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Abstract

Russia of the 21st century is a fundamentally fragmented society (Auzan 2011, Zubarevich 2011), with post-industrial, industrial, rural and migrant/Caucasian communities showing divergent patterns of consumption and involvement into public deliberation, including patterns of media use and formation of closed-up communicative milieus in online/hybrid media (Chadwick 2013). The ‘third’ and ‘fourth’ Russias are seriously underrepresented in the media system; recently, a major cleavage between the public spheres of the ‘first’ and ‘second’ Russia has openly shown up. Our research upon media use patterns of participants of ‘For fair elections’ protest rallies of 2011-2012 (Bodrunova & Litvinenko 2013b) shows that there’s a link between communication and media use patterns in post-industrial urban ‘public counter-sphere’ (formed of intelligentsia, ‘creative class’, studentship, and ‘white collars’) and their perceived political freedom and online political behavior. As Russia is ‘world’s top1 networking community’ (as stated by Comscore in 2012), the research is expanded by search for echo chambers / opinion crossroads in Russian Facebook vs. its analogue Vkontakte, as well as within the migrant-oriented discourse in the Russian Twitter of 2013.

Keywords

Hybrid media system, public sphere, media use, Russia, Facebook, Twitter, echo chambers

Nowadays, democratizing potential of Internet in terms of raising the efficacy of public deliberation is a highly disputable matter within several media and political research fields. This dispute seems to be especially relevant for transitional democracies like post-Soviet or Latin American countries, where traditional media segments have for long experienced flaws in democratic development. This paper deals with the recent changes in the media system and public sphere in Russia. In Part 1 of the paper we formulate the research framework we use and pose the research questions; we formulate them quite broadly, in order not only to answer them (only partly) in this paper but also to state them for other researchers. In Part 2, we discuss some outcomes of the Case study 1, which deals with media use and perceived political behavior of the most active political audience of the early 2010s, namely the Russian political protesters. In Part 3, we discuss, again, some results of the Case study 2, which shows the ‘crossroads’ nature of the Russian Twitter. In Part 4, we answer the research questions and discuss the overall results.

1. Research premises

Theoretical grounds and research area

With the growth of Internet penetration around the globe in 2000s and especially 2010s, traditional views on the concept(s) of mediated, or media-based, public sphere and its democratization potential, including deliberation practices, has undergone several significant changes. Without even attempting to trace all of those developments, we will draw attention only to some points that we consider relevant to this paper.

To conceptualize the qualitative shifts that media systems themselves are passing through in terms of their shape, borders, and relations with outer society, including the political sphere, we deploy the concept of hybridization of media systems (Chadwick 2011, 2013). Under hybridization of a media system, we understand the two trends: 1) growing transformation of offline media into the so-called ‘convergent’ media characterized by multiplatform production and multichannel delivery of content; 2) growth of the new segment of the media sphere, namely online-only professional media outlets and web 2.0 aggregated individual media. In other words, media
hybridization means not only tech-based changes in the structure of media systems and growth of its online segment but also its relation to numerous social and political consequences of the technological advances, including horizontalization and higher involvement of audiences into political discussion, formation of online local pressure groups, and facilitation of communication for political movements. A hybrid media system, thus, has a visible segment of both convergent and individual media; the extent of hybridization, though, may vary significantly in several terms: first of all in conditions for hybridization (e.g. Internet penetration in a given community), extent of hybridization (e.g. platform diversity or number of media outlets represented in social networks), and social implications.

As media hybridization studies is a research area in the making, the hybridization 'umbrella' is not always applied, and more traditional research frameworks are used to conceptualize the research. We, though, consider this ‘umbrella’ quite productive (Bodrunova&Litvinenko 2013a), as it, first, allows to treat new media, including social networks, simultaneously as technological platforms and/or communicative milieus (which is common for Internet studies) and as parts of media systems – with all the political implications they bear. Second (perhaps due to the ‘first’), it allows to flexibly link research on technological and structural aspects of transformations in media systems with media-political research in areas of digital divide, agenda setting, efficacy of public sphere, political involvement through media and others. A clear link between public sphere research and the hybridization of media sphere, especially in the area of social networks studies, has been established in the works dedicated to Arab spring, worldwide Occupy movement and grassroots movements of a lower scale.

German authors have stated that media hybridization trajectories are context-bound (Adam&Pfetsch 2011) – that is, media hybridization depends on national socio-political conditions and societal patterns more than on universal ones (e.g. on the nature of media platforms used transnationally). This statement still needs a lot of research to be proven (or otherwise) for different macro-regional contexts; but even if so, this statement shows that media hybridization research has natural comparative notion, as we speak of national hybridization trajectories, which we understand as the co-tracks of temporally or causally correlated changes in media systems and political sphere. But comparative framework for such studies is not yet well-developed in literature; thus, national case studies are now conducted in search for parameters relevant for future comparative assessment of the hybridization trajectories and quality of hybridization.

In this paper, we suggest two broad sets of parameters to be discussed: 1) context parameters and 2) functional parameters.

Under context parameters, we will briefly speak of three types of relevant context: 1) national socio-political context important for development of the particular media system – e.g., democratic status of the country, modernization patterns, recent political history, major societal cleavages, institutional structure, or legislation; 2) media context – e.g. structure of the media system prior to and in times of hybridization linked to how societal and political cleavages are represented, national politically relevant peculiarities, or penetration of digital technologies into journalistic community; 3) new media context – e.g. Internet penetration levels, as well as the structure of the offline/online media parallelism, of social networks market, or of SNS audience.

Of this picture, the research hypotheses arise that help assess the functional outcomes of the hybridization trajectory linked to its democratic quality. These outcomes may be of practically nature and may touch different areas of political behavior of citizens; reviewing them all is well beyond the scope of this paper (for a short account, see Gerhards 2009). But we still see several particularly relevant research areas that may in future produce parameters for assessing the quality of public spheres in hybrid media systems. Of those, we will widely describe four ‘big’ research foci.

First, it is connection between hybrid media diets and political behavior. In this area, optimism or even utopism of the early Internet years (Jankowski & van Selm 2000; for the Russian account, see Rohozinsky 1999: 2) has shifted to a more rational critical estimation of potential of new media to shape ‘tweeted revolutions’ (Gladwell 2010), and the questions remain on how exactly new media impact political involvement, including mass political protest, movement formation, and individual political participation – and vice versa, whether political activity online alters media consumption. Second, it is structural aspects of the public sphere – we need to know whether the existing societal
cleavages are mirrored, smoothed, deepened, or new ones appear. Often, the aforementioned two aspects combine in research to show the ambiguous nature of online communication – as it is still believed to be more horizontal, easy to access, and individual-friendly and thus more politically empowering than traditional mass communication, but at the same time it fosters fragmentation of online political discussion (Sassi 1996; Gerhards 2009), since online milieus tend to be quite closed-up and to form ‘spirals of silence’ (Noelle-Neumann 1984) eliminating the views contrasting the dominant one within the given milieu. Noelle-Neumann’s famous concept is revived within ‘echo chambers vs. opinion crossroads’ research, where these closed-up milieus are referred to as, e.g., ‘public sphericules’ (Gitlin 1998), ‘enclaves’ (Sunstein 2007), or ‘filter bubbles’ (Pariser 2011). Here, it is worth researching which platforms in the national context tend to form echo chambers and which help build crossroads of opinion, and why.

Third, it is another platform-oriented question already mentioned above – national context vs. universal (that is, platform-bound) conditions of communication. We need to know 1) to which extent the national context actually influences universal patterns of use of online and hybrid media; 2) what factors – national or universal – play a bigger role in formation and functioning of hybrid public arenas in a given society (Adam&Pfetsch 2011). And, finally, we need to look at the roles of traditional media in the hybrid media system. In the 1990s, researchers showed that actual, non-abstract public sphere is media-based (Calhoun 1992; Gerhards 1997; Schulz 1997), with mass media playing ‘junction’ roles in flows of communication. Reconstruction of the existing political cleavages and representation patterns, as well as the transposition of the public fora online, highly depends on whether these ‘junction’ media keep their dominant positions in the hybrid media system or are challenged by the online-only media. Another aspect of relations between online-only, offline-only and hybrid media is intermedia agenda setting (McCombs 2005), including the online/offline discussion flows and agenda spill-overs: e.g. which media create agendas for other segments of the hybrid media system, whether agenda flows trespass the online/offline boundaries, or which roles new media play for their ‘old’ counterparts.

In short, what we consider relevant is to look at whether new media really influence political behavior (and how), whether hybrid media reproduce the pre-existing representation and discussion cleavages (or smooth or intensify them), whether the national context can dominate the platforms coming from outside the system, and whether ‘old’ media continue to be agenda setters and gatekeepers.

Further on, we will describe the Russian hybrid media system of 2010s bearing in mind the three context areas and the four research foci. We aim at starting a discussion of the Russian media hybridization; the paper represents partial results of several research projects united by this aim.

