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World of Media

Journal of Russian Media and Journalism Studies

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Editorial Scope

The journal *World of Media* is affiliated with the National Association of Mass Media Researchers (NAMMI).

The journal *World of Media* has been published since 2009. It represents an annual review of original research in the field of media and journalism studies conducted by Russian authors from diverse cities and institutions.

World of Media is published in the English language.

Editorial Policy

World of Media is aimed at promoting the development of Russian media and journalism studies in both national and global contexts, and stimulating a wider public interest in the journalism theories, methods, findings and applications generated by research in communication and allied fields. Only those articles that are deemed to be of the highest standard and present original research conducted in one of the aforementioned fields are accepted for publication. Articles must not be under consideration by another publication at the time of submission.

This journal seeks to publish original research articles of the highest standard in the **fields** of:

- Media and journalism studies
- Communication theories
- Intercultural communication
- International communication
- New media
- Media regulation
- Media sociology
- Media psychology
- Regional studies
- PR and advertising
- History of journalism
- Media stylistics
- TV and radio journalism
- Business journalism

While the manuscript is open to all methodological approaches, all submissions are expected to be theoretically grounded.

Submission Information

The editors of *World of Media* are now inviting submissions.

Submitted papers should be no longer than 5 000 words, accompanied by a short abstract, up to 200 words, and contain normally 5-7 key words.

The title page should include the title of the paper, the name of the author(s), full title and the affiliation of the author(s) (full name of the institution and department, city, country, e-mail address). Abstract, key words, title and information about the author should be written in English and Russian. The text of the article should be written in English.

List of references should include only publications cited in the article. Citations in the text should be accompanied by round brackets containing last name(s) of the author(s), year of publication and page(s). Example: (Johnes, 2008: 115).

The manuscript should be typed in 1,5-spacing on one side of the paper only, using Times New Roman 14 font. Margins are 2 cm on all sides. Tables and figures (illustrations) should be embedded into the text.

After the article is accepted for publication, the author receives an editor's confirmation, and then page proofs. The author reads page proofs to correct errors and answer the editor's questions.

The publication is free of charge.

All authors should submit their papers electronically. The papers (.doc) should be sent to the e-mail address **worldofmedia@mail.ru**

The submission deadline for *World of Media-2016* is **September 15, 2015**.

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- **Books in English:** Shoemaker, P. J. (1991). *Communication Concepts 3: Gatekeeping*. Newbury Park, Ca.: Sage.
- **Articles in English:** Zinchenko, Yu. P., Pervichko, E. I. (2012). The Methodology of Syndrome Analysis within the Paradigm of "Qualitative Research in Clinical Psychology". *Psychology in Russia: State of the Art*, 5, 157–184.
- **Books in Russian:** Bakhtin, M. M. (1994). *Problemy tvorchestva Dostoevskovo* [Problems of Creativity of Dostoevsky]. Kiev: Press, 100–112.
- **Articles in Russian:** Vartanova, E. (2012). O neobkhodimosti modernizatsii konceptzii zhurnalistiki i SMI [On the Need to Update the Concepts of Journalism and Media]. *Vestnik Moskovskogo Universiteta. Seriya 10. Zhurnalistika*, 1, 7–26.
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Peer Review

World of Media supports a strict policy of publishing only peer-reviewed articles. Each article will be subject to anonymous refereeing by at least two referees. The review period usually takes 1-2 months. Reviews are sent to authors by email.

If you have any queries, please, contact the editors at **worldofmedia@mail.ru**

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Part 1

MASS COMMUNICATION RESEARCH: RUSSIAN APPROACHES

**TO THE ISSUE
OF THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK
OF MEDIA RESEARCH**

**К ВОПРОСУ О ПОНЯТИЙНОМ АППАРАТЕ
МЕДИАИССЛЕДОВАНИЙ**

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This paper deals with the substantiation of prospects of using the communication institutions' approach to analyze the present-day situation and processes in the media sphere. Under that approach, a primary, fundamental category is the information

and communication universum consisting of the two closely related complexes: human knowledge and professional matrices of interaction of subjects producing or sharing such knowledge. Furthermore, the information and communication universum can be divided into arbitrary segments (information and communication spaces): social (mass), public (specialized), and private (interpersonal) communications.

The authors lay out their vision of the category “media space”: this term is meant to be used to define the information and communication universum segment where high-end technologies are used for knowledge sharing. The basis of the media space is formed by the means of production and dissemination of socially significant information and information proper. Information producers and consumers regulating the processes in the media space interact with the media space but cannot be considered its elements.

Interpersonal relations arising from the process of production, sharing, and consumption of various information products are regulated by sets of principles, standards and rules, which can be called communication institutions. These include media, advertising, PR, literature, art, and others.

Key words: *communication institutions approach; information and communication universum; communication institutions; media space; social (mass) communications; public (specialized) communications; private (interpersonal) communications.*

Статья посвящена обоснованию перспективности использования институционально-коммуникационного подхода для анализа современной ситуации и процессов, происходящих в сфере медиа. С точки зрения этого подхода, фундаментальной категорией является понятие «информационно-

коммуникационный универсум», состоящий из знаний, выработанных человечеством, и профессиональных матриц взаимодействия субъектов, производящих эти знания или обменивающихся ими. Информационно-коммуникационный универсум может быть разделен на условные сегменты: общественные (массовые), публичные (специализированные) и частные (межличностные) коммуникации. Отношения между людьми, возникающие в процессе производства, обмена и потребления различных информационных продуктов, регулируются наборами принципов, норм и правил, которые можно назвать коммуникационными институтами. К ним относятся медиа, реклама, PR, литература, искусство и др.

Ключевые слова: *институционально-коммуникационный подход; информационно-коммуникационный универсум; коммуникационные институты; медиaprостранство; общественные (массовые) коммуникации; публичные (специализированные) коммуникации; частные (межличностные) коммуникации.*

The conceptual framework used to describe and analyze the processes in the sphere called “journalism” was shaped in a particular era of development, and to a greater or lesser extent corresponded to it. The modern era represents a new information civilization with the following characteristics: information environment; information activity types; new products and services; new values and judgments of quality of life; new perceptions of space and time, etc.

Many researchers believe that mediatization of political, economic, social, and other processes should be regarded as one of the most important features of the modern age. Moreover, according to S. Žižek, a person captured by and absorbed in media culture

becomes a product of new media. Mediatization is the process of a real-world object turning into an artificial one: “a body which is almost totally ‘mediatized’, supported by prostheses, speaking with an artificial, computer-generated voice” (Žižek, 1998).

An analysis of works by modern investigators of mass communications, K. Brants and Ph. van Praag, H. Wijfjes, S. Cottle, S. Livingstone, D. McQuail, G. Mazzoleni and W. Schulz, J. Strömbäck and S. Hjarvard, and others, provides sufficient evidence to conclude that building on the traditional understanding of the word “mediation,” – as intermediation in disputes or conflicts, where a third party sorts things out and reconciles the disputants – scholars began to interpret the concept of mediation as a manifestation of the transformational function of mass media. In the process of collection, processing (“filtration”) and communication of data on real facts this function can alter (or distort) them, giving them their mediated meanings, which emerge in the course of the fabrication of illusory images (events) of reality (Brants, Praag, 2006; Cottle, 2006; Hjarvard, 2008; Livingstone; Mazzoleni, Schulz, 1999; McQuail, 2006; Wijfjes, 2009).

