

# Are we entering the Second Cold War?

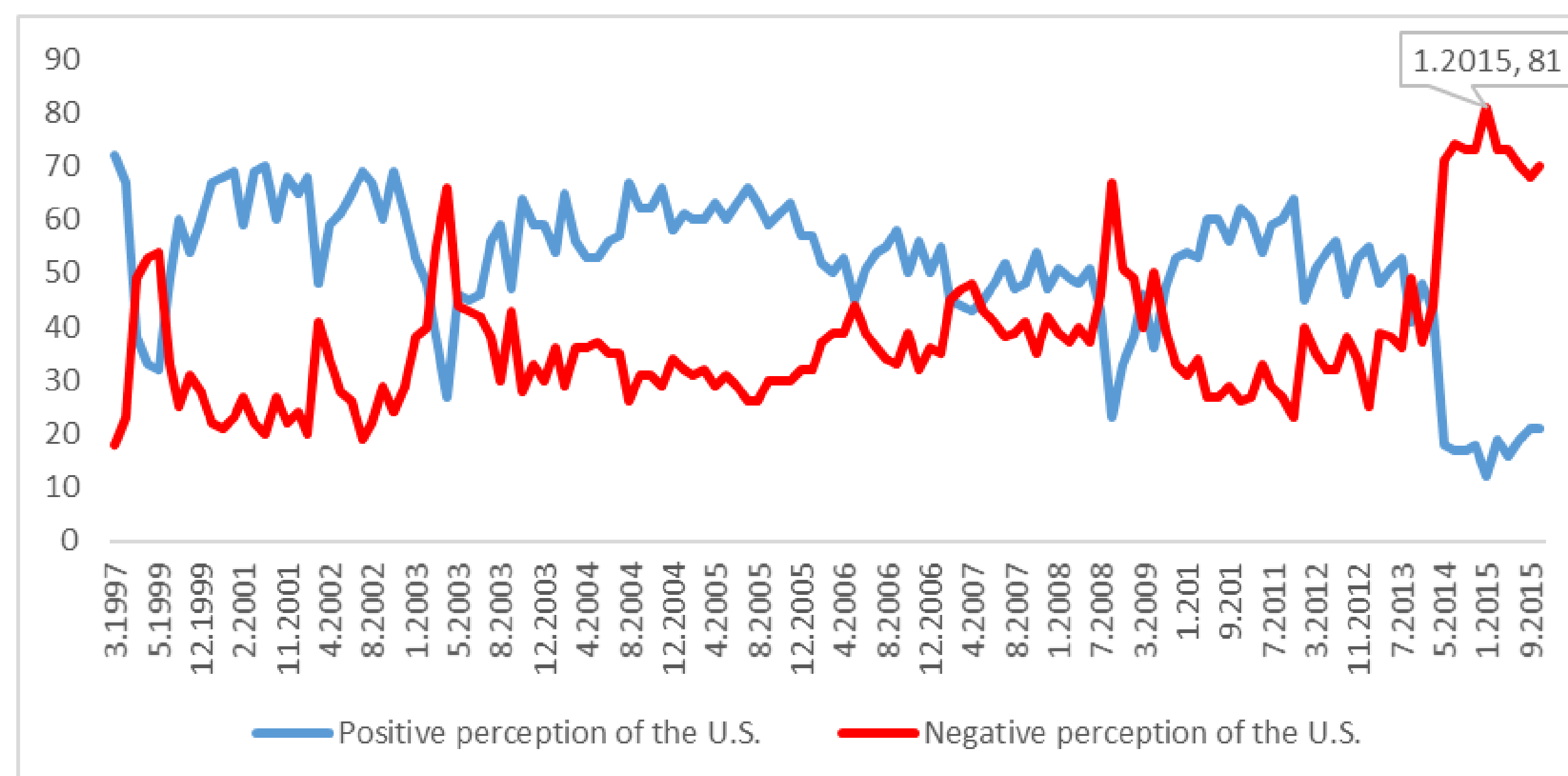
## Media agenda and public opinion about the U.S. in Russia

Ekaterina Bogomoletc, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC  
 ebogomo@ncsu.edu

### 1. Introduction

From 2014-2015, the number of Russians who dislike the U.S. increased from 50% to 81%. Some experts explained the shift in public opinion by the "Second Cold War" rhetoric in Russian media that happened after the reintegration of Crimea into Russia. However, only few studies were conducted to demonstrate a link between media coverage of a foreign country and public opinion about the country.