Russia of 2010s as a research object: fragmentation and polarization of the ‘four Russias’

If we place Russia into the current modernization research, we’ll see that its modernization trajectory has had a distinct set of features that till today shape the national understanding of progress (Kangaspuro&Smith 2006). Being always top-down and Western-oriented, both before-and after-the-revolution modernization projects aimed at either catching-up or competing with global powers, rather than to qualitative breakthroughs in raising the standards of internal life. The Soviet modernization legacy, as Vartanova (2013) notes, left conservative and industry-based modernization detached from culture and especially media, with the economic and ideological factors slowing cultural modernization and thus creating several ‘modernization speeds’. The late perestroika time and late 1990s have become a major ‘shock therapy’ period that, for the media market, caused not only introduction of democratic patterns into political life, commercialization of media economy, and deideologization of audience (Zassoursky Y. 2004; Vartanova 2012) but also a giant value shift with the direction opposing to most other countries and regions of the world – more towards traditional and survival values than secular and self-expression ones (Inglehart 2013).

The socio-economic development of Russia in first Putin’s era was not deprived of the Soviet multi-speed patterns; thus, the country that seemed to reach if not stable growth then at least a certain stability of rules in economic life remained socially underdeveloped in crucial social arenas like social security, crime prevention, or fight with corruption, as well as sharp inequalities in access to public goods formed in 1990s and not yet overcome.
In 2000s and early 2010s, the Russian society remained a fundamentally fragmented one in several areas: center vs. periphery, rich vs. poor, economic stability vs. social underdevelopment, and availability and implementation of new industrial technologies. Russian federalist model has evident misbalances, with decision-making taking place mostly in Moscow and regions highly differing in both structure of executive authorities and fiscal and developmental freedom (Khvoschin 2007), the current system being often described as super-centralized (Zubarevich 2013a). In 2008 to 2012, Dmitry Medvedev’s ‘modernization’ appeal did not base itself neither on a systemic approach to new hi-tech-based industrialization nor on linkage between modernization of technologies and public institutions, both aspects clearly necessary for the country as the Russian Academy of Science experts have shown (Bodrunov 2009, 2013). By 2013, Moscow has developed as a global city, being the only global city in the country, a clear sign of this being the popular division of Russia into “Moscow” and “Zamkadye,” the area beyond Moscow circle road (MKAD). But, as Russian Forbes noted, Moscow has failed to become an attraction for foreign investment and high-qualification specialists from abroad. Another factor shaping the current socio-economic picture were the major emigrant flows: out-flows to Europe and the US and immigrant flows from the ex-Soviet states of South Asia and the Caucasus into the European part of Russia as well as the Chinese ‘soft invasion’ in the Far East.

By 2011, these factors have lead sociologists to the idea of ‘multi-speed Russia’, or, rather, of ‘several Russias’ in one. Thus, Natalia Zubarevich, director of regional studies at the Independent Social Policy Institute, has described “four Russias” based on amount of population, its habitat, income and work status, lifestyle and behavior patterns, and developmental potential. ‘First Russia’ comprises 21% of population if cities with over 1,000,000 inhabitants (millionniki) only are considered, and 36% at best if some other cities with not less than 250,000 dwellers are included. Here, post-modern transformation is on march restructuring the labor market towards high-profile and service-providing jobs, disseminating Moscow consumerist practices and concentrating the Russian newborn middle class. ‘Second Russia’ is industrial, made up of cities with 20,000 to 300,000 inhabitants whose main occupations are either blue-collar industry or state-funded jobs. This Russia comprises circa 25% of population – the one with Soviet patterns of social life, whose political protest potential is calmed down by state donations supporting employment and social spending. ‘Third Russia’ is rural: territorially huge but devastated, depopulated, and depoliticized but still making up to 38% of population. ‘Fourth Russia’ is formed by North Caucasus (circa 6% of population) and migrant flows (4/5 of which are concentrated in Moscow and St.Petersburg); this Russia is focused on in-community struggle for resources and depends upon Moscow for financing (Zubarevich 2011, 2013b). A similar division was drawn by Alexander Auzan, notable Moscow economist who told of Russia as of ‘country of managers, security men, migrants, and pensioners’ (Auzan 2011).

Politically, the 2000-2008 were the time of consolidation of the regime: the formation of ‘power vertical’, cancellation of mayoral elections and thus transforming the upper chamber of the parliament into a non-elected body, growth of the ‘United Russia’ as a catch-all party of power, raising the State Duma electoral threshold and thus dividing the opposition parties into ‘systemic’ (elected) and ‘non-systemic’ (no longer elected), establishment of pro-power youth movements like ‘Nashi’ (‘Ours’, infamous as ‘nashists’) or ‘Molodaya Gvardia’ (‘Young Guard’, after a Soviet novel) all created the circumstances for lowering the competitive capacity of the political arena. The 2008 first seemed to become a bifurcation point of expectations in terms of revival of political competition. After the pre-election ‘heir’ situation was resolved in favour of Dmitry Medvedev and he won the subsequent presidential elections, while Vladimir Putin became prime minister, the expectations rose in some part of the establishment that the two ‘tandem’ leaders will, in four years, become competitors in presidential race – even if the discourses of Putin’s ‘stability’ and Medvedev’s ‘modernization’ intertwined but rarely opposed each other; both de-aligning from “the evil 1990s” and underlining separation of powers rather than competition. During Medvedev’s term, a major political cleavage showed up in how opinion polarized in interpreting the heritage of 1990s vs. the 2000s: for most part of the ‘second’ and ‘third’ Russia, the ‘evil 1990s’ were the time of ‘der’mocrats’ (‘shitocrats’) and ‘prihvatization’ (‘grab-it privatisation’) while the 2000s were that of ‘stability’ and ‘modernization’, while for many in the ‘first’ Russia the 2000s were perceived as a transitional drawback embodied in ‘tandem’, ‘putinism’, ‘new stagnation’ (second after Brezhnev’s
late 1970s) and 'party of filchers and thieves', as blogger and anti-corruption activist Alexey Navalny famously called 'United Russia'.

Meanwhile, an ambiguous phenomenon of 'social rise' was observed by academics and journalists. The negative part of it was the rise of militant youth movements like nationalist, neo-Bolshevik, neo-Nazi, or 'radical antifa' ones. Other radicalized non-political groups included communities of the Caucasus migrants and nationalist-oriented football fans, those two being at the edge of violent clash in Moscow in 2010; other two big attacks to migrant communities were in Kondopoda in 2006 and in Moscow's Biryulyovo district in 2013. The position of the state towards radicalized communities has been ambiguous, as neo-Bolshevik leaders were several times under arrest but at the same time clearly racist 'Russian marches' were officially allowed – while peaceful manifestations of 'Strategy 31' civic movement for the freedom of assembly were never allowed in 2009-2010 in Moscow, were all broken up by specially equipped police forces, and on May 31, 2010 at least 230 participants were arrested in Moscow and St.Petersburg, several activists getting severe injuries. On the other side, a kind of positive response to social demand for political action and political efficacy manifested itself in the growth of multiple grassroots activist initiatives, mostly local and 'alternative' to state-induced political agenda, like helping homeless, solidarity in fighting forest fires around Moscow in 2010, a struggle of car owners for abolishing the 'blue lights' of VIPs on the roads (the 'small blue buckets’ campaign), moving Gazprom’s 'business tower' away from the city centre of St.Petersburg (the Okhta Centre case), protecting a local forest from a road construction project in Khimki in 2010, highly popular anti-corruption crowd-funded campaigns by Alexey Navalny and his 'RosPil' foundation, or searching for the people lost in woods – all based to a big extent on online networking and assuming certain responsibilities of local authorities. Of these initiatives, only several were connected to political life (like creating an association of election observers named Golos – the Voice). This 'social rise' was supported by the revival of actionist art, with Voina group, Pussy Riot and Petr Pavlensky emerging as the most radical artists all suffering from persecution (bloody street attacks to members of Voina, a two-year sentence to Alekhina and Tolokinnikova of Pussy Riot, and a court case against Pavlensky in 2013-2014).

Throughout the 2000s, within the ‘first Russia’, a particular stratum has been forming, which later got popular names of 'creative class' and 'angry city dwellers'. Sociologically, their peculiar features were mental character of work and placing values of self-expression and freedoms over the values of stability (WCIOM 2012a). This re-designed the social cleavage line, as the dominant mode of regional underdeveloped middle class was much more 'pro-stability'. Politically, the level of legitimacy of the national leadership and executives was the lowest in this social milieu (Kachkaeva 2013). In terms of media, they began to form a new audience of urban, cosmopolitan, highly educated, technologically advanced, and creative stance.

**Russian traditional media of the 21st century**

For the post-Soviet political landscape, for Russia first and foremost, the vector of development of media systems has changed in the recent 15 years from 'imitating' the West (Splichal 1994) to perception of national contexts, especially political hybridization processes, as a primary definer (Vartanova 2013). In the recent 15 years, Russia has witnessed two economic crises: that of 1998 (the internal banking and insolvency crisis) and the world economic recession of late 2000s. Unlike the latter; the former is considered to have cast at least ambiguous if not positive effects upon the media market, as many industries have turned to internal markets thus creating the modern Russian ad market, which gradually allowed for bigger economic and political autonomy of the market (Vartanova 2013: 64), especially in regions. While some big ad market players went bankrupt (Zassoursky I. 1999: 200-201; Koltsova 2006: 89), in long-term perspective it lead to 'fat years' of 2000 to 2007, when the media market diversified and commercialized; several trends became vivid. Qualitative changes on the media market included relative decline of the newspapers, especially of the Moscow-based ones, and 'TVzation' of the Russian audience. As newspapers and national TV channels are viewed as the most politically relevant media segments (Voltmer 1990), we will go in a bit of detail in discussing the abovementioned trends.