To indicate the processes of media that influence the public consciousness, social being, and modern culture, a well-known researcher, J. Thompson, introduced the term “mediatization”. According to Thompson, the term more clearly highlights the increasing power of the media over all aspects of modern life. When an event is designated as a media fact, it cardinally changes the nature of the event (Thompson, 1990).

We can add that similar terminological correlations can also be found in the field of English-language sociology of communications. The well-known theory of structuration proposed by Anthony Giddens contains the concept of “mediated experience”. In the modern era, the expansion of electronic media vehemently “carrying”

the results of social interaction through space-time intervals could not but result in the loss of sincerity of mass perception within social systems. Giddens believes that the intrusion of information about distant events into everyday life has “disrupted the traditional link between the “social situation” and its “physical basis””: mediated social situations give rise to hitherto unknown types of similarities and differences within the framework of the conventional forms of collective experience” (Giddens, 1991: 84). In other words, globalization makes society more complex, less predictable, and stochastic, simultaneously increasing the autonomy of system references. From now on, the mode of self-reproduction of social practices will become increasingly dependent on the rules of media functioning and information resources circulating therein.

In his remarkable book “On Television and Journalism” (Bourdieu, 2002), P. Bourdieu brilliantly shows how television endangers different cultural production spheres (art, literature, science, philosophy, law), as well as political life and democracy. According to him, **we are currently witnessing the actual monopolization** of journalists for means of production and wide dissemination of information, and access to “public space” for members of the ordinary public and scientists, actors, and authors. Journalists possess power over the means of public self-expression and public recognition technologies. There exists, to a large extent, unconscious censorship in the field, where a journalist “allows” only what correspond to his or her “system”, “field” categories of thinking (it is not a case of “personal” categories). On the other hand, today TV is a dominant model for the entire journalistic field, which is generally much more dependent on external forces than other fields of cultural production or the political field. And it is this field with the strong external dependence that exerts structural pressure on all other fields.

In our opinion, it makes sense to use the concept of “mediatization” to describe the social communication process with the following distinguishing features:

- Incorporation of patterns and rules typical for mass communication media into the system of rules regulating actions and relationships of people within a particular social institution, that is, the transformation of social institutions into active media space subjects;
- Dynamic interaction of authorities, business, non-commercial sector, and other social institutions with mass media in order to create, with their assistance, a favorable setting for their activities;
- Gradual transition from cooperation with the media to their management by winning over media workers and creating their own media resources.

It should be noted that there is sufficient evidence of the dependence of social institutions on media. (Dzialoshinskiy, 2013)

The activity called “journalism” has changed to such an extent that all former concepts, such as “function”, “subject”, “method”, “content”, “form”, “genre”, etc., are no longer relevant and comprehensive when they are used to reflect the situation in the digital media environment and in professional activity, which are rapidly converging. Therefore, there is a pressing need for a revision of the conceptual framework of media research at the macro and micro levels.

Basic approaches

Presently, media research practices are based on several stable methodological paradigms. The basic ones include:

Politico-ideological (resource) approach. Advocates of this approach regard media as a specific resource, the ownership of which makes it possible to achieve various political and ideological goals. Correspondingly, media processes should be described as the processes of receiving, distributing, redistributing and consuming specific resources in the human relations space. In this context, accessibility of information is the most interesting issue. Obviously, the amount and quality of received information, i.e., access to information resources, is the most precise criterion for the differentiation of the subjects of information relations. Access to information is recognized as a clear indicator of information status and always means a certain advantage over somebody; possession of information, and even the simple possibility of receiving information, suggests that there are subjects denied such a possibility. In this case, stratification of information (hierarchized information inequality) appears to be a peak reached by few. Such logic of analysis naturally leads to the shaping of information strata (layers) determined by quantitative comparisons – upper, middle and lower.

Media-linguistic approach. Under this approach, media are regarded as a totality of media texts and discourse. Supporters of the media-linguistic approach are interested in the methods of analysis of mass information texts, specific features of media language, and investigating potentialities affecting individual and mass consciousness.

System and structural approach. From the standpoint of proponents of this approach, media is understood as an institutional sphere, a social field, and a system of mass-communication tools. Thus, media may be structured in different ways. For instance, if the owner is taken as a criterion, then state-run media, commercial media, and nonprofit sector media (civilian media) can be clearly identified. Based on the technological criterion currently employed,

traditional media, new media and integrated media can be singled out. Using a covered area criterion, we can differentiate between federal, regional, and local media.

Territorial approach. Supporters of this approach identify media with the media market or information space of a region (city, country, etc.).

Technological approach. A very popular standpoint under which media are described as a totality of databases and databanks, technologies of their maintenance and use, information and telecommunication systems and networks operating on the basis of common principles, and rules and ensuring information interaction of organizations and individuals, as well as satisfaction of their informational needs.

Media-education approach. Under this approach, media are seen as an instrument for shaping the social experience of pupils and students, who gain such experience in the process of studying the history, structure, and theory of mass media, by learning how to independently select and critically analyze the information provided through various channels, and independently generate messages using different semiotic systems and information technologies.

This paper presents another possible approach to the interpretation of the conceptual framework of the media sphere – **the communication institutions approach.**

Under this approach, a primary, fundamental category, based on which it is reasonable to restructure the conceptualization of modern media and media processes, is the concept of the “*information and communication universum*”. The concept has not become commonplace yet, but has already been used in various publications and even in titles of some dissertations and books (Eliseeva, 1998; Klyukanov, 2010). It was created based on the further development

of the brilliant ideas of V. I. Vernadsky and Teilhard de Chardin on the noosphere that encases the Earth, and is the center of all human knowledge. In terms of concepts rather than figures of speech, it can be noted that the original meaning of the category “universum” is connected with the idea that there exists some ultimate synthesis allowing the integration of all particularities and aspects into a single whole. The categorical concepts describing the universum are as follows: “being”, “world”, “matter”, “reality”, “one” and “absolute”. The concept of universum is related to the idea of the world of self-organizing systems, including self-organizing man, thus making it possible to catch the relationship between the sphere of nature, sphere of knowledge and sphere of human life. The concept of the information and communication universum makes it possible, first, to get over the idea that communication and the media space are strictly objective (or independent of man) or strictly subjective (or man-made and man-governable) systems. It is a system that is difficult to comprehend using common sense, and one in which at least two types of processes take place: natural and unregulated, and expedient and man-dependent.

Similar ideas were expressed by K. Popper, a renowned philosopher and science methodologist, in his theory of the three worlds: World 1: the world of physical objects and events; World 2: the world of mental objects and events; World 3: the world of logical contents fixed in the form of databases, books, libraries, and data processing methods. With the publication of works by M. McLuhan, J. P. Barlow, and T. Leary, one can remark on the specificity of the self-organization of the media world, a peculiar kind of World 4 that has “branched off” from Worlds 1-3 (Tarasenko, 1997). Ever more researchers are arriving at the idea that media systems are more than information media; they have their own meaning-forming,

world-forming trends, giving rise to specific cultural practices to comprehend, which philosophers and cultural studies scholars will have to look for new languages and methods.