Dramatic shift in public opinion about the U.S. in 2015



© <http://www.levada.ru/indikatory/otnoshenie-k-stranam/>

### 2. Objectives

In this study, I seek to find out if...

- the media discourse of 2012-2015 resembles Cold War rhetoric;
- the situation in Crimea changed the way Russian media portrayed the U.S.;
- public opinion about the U.S. in Russia is connected to the way the U.S. is portrayed by Russian media.

### 3. Methods

#### Media content data ← content analysis

Sample: 572 news stories from TV Rain and Russia 1 TV channels  
 Time period: May 2012 – December 2015  
 Unit of analysis: the individual news story  
 Coding: tone, myth, meaning of a myth

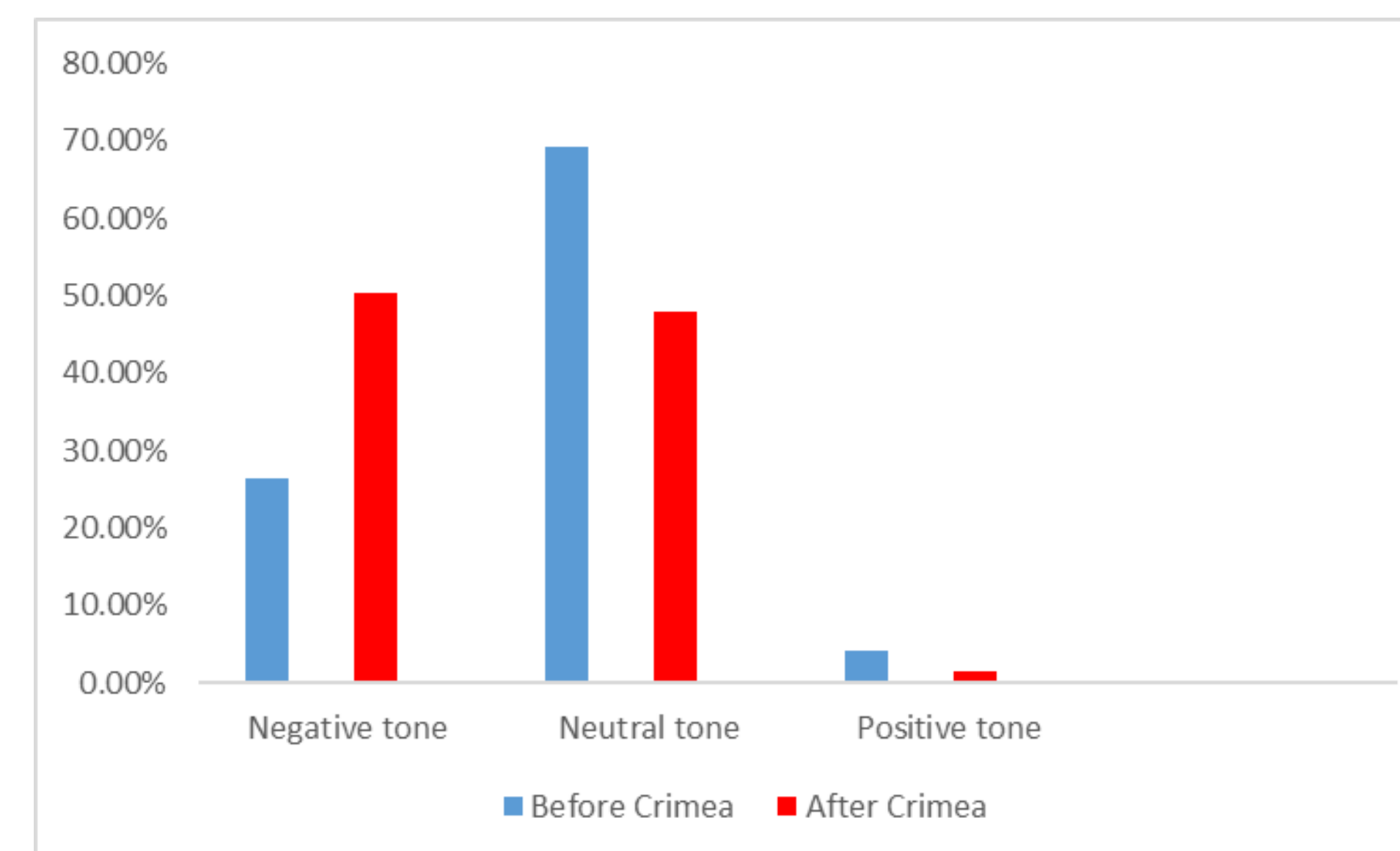
#### Public opinion data ← secondary data (public opinion surveys)