The newspaper decline in Russia had its own features that make it differ from the newspaper crisis in Europe or Americas (Alterman 2008; Puyu 2010; Siles&Boczkowski 2012). It was provoked by the rapid liberalization of the media market (known as the glasnost period), one of the
implications of which was tabloidization of newspapers. Thus, several major surviving Soviet titles like Komsomolskaya Pravda or Moskovsky Komsomolets have moved to low-market high-circulation segment forming the core of the Russian tabloid press, the rest being formed by depoliticized, erotics- and mystery-oriented titles. The quality dailies’ market ceased to be nationwide in terms of appeal, as today it is the business titles (Kommersant, Vedomosti, RBC Daily) that form its upper segment, thus narrowing its audiences to the business-oriented ‘first Russia’ (less than 1% of the population, in experts’ opinions) and naturally making the regional publics turn to local editions for quality news. Though evident was the ‘regionalization’ of the newspaper market, provoked by restructuring of the audience niches described above as well as by the collapse of the Soviet distribution system, the regional dimension of the market suffered in other aspects, first of all of low quality of content, low general cost-effectiveness on non-yet-well-developed ad markets, financial dependence upon local authorities, pre-paid publications practices, and absence of clear market statistics (Martynov&Os’kin 2007; Gatov 2010), as well as self-censorship (Os’kin 2011). Thus, it was not the competition with TV, Internet, or the new breed of dailies like Metro that formed the systemic crisis of newspapers in Russia, as the Russian newspaper crisis started before 2000s; it was the delivery and subscription crisis on vast territories, low amount of quality audience and lack of professional production of news. But perhaps its main cause was the dramatic after-shock loss of trust to newspapers, with the country average of 16% in late 2000s (Vartanova 2013: 69); for 2013, this figure already was as low as 7% (WCIOM 2013). Another explanatory factor for such drops of trust to newspapers may be the fact that newspapers are still perceived by older non-urbanized audiences as a part of the state, and thus general mistrust to the state (Holmes 1997; Schoepflin 2001) stretches to the papers. Liberalization of the market which spurred the circulations in the 1990s and ‘regionalization’ of demand have brought the market relative stability in the 2000s, but even if so, the overall newspaper audience in Russia today does not exceed 20%.

Political trends on the newspaper market were also very distinct, as they reflected the post-Soviet legacy combined with distorted political competition of the 2000s. Thus, absence of classic political parallelism tradition (Hallin&Mancini 2004) has lead to absence of formal electoral support of parties by the tabloid papers, which, though, was compensated by latent support and informal ties of journalists with politicians and business – notoriously exemplified by Ashot Gabrelyanov, since 2011 owner of the Soviet-survival mid-market leader Izvestia and a tabloid Life who openly expresses his support to Vladimir Putin in interviews. Weak party press does not form the political spectrum in media, while more politically relevant papers often demonstrate ‘weathercock’ behavior on political stance, as their political position polarizes depending of the position of the elite: pro-establishment press remains such and oppositional press remains in opposition no matter whether the leaders express right or left views.

Parallel to this and unlike in the EU, national terrestrial TV remained free of charge for the general public and available in at least several channels for over 95% of the population, which, together with the newspaper crisis, has naturally lead to ‘TVzation’ of the national audience. The so-called federal TV channels gradually emerged as ‘the only glue of the nation’ (Gabowitch 2012) and the main news source for Russians on average. But unlike in press, TV trust levels differ significantly from one polling agency to another: as to Public Opinion Foundation (FOM), it is 56% and varies two times across the ‘four Russias’, with 36% among the ‘high resource employees’ to 62,5% among pensioners (Galitsky&Petuhova 2012), while WCIOM and Levada Center provide much higher figures, namely 74% to 79%. The huge gap in viewing and trust between the ‘first’ and ‘second&third’ Russias even allowed some commentators to speak of a ‘post-broadcast era’ (Strukov 2012) and of ‘a fundamental shift in the loyalty and attention of key segments of the Russian news audience’ (Oates 2008), which, though, may be true for the most tech-advanced cluster of the ‘first’ Russia where TV consumption has been fading indeed.

The structure of the TV market has partly followed the world trends, with growth of supply in response to segmentation of demand; today, it is 40% of audience who watch TV news in general, which is in line with the figures of most European countries. But the post-Soviet legacy and the ‘four Russias’ factor show in how the TV audience is fragmented: thus, Vartanova shows that there are three main audience groups, namely the ‘TV-oldies’ who represent ‘second’ and ‘third’ Russia and two other, much smaller segments from the ‘first Russia’ – ‘white-collar’ and ‘Internet aborigine’ groups (Vartanova 2013: 73). But in terms of programming the interests of the ‘third’ and ‘fourth’ Russias were heavily under-represented, as neither regional, rural, or migrant/small-nation
communities ever received substantial coverage of their agendas on federal TV channels. Neither was there a chance for minority or opposition audiences to equally (or at least partly) manifest their agendas on television, as in 2000s there was no public service TV in Russia which could, as Channel 4 in the UK or ZDF in Germany, give floor to the non-dominant social milieus. In 2011, one of the last Medvedev administration’s initiatives was creation of a PSB channel, which provoked a vivid public debate. The channel was launched in spring 2012, and in several months the money for the channel were exhausted; additional subsidies were issued, but till today the overall audience of the channel has not reached even 3%.

The ownership structure of the TV market has been raising multiple critical accounts, as the main audience share (over 70%) is divided between federal channels with state or close-to-the-state ownership (Pervy Kanal, Rossiya 1, NTV, and Pyaty Kanal, altogether enjoying circa 50% of daily audience) and all-Russian entertainment channels (STS, TNT, and REN TV, with over 20% of daily viewership). After 2008, the state control of federal channels further enhanced, as news production at REN TV and Pyaty Kanal was given to Russia Today, the state-owned Russian foreign broadcasting channel, and in 2011 as ‘Yury Kovalchuk, a co-owner of Bank Rossiya and a longtime Putin associate, purchased a 25%-stake in Pervy Kanal’ (Freedom House 2011). The rest (under 20%) of the market is formed by 12 all-Russian niche channels and a ‘long tail’ of regional and local channels, which catch some 80 to 85% of this market share (Vartanova 2013).

Political trends on the Russian federal TV have by the late 2000s formed an atmosphere reminiscent of the abovementioned ‘new stagnation’. First, the division of the opposition in Russia into ‘systemic’ (three parties elected to the State Duma beside the ‘United Russia’) and ‘non-systemic’ (non-elected parties and movements, including liberal and centrist forces representing SMEs and the creative class) has been reflected in news coverage, where the non-systemic opposition was heavily underrepresented. Second, consensus-oriented political discussion has been substituted by news reporting upon personalized political and economic decisions by the president and prime minister (whoever, Putin or Medvedev, these were) as well as by confrontation-oriented talk shows like Poedinok (‘Duel’), K barieru! (‘Fight!’) etc. Third, personalization of political representation grew enormously, as political broadcasting focused on major figures: president, prime minister, several ministers, four party leaders, and several governors. Inevitably, non-political narratives were attached to the major political figures. If Medvedev got known for is ‘hi-tech modernization’ narrative (the ‘naukograd Skolkovo’ project, publicly expressed interest to gadgets, support to launches of Russian analogs of foreign hi-tech goods etc.), Putin has openly acquired a macho image (guiding superjets, saving a journalist from a tiger on the Far East, going deep into the lake Baikal in a bathyscaphe, diving for ancient amphorae, and the famous ‘teaching sterkhs to fly’ – a clearly positive species-saving initiative that, though, had no chance to be interpreted outside of the dominant personal image). These were only the most evident signs of emasculation of the TV-based political discourse. And if for Moscow a radio station Ekho Moskvy, even if owned by Gazprom, took the oppositional stand, many regions were deprived of such a luxury.

Structural hybridization of Russian media and the formation of the online public sphere

The hybridization of the Russian media system in late 1990s – 2000s had several stages and several peculiar features. The early years of Runet were marked by a particular sense of freedom, as Runet itself formed not via the attempts by the late-Soviet authorities but as a collection of networks initiated by private forces (Rohozinski 1999: V).

As it is evident from Bovt (2002), of the first three pioneering phases of Runet media, the third (1999-2000) was already politically-oriented, as new media outlets like Gazeta.ru, SMI.ru, Utro.ru, Lenta.ru appeared in between State Duma and presidential election campaigns. Till 2014, Gazeta.ru and Lenta.ru remained the leading online-only news outlets in Runet, setting the standard of fair and balanced reporting.

The next phase includes, to our mind, the ‘fat’ years 2001 to 2007 when the main quantitative growth of Runet can be observed – with offline media gradually appearing online; blogosphere, especially the Russian Livejournal, being the main communication milieu for the Runet elite (IT workers, students, urban office-based employees, creative intelligentsia etc. (Alexanyan&Koltsova 2009); Internet penetration reaching over 30% in millionniki; the Russian social networking platforms Vkontakte (‘In contact’) and Odnoklassniki (‘Classmates’) blooming. These years saw the
formation of the first online close-up communication milieu, namely the Russian *Livejournal* (Gorny 2004), while web 1.0 Internet remained practically non-regulated and self-standing communication environment.