Studying this World 4, V. V. Tarasenko and other scholars have identified anthropological, institutional, and epistemological problems of its self-organization. It has been demonstrated, that in this world, subjects and objects are non-local and their positions are easily changed. This world by no means seeks equilibrium; it is chaotic and continuously generates new communication systems where stability phases may alternate with structural catastrophes. The following key institutional characteristics of World 4 have been identified and formulated: intersubjectivity, normativity, and objectivity (Tarasenko, 1996, 1997a, 1997b, 2010).

Media space

The information and communication universum consists of the two closely related complexes: human knowledge and methods, technologies, manner (or, better, matrices) of interaction of subjects producing or sharing such knowledge.

As a continuously changing concept, like S. Lem's thinking ocean on planet Solaris, the information and communication universum can nevertheless be divided into certain rather arbitrary segments, or, using other terms, "***information and communication spaces***".

As for the term "space", most often it means a place where something is located (for example, information), something happens (for example, communication), or a scene where some subjects act (cultural space – a scene of action of spiritual forces). Sometimes, the concept "space" is used to designate belonging to someone (for

example, “space of Russia”). There are also other concepts of space, whose authors and adepts include Aristotle, Descartes, Leibnitz, Hobbes, Locke, Durkheim, Simmel, and others.

P. Bourdieu made an attempt to integrate different traditions of space analysis, maintaining that the physical space is a more or less exact projection of the social space. Under such approach, the physical space is a form of representation of the social space. According to P. Bourdieu, the social space is “the ensemble of invisible relationships, the very relationships that form the space of positions that are external in respect of each other, determined one through others, by their nearness, proximity or distance between them, and also by relative position: above, below or between, in the middle”. According to P. Bourdieu, there exists the “space of relationships that is as real as the geographical space” (Bourdieu, 1993).

V. Ilyin presents a somewhat different classification, identifying the substantive and structural approaches to the understanding of the social space. In the first interpretation, it consists of substances, i.e. individuals, their groups and organizations connected by social relations. In the second interpretation, the social space is a supra-individual reality consisting of structuralized social relations. According to V. Ilyin, “the social space is a force field created by interacting individuals, their practices, but at the same time having its special (system) quality that individuals lack (for example, state, law, social customs, morals, etc.). Individuals only have its elements in the form of accepted social roles and values. Naturally, the social space does not exist without individuals. Social relations occur as a result of the interaction of individuals and their groups. However, relations and interacting individuals, in spite of their interrelationship, are not identical, as an electrical conductor is not identical to electric current” (Ilyin, 2000).

We propose that the concept of “information and communication space” be used to designate different noosphere segments with conventional boundaries created by communication actors. What is meant here is not a physical space (although today physical spaces of many premises are expressly adapted to communicative procedures: traditional reading rooms, audiovisual, computer rooms, display areas, elements of communication and recreation spaces, etc.), but a virtual space in which all relations have an ideal and symbolic nature.

From this point of view, in the structure of the information and communication universum, three interrelated information and communication systems can be identified.

The first system incorporates social (socially significant) information and mass communication channels, (media) through which such information is delivered to target groups. The intercommunication between communication subjects is provided by high-end technologies leaving open the possibility for the connection of an unlimited number of third parties. The system can be described as “**social (mass) communications**”. Social communications are organized by social institutions: the authorities, organizations, associations, unions, etc. Information transmitted via mass communication channels acquires a social status, i.e., generates (or should generate) general interest. Social communications are regulated by social regulators, including state legal institutions.

The second system, or **public (specialized) communications**, is first, meant to ensure an exchange of views between rather clearly defined groups of individuals on matters of interest expressly for such groups. Second, public communications take place in the public space, that is, in the space dedicated for the communication of such a group, or are transmitted via dedicated communication

channels using primitive technical equipment that does not guarantee protection from the connection of a limited number of third parties.

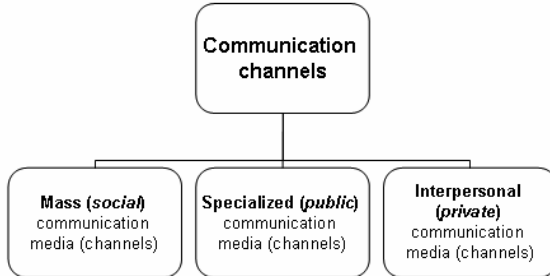
A prototype of this concept of public communications is chamber music. In the 19th century, there existed a form of salon albums, now forgotten. High society and demi-monde were quite closed communities, and “publications” in albums satisfied the demand for social and creative communications. At that time and later on, special sites for face-to-face communication (salons, clubs, coffee houses) were regarded as the sites for public communication. Publications not intended for wide distribution, both underground and elite, also fit into this group. Today, public communications include various close and semi-closed groups in the Internet.

The third system can be defined by the term “**private (interpersonal) communications**”. These are systems of production and dissemination of personally significant information controlled by a particular individual. Private communications are communications free from outside influence, including legal regulation, although private communications require legal support, such as privacy protections, prohibition of phone-tapping, etc.

Prior to the development of up-to-date information and communication technologies, all types of information were transmitted via their respective channels as shown in *Figure 1*. Specifically, the target group of the mass media as the social (mass) communication channel is the mass (society, general population); transmitted messages (texts) are meant to be seen by the mass audience, and the communication itself takes place in the unrestricted space.

Figure 1

Communication channels



However, presently we are witnessing an ever increasing blurring of borderlines between social, public, and private communications. In the past, too, some private letters written by classic authors were knowingly intended to be read by others – they were copied, and the authors did not object to their publication; before, too, political figures used private letters to communicate with each other, publishing them in the mass media for all to see. Journalists also used the open letter genre to draw public attention to this or that problem ... but now no one is surprised when private web blogs, private entries, or private photos are posted on the Internet. As a result, various types of information “cross” with communication channels non-specific to such types of information (*Figure 2*).

Figure 2

Information and communication matrix

Types of information	Information dissemination channels (media)		
	Interpersonal	Specialized	Mass
Private (individual)			
Public (group)			
Social (society)			

A major feature of social, public, and private communications in the current context is that they are mediated by technologies. Thanks to M. McLuhan, such technologies are now called media (McLuhan, 2007). According to him, media include different things, such as electric light, spoken words, written words, roads, numbers, clothing, housing, city, money, clocks, print media, comics, books, ads, wheels, bicycles, motorcars, airplanes, automation, photographs, games, the press, telegraphs, typewriters, telephones, phonographs, movies, radio, television, weapons, and many other things. What is common among these many different things is that they are all “technologies” or “mediators” which bring about great changes in man’s communication with the environment (both natural and social) and the way people perceive and understand the world around them, as well as their way of life.

Russian researchers originally used the term “media” as a synonym of the Russian term “sredstva massovoy informacii” (SMI) (mass media). However, it turned out that they were not identical.

