestation towards the difficulties of import substitution. This is opposed to the salience of the self-sufficiency frame in RG, supported mainly by pro-governmental statements on successful import substitution. This is the main point where the state-owned and independent newspapers diverge. Besides that, the frames of innovation transfer, foreign investment and dairy sector cooperation in the coverage of RG presume external and domestic networking; while in Izvestia the frames of innovation transfer and foreign investment

are low articulated and appear only in the end of the timeline, and in RBC daily these frames are absent.

In terms of standing, officials gained a dominant appearance overall, although in the sample of RBC daily the dairy sector' speakers together with the sector associations and science overbalance officials in the total count. This can explain a higher level of contestation (prevalence of contra-governmental utterances) in the independent newspaper, in contrast with the state-owned and aligned newspapers.

Metaphors mainly reaffirm the previous findings. Neutral metaphors of RG are counterbalanced by contra-governmental ones by signalling various issues of policy change and contestation of them on federal and local levels. This refers to the parity strategy found in RG coverage. Vicious circle as a symbol of ineffective dairy production illustrates the counterbalance. Izvestia represented politically neutral metaphors on dairy counterfeit combined with a low count of pro- and contra-governmental ones concerning new regulations. This correlates with the prevalence of state control frames in Izvestia, articulated mainly in politically neutral statements, with a low count of contra-governmental and lack of pro-governmental ones. RBC daily presented only politically neutral metaphors on policy outcomes, mainly concerning state subsidies and dairy counterfeit as well. These metaphors mainly refer to the statements on domestic producer support, articulated in a politically neutral way.

The discussed findings will help to answer seven specific research questions, outline the contribution and limitations of this study, and give recommendations to communication science, practice and journalism, represented in the next chapter *Conclusions*.

<b>Issues</b>	Shift from external to internal causes	Barely shift to internal causes	Shift from external to internal causes
<b>Generic frames:</b> <i>Responsibility:</i>			
<b>Victims</b>	Dairy producers		Dairy producers and retailers
Approach to change	Barely need of change	Need of change outside Russia	Need of domestic change
<b>Culprits</b>	More importers than officials and domestic producers for insufficient dairy quality		More officials than retailers and producers (importers & domestic) for imperfect policy measures
Coverage specifics	Shift from importers to domestic producers	Shift to importers and domestic producers	
<b>Problem solvers</b>	More officials than producers and retailers		
Coverage specifics	Solutions constrained to setting and implementing policy measures		Shift to dairy producers to find solutions within the dairy chain
Approach to <i>Conflict</i>	Balance the interests	Protect officials	Critical to officials
Coverage specifics	Conflict solution Conflict refutation by officials	Conflict of interest	
	Refutation of official data on prices increase by consumers	Refutation of official data on dairy counterfeit by officials	Refutation of official data on self-sufficiency by dairy producers
<i>Economic consequences</i>	Prices increase; negative impact of the policy on financial flows		
Coverage specifics	Lack of issues evaluation Less coverage		Uncover patterns More coverage
<b>Issue-specific fr. :</b>			
<i>State control</i>	Domestic producer support presented as contested	Mainly consumer protection from illegal dairy imports	Domestic producer support presented as contested
<i>Others</i>	Self-sufficiency with support of import substitution	Low articulation	Mainly import dependence with criticism of import substitution
<b>Standing</b>	Officials dominate		Speakers of the dairy sector, science and associations overbalance officials
<b>Metaphors</b>	Counterbalance: pol. neutrally on various issues of policy change and disagreement with them	Politically neutrally on dairy counterfeit; pro- & contra-gvt. on new regulations	Politically neutrally on state subsidies and dairy counterfeit

Table 6. Coverage overview.



## Chapter 7. Conclusions and recommendations.

This study concerns the media framing of the Russian dairy policy after the reciprocal sanctions with regard to increasing media autocracy in Russia. The study showed how the controversies around the Russian dairy policy were articulated in the observed period within and across the three business newspapers with different forms of ownership, i.e. by selecting certain issues, prioritising certain issue aspects and speakers, and thus constructing different realities. The findings presented in this study help to understand what kind of interactions between the frames can occur across the newspapers and over time: dominance, parity, or contestation of the issues at stake. And how this contributes to the understanding of media framing in terms of media autocracy, how this reflects the policy making process, and its influence on the dairy sector and consumers. The conclusions are presented along the specific research questions, outlined in the introduction.