The next two phases, of which we’ll tell below, are those of 2008-2011 and since 2011 on, and they are clearly politically shaped in their beginnings and ends, as the 2008-2011 phase begins with the first ‘rokirovka’ (‘castling’ between Putin and Medvedev) at the elections and ends with the outburst of the street protest of December 2011 in Moscow. It is this particular phase that saw the most rapid growth of Internet use (from 20.8% in 2007 to 27% in 2008 and to 44.3% in 2011, according to InternetWorldStats). The last phase is the one we research upon (see below).

As theorists argue, the Russian hybridization of media may be better understood using the notion of national media models rather than via the universal normative concept of the democratic impart of the web (Oates 2008). The Runet media and blogs, according to many scholars (Alexanyan 2009; Gorny 2004; Schmidt&Teubener 2006), was in 2000s influenced by both the nation-specific societal structures and journalistic traditions, reproducing the ‘social atomization, negative attitudes to official institutions… and a strong dependence on personal networks as a source of information, opinions and support’ (Gorny 2009: 8), as well as the digital divide in journalistic community.

The distinct features of the Runet of 2000s were, first, a special shape of digital divide in and beyond the journalistic community (Anikina, Dobek-Ostrowska, Nygren 2013) which practically pushed older-generation journalists out of online-only media production, second, low parallelism between offline and online media (Bodrunova&Litivinenko 2013b), and, third, a special role of social networks within the online community. Thus, by September 2011, there were over 50 mln Russian users online, which, though, was just a bit over 1/3 of the population (Ioffe 2010); there remains a sharp division between big cities of the ‘first Russia’ where the average Internet penetration level was already over 90% in 2012 (Vartanova 2013: 86), and the ‘third’ Russia, but this difference is gradually diminishing, as over 50% of today’s users do not belong to the cities of over 100,000 inhabitants. Nearly a half of the online audience in Russia, though, is found in the 25-45 age stratum, thus taking Internet use profile far from normal distribution; these are the ‘young but experienced users’ that drive the development of Internet projects, according to Rambler Rumetrics.

In this stratum and younger ones, Internet news sources have stably gained the second place after television in both consumption and trust; for the audience of 12 to 34 years old, Internet was by 2012 already leading in reach. The growing Internet consumption ad multiscreen connections vs. fading TV use and decline of trust to it have explicated in a popular saying of ‘throwing away the zombie set’ as a sort of a norm of social behavior towards television.

Another feature of the Runet media is low structural parallelism between online and offline media (Litvinenko 2013); of the Top10 Runet media sites, there would be just one or two web portals of the major offline outlets, as it is stated monthly by the media monitoring agency Medialogia. Until very recently, this very distinct feature was also supported by how the websites looked like, especially in province: the more ‘first-Russia’ was the orientation of a media, the more user-friendly and modern design the website had (with very few exceptions like *Komsonolskaya Pravda*); many local newspapers had just a ‘frontpage’ websites with a greetings editorial and scanned front pages collected online with no clear purpose, ‘just because we should have a website’ (Bodrunova 2013). Surprisingly, TV portals were underdeveloped as well.

The third national feature has been a peculiar configuration of social networks’ market, *Vkontakte* with over 110 mln Russian-language users being the gathering point for the younger part of the ‘second’ Russia, *Odnoklassniki* representing its older strata with significant presence of the ‘third’ one, and the Russian *Facebook*, the newcomer of 2009 which attracted the most advanced audience from *Livejournal* and other communicative spaces of the creative class, while reaching circa 9 mln users by 2011. In 2010, ComScore ranked Russia #1 worldwide according to monthly time spent in social networks per visitor (9.8 hours in comparison with worldwide average of 4.5 hours per visitor; with these figures rising up to 12.8 and 5.9, respectively, in 2012). But this audience seemed to be using social networks mostly for fun and to be hardly interested in politics (Etling et al. 2010), which made, e.g., Oxford and Harvard researchers call Runet ‘the web that failed’ the political expectations (Fossato 2008; Fossato, Lloyd, Verkhovsky 2008; Etling et al. 2010). As later events showed, these assumptions underestimated crucial potentials of Runet.
But the main content feature of the latest phase was the gradual formation of several clusters of online and hybrid media that were all united by, first, its audience and, second, by a very peculiar treatment of news agenda.

These media corresponded to the demands of the audience that had abandoned television use and shifted to online news consumption. Such audience looked not just for alternative channels but for meaningful news discourse relevant to their everyday practices and cultural, political, and critical demands. That is, the media that captured the audience of the “angry city dwellers” were destined to have other news judgment orientations and, *ergo*, a different resulting agenda in their news menus. E.g. instead of politics, economics, social, cultural and sports departments, they would focus on the issues that remind of the green, alternative, single-issue or other niche parties in Europe: they had speak of organization of urban space, designate trends in cultural consumption, bring to light social cleavages previously non-reflected, feature persons that bear non-political information still crucial for societal survival and development, like scientists or industry leaders; and their agenda became politically relevant and thus politicized (or, rather, their audience felt so) not because of left-right polarization but under the pressure of comparison between subjectively judged meaningful and irrelevant, emasculated, ‘spun’, or ‘doctored’ discourses. Such media cannot be compared to those media that serve counter-cultural groups as described by Lars Svendsen (2007) in the area of fashion, Dick Hebdige (1979) or Sarah Thornton (1996) in the life of subcultures, or Stephen Duncombe (1997) in political art. They exist as if there were no mainstream media at all, rather than struggling for alternative interpretations of the same current agenda, as oppositional media do.

Among those, one could find at least several smaller clusters, as this segment on the whole has been a zone of experiments with format and audience involvement. Moreover, in full accordance with the theory of media hybridization, offline alternative-agenda media appeared and accumulated into its own cluster(s), fostering the appearance of a ‘parallel’ media sub-system united by new topicality and news judgment principles, no relation to the mainstream discourse of major mass media, and having as audience the stratum that stood higher on Maslow pyramid, as they valued change, competition, and self-expression over stability and security. Along with ‘traditional’ oppositional media like Ekho Moskvy website, Novaya gazeta, or Radio Liberty, these new media created an alternative ambience, providing a new dimension for the choice of information sources.

In Moscow and S.Petersburg, among hybrid (online/offline) media, there were ‘hipster media’ (Bolshoi gorod, F5, Sph.sobaka.ru) and city recreational media (Afisha, TimeOut), creating a phenomenon of almost-glamorous media outlets becoming substantial parts of public sphere. Phenomenal was opening of the Dozhd ‘optimistic’ television channel in cable and online ambience. An interesting phenomenon was gradual (and in December 2011 – almost rapid) shift of business media, namely Vedomosti and Kommersant, to pro-oppositional stands; their news were provided via Facebook to a big part of their target audience, and the papers, allegedly, decided that the audience was more important in long-term perspective than connections in the establishment. Magazines like Russian Reporter or Snob also played a part in shaping the online public sphere.

Alternative-agenda media in Moscow and St.Petersburg included those listed above, but not only. Several news outlets of non-political agenda, like Openspace (culture, media, community) or Slon (business and later political blogs). Openspace that started off in 2009 was such a significant ‘junction’ that it attracted hundreds of thousands readers on publications non-political by topicality but politicized in terms of social critique. Hipster/city media online were smaller in number, of which Look At Me and The Village projects were, arguably, the most successful.

Among other media online, political discussion platforms like Russian Journal, Daily Journal, or InLiberty became much more active. Though regional media are, for now, out of our focus, we can’t help noting that there was also a wave of establishment of regional web portals with alternative agenda and social critique as principles of news judgment, which supported the spread of the ‘alternative’ space for public debate. Among those, we could name Taiga.info in Siberia, Gazeta.Irkutsk, Vladivostok3000.ru, NewKaliningrad.ru, Bumaga in Saint-Petersburg and others. In 2008 – November 2011, individual blogs or portals of user-generated content (UGC) did not play a role comparable to that of alternative-agenda media – with one notable exception, namely the blog by Alexey Navalny who became known after publishing insider financial reports of major state companies where he was a minority shareholder. Becoming one of the most popular bloggers in
Russia, he created a crowdfunded project RosPil (‘RusSaw’) on how state money are ‘sawed’ (‘cut into per-person parts and stolen’).

To sum up the 2000-2010 in Russian media, we’ll note five conclusions.

1. The fundamental audience fragmentation has produced new cleavages in media consumption, from newspapers to Internet. Several distinctive cross-platform and cross-demographic media clusters may be spotted in today’s Russia that differ in audience niches, agendas, media use patterns, degree of support to the ruling elite, and media industry concepts, including professional norms, production cultures and understanding of newsworthiness. Thus, Toepfl (2011) describes official, mainstream, liberal-oppositional, and social media clusters in Russia.

2. Media use itself has become in Russia, as in many other countries, a social stratification variable: exposure to technologies (Galitsky&Petuhova 2012), media diets and media use patterns, not less than your income or job status, attach you to a certain social milieu.

3. The ‘third’ and especially ‘fourth’ Russia are heavily underrepresented in national and even regional media, which creates the ‘silent zones’ in the public sphere less inclusive than expected.

4. Before 2011, Runet remained practically untouched by restrictive legislation being a free space with its own leading news outlets, self-forming communicative milieus, and free discussion.