The concept of “mass media” was introduced during the first half of the 1970s by the Propaganda Department of the Central Committee of the CPSU, to replace the concept of “sredstva massovoy kommunikacii” (mass communication media), which could imply a broad public dialogue, as here “communication” means “relations and contacts”. The concept of “mass media” suggests an authoritarian attitude towards the mass audience in accordance with the inherent idea of people as “products of circumstances and upbringing”. In accordance with the meaning of that idea that dates back to the Enlightenment, mass media should be “produced” or formed “from above” (Terin, 2009).

The term “media” is related to the idea of an everlasting connection of content and its formatting and transmission, which was proclaimed by M. McLuhan in his well-known phrase “The medium is the message”. This maxim was a revelation for most people who tended to ignore media technologies and focused only on the content. The meaning of McLuhan’s dictum is the requirement to see the connection between the content and its form. The content cannot exist all by itself, and the forms it takes affect our perception. “The code and the mode of information that is used will determine who has access to the data and who controls its dissemination, how much information will be distributed, how fast it will be transmitted, how far it will travel, how long the information will be available, and the form in which it will be displayed. As these variables change, so does the message that is being communicated” (Strate, 2009).

McLuhan showed that media *comes before* the message. Before creating an end product we should have raw material and technologies to process it. Before coding the message we should have the code as such to structure it.

As for the term “mass media”, it is used to distinguish those societal institutions that employ copying technologies to disseminate communication from the general media complex. This means principally books, magazines and newspapers manufactured by the printing press, and also all kinds of photographic or electronic copying procedures, provided that they generate large quantities of products whose target groups are as yet undetermined. Also included in this term is the dissemination of communication via broadcasting, provided that it is generally accessible and does not merely serve to maintain a telephone connection between individual participants. Public lectures, theatrical productions, and exhibitions do not qualify for inclusion, though the term does include the circulation of such performances via film or diskette. This delineation may appear somewhat arbitrary, but the basic idea is that it is the mechanical manufacture of a product as the bearer of communication, not the writing itself, that has led to the differentiation of a particular system of the mass media (Luhmann, 2005). In practice, as is stated in the fundamental Encyclopedia of Journalism, “the term *mass media* is used to describe a wide range of printed and electronic media, including television, movies, radio and sound records, books and magazines, as well as the so-called “new media”, such as the Internet and video games. However, three interrelated trends generated by the new media – fragmentation of the audience, specialization, and customization of media content – require another form of conceptualization of the terms *mass media* and *mass audience*” (Encyclopedia of journalism, 2009).

In English-language literature, the concept of “media space” began to be used in 1980 by R. Stults and S. Harrison to describe “an electronic setting in which groups of people can work together, even when they are not resident in the same place or present at the

same time. In a media space, people can create real-time visual and acoustic environments that span physically separate areas. They can also control the recording, accessing and replaying of images and sounds from those environments” (Stults, 1986).

In recent years, the category of “media space” has become the subject of many research works.

The US geographer P. Adams introduces four areas of the spatial study of communication:

1) “Media in spaces” – a study of the geographic location of communication networks, their technical infrastructure, and geometry of “space of flows”.

2) “Spaces in media” – an analysis of unique spaces of communication supported by media. Such spaces have no geographic coordinates; they reflect topologies of flows of information and ideas. They can be measured by personal contacts.

3) “Places in media” – an investigation of mechanisms by which particular locations receive their meaning through media.

4) “Media in places” – a study of what types of media communications and under what rules are possible or impossible in a particular location.

According to Adams, space arrangement (“media in spaces”, “media in places”) presupposes that “spaces” and “places” can be regarded as “containers” containing, bounding, and shaping media communications. Space representation (“spaces in media”, “places in media”) reflects the process of production of spaces and locations in communications through verbal, visual, and audio representations (Adams, 2009).

Based on Bourdieu’s concepts, N. Couldry and A. McCarthy underscore the deep media-space relationship. As electronic media are increasingly saturating everyday life with images of other places and spatial scales (imaginary or real), it is difficult to speak about

space without mentioning media, and vice versa. The authors state that, on the one hand, media space is material and consists of objects (receivers, displays, cables, servers, transmitters) “incorporated” into geographically-specific power structures and segments of the economy. On the other hand, it has become commonplace to stress the “virtuality”, “illusiveness”, and ephemerality of media space (particularly cyberspace) as opposed to “reality” and its remoteness from the material aspect of existence (*Mediaspace: Place, Scale and Culture in a Media Age*, 2004).

In his article “Information Ecology: a systems approach to media environment” F. Stalder argues that “Media build an integrated environment based on flows of information. Increasingly, this environment provides the primary setting for human agency. Information ecology aims at understanding the properties of this environment in order to use its potential, avoid its dangers and influence its development positively...” (Stalder, 2011).

Jasper Falkheimer and André Jansson substantiate the timeliness of the development of the geography of media communication as an emerging academic field. They note that older theories of media and communication were outcomes of the so-called concept of “mass society” and presupposed clear boundaries between media producers and audiences, between texts and contexts, etc. However, the epoch of “liquid modernity” (the term introduced by Zygmunt Bauman) embodies a range of spatial “ambiguities” and “uncertainties”. Furthermore, thinking of communication as the diffusion of messages in space is surely not the same as thinking of communication as the production of space (*Geographies of Communication: The Spatial Turn in Media Studies*, 2006).

Concerning the “geography of communication”, Jansson distinguishes ideological and political aspects, technological aspects, and textural aspects (Jansson, 2006).

In the Russian discourse, the concepts “media space”, “media environment”, “media field”, and “media sphere” have emerged relatively recently, have not yet acquired a more or less clear meaning, and are most often used as synonyms. These concepts were preceded by categories such as “information space”, “information sphere”, and “information environment”, and therefore they repeat in their definitions the basic meanings of their “predecessors”. Thus, N.B. Kirillova in “Media Environment of the Russian Modernization”, based on the encyclopedia definition of the term “environment”, gives the following definition: “The media environment is what is around us day in and day out. It is a set of conditions in the context of which the media culture is functioning, that is, the sphere which through mass communications (the press, radio, TV, video, movies, computer channels, the Internet, etc.) connects man with the world around, informs, entertains, advocates particular moral and esthetic values, has an ideological, economic or organizational impact on assessments, opinions and behavior of individuals, in short, affects public consciousness” (Kirilova, 2005).

Obviously, the interpretation of mass media just as an environment rather than as the sphere of the implementation of human activity cannot satisfy researchers and practitioners, although the term “media environment” still appears in some publications. To date, there exists no generally accepted definition of the term “media space”, while the divergence of opinions in this regard is very great. We believe that it would make sense to use the term “*media space*” to designate the segment of the information and communication universum where high-end technologies are used to organize knowledge sharing. Thus, the means of production and dissemination of socially significant information and information proper, form the basis of the media space (Dzialoshinskiy, 2012, 2013).