Time period: May 2012 – December 2015  
 Question: How do you perceive the U.S.?  
 Source: Levada Center Organization

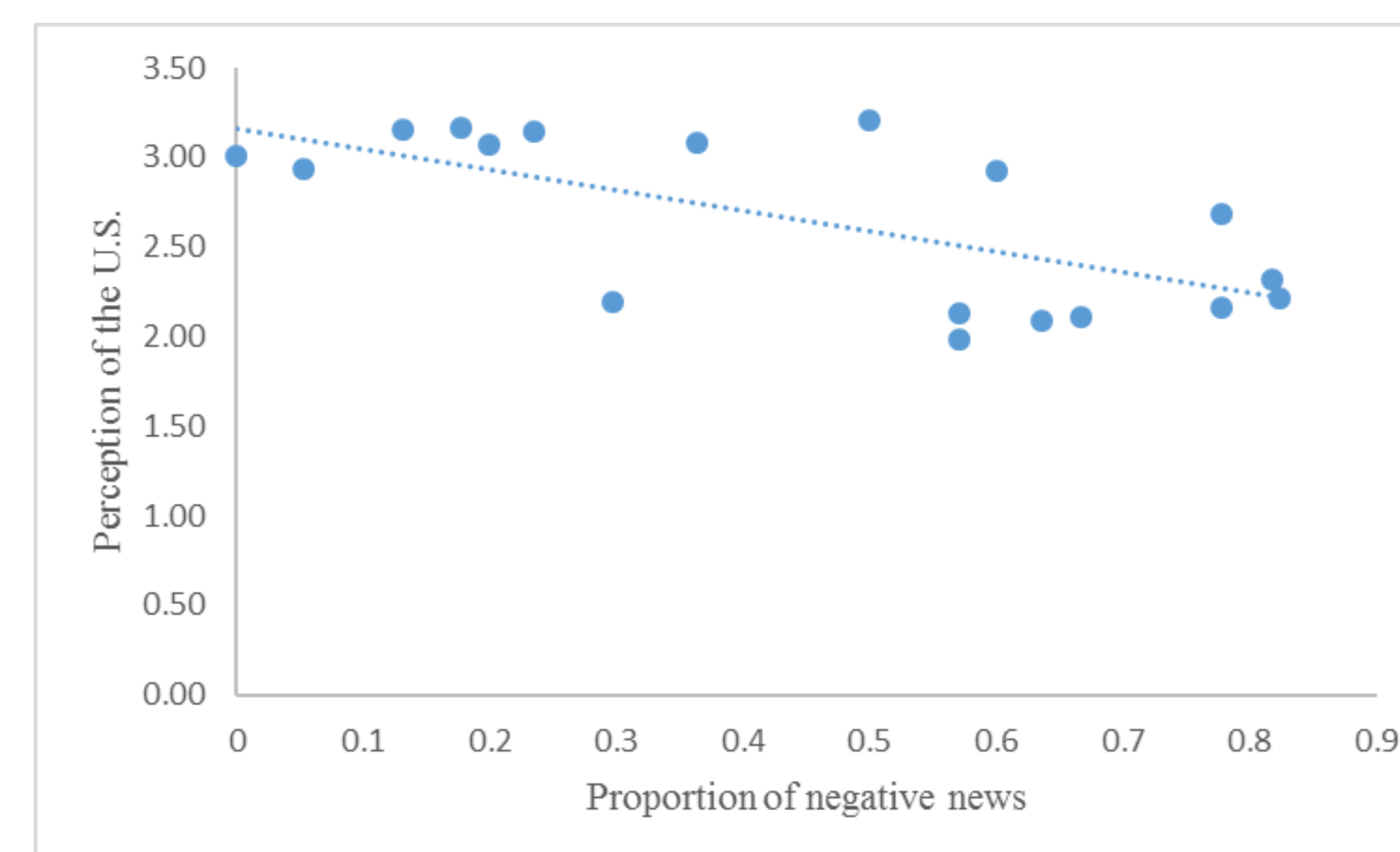
**Analysis:** chi-square tests, and correlation analysis