5. The split between the ‘first’ and ‘second’ Russias began to form is how agendas were split on state-owned and pro-establishment newspapers vs. business papers, online-only news agencies, and alternative agenda online-only and hybrid media. This split was still latent in end-2010s but already cut through online/offline borderline, being shaped not by digital divide but by cross-age, -gender and -class cleavages in media audience.

Thus, Russia of 2010s represents a nearly perfect object for media hybridization research, as by that time it had developed a peculiar hybridization strategy, with low parallelism between offline and online media arenas and socio-political cleavages showing up on the media market and in the online public sphere.

Case study 1: Hybrid media in the Russian political protests of 2011-2012

In 2012-2013, we conducted research upon media diets and patterns of media use of the protesting community (Bodrunova&Litvinenko 2013b). Some results of this research appeal to the research foci we suggested above.

Short history of the Russian 2011-2012 ‘For fair elections’ movement includes protest rallies of December 2011 to May 2012 in 39 cities all over Russia, which in Moscow mounted to over 100,000 participants, peaceful ‘walks with writers’, Occupy camps, and ‘White ring’ car rides. White ribbon became the symbol of the movement, being labeled by Vladimir Putin as ‘looking like means of contraception’ in one of his televised press conferences. The protests were the first massive clash between the ‘first’ and ‘second’ Russia, as there were also ‘pro-stability’ and ‘anti-orange’ rallies (often attributed by opposition as staged) and expressions of public support to Vladimir Putin by people who asked questions at televised ‘direct lines’ with the president.

In summer 2012, we conducted an online survey among the ‘For fair elections’ rally participants. The questionnaire had 29 questions, we received 652 responses, of which 424 were full (and over 500 completed more than ¾); thus, the full response rate was close to 2/3. We also conducted 11 in-depth interviews with senior media managers, political analysts, and representatives of ‘white-collar’, ‘online aborigines’ and ‘TV oldies’ audience strata to cross-validate our results; five media experts also provided us with their views on what political stance a selected list of national newspapers took before and in times of the protests.

Media use patterns and changes in the media diets of the protesters
According to our findings, the social milieu involved into protests varies significantly from the average Russian socio-demographic spread. Our respondents are over 30 (32–36) years old on average, over 70% of them have higher education and 10% have an academic degree, and Vkontakers (who predominantly use Vkontakte social network) are, on average, older than the Facebookers. They all mainly work as hired professionals (40%), including upper levels of management (15.6%), and the number of students, pensioners, and non-workers is not higher than 5%, while the number of self-employed and freelance workers who depend on themselves in financial support amount to 25%. Our figures are in line with the general image of the Russian protests: it is really mostly the creative and managerial class of Moscow and Saint Petersburg (3/4 of the respondents), successful people with high self-esteem and perhaps with a plea for change, thus reflecting the “four Russias” division. As to the political activity of the respondents, it was remarkably low before the protests started, roughly 1 of (0; 3) scale.

In accordance with this, the news diet (media of regular use) of the protest movement contrasts sharply the average one (where television represents the main news source for up to 98% of population, according to various polls of 2004-12). The news diet of the spill-over consisted to a large extent of new media (online media, social media and blogs almost equally) and of radio (mostly oppositional, and of those – mostly Ekho Moskvy).

Overall preference of online information sources to offline ones is 4.2 for Facebookers and 4.0 for Vkontakers on the scale of (1; 5). No surprise, then, that social media were generally perceived by the respondents as a very influential trigger of the protest (2.53 on the scale of (1; 3)). The preferences towards web 2.0 media are also supported by the fact that social networks, blogosphere, and online media compete very closely within media diets of the rally participants (see Figure 1): our results showed reliable and significant correlations in co-use of these three communicative milieus [Table 1 – to be provided by September 1, 2014, subject to publisher permission].

Traditional politically relevant media, like TV and print, do not make more than 25% of relevance in terms of regular news supply. This provides new input for re-consideration of political influence of various media segments. The growth of consumption of online media naturally suggests their growing influence, but the cases of street protest demand closer look at the thresholds of their political impact. Such a big percentage of use of new media suggests, indeed, significant polarization in media consumption (see Figure 2).

The protests seem to have really influenced media diets of the respondents. Perceived mean change in media diet is 0.4 of 1; that is, circa 40% of the respondents noted at least some changes in their media consumption. When asked which exactly media they abandoned or included in use, 16% tell of refusal and 24% of growth of use of certain media outlets, but these two groups partly overlap, thus, altogether, less than one-third of the respondents could reflect on their changed media consumption patterns (29%). But anyway this figure suggests huge changes in perceived media consumption.

The decline in consumption was in 2/3 connected to denial of use of pro-establishment media (82 of 120 mentionings), of which over 90% was about abandoning federal television channels. In in-depth interviews, two out of four respondents who used to watch television regularly admitted to have quit doing so since autumn 2011, with argumentation that ‘the political information one gets on television is one-sided’ (Konstantin, 55). Here, ‘double polarization’ may be spotted: the protesters not only refused to use media that favored establishment but also consumed more oppositional, alternative-agenda and social media. In general, the protest movement seems to have fostered the consumption of ‘media junctions’ of the ‘parallel’ public sphere constituted mainly by these three media clusters. But, more or less unexpectedly, 15% of rejections were exactly in the three clusters relevant to the protesters. This may be explained by two factors: 1) general disappointment in the protest movement, which also cast shade to the relevant media; 2) politicization of content that could seem overwhelming to some parts of the audience. The second suggestion is supported by our data on mean perceived political bias in the media consumed by the protesters, which is 2.7 (1 – pro-establishment, 2 – neutral, 3 – oppositional).

Arguably, the most interesting finding is that, despite social networks and not online media most effectively distributed information on the protests (see Figure 3), it was still journalists who played the role of opinion leaders (‘Who authored the most important texts during the protests?’). But these were journalists from online media, not traditional journalists (see Figure 4). Another
curious finding was that the ‘For fair elections’ movement was not at all video-based (see Figure 5), unlike the Arab spring protests or other protest movements around the globe.

**Media use vs. perceived political behavior of the protesters**

But, at the same time, our findings suggest a much bigger role of oppositional media and lesser role of alternative-agenda media than it could be expected after in-depth interviews with media professionals. Radio (predominantly *Ekho Moskvy*) proved to be the most relevant offline information source for the respondents, perhaps due to the pro-Moscow bias in sampling, while social networks were perceived as the main (and practically only) media triggers of the protest (see Figure 6). Radio, UGC/blogs, and online news portals all lag behind; newspapers and alternative media were considered triggers of the protest by 1 in 10 respondents only.

It seems that the very existence of alternative-agenda media was more important than their content, as it widened the borders of the possible media space, made it multi-dimensional, and showed the principal possibility of media agenda not involved into pro/anti-establishment bipolarism. Opinion on high impact of ‘hipster’ and city media is not supported by our results. If recalculated, the relevant media clusters range in importance in the following way: social media, oppositional media, UGC and blogs, news portals and business media, alternative-agenda media.

Perceived impact of social media upon the protest movement is positively related to four factors: 1) age; 2) presence of social media in everyday media diet; 3) political positions of the media of regular use (the more oppositional media are, the more belief into social networks people express); 4) proportions of online/offline information sources in the respondents’ ‘protest media diets.’ Negative correlation, though, may be traced with change of political activity during the protests: the more active people tend to become, the less they believe in social media’s impact.

If a person changed his/her media diet (either by refusal or growth of consumption), it is likely that he/she will feel freer in acting politically in social networks. Perceived change in media diet weakly but positively correlates with perceived changing political behavior in social networks [Table 1 - to be provided by September 1, 2014, subject to permission]. And both perceived change in media diet and perceived change in political behavior in social networks correlate with the proportions of traditional / web 2.0 media in individual consume. The more web-oriented the diet was, the more it tended to change and the more free political behavior online became; this provides new input for the discussion of democratic role of media segments, especially new and web 2.0 media, in transitional democracies.

**Facebook vs. Vkontakte**

All our respondents can be divided into ‘Facebookers’ (those who use Facebook as the main networking site) and Vkontakers (those whose basic networking site is *Vkontakte*, a close Russian analogue to *Facebook*). In our sample, there was predominance of ‘Facebookers’ (340 respondents) over ‘Vkontakters’. On one hand, this lead to a certain bias in the results, but on the other hand it clearly reflects the fact that the Russian *Facebook* has since 2009 became the meeting point of critically minded intellectuals, mostly those from Moscow and St.Petersburg, playing a significant role in building the liberal-oriented online public sphere. The Russian *Facebook*, until recently, hadn’t been attractive to the majority of the Russian population due i.a. to the language barriers and to the existence of the Russian-language analogs with a lot of free entertainment content.

*Facebook* turned out to have all the necessary features for the rise of an online communicative milieu for the ‘thinking community’, similar to the one in *Livejournal* in the early 2000s. Thus, we can observe the phenomenon of the Runet intellectual elite searching for spaces to build closed-up discussion milieus and abandoning them once they become ‘too popular’ and too populated. ‘Migration to *Facebook*,’ as it became known, happened relatively shortly before the protest rallies and took around a year; many *Livejournal* inhabitants first used two platforms and cross-posted but then gradually left *Livejournal*.

Platform dependence in There’s clear difference in purposes of use of the two networks, according to our respondents: *Facebook*, both by Facebookers and Vkontakers, is mostly used for information search, while *Vkontakte* is more about leisure and entertainment (see Figure 7). This finding points out to the overall patterns of use of major social media in Russia: 1) social media are
used to a big extent for information search and news consumption; 2) Facebook tends to be perceived more serious and news-containing than the national Vkontakte and Odnoklassniki.