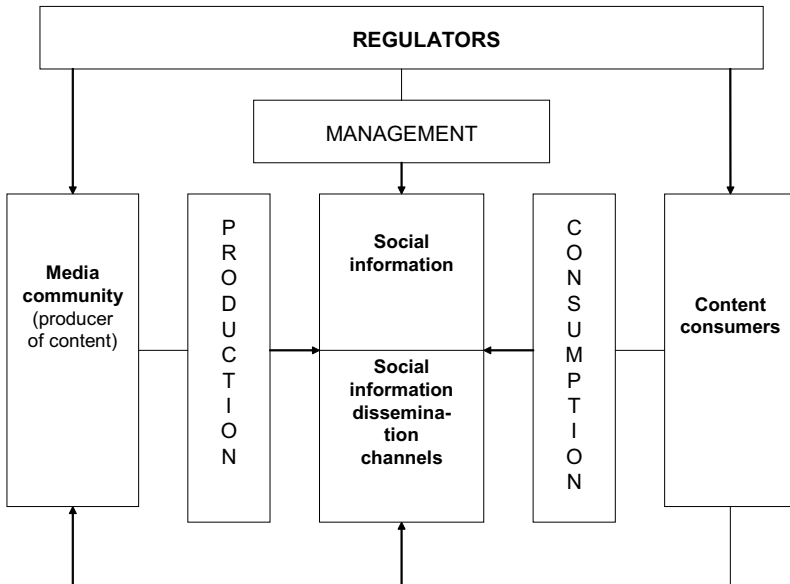
As for the subjects producing and consuming information, as well as regulating the processes in the media space, they interact

with the media space but cannot be regarded as elements of the media space proper. However, such interactions, or more exactly, actions—production of meanings, regulation, dissemination, and consumption – are important structure-forming elements of the media space (*Figure 3*).

As it is commonly understood, media space has conventional boundaries created by participants in the media processes whose relationships determine the metric of the media space. The principal regulator of such relationships is the relevant communication institution.

Figure 3

Pattern of interaction of elements and subjects of the media space



Media as an institution

Further examination of the new conceptual framework requires a review of some works on the analysis of social institutions.

Before the 19th century, the study and comprehension of such institutions primarily took place in the legal field. Institutions were primarily understood as administrative agencies, or legal rules and restrictions established by legislation, expressly fixed and formalized. D. North defines institutions as formal rules, mechanisms that ensure their fulfillment, and codes of conduct that structure recurrent interactions between people (North, 1993). Such rules may be in the form of constitutional laws (e.g., presidential rule or parliamentary rule) or informal restraints, such as code of conduct. In one form or another, such an interpretation has become generally accepted. Thus, V.V. Radaev defines institutions as “codes of conduct and procedures for their enforcement” (Stalder, 2011). N.N. Lebedeva also believes that in modern science, the term “institution” usually means the system of stable relations in respect to the agreement (harmonization) of the forms of joint interactions of individuals based on using standards and rules shared by interaction participants (Lebedeva, 2008).

The most comprehensive and apt definition of institutions is given by J. March and J. Olsen: “An institution is a relatively enduring collection of rules and organized practices, embedded in structures of meaning and resources that are relatively invariant in the face of turnover of individuals and relatively resilient to the idiosyncratic preferences and expectations of individuals and changing external circumstances” (March, Olsen, 2006).

According to E. Ostrom, institutions as a system of rules may be presented as follows:

- **Position rules** that specify a set of positions and how many participants hold each position;

- **Boundary rules** that specify how participants are chosen to hold these positions and how participants leave these positions;
- **Scope rules** that specify the set of outcomes that may be affected and the external inducements and/or costs assigned to each of these outcomes;
- **Authority rules** that specify the set of actions assigned to a position;
- **Aggregation rules** that specify the decision function to be used in a particular position to map actions into intermediate or final outcomes;
- **Information rules** that authorize channels of communication among participants in positions and specify the language and form in which communication will take place (Ostrom, 1986).

Therefore, we can state that interpersonal relations arising in the process of production, sharing, and consumption of different information products are regulated by sets of **principles** (ideology, philosophy), and **standards and rules** (technologies) that can be called **communication institutions**.

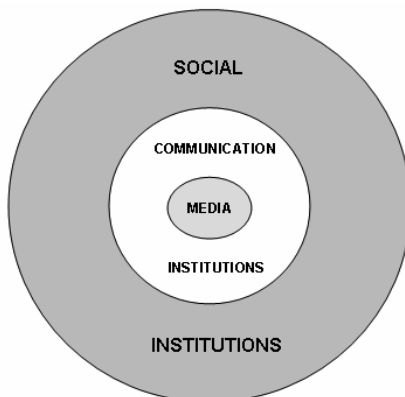
Any social institution emerges in response to public need. Needs, and conditions of their satisfaction form relevant interests and goals that form the basis of the establishment and development of social institutions. That is why the development of the communication sphere generally, and the media system in particular, required their institutionalization.

To make communication processes efficient, the sets of principles, standards, and rules, which are incorporated in the system of social institutions and are called communication principles, standards, and rules, have been developed. Via the communication institutions, society, through relevant social structures, produces

and disseminates information expressed in symbols. Communication institutions include: media, advertising, PR, literature, art, etc. (Figure 4).

Figure 4

**The social institution “media” within the system
of communication institutions**



In the course of the socialization of individuals, “subjectivation” of institutions takes place, where relevant behavior patterns are integrated into the mental structure of an individual. In sociology, the process of accepting social values and codes of conduct, and acknowledging them as binding, is called “internalization” (in psychology, the term “interiorization” is used). The ideas of the world and of proper conduct are only stable when they become part of the mental structure, or interiorized.

The exercise of institutional functions in today’s complex society requires special – organizational – framework.

Organizations are rationally conceived entities that are meant to exercise particular functions. We can say that an organization is the specific form that each particular society finds for a relevant social institution.

In “Elementary Concepts of Sociology” J. Szczepański analyzed the different interpretations of the term “institutions” and came to the conclusion that social institutions are “the systems of agencies in which particular people elected by group members are authorized to perform specific public and impersonal functions to satisfy the existing individual and group needs of individuals and regulate behavior of other group members. All groups having at least rudiments of organization create specific *modes of action on behalf of the group* as a whole ... Such modes of action are defined as *impersonal*, i.e., they should be followed irrespective of individual traits and interests of a person, who always carries them out in the same way” (Szczepański, 1967).

Hence, all institutions can be divided into two subsections using their individual types of involvement in the process of social creative work as a criterion:

Institutions-mechanisms – stable complexes of values and standards regulating various spheres of life (such as marriage, family, ownership, capital, religion, etc.);

Institutions-subjects – organizations of different types and scale; in this case, the institutional subject is the collective of individuals united in an association based on the agreed acceptance and joint use of a number of requirements, which are the constraints of the scope, forms, means, and instruments of interactions (e.g., an enterprise) (Gavra, 2011).

From the provision that a public institution emerges and functions to meet a particular social need, follows the conclusion that an institution will continue to exist as long as such need exists

in a relatively invariable form. Therefore, we can state that in traditional societies, where changes do not take place (or take place slowly enough for people to be able to correct their interrelations), social institutions exist for a long time, for centuries and sometimes millenniums. This explains the myths about the “never-changing nature” of man and the “natural” or “normal” state of society.

However, with society becoming increasingly dynamic, an institutional structure with the rigid set of rules can become a destabilizing factor in the development of society. In a dynamic society, the norm of existence of social institutions is their responsiveness to dynamic socio-economic and other processes, rather than rigid stability (Yadov, 2006).

Institutional transformations follow different paths of development. To describe such paths and identify the extent of the institutional change, the term “mode of functioning of the institution” is used. The following modes are identified.

