Chapter 6
Framing of National Image in a Climate of Socio-Political Uncertainty: A Study of IKEA and Volvo Car Corporation in Swedish and Russian News Media

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ABSTRACT

The climate ripple of socio-political relations between countries can be seen to directly influence trading and international business relations. Discourse within the socio-political realms reflects in discourse within the economic realms. A common channel through which such perspectives are mediated between the political realms, corporate relations, and public opinion is the news media, both traditional and new, such as social media and Internet publishing. This chapter examines and compares how major business newspapers in Sweden, Dagens Industry (DI), and two business newspapers in Russia, Kommersant (Ъ-Газета - Коммерсантъ) and RBC (РБК) represent Sweden’s national image between 2014-2015, a period of uncertain socio-political relations between Russia and the Nordic Eurasian states, in particular, Sweden, in the process of the annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation in 2014.

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INTRODUCTION

Swedish-Russian Relations

Swedish-Russian relations, going as far back as the 12th and 13th centuries with the documentation of the Swedish-Novgorodian Wars, can hardly be described as peaceful. Until the early 19th century, the two countries were engaged in several wars, each attempting to gain hegemony over the Baltic Sea (Etzold & Haukkala, 2011; Hagström, Frisell, & Oldberg, 2009). A policy of neutrality has been in place since the 1800s for Sweden that enabled the country to disengage in the two world wars and through the Cold War. The socio-political relationship between the two countries, however, have remained uneasy due to several contributing incidents punctuated in time involving espionage affairs, a stranding of a Soviet submarine in Swedish waters in the early 1980s, and of the recent Russian Federation annexation of Crimea in 2014 (Si, 2016; Hagström, Frisell, & Oldberg, 2009; Silberstein, 2008). The year 2016 recorded the lowest Swedish confidence in Swedish-Russian relations since the submarine incident of the early 1980s and the two countries seem to be struggling for common ground perspective on Crimea (Sydsvenskan, 2017; Lund, 2016).

Set within the current context of the political climate between Sweden and Russia are 400 Swedish companies that operate in Russia. The total value of Swedish-Russian trade was recorded to have increased by eleven times between 1998-2011. In 2013, Russia was Sweden’s 13th largest export market and 7th largest import market, the main trading goods being automobiles, equipment for the telecommunications industry, chemicals, and raw materials including crude oil from Russia to Sweden (SwedenAbroad, 2017). As of 2016, Russia is Sweden’s 15th largest export market and 13th largest import market (SCB, 2016).

News Media, Public Opinion, Multinational Business Enterprises (MBE)

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The Relevance of Science in Development: Scientific Development Favors Economic Prosperity, but Not Necessarily through its Effect on Technological Knowledge in Middle Income Countries
www.igi-global.com/chapter/the-relevance-of-science-in-development/94089?camid=4v1a

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