Facebook was perceived by the participants of the rallies as the main information tool for the protesters, getting 38.6% of all responses on information sources, the closest competitors – Twitter, Ekho Moskvy, and Livejournal – receiving 4.4 times lower popularity (similar findings are stated in Panchenko 2012). Facebook has played an important role in cultivating pre-protest anti-establishment consensus, thus playing a significant role in political and deliberative polarization of the online audience as well as in consolidation of the protest nucleus, whereas Vkontakte seemed to play a less important role in the political mobilization for the anti-government rallies.

Our survey also marked difference in micro-networking patterns depending on the type of the respondent’s basic social network: thus, Facebook showed higher independent and horizontal-networking participation, while Vkontakte showed the importance of inter-generational and ideologically-aligned networking (see Figure 8). It is also worth noting that, for Facebookers, the alternative-agenda media cluster appears to be almost two times more important than for the Vkontakte-based protesters.

Both from in-depth interviews and from the survey results, it can be concluded that the Russian Facebook can be seen as an echo chamber with the predominance of the anti-establishment discourse whereas Vkontakte is more depoliticized and has less potential of creating an alternative discussion arena as it happened with the Russian Facebook during the protest rallies of 2011-2012.

Ambiguous democratic outcomes: formation of the public counter-sphere of the ‘first’ Russia

All in all, our research results fully support the idea of ambiguity of political roles of hybrid media. Social networks and several media clusters have shown significant potential for rising political involvement, cultivating anti-establishment consensus, and fostering the street protest by spreading information and performing organizational roles. But at the same time latent societal cleavages and social tensions showed up to such a big extent for the first time in the modern Russian history, and this happened not without help of media that supported the protest.

This ambiguous communicative and behavioral split between the ‘first’ and ‘second’ Russians was vividly reminiscent of the late Soviet times, when ‘culture of kitchen discussions’ substituted publicly available deliberation fora. This is how we have come to an idea of a public counter-sphere which, to our mind, suits best to interpret our findings. Though not being the first to coin the term for Russia (Schmidt&Teubener 2006), we argue that our understanding differs from earlier works.

In liberal theory of public sphere, counter-spheres believed to form against the oppressing nature of the mainstream public sphere (Fraser 1990, 1992; Fenton&Downey 2003; Wimmer 2005), as social consensus sought after in classic approaches to public deliberation, is perceived as ‘temporary hegemony or instant stabilization of power’ (Karppinen, Moe, Svensson 2008: 10). But counter-spheres are usually studied on the level of a community (like subcultures) or even one media outlet as the bearer of a counter-mainstream culture (Mitchell 1998; O'Donnell 2001). For Russia, a similar idea of relatively small online communities described as counter-spheres was expressed in (Schmidt&Teubener 2006).

Our findings support the idea of the emergence of a counter-sphere of a much bigger scale. Without overestimation, we could tell that a nationwide cleavage between ‘first’ and ‘second’ Russians became mirrored in the communicative environment on the national scale; thus, a nationwide public counter-sphere began to form. Structurally, it was based on social networks (especially Facebook as its nutrition broth), oppositional media, business and news outlets, and alternative-agenda media; all the most successful media in these clusters used multichannel content delivery strategies, thus being hybrid.

The counter-sphere did not belong completely to Runet; the public sphere cleavage cut through online/offline divisions to replicate the societal fractions. The counter-sphere existed within certain social milieux, rather than everywhere, and within a nationally bound political-communicative situation. Its life depended mostly on mediatized communication in web 2.0, but therein – more on ‘junction’ online-only and hybrid media than on interpersonal communication.

The counter-sphere as a multi-faceted space of both discussion and action prepared the ground for the protest rallies, becoming a factor with a double role: 1) organizational – in terms of information spread and coordination of participation; 2) cultivational – in term of helping to create
a shared consensus on the subject of protest. But it was nothing like an ideal public sphere; neither was it activist- or platform-based like counter-spheres in earlier research. It tended to form quite a closed-up discussion, just as it is predicted for a counter-sphere, but had no clear center or attraction point.

The formation of the public counter-sphere also showed that ‘segment-oriented thinking’ in discussing the political role of media may be losing its relevance, as multichannel strategies of hybrid media gain the leading role in shaping public discourse. It was hybrid media that, in our results, showed the biggest relevance to the protest audience and most successfully reached the protesters in a whole bunch of democratic roles. Political relevance of national television and national newspapers as the traditional politically influential media segments gradually shifts to new media, and of them – to hybrid media and web 2.0 media, especially social networks.

**Case study 2: Twitter - an echo chamber or an opinion crossroads?**

In 2011, Twitter was still not that relevant for the Russian Internet users; by 2013, the growing twitterization made us pose the question on whether Twitter will follow Facebook’s path in forming a tightly closed-up communicative space – or, due to a very different platform nature, whether it could become more of an ‘opinion crossroads’ due to its relatively higher accessibility and orientation to dialogue.

In Western research, Twitter is treated highly controversially, as early optimism gave place to demarcation of optimists and pessimists. The former still perceive Twitter as a capable catalyst of political discussion, whose advantages include horizontalization, spontaneity, openness, and intensity of discussion. Pessimists, though, consider Twitter to be more like a noisy dump of de-politicized and useless content oriented to sex, gaming, and everyday trivia. More than that, the structure and quality of the Twitter audience easier allows for spread of misleading or openly manipulative information. The structure of this scholarly debate is vividly depicted in (Fuchs 2013: Chapter 8).

Research on the Russian Twitter has by far been scarce; even more scarce have been attempts to analyze the platform as a part of the Russian media system. We could name just two that are relevant to our research (Greene 2012; Kelly et al. 2012). The research by New Economic School in Moscow suggests that, indeed, the Russian Twitter of 2012 may be perceived as ‘crossroads’ in terms of presence of pro-establishment and oppositional clusters of discussion on the same platform; but it was also shown that pro-establishment networks within Twitter have relatively high intensity of connections along the pre-established linkage as well as higher hierarchization and institutionalization (while oppositional networks are more loose and vague). This finding was, to some point, supported by the second research (by Berkman Center for Internet and Society at Harvard University) which, based on Russian Twitter data of 2010-2011, identified stable clusters in discussions – which, though, were topic-oriented rather than based on demographics or political orientations. But multiple questions surrounding the ‘crossroads’ stance of the Russian Twitter still remain unanswered. They become even more important with growth of Twitter use in Russia. There’s no clear statistics on the number of the Russian Twitter accounts in 2014; it is estimated as being over 3 mln out of circa 78 mln of monthly users aged over 12 (data by TNS). The most popular account on the Russian Twitter has over 2,3 mln followers. In early 2010s, Twitter usage grew over 25 times a year; today, this growth has slowed down but still remains higher than in other countries of Europe.

In the research project ‘Hybrid media systems and political agendas’ (2013-2014) we looked, i.a., at whether the Russian Twitter forms distinct and non-intertwined echo chambers within an issue-oriented discussion. We chose (anti-)migrant discourse as the research topic, as in October 2013 in the Moscow district of Biryulyovo massive anti-migrant bashings took place after an alleged killing of a young Muscowite Egor Scherbakov by an Azerbaijani Orhan Zeinalov. We will also compare the period of intense discussion to the ‘calm’ one, when no ethnic-oriented events took place on national scale.

**Methodology of the case study**
To map the discussion on Biryulyovo bashings in October 2013 and the ‘calm’ one, we used vocabulary-guided web crawling and subsequent analysis of the obtained data. Hashtags selected by manual reading of over 1,000 tweets for each period have constituted the vocabularies for two runs of the web crawler robot. What we received as the result of the crawling was:

- A web graph reconstructing the hashtag-based discussion for each of the two periods;
- Lists of the most active users (who tweet and comment) and the most influential users (who get retweeted and commented);
- Discussion vocabulary of high relevance and clarity;
- Collections of tweets for manual coding (work in progress).

To assess the ‘crossroads’ nature of the discussion, we will look at the two first data pieces – namely, the web graphs of both discussion periods and the lists of active and authoritative users for the first (‘intense’) discussion period. These data will show us: 1) whether there’s a real ‘crossroads of opinions’ of various stakeholders in the Russian Twitter; 2) whether the existing cleavage between media of the ‘first’ and ‘second’ Russias (mainstream and counter-sphere) is repeated – or, vice versa, neither pro- or anti-establishment media fully dominate.

The research was conducted in several steps:

1) we analyzed trending topics of the Russian Twitter at Trendinalia.com to select properly the research periods (October 1 to 31, 2013, and March 1 to 31, 2014 were selected). Then we selected a group of relevant hashtags for each period by manual reading, and these hashtags became vocabularies for web crawling;
2) we conducted web crawling and received the graphs as well as the collections of tweets for each period;
3) we visually analyzed the web graphs and the 20 key discussants for each period;
4) we ranged users who posted in October 2013 to create three lists: by frequency of posts – ‘active users’, by received comments – ‘authoritative users’, and the combined list – ‘junction users’;
5) we selected and assessed media accounts among the 72 users who tweeted on the case of Biryulyovo 20 or more times in October 2013 to see what media are there and which of them are winning the battle for audience;
6) we started the analysis of what external media content is linked to the tweets.