- **Inaction.** Individuals are aware of the rule, know how to act in a particular situation, but act differently; mostly-formal institutions with abeyant laws exist in this mode.
- **Sporadic action.** In a particular situation this rule may be applied or not applied and in the latter case individuals either adopt (an) other rule(s), or act as they see fit, not relying on any rules known to them.
- **Systematic action.** The rule is applicable always or nearly always (Radaev, 2003).

Experience has shown that inefficient institutions often continue to exist. This is due to several reasons.

First, the institution, even when it no longer plays its regulatory role and has lost its social meaning, will seek the conservation of social processes, opposing any transformations. That is why, in the

situation of a fundamental change of social relations, the destruction of old institutions and deinstitutionalization of the population is critical. However, as a rule, such attempts have failed (“restoration”) or only partially succeeded: new institutions emerged, their weight in the social life changed, and gradually everything returned to its previous state.

Second, there are powerful social agents uninterested in the revision of the existing “rules of the game” because of the losses they would incur. Thus, the preservation of inefficient institutions may be in the interests of the state, if this supports the maximum difference between state treasury income and expenditure, or powerful groups with special interests; or else if the evolution of society depends on once selected institutional path. New and more efficient “rules of the game” may remain inoperative because their implementation would require considerable initial investment not required by long-established institutions. All this stabilizes the existing institutional system irrespective of its efficiency. In a way, institutions lead society along a certain path that will be difficult to stray from in the future. A “mixture” of efficient and inefficient institutions appears, and the relationship between them ultimately will determine the path of the social development.

People design and form social institutions according to the interests of their own projects. Individual activity gradually turns into customary, repetitive activity that leads to its institutionalization. Practices of some individuals, having turned into mass practices, become a social institution.

Ultimately, institutions live a life of their own, according to their own logic, overcoming their creators’ intentions. According to V. Bychenkov, institutions are abstract entities that become subjects, “reducing man to the role of a mediator in the system of impersonal social relations... The mind forms an abstract concept

which then turns into an independent entity estranging itself from its creator and turning on him” (Bychenkov, 1996). No institute can exist without people who abide by its rules, but at the same time the institution rules over them. Therefore, a social institution is an impersonal and even super collective form brought into action by people who pursue their perceived interests, considering the force field of the institution.

Analysis shows that currently we have a complex, multilevel system of communication institutions. At the top of the pyramid, there are mega-institutions, such as the media, which serve all social processes. On a lower level there are institutions providing for communication between large spheres of social life: political, economic, social and cultural. Naturally, these spheres come into contact with each other and interact, which results in the appearance of hybrid communication institutions. Still lower, there are institutions, which regulate communication processes in specific areas of human activity (Dzialoshinskiy, 2012).

Communication matrices

As part of the institutional system of society, communication institutions interact with other social institutions, creating an institutional matrix defining the tendencies of human interaction. Institutional matrices are always linked to a particular social or geographic area, i.e., they have a space within which particular imperatives operate. In other words, it is a certain real or virtual territory where the population acknowledges the authority of a particular matrix (Dzialoshinskiy, 2013).

Different communication matrices are developed and approved within this framework. They can designate various regulators of communication behavior, which are usually called principles, postulates, standards, rules, discourses, conventions, codes or formats. The collection of matrices, that is, standards and rules, stable forms of communication behavior can be defined by the term “communication culture”. Communication culture plays an active role in the regulation of communication processes, displaying constraining nature in respect of communication subjects. Ignorance of or failure to comply with the communication matrices will result in the alienation of the communication subject.

Thus, a cub reporter entering the professional environment enters the world of values protected and supported by the system of social standards, prescriptions, taboos, and sanctions that ensure the stability of the professional community. In the course of communication, cooperation, and joint work of the reporter and his or her environment, an ever-deeper comprehension of professional standards and values occurs. Under the influence of education (with various mechanisms of approval and disapproval) and other influences of the professional environment, formerly external standards of proper professional conduct permeate the individual’s mind, taking on the shape of a certain model of professional conduct based on professional values and standards, – a product of the personal experience of the individual and collective experience of the macro – and a microenvironment adapted through behavior samples and the system of meanings.

Deep assimilation and repeated use of prime professional postulates, simple and universal professional standards, results in shaping professional behavior stereotypes which are not perceived

as professionally regulated, so the question “Am I doing right?” usually does not arise. An accepted line of conduct, having become habitual, becomes a necessity.

Taking into consideration the facts mentioned above, it is possible to formulate an important conclusion that communication institutions form a quite rigid system of rules, standards, and public expectations governing the actions of professionals engaged in a particular type of activity: journalism, advertising, PR, literature, etc. The results of the performance of communication institutions – just as of other social institutions – include the development of formal (laws) and informal (codes of conduct) prescriptions regulating professional behavior. The draft Code of Ethics for Communications – an unprecedented convention for Russia, aimed at developing uniform ethical standards in communications, including communications with business partners, employees, and representatives of mass media and communications in social media, is an example of institutional activity (*Pervyy Eticheskyy kodeks v oblasti kommunikatsiy byl predstavlen na Baltic PR Weekend, 2014*).

Directives of communication institutions are cemented into a certain status by people ensuring the functioning of the communication system, and into roles imposed on (or sometimes forced upon) people associated with such institution. The term “role” (as a rule, “social”) traditionally refers to an individual and is used to define a collection of standards determining the behavior of persons acting within a social system according to their status and position, and the behavior proper through which such standards are implemented. Ample empirical strength of that term makes it possible to use it to define a particular aspect of the functioning of different subjects of social activities (organizations, agencies – various subsystems of society with a status, position in the system

of social interactions). One example is the list of professional roles, which Russian journalists play in various combinations and hierarchic sequences (*Table 1*).

Table 1

Journalist’s professional roles

Roles	Role content
Analyst	Analyze current events, search for solutions
Teacher, mentor	Cultivate certain qualities, standards of conduct
Generator of ideas	Identify key problems of social development, offer new ideas and roadmaps
Herald	Establish public discussion priorities, affect public opinion
Defender	Protect citizens against encroachments by the authorities Act as an arbitrator addressed for the resolution of disputes between conflicting parties
Informer	Reflect a variety of opinions and attitudes Provide practical information, advice, etc.
Commentator	Comment on developments, explain and interpret facts, actions, texts
Monitor	Monitor the activities of economic and political structures
Critic, exposé	Criticize actions of the authorities, individuals and population groups Criticize the implementation and results of actions carried out by various population groups and their representatives, as well as problems and proposed solutions discussed in various publications Polemicalize with other publications
Lobbyist	Using the press resources ensure the realization of interests of a particular political, financial or other group

Roles	Role content
Organizer	Inspire active public action Organize joint actions, ensure coordination, ordered actions for the purposes of the achievement of common goals
Negotiator	Promote mutual understanding, settle disputes
Assistant/ consultant	Help people find each other and encourage integration Assist people in specific life situations
Ideologist (propagandist)	Form particular views
Educator	Disseminate and explain to the population ideas, doctrines, views Educate, provide reference, encyclopedic and historical information on a wide range of issues
Chronicler	Record current developments with the view of communicating them to present and future generations
Dialog moderator	Enable multilateral public information sharing
Public opinion “tribune”	Assist individuals or social groups in stating their views on various problems of concern to the public
Entertainer	Provide an opportunity to have a good time and fun, distract one’s mind from bad thoughts, stresses, provide psychological safety valve

While stressing the viability of using the communication institutions approach in the analysis of the present-day situation and current processes in the media sphere, we should remember that any institution emerges, develops, and sometimes dies out, not of its own volition, but only due to the actions – conscious or unconscious –

of many people. Social institutions in all spheres of life were not formed until the emergence of man and society, but with them, they function via man and for man. In terms of the problems addressed in this article, it means that various standards and rules governing the communication processes have a specific – probabilistic, variative – nature. The live world or professional culture are not just typical forms of activity, not just depositories of standards and stereotypes of professional conduct, not just the “memory” of the professional community, but also of individual uniqueness, creative embodiment and development of forms of professional activity.