### 4. Results

1. Media coverage of the U.S. after the Crimea situation is more negative than media coverage of the U.S. before the Crimea situation ( $\chi^2(2) = 35.44, p < .001$ ).

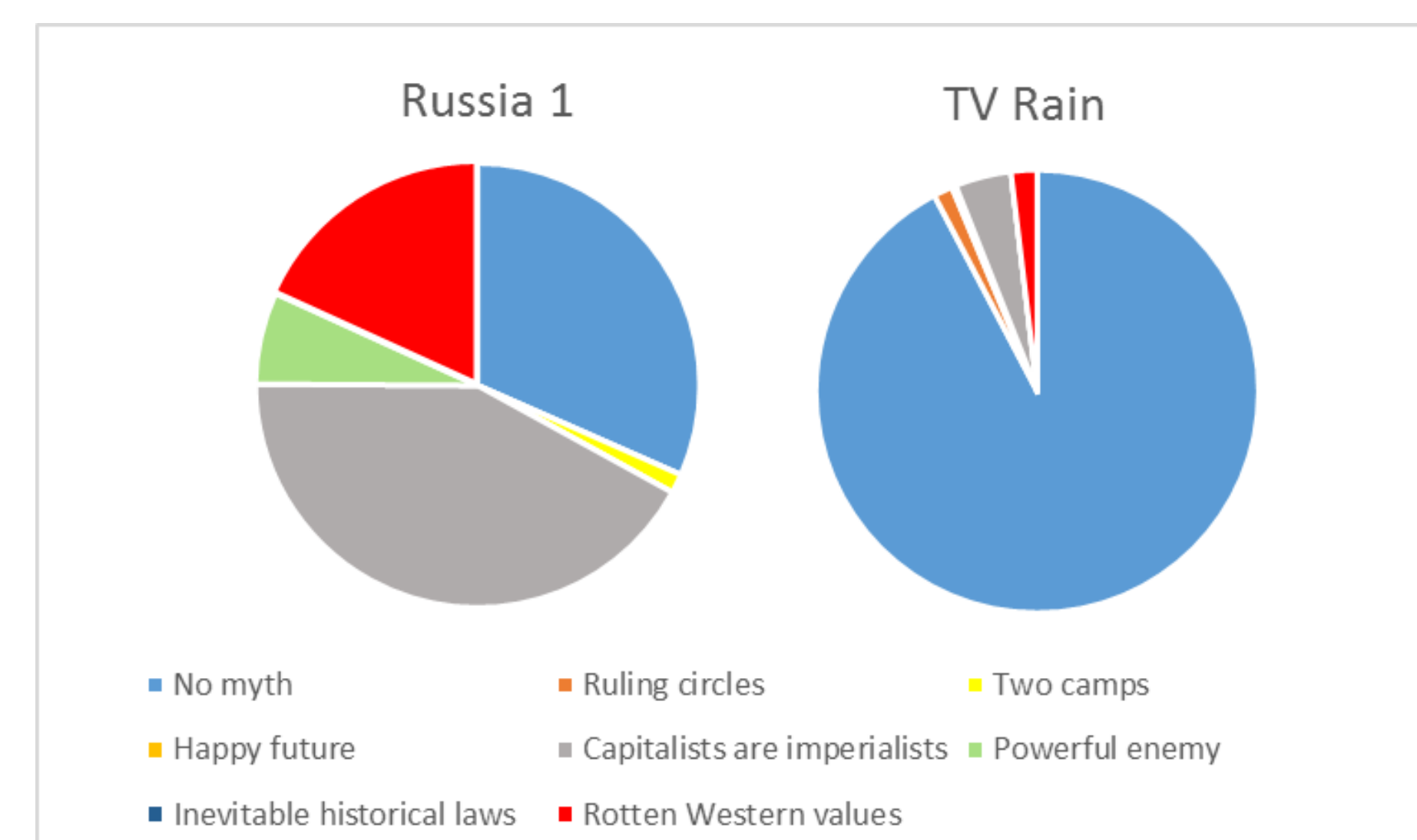


2. There is a negative linear relationship between the proportion of negative news stories and public opinion about the U.S. in Russia ( $r = -.669, p < .01$ )



3. Positive media coverage of the U.S. does not correlate to public opinion about the U.S. in Russia ( $r = .177, p = .482$ )

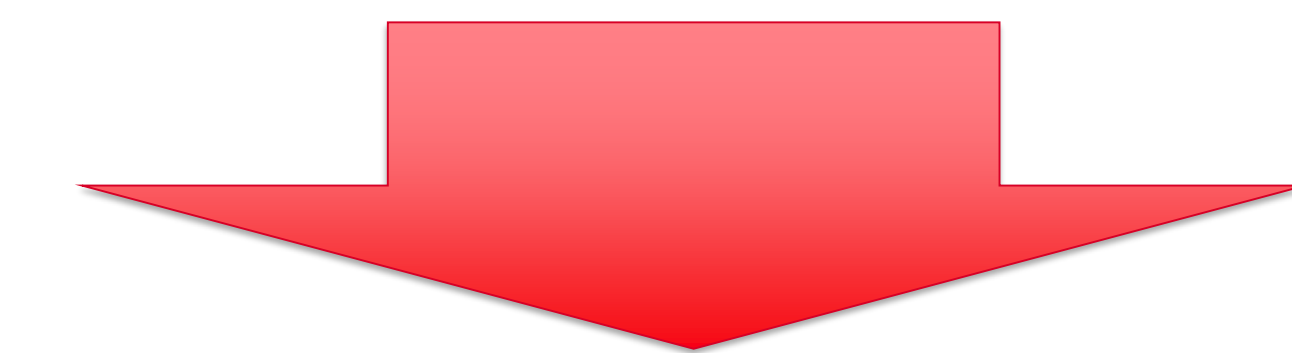
4. Cold War myths were used in 30% of news stories about the U.S. The most popular myths were the Americans are imperialists myth and the Rotten Western values myth.



### 5. Conclusions

Media framing of the U.S. In Russia:

- Could have been affected by the reintegration of Crimea into Russia: the proportion of negative news stories after the Crimea situation almost doubled in Russian media in comparison to the news coverage of America before the Crimea situation;
- Might have shifted public opinion about the U.S. in 2015: there is an association between negative media coverage of the U.S. from 2012-2015 and public opinion about the U.S. from 2012-2015;
- Resembles Cold War rhetoric but has its unique features: the majority of news stories used only two Cold War myths out of seven;
- Depends on TV channels: while there were no other points of view broadcasted by Soviet media except for the one approved by the official propaganda, today, the oppositional TV channel provides an alternative perspective on the U.S.



© <https://tipolitics.com/>

Implications for the framing theory:

- Events happening in a third country may impact media framing of a country that is not directly involved in the events;
- There is a negative correlation between negative media coverage of a foreign country and public opinion about the country;
- There is no correlation between positive media coverage of a foreign country and public opinion about the country.