Russian Twitter as the crossroads of opinions

The web graphs for the intense (bashings) and calm periods are represented at Figure 9 (a, b). As a result of crawling, 3734 users were found to be tweeting under the hashtags in October 2013; 10715 tweets were downloaded. For March 2014, only 362 users were found to be tweeting under the selected hashtags, with only 634 tweets available. The calm period showed that, with no ongoing agenda, migrant discourse is somewhat 10 times less intense and involving than it was in October 2013, and is definitely outside the current issue agenda in Russia.

But even if so, the graphs tell us that, for October 2013, the discussion is a sustainable research object. There is a substantial amount of users who participated in at least one discussion (posted, say 4 to 6 posts); it is over 120 users who tweeted 10 times or more, probably following the case for at least several days. It was not a few-actors or short discussion; the discussion didn’t stop after the bashings and created a reference point on the discussions on migrants. But being quite intense between a hundred users or so, the discussion upon Biryulyovo bashings also had the ‘buzz’ component, with over 3200 users somehow referenced or replied to the case within 20 days (October 11 to 31, as the first information on the case appeared on October 11), and this was enough to bring the case to the trending topics of the Russian Twitter.

Visual assessment of the web graphs tells us that there is no distinct ‘clouds’ or any other signs of separated segments of discourse on both pictures; this means that there are no closed-up milieus within Twitter for this discussion, and all the users may freely participate in any part of the discussion. This finding may be interpreted in two ways: we witness either a ‘one big cloud’ where all the space is occupied by one echo chamber – or we see a real crossroads of opinions where any user can freely participate in any part of the discussion.
To eliminate one of the explanations, we will further on look at October 2013 only and assess who are the 72 most posting users (to see whether the discourse is dominated by one side of the conflict, e.g. by nationalists) – see Figure 10. We see that the list includes:
- 28 users that did not bear signs of institutional belonging or political stance, of which one was created especially for #Biryulyovo and posted on October 13 and 14 only;
- 27 media and journalists’ accounts (including 1 Ukrainian media though posting mostly in Russian and 1 pro-nationalist media account);
- 5 nationalist or pro-Slavic accounts (‘Russian people’, ‘Slavic news’, ‘Russian Question’, ‘Right ones’, and ‘I’m Russian’) of mixed (institutional/individual) nature;
- 3 fake media accounts;
- 3 political accounts, of which two belong to Public Council, a consulting body of Russian President;
- 1 pro-migrant institutional account (the famous Caucasus Center) and 1 user account the owner of which may be identified as migrant (Kenan Aliev); 1 account of a policeman in Nizhny Novgorod; 1 English-language user (Chriszta Satori) who posted in English; 1 account ‘Poker in Moscow’ (spam, sexual content, gaming).

Though nationalist accounts outperform pro-migrant accounts in at least three times both in number of accounts and in quantity of posts, the analysis provides strong arguments in favor of Twitter in Russia being a real crossroads of polarized opinions.

Another important finding is that the discussion in October 2013 was highly mediatized, media being among most posting, authoritative, and ‘junction’ users (see Figure 11). 1/3 of all the most posting users were media; this shows how important it is to look at what media these were, as users are guided by the provided content they can repost.

Here, Twitter represents a picture quite unexpected and different from, e.g., the Russian Facebook where oppositional and anti-establishment media (including several leading business outlets) together with alternative-agenda media dominate. In terms of the public sphere cleavage identified earlier, we could cluster the media in the following way (see Table 2). As we see from the Table 2, pro-government media outperform anti-establishment and independent news outlets in almost 3 times, but independent media also have significant presence and are able to form audiences without putting into Twitter the efforts comparable to those by pro-establishment media entities like Lifenews or Voice of Russia. Thus, we may conclude that Twitter, unlike Facebook, effectively gives voice to pro- and anti-establishment media. This may be explained by the fact that the average user profile of the Russian Facebook user would differ from that on Twitter (though there’s no available statistics on that): if Facebook has become an enclave for the Russian cultural and business elite, while other social networks, especially Vkontakte, has the public with the features of mass audience. Media that are most active in case of Biryulyovo are mid- and low-market in their audience orientation (Lifenews), state-funded (Voice of Russia), or depoliticized (Metro); oppositional Grani.ru or business paper Kommersant, both being leaders in their audience segments, were almost 7 times less active than Lifenews; the same goes for Radio Liberty and even both Moscow News outlets – they should have been most interested in the case being the Moscow media but neither of them is low-market-oriented. Thus, Twitter is, indeed, a crossroads for media representation, but by far the pro-establishment (and) low-market media win the battle in the aspect of presence in the issue-oriented content providing Twitter users with views not deprived of political slant. This, in its turn, is reflected in the tweets: by far, we see much more news-oriented content than expected.

These results are cross-validated if we take a quick look at what media content users link to. We suggested dominance of web 2.0 content in hyperlinks. The first 372 tweets of our collection (as others are still being processed) show that hybrid and online-only media are represented practically equally (see Table 3).

As we see from Table 3, media that produce content attractive for Twitter users in issue-based discussions is mixed and definitely not online-only oriented. Hybrid media outperform online-only media more than twice; even if we eliminate autoreferences by Lifenews (lifenews.ru) and Komsomolskaya Pravda (kp.ru) for hybrid media and Pravda.ru for online-only media, the proportion will still remain very similar. It is also evident that the discussion is not encapsulated within Twitter, as references to it are rare (and the number of reposts found in our dataset is also very low, it is only 5 instances). As to the ‘crossroads’ thesis, the pro-/anti-establishment
representation basically repeats the one in Table 2, supporting our opinion on the alleged audience profile and their media use patterns. We will soon see whether the proportions remain the same after the whole dataset is processed.

In general, we'd like to say that Twitter in Russia shows more potential to become a real 'crossroads of opinions' than Russian Facebook dominated by anti-establishment discourse or Vkontakte where political discussions are much less visible and, even when exist, are community-oriented. The discussion on Biryulyovo became highly mediatized and politicized, which, in general, shows that media and political actors may find an interested audience in the Russian Twitter. But by far pro-establishment media of mid- and low-market nature dominate this communicative milieu in terms of frequency of posting and linking, though independent media are also represented among the most active accounts. Hybrid media easily compete in Twitter with online-only media. Visualization of the graph will demonstrate whether media who post a lot have really become central nodes of the discussion and which part of the public sphere – mainstream or counter – wins the game.

Conclusions and discussion

In this paper, we have tried to represent the Russian media system in its hybridization trajectory, as well as in a wider socio-political context. The conclusions that can be made are the following:

1. The split between social strata in Russia cuts across traditional socio-demographic or class cleavages, the social strata being formed on the basis of post-Soviet partial and multi-speed modernization. There are ‘four Russias’ today that are spotted throughout many research projects, namely urban cosmopolitan, urban post-Soviet, rural and migrant/Caucasian. They co-exist on the same territory but assimilate badly, and their interaction is full of potential conflicts, either between ‘first’ and ‘second’ Russias (as political protests) or between ‘second’ and ‘fourth’ Russias (as anti-migrant bashings).

2. Media consumption in Russia today is a factor of social stratification.

3. The Russian media system may be viewed today as fully hybrid, having distinct online-only and hybrid segments.

4. Several research attempts, including Toepfl (2011) and Vartanova (2012, 2013), to show that the media system in Russia reflects the societal cleavages of non-traditional nature.

5. There are several peculiarities in the shape of the Russian hybrid media system. One of them is low online/offline media parallelism, which allowed for formation of online-only media that dominate Runet in information terms. A special shape of digital divide in and beyond the journalistic community which pushed older-generation journalists out of online-only media production and a big role of social networks also shapes the media face of Runet. On one hand, Russian Internet as a collective communicative body reproduced a lot of interaction patterns from the Soviet times, among them low trust to institutional information and overall denial of institutions, under-development of regional information portals, and . On the other hand, Runet has from its early years been a place for privacy and freedom which enjoyed very little restrictive legislation.

6. In the situation of dominance of federal TV channels affiliated with the establishment and relative political weakness of newspaper market (absence of party press and media-political parallelism, small audiences for oppositional media, and quality dailies being business-oriented), a cluster of alternative-agenda media has begun to grow, consisting of online-only and hybrid but ‘online-first’ news outlet and niche media of non-political stance. As our results show, the appearance of this media segment was not directly responsible for organizing the protests, but it was crucial for cultivating the anti-establishment consensus among the ‘first Russia’ audience, especially in Moscow and St.Petersburg. The segment was also very important for the media industry itself, as it shifted the agendas and showed deliberative alternatives, as it is evident from the in-depth interviews.

7. The ‘For fair elections’ protest movement may be interpreted as the conflict between probability ‘second’ and cosmopolitan ‘first’ Russia. Our results have brought us to the idea of a nationwide communicative cleavage mirroring the societal cleavage and cutting through online/offline divide, just as the societal cleavage cuts across traditional demographics and class. We hypothesize formation of a nationwide public counter-sphere reminiscent of the late Soviet
times when ‘kitchen culture’ and non-censored literature and media created an alternative deliberation milieu for the dissident community.