*What is the difference between generic frames of the recent Russian dairy policy in the selected newspapers?* Responsibility is the highest articulated frame across the newspapers. However, it mainly concerns the problem identification and solution rather than the need of change, and it is unequally attributed to three main actors: officials, dairy producers and retailers. In RG and Izvestia importers are present much more as problem causers (for insufficient dairy quality) and officials as problem solvers, in contrast with RBC daily, where officials are more culprits (for imperfect policy measures) than dairy producers (equally importers and domestic) and retailers, both shifted to problem solvers. The need of change is overall low articulated, especially in RG, with difference that Izvestia slightly articulates the need in change outside Russia, and RBC daily – in domestic dairy production and retail. Although the issues of product quality were highly articulated by RG and sparsely by Izvestia and RBC daily, none of the newspapers represented consumers as victims, but well as problem solvers and even culprits (RG and Izvestia).

The conflict frame is more articulated in the state-owned and aligned newspapers, than in the independent one. The newspapers differ in representing conflict: RG tried to balance the interests of officials, producers and consumers; Izvestia – to protect officials, and RBC daily – to criticise them. The frame of economic consequences is more articulated in the independent RBC daily, that tends to refer issues to the underlying reasons. The lack of morality frame and low presence of human interest frame, and the avoidance to represent consumers as victims, indicate that all the three business newspapers with different forms of ownership circumvent to mobilise the audience, with different interests and concerns, around the controversies of the dairy policy.

*What kind of issue specific frames can be found in the different newspapers?* The frames of state control were mostly articulated in the state-owned and aligned newspapers. While the state-aligned Izvestia endorsed the consumer protecting measures, the state-owned RG and the independent RBC daily aligned in strong contestation towards the mechanisms of domestic producer support (i.e. state subsidies). However, these two newspapers diverge in their interpretation of the policy of import substitution. The import substitution in the dairy sector is contested by the independent RBC daily in the most articulated frame of import dependence; and it is endorsed by state-owned RG in the one of the highly articulated frames of self-sufficiency. The low presence of innovation transfer, foreign investment and dairy sector cooperation frames in RG align with low articulation of need of change (in terms of responsibility frame).

By tracing the patterns across generic and inductively found frames, several strategies were defined within each newspaper. The state-owned and aligned newspapers used a downplaying strategy by neutrally representing the issues of consumer prices increase and production deficiency without attributing it to consumers (RG), and the issues of dairy quality decrease – by attributing it to causes

outside Russia (Izvestia). Looking for balance in views, the state-owned RG presented a parity strategy by as much amplifying as contesting the policy measures and the competitiveness of the dairy production; and a 'call for cooperation' strategy by trying to connect the dairy sector stakeholders around the complex issues. The state-aligned Izvestia performed a conformity strategy by reporting the policy measures of officials (ban, permission, subsidies) and compliance of other speakers with them; and a strategy of imitating contestation, when the speakers expose demands to improve the policy measures by using the order-giving, or commanding style of officials. By attributing responsibility to officials and ambiguity in the policy implementation, the independent RBC daily tends to foster possible solutions of issues in a prescriptive or subjunctive form, that is reflected in a fingerpointing (or naming&shaming) strategy. The main difference in strategies is that there is almost no contestation in Izvestia, that is reflected in the strategies of conformity and imitating contestation; with regard to a parity strategy of RG, support and contestation are balancing across different articles, and in RBC daily – in one article or even one sentence, with regard to a fingerpointing strategy. Such a disposition of frames and strategies is reinforced by metaphors.

*What kinds of speakers appear in the different newspapers, and are there any dominant types of speakers?* The main kinds of speakers are officials of federal and local levels, followed by representatives of the dairy sector (including milk and dairy producers and retailers), the sector associations and science. As it was assumed, the Russian officials gained overall a dominant standing. However in the sample of the independent RBC daily the speakers of the dairy sector together with the sector associations and science overbalance officials in the total count. This can explain a higher level of contestation in the independent newspaper, revealed in the prevalence of contra-governmental utterances, in contrast with the state-owned and aligned newspapers.

The presence of foreign actors and civil society representatives was minimal. There was no space for consumers as individuals in all the three newspapers to articulate their views and concerns towards the dairy policy. They have been voiced only once in the state-owned RG as a part of consumer association towards prices increase on the dairy. Remarkable is that in conflict situations the refutation of official data reflects the disposition of strategies used by the three newspaper: the official data was contested by consumers due to prices increase in RG, by officials in Izvestia due to high level of dairy counterfeit, by dairy producers against self-sufficiency in RBC daily.

The focus on economic news and the interests of business community as the target group of the three newspapers can be one of the reasons for the absence of consumers as speakers. This shows limitations in the coverage of business newspapers.

*Did the media frames of the recent Russian dairy policy shift over time?* There is a shift found only in the articulation of responsibility frame connected to the shift in issues. The coverage of RG and RBC daily shifted in the coverage of issues from causes outside Russia to domestic causes, and the framing of culprits in terms of responsibility shifted in RG as well – from importers to domestic producers. The framing of dairy producers and retailers as culprits in RBC daily shifted to representation of them as problem solvers. At the same time Izvestia performed no shifts in the coverage and framing.