When the standards and rules are not understood as flexible systems, and are rather associated with something rigid, the creative nature of communication-related types of activities will also be lost. Specifically, while regulating and maintaining, in given social conditions, the required activity level and ensuring a certain level of quality of journalists’ work, the standards and rules compiled by the professional community, if uncritically accepted, may lead to a lack of individuality, and banal and clichéd materials.

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REGIONAL MEDIA STUDIES AS A RESEARCH AREA

МЕДИАРЕГИОНАЛИСТИКА КАК ВОЗМОЖНАЯ ОБЛАСТЬ ИССЛЕДОВАНИЙ: К ПОСТАНОВКЕ ПРОБЛЕМЫ

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This article presents an attempt to distinguish Regional Media Studies as a separate and unique research sphere in contemporary Russian Mass Media Studies. The authors believe defining this

research sphere is a logical and justified step that corresponds, on the one hand, to the scientific understanding of the contemporary system of Mass Media and, on the other hand, to the development of adjacent areas of humanitarian and social knowledge. Understanding the specifics of regional media production and media consumption is important not only for understanding current Mass Media processes, but also for the research and assessment of the social and economic situations in the region.

Key words: *Regional Media Studies; territorial media behavior; media systems; mediatization.*

Данная статья – попытка постановки вопроса о выделении специальной проблемной области в современных российских исследованиях массмедиа – медиарегионалистики. Выделение этой проблемной области, с точки зрения авторов, логичный и обоснованный шаг, соответствующий, с одной стороны, логике научного понимания современной системы массмедиа, с другой – логике развития смежных областей гуманитарного и социо-гуманитарного знания. Понимание специфики регионального медипроизводства и медиапотребления важно не только для понимания процессов массмедиа, но для исследования, оценки ключевых социально-экономических характеристик региона.

Ключевые слова: *медиарегионалистика; территориальное медиаповедение; медиасистемы; медиатизация.*

Changes in the role, place, functions and essence of Mass Media in contemporary Russian society have numerous social consequences. These consequences have not yet been revealed, classified, and studied in detail. The research demonstrates different

degrees of interest to these problems: some of them have become core issues of contemporary research while some are still on the periphery. This phenomenon is easy to explain, as transformational processes imply the changes of emphasis, priorities, and habitual hierarchies. It can be said that in analyzing different present-day problems, we can only feel the existence of some of them or simply note them in the discourse rather than study them (Regiony v rossiiskom mediaprostranstve, 2014). This article will focus attention on one of these problems, or to be more exact, on a topic area, which all scholars consider as urgent and up-to-date, but whose terminology and analytical tools are only now emerging. That requires drawing attention to the social phenomena appearing due to the influence of media, realized through media, communicated by means of media. In other words, these are social phenomena blended with media while at the same time possessing regional specifics.

It is obvious that the creation of a new term with the prefix “media-” is bound to encounter some resistance. The contemporary “pre-paradigmatic” state of Mass Media Studies has led to the emergence of a large number of separate research areas thematically unified under the title “Media Studies”: Media Psychology, Media Linguistics, Media Economics, Media Management, Media Education, etc. Thus attempting to introduce yet another “Media” discipline requires that we remember the words of William of Ockham: “*Numquam ponenda est pluralitas sine necessitate*” (Plurality must never be posited without necessity).

The emergence of the new term can be justified by the exhaustion and inefficiency of existing definitions and terminology used to describe and explain new realities. Is it possible to discuss this topic concerning social consequences of new regional media realities, taking into consideration the fact that the existing terminology does not allow to describe the present situation or to complete research?

Certainly, yes, but only to a certain extent and in cases regarding changes in territorial behavior of Russians.

This fact must be underlined in order to emphasize the topicality and importance of not numerous but representative studies devoted to the past and present of regional journalism. These works solve important research problems. Today regional Mass Media model transformations and social consequences are not included in the research.

Our main point of concern is the fact that the social and economic consequences of transformations are excluded from social and economic ratings and other regional research. These studies do not investigate the role, place, influence, and details of the media in major regional processes, nor do they study regional media as the major creator and implementer of social meanings and behavioral models. For many reasons, the media component of transformational social and economic processes in the various regions is not taken into consideration, and the practice of “avoiding the media factor” in regional ratings has become commonplace (Chernov, 2013a).

The novelty of the proposed approach lies in the fact that it offers a specific and complex analysis of the role the media plays in the everyday social and economic life of a particular region of the country. We consider this approach to be essential due to the enormous regional differences existing within our country. These differences are of diverse in nature. First, it is necessary to mention regional economic differences that are related to economic structure, income level, dominant employment, demographics, cultural differences, levels of access to various social benefits and social services such as quality education, healthcare and culture, including access to information and its databases. It is generally acknowledged that the different level, depth of penetration, and the

cost of Internet service largely determine information inequality. Despite all the efforts to overcome it, information inequality still creates significant regional distinctions. These distinctions are very substantial, as they define and form differences in lifestyle, and in territorial behavior. Thus, these distinctions determine differences in regional media behavior as well. The structure and hierarchy of the factors influencing these distinctions in regional mediatization processes deserve a special investigation. At present such research is not possible due to insufficient amount of regional statistics and sociological and marketing data. But even the little available data is sufficient to raise a question as to the validity of the regional approach. Let's take average wages in different Russian regions as an example. 2013 RIA Rating research shows that the differences range from slightly more than 12 000 (Dagestan, Kalmykia) to 54 000(Yamal-Nenets Autonomous Area) rubles per month, that the rate of wage inequality (Gini index) in all regions is higher than 30 percent, and for Russia in general is estimated at 37.8 percent. Certainly, the problem of information inequality has a complex nature that is mainly determined by the structure of the national media system. Traditionally in the Soviet and early Post-Soviet eras, it was the function of the federal mass media organization to shape the media scene of the country while the main function of the regional media was restricted to the local media scene. Nationwide information was provided by national print media, national television, and to a lesser extent by radio broadcasting. However researchers who performed a recent study of the regional media scene point out, "today in our country only one of the two basic elements of media system – newspapers and television – functions adequately. The daily press is in the extremely difficult situation: there is no real federal distribution of national newspapers (the only exception is, perhaps, "*Rossijskaya Gazeta*"), and the circulation

of regional print media is extremely low” (Vyrkovsky, Makeenko, 2014). The structure of television broadcasting also differs significantly in various regions, though introduction of free multiplexes provides a certain minimum number of channels that are available regardless of the population income level. However the availability and the cost of internet access are becoming important factors in either leveling out, or on the contrary, increasing information inequality, especially for certain social groups.