8. Within the movement, social networks are perceived as the primary information source on the development of the protest activity, as well as an important protest trigger on the whole, thus denouncing, at least partly, Runet as ‘the we that failed’. But the traditional textocentricism of the Russian culture has shown up, as opinion leaders of the protest were still journalists of online media and cultural leaders, and video didn’t play any role in the formation of protest consensus, unlike in the Arab spring and the Occupy movement. These findings support the idea of national context being the primary definer of how the political hybridization of media systems works in crisis times.

9. Beside this, though, Facebook also played an important role for the protest community, being, along with the alternative-agenda media, the second part of the nutrition broth for the protest community. ‘Migration to Facebook’ from Livejournal became an important factor of preservation of the habitual discussion milieu of the ‘first’ Russia, thus helping in formation of the protest consensus. The Russian Facebook segment became an example of an echo chamber with, on one hand, evident mobilization potential but, on the other hand, with low capacity for ‘crossroads of opinions’. There was also a clear evidence in how Facebook differed from its local competitor Vkontakte (which had the Russian-speaking community over 10 times bigger than Facebook), as Facebook was mainly used for information search for both news and events. The other difference was in how Facebookers and Vkontakters networked within the protest rallies, Facebook showing more horizontal (friends and colleagues) and individual patterns while Vkontakte associated more with inter-generational (family) and comrade (party/movement members) ties. This provides input for future comparative studies (Facebook vs. local analogues) to see whether in other countries Facebook plays a similar role for local intelligentsia and creative class. If so, national context would give up to a more universal pattern of use of Facebook in, say, post-communist countries or transitive democracies.

10. We spotted weak but still noticeable correlations between perceived changes in media diets during the protests and the perceived changes in political behavior – e.g. the more web-oriented a person’s media diet was, the higher probability was that he/she would be more flexible in changing both the media diet itself and his/her political behavior, too. Here, platform difference between Facebook and Vkontakte was very low, which tells that perhaps other factors, not platform dependence, shaped the results; overall web orientation of media diets played a bigger role than the ‘basic platform’ factor.

11. Despite expectations, the Russian Twitter showed much more potential for being an opinion crossroads. As studied within the discourse upon another ‘cleavage conflict’ between ‘second’ and ‘fourth’ Russia, it showed no closed-up communication ‘sphericules’ and an effective diversity of the most active tweeters representing polarized opinions, which clearly marks the anti-echo-chamber character of the discussion within the conflict period. But it is worth noting that in the calm period nationalist accounts dominated the discourse, so perhaps the pattern changes at the moments of crisis; this needs further research. This may be explained by the average user profile differing from that of Facebook in Russia. It is also interesting that the Russian Twitter discussion was overwhelmingly mediatized, and media representation actually favored pro-establishment media – even if independent and oppositional media also could foster their agenda and had significant readership. This clearly tells that, within the same socio-political context, various platforms may show very different potential for ‘echo chamber / opinion crossroads’ formation.

All in all, the thesis of our German colleagues of contextual limitations of hybridization trajectories is supported only partly. We would argue that national socio-political conditions shape the hybridization process ‘from outside’, creating only outer limitations. One clear dependence that we spotted was that the media system in its hybridization tended to mirror not the media market with its dominant positions or reproduce information patterns from ‘old’ media, but the complicated societal stratification based on several factors of various nature; it also tried not only mirror it but also compensate some of its misbalances, like under-representation of alternative agenda suitable for ‘first’ or ‘fourth’ Russia. But within the hybrid system, platform limitations and average user profiles (clearly caused exactly by the platform peculiarities) play a huge role, perhaps bigger than the national context.
This paper has numerous disadvantages, as it presents the results of two different projects and does not go deeply into methodological details of the research. But the methodology of both case studies has been previously published and may be accessed if needed. By this paper, we wanted to draw attention to the media hybridization concept itself, as well as to several important but under-researched areas that could tell a lot on how the changing media system cast political influence on today’s transitive democracies.

Notes
1. It is arguable what media entity is to be credited for organizing the protest street action, as the protest web page organized to help gather people for the first rally, was a Facebook community created by Ilya Faybisovich of Afisha and his colleagues from other city media of Moscow. Thus, one may say that it was Facebook that played the crucial role in organizing the first rally, but it may also be said that it is the journalists from alternative-agenda media segment who did it.

Literature


Table 1.
[to be provided by September 1, 2014, subject to permission]

Table 2. Mediatization of the discussion on the case Biryulyovo bashings in the Russian Twitter: 23 pro-establishment, neutral and anti-establishment media accounts among the 72 ‘authoritative users’ (Ukrainian, nationalist media and journalists’ accounts not included)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pro-establishment (state-funded / biased)</th>
<th>Neutral (depoliticized / balanced)</th>
<th>Anti-establishment / independent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Media format</strong></td>
<td><strong>Title</strong></td>
<td><strong>Ntweets</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tabloid agency</td>
<td>Lifenews</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk radio</td>
<td>Voice of Russia</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online agency</td>
<td>FederalPress</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV channel</td>
<td>Russia Today in Russian</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-market newspaper</td>
<td>Izvestia</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV channel</td>
<td>Russian Public Service Channel</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online portal</td>
<td>Window to Russia</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>Komsomolskaya Pravda</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online portal</td>
<td>Pravda.ru</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>418</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Attracted media content, October 2013 (N<sub>users</sub> = 372)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Platform belonging of media</th>
<th>N&lt;sub&gt;links&lt;/sub&gt;</th>
<th>Examples of portals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hybrid media (web versions of offline media)</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>lifenews.ru, kp.ru, vesti.ru, interfax.ru, newsmsk.com, novayagazeta.ru</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hybrid and online-only / web 2.0 media</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>lifenews.ru+twitter.com, lifenews.ru+youtube.com, bg.ru+twitter.com</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online-only media</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>politonline.ru, pravda.ru, ridus.ru, topnews.ru, firstnews.ru, m24.ru, gazeta.ru, slon.ru, slon.ru/tvtrain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web 2.0 media</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>ustream.tv, youtube.com, livejournal.com, vk.com, blogsport.ru, facebook.com</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter only</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>twitter.com</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 1. Media diet of the protest participants, in (0;4) scale

Figure 2. Growth and decline in media consumption, by media segment, in absolute numbers
Figure 3. Sources of information on the development of the protest movement, in absolute numbers

Figure 4. Opinion leading in the protest movement, in %
Figure 5. Relevance of sources of information on the protests to the protest audience, in %

Types of sources of protest information by relevance to the % of respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>% of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social networks</td>
<td>58.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media</td>
<td>30.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blogs</td>
<td>11.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video</td>
<td>0.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggregators</td>
<td>0.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1.99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6. Media as perceived protest triggers

News types vs. web 2.0 sources that triggered protest

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Triggered Protests</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information agencies</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspapers</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>News portals</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion portals</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative agenda</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>News aggregators</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UGC and blogs</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social networks</td>
<td>383</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 7. Use of social networks by protest audience, in (0; 5) scale

Figure 8. Micro-networking in rally attendance, in %

**Networking in rally attendance**

*Who did you go to the rallies with?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Facebook</th>
<th>Vkontakte</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alone</td>
<td>26.7%</td>
<td>18.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With relatives</td>
<td>18.7%</td>
<td>18.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With colleagues or friends</td>
<td>44.6%</td>
<td>32.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With party or movement companions</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 9. Web graphs of migrant-oriented discussion in the Russian Twitter with representation of 20 key ‘junction’ users:

a) In October 2013 (bashings at Biryulyovo)

(non-institutional users marked blue, media – green, politicians – yellow, spam accounts - black)

b) In March 2014

(non-institutional users marked blue, media – green, politicians – yellow, NGOs – black, official accounts – lilac, red – nationalist users, blue coloring – spin-doctoring accounts)
Figure 10. User accounts by type, Twitter discussion on Biryulyovo bashings, October 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Account Type</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ordinary Users</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media/Journalist Accounts</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Actors' Accounts</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pro-Nationalist Accounts</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irrelevant Accounts</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 11. Media in the lists of most active, authoritative, and 'junction' users, October 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Account Type</th>
<th>Quantity of tweets/Day</th>
<th>Betweenness centrality</th>
<th>Input capacity</th>
<th>Output capacity</th>
<th>Summarized capacity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LifeNews.ru</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>0.01253</td>
<td>/BorisAv</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>1388</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/BorisAv</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>0.01237</td>
<td>/Antiputya</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>1095</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/RodnyarnySky</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>0.00961</td>
<td>/Michalav</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>620</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/Kommersant.Ru</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>0.00457</td>
<td>/Kp.live</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>551</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/LiveNews</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>0.00944</td>
<td>/Iryna.Uk</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>441</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/RussiaTV</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>0.00368</td>
<td>/Sergey.Sergey</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>319</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/PressTv</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>0.00359</td>
<td>/Medved.Ru</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>457</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/Gavrovno88</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>0.00355</td>
<td>/Jarilo.</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>395</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/MetroRussia</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>0.00354</td>
<td>/Grntw</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>394</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/RosTv</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>0.00331</td>
<td>/RTVRU</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>392</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/Rbc</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>0.00322</td>
<td>/Elena.Batrunya</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>378</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/NovostiTV</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>0.00319</td>
<td>/Jarilo.</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>377</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/Rbc</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>0.00319</td>
<td>/Jarilo.</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>377</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/MetroRussia</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>0.00319</td>
<td>/Jarilo.</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>377</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Legend:
- pro-establishment
- neutral/non-political
- anti-establishment