*Is there any frame interaction within or across the different newspapers?* The interaction of responsibility frame is found in the state-owned RG and the independent RBC daily. Both align in strong contestation towards mechanisms of domestic producer support, and diverge in the interpretation of the policy of import substitution. Dealing with ambiguity, the newspapers interpret the goal of officials to achieve self-sufficiency differently. Accordingly, the frame of self-sufficiency, displayed by RG to endorse the policy of import substitution, is countered by RBC daily in the frame

of import dependence. In contrast, the strategies of conformity and imitating contestation, used by Izvestia to display how officials try to keep control over the issues, correlate with the findings of Elvestad & Nilssen (2010), that the import substitution policy is used by officials to regain state control over economic transactions and actors.

Another interaction, found in these two newspapers, is divergence in representation of networking within the dairy chain. The frame of dairy sector cooperation, appeared only in the state-owned RG, displays the need in networking and better collaboration around the complex issues of the Russian dairy sector. In contrast, the frame of self-responsibility, represented only in the independent RBC daily, describes how the actors of the dairy sector build networks themselves to manage the gaps in the dairy policy after the food ban. This indicates higher articulation of proactive position in the independent newspaper.

*How do the media frames relate to the developments and issues in the dairy sector?* The coverage of the three business newspapers with different forms of ownership complies with issues found in the literature review. The overall dominant standing of officials with high articulation of state control frames in the state-owned and aligned newspapers corresponds with vertical coordination of the industry, aimed to protect and support domestic producers and consumers in order to ensure self-sufficiency.

Besides that, highly contested frame of domestic producer support in the state-owned and independent newspapers complies with the Russia's commitment to WTO obligations to reduce state subsidies, and stimulates the development of new financing models and knowledge exchange. Unfortunately, both were low articulated in the newspapers, except rather high presence of the innovation transfer frame in RG. However, the literature showed that knowledge and technology exchange are extremely needed, e.g. for the development of dairy cattle breeds (Blokhin & Dunin, 2015).

Many issues of the Russian dairy sector are mentioned both in the reviewed literature and in the observed newspapers. Such issues as insufficiency in milk and dairy production, enlargement of agroholdings and disadvantage position of small dairy farms, depreciation of physical machinery, weak institutions, are not connected by the newspapers to the underdevelopment of agricultural education, research and extension. According to Sedik et al. (2015), research organisations have a potential to provide an independent expertise, for example, explore consumer needs and preferences. While the needs and concerns of domestic dairy producers are widely articulated by the three newspapers, the interests of consumers are almost not present.

Moreover, education, research and extension could stimulate networking, bring up innovations, attract finance, and foster transition from import dependence to self-sufficiency in the Russian dairy sector. The need of networking in the milk production and dairy supply is articulated by RG in the frame of dairy sector cooperation. In contrast, the self-responsibility frame of RBC daily provides the audience with examples of such cooperation. That aligns with need of change, articulated in the independent RBC daily, and not present in the state-owned and aligned newspapers. It can be concluded that self-organised networks within the dairy sector could be a driver of change and an alternative to restrictions and limitations of the policy measures.

*How can this media framing be explained?*

By using the conformity, imitating contestation and downplaying strategies, the state-aligned Izvestia serves as a mouthpiece of the official interpretation: the selected issues and speakers, interpreting them, give no space for ambiguity articulation. The strategies of the state-owned RG, named as

parity and 'call for cooperation' versus the downplaying one, discover its balancing potential between actors with various interests, so that the role of RG can be interpreted as arbiter among controversies. The ambiguity in the representation of the dairy policy is however dispersed across different articles, and the RG's representation of reality has less potential to influence the situation in the dairy sector. The coverage of the independent RBC daily, due to the fingerpointing strategy, can be interpreted as a watchdog of the official interpretation, that can be in line with the function of independent business media. Together with this strategy, a higher salience of self-responsibility frame, represented the emergence of networks in the dairy sector, could serve as a driver of change towards self-sufficiency. However, the networks need to be stimulated within the sector itself, not only by media framing.

This study investigated the difference in representing ambiguity in the framing of the Russian dairy policy from the perspective of media autocracy. The findings of this study showed how the form of a newspaper's ownership can influence the framing of the Russian dairy policy, i.e. the salience of certain issue aspects and speakers, and what underlying strategies of the newspapers predetermine the differences in framing. In terms of Benford & Snow (2000) this study contributes to the understanding of correlation between *contention*, found in contra-governmental statements, and *agency* – in pro-governmental ones, the role of these statements in construction of one-, or two-sided, or more complex representation of reality, and their role to promote the need of change. It is proved at the example of these three business newspapers that the form of a newspaper's ownership implies the use of certain communication strategies, developed as a result of media autocracy.

It is found that ambiguity is more or less represented, when politically neutral statements are counterbalanced by contra-governmental ones (*fingerpointing* strategy); and when politically neutral statements were equally contested and supported, in order to balance the stakeholders' interests (*parity*, 'call for cooperation'). Official, or one-sided, interpretations dominated, when politically neutral statements avoided to articulate the victims of the represented issues (*downplaying*); and there was alignment with official interpretations, when politically neutral statements were neither contested nor supported (*conformity*, *imitating contestation*). Contestation of official interpretations, based on the prevalence of contra-governmental utterances, or alignment, based on the dominance of pro-governmental ones, are not found in that sample. The fingerpointing strategy of the independent newspaper is closer to more complex representation of the dairy policy, than the parity strategy of the state-owned one, due to density of the ambiguity articulation. In RBC daily it appeared in one article or sentence, while in RG it shifted from one article to another.

The findings fill the knowledge gap in previous studies on media framing, that are conducted in terms of democratic societies. Firstly, the differences found in framing and underlying strategies of the three business newspapers according to the form of ownership, comply with the conclusions of Whitten-Woodring (2009), Kostadinova & Dimitrova (2012) and Stier (2015) that the regime type can influence the media content, in that sense that autocracy leads to less level of deliberation in media. However, the Russian state-owned newspaper used strategies and frames that imply the balance of the stakeholders' interests, and thus perform more level of deliberation, than the state-aligned one. Secondly, the results of Garbuznyak (2015) that the independent Russian quality press is able to establish alternative interpretations of the official policy representations, are also in line with the findings that the independent newspaper tends to give more a complex interpretation of reality, than the state-owned, and the state-aligned – a one-sided interpretation. Thirdly, the theory of Entman (2003) on frame dominance, contestation and parity corresponds also with the findings on

dominant frames, frames alignment and divergence. Particularly, the dominant frames are responsibility, found in all the three newspapers, and state control, articulated in the state-owned and aligned newspapers. The state-owned and independent newspapers align in strong contestation towards mechanisms of domestic producer support, and diverge in the interpretation of the policy of import substitution. They are also in line concerning the need of networks development in the dairy sector, although the framing of this need differs.

The conceptual framework of this study combined different theoretical insights on framing that proved to be useful. The conceptualisation of media framing based on Benford & Snow (2000) and Entman (1993, 2003) was helpful to analyse framing of the Russian dairy policy in terms of agency and contestation, and reveal its potential in the ideas mobilisation. Therefore the analysis was aimed to identify and frames in the statements, and the polarity of these statements. Use of Atlas.ti helped to provide the analysis with transparency which is important to achieve trustworthiness of the study. The research methodology based on combination of qualitative and quantitative methods helped to analyse the data from different perspectives. Recognising of generic frames helped to provide the study with a greater internal validity. Inductively found frames helped to bring the analysis closer to the context of the Russian dairy policy, and thus contribute to generalisation of generic frames. Comparing generic and inductively found frames within each newspaper and across them helped to draw conclusions from multiple perspectives. The quantitative analysis helped to make data analysis more precise, and visualised the findings.

In terms of limitations this study compared the samples of different sizes. However, the most extensive coverage in the state-owned RG corresponds to the highest circulation of the newspaper, and does not affect the internal validity of this study. Besides that, because “translation of framing definitions to concrete, operational steps is not transparent in a huge part of the literature” on media framing (Matthes, 2009), the generic frames in this study were operationalised according to fragmented descriptions found in different research designs, e.g., responsibility in the study of Feindt & Kleinschmit (2011), economic consequences and human interest in the study of Kostadinova & Dimitrova (2012). While the policy is aimed to fulfil the needs of domestic producers and consumers, the interests and concerns of consumers are almost not covered by the selected newspapers, and another kind of research is needed to estimate how the consumers are affected by the policy, and how they can be mobilised after the policy change.

Finally, with regard to communication science it is recommended to further investigate media framing of the dairy policy after the reciprocal sanctions in different types of newspapers, e.g., according to the level of specialisation, and compare representations of the Russian dairy policy across different types of media (e.g., audio-visual versus print) and in different countries, according to the level of deliberation. It is also recommended to include the findings on differences in representation of ambiguity in design of communication strategies that have to deal with policy controversies (especially in terms of media autocracy). With regard to industry, it is recommended to explore the role and capacity of modern agricultural education, research and extension organisations in the emergence of networks for the development of the Russian dairy sector. With regard to business journalism, it is recommended to include the interests and concerns of consumers in the coverage of the Russian dairy policy, and to articulate the need of change.

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