Until now, in our country no complex research has been conducted on factors of information inequality determined by regional specifics. It is obvious that these specifics can vary greatly and can be determined by the economic level of regional development, geographical location, climate, cultural norms and many other factors. One of the most important factors is the economic and political management of mass media.

At present we can only state this fact, leaving more detailed research for a separate study

Though attempts to overcome regional differences made by the government of the Russian Federation consist primarily of leveling budgetary provisions, they also extend into the information sphere. The latter manifests itself in the process of the transition to digital broadcasting, the creation of multiplexes, the extension of Internet-coverage areas, and reduced costs for Internet access.

In fact, the tension between the state policy of the socio-economic equalization of all regions, real regional situations, and social practices, provides a unique research topic that is likely to be of interest not only to Russian but also to foreign researchers. Today we have a unique opportunity to explore a variety of cultural and social phenomena caused by contradictory trends and influences. We can also – at least approximately – define the role the media plays in these processes. The media influences territorial behavior

and thus demands close attention and specialized research tools, but as of yet, such tools have not been developed.

When speaking about the current state of affairs of media regional studies, it is necessary to note the fact that interest towards regional measurement of media behavior, its specifics, and its manifestations is only now emerging and with quite a superficial character.

Let us consider a recent example. At the request of “*Lenta.ru*” and economic columnist Arina Borodina, TNS Russia decided in 2013 to study preferences of TV-audiences in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Kazan, Ufa, Volgograd, Samara, Yaroslavl, Tula, Vladivostok, Krasnoyarsk, Tomsk, Yekaterinburg, Stavropol, Kemerovo, Barnaul, Izhevsk, Novosibirsk, Perm, Rostov-on-Don and Tyumen. “Asking TNS Russia to do this research,” says A.Borodina, “I was sure that there would be little or no difference in audience perception of the most popular TV-programs in different regions of Russia. I thought that only rating positions of the programs and series might differ from city to city. But the results shocked me.” (...) “It turned out that TV-preferences not only reflect social peculiarities of the audience but they also demonstrate a great difference between TV-audiences of various regions of the country. Especially if we compare this data with all-Russia data which I have been analyzing weekly for more than ten years” (Borodina, 2014). If the Tyumen audience prefers a criminal series on NTV, the Vladivostok audience prefers “Avatar” while the Moscow audience watches the title fight between V.Klichko and A.Povetkin, it is clear that these cities take completely different approaches to TV-viewing. Only programs on national TV-channels were analyzed, and if we include the data from cable TV, satellite TV, etc., the distinctions are likely to increase rather than decrease.

This example contains information well known to those who research regional media preferences. Essential distinctions are

apparent in a comparative analysis of media consumption in regional markets that are geographical neighbors, but have different socio-cultural characteristics. For example, more than 10 years ago, sociologists carrying out the “Media Measurements” project in the Vologda region noted the following distinctions: 1) distinctions among all-Russia and regional TV-viewing and 2) distinctions in TV-viewing among the citizens of Vologda and Cherepovets: two cities 135 km away from each other (while Vologda is an administrative center, Cherepovets is an industrial center of the Vologda region) (Mekhova, 2004).

Thus, the abovementioned observation made by “*Lenta.ru*” is indicative of the fact that regional distinctions in TV-viewing preferences are a general tendency, common to the whole country. Though the nature of these distinctions is not always obvious, they should be taken into consideration and paid special attention.

It is important to emphasize that the research conducted is significant not only as a confirmation of existing distinctions, but also the very fact that it exists is crucial at a time when the problem of regional distinctions is being placed on the national agenda. This problem is treated in a public relations-focused, non-academic and very vivid way.

Attention, not only to similarities but also to distinctions in the sphere of Mass Media Studies, can be treated as the reflection of specific trends in this sector. It is distinctions and differences that in the digital era have become the main means of targeting, the means that make up the audiences of niche TV-channels. In a sense, researching, understanding, communicating, and resolving the distinctions have become the main goal for cable, satellite and Internet channels. Though Russia has a rather limited number of TV-channels and programs, the fact that research shows that there is a demand for such variety, is significant.

At the same time however, the distinctions revealed by this research are only the tip of the iceberg. It merely scratches the surface of serious distinctions among regional media behavior models, which are extremely obvious in TV-viewing (though the distinctions exist in all media). It is logical to assume that these distinctions will deepen if we were to include broadcasting (including TV) channels in general.

Let me emphasize the problem's newsworthiness. It seems natural that it is only now that regional distinctions are attracting the attention of researchers. As already mentioned, this can be explained in part by the dominating market logic of differentiating the development of media content, by the logic of "uniqueness" and "distinctions". At this crucial moment of transition to a digital reality, the concept of the role of regional media changes. This can be seen in the desire to understand the logics and prospects of their development (Vyrkovsky, Makeenko, 2014).

At the same time, it is obvious that this is not the only reason attention to this problem is now growing. One additional reason is more global. It consists of a cardinal change of habitual models and logics of interaction between society and the media. It is the change that has already been defined as mediatization. Mediatization calls into question the developed models of media behavior and demands reconsideration of the locus and topos of a person's interactions with different forms of media.

Herbert Schiller noted that the concept of communication includes much more than just messages and the communication systems that transfer these messages. Communication defines social realities, and in this sense affects labor management, technology, education, and free time (i.e., it influences lifestyle) (Schiller, 1973). Marshall McLuhan studied the communicative and social nature of information channels and the ability of humankind to

turn newly created objects and tools, and devices and discoveries into new communication channels. But mediatization goes beyond the classical statement that “the channel is the message”. Instead of the concept of “media centrism”, there appears to be a concept of “media diffusion”.

The concept of mediatization is spreading and is being cemented in scientific discourse. But some unique characteristics of the phenomenon have already been defined. In her recent article, L.M. Zemlyanova examines this concept in the context of innovations in the conceptual and terminological pool suggested by contemporary Communication Theory, and cites the explanation of the concept offered by Stig Hjarvard. According to his definition, mediatization is the process by which core elements of social and cultural activities (e.g. politics, religion, education) are affected by media, and at the same time, depend on them. As a result, to some extent, such activities are performed in the course of interaction with various forms of media, while the content and the structure of social and cultural activities are affected by media, i.e., by its institutional, esthetic and technical means (Zemlyanova, 2013).

V.P. Kolomiyets suggests that one should differentiate between mediatization as a historical process that increases institutionalization of media, and mediatization as a modern process that overcomes the institutional framework, and transforms into a meta-process. From this point of view, mediatization treated as a meta-process is similar to globalization, individualization, and commercialization. Therefore, the problem of researching this meta-process goes beyond the problem of the number and typology of media, thus, it assumes the research of the process of changing media from being incorporated into daily practice, into media ecology.

It is obvious that research of the activities of individuals constructing their social and cultural reality by means of mediatized communicative actions (Kolomiets, 2012) demands new approaches and methods. From this perspective, media eluding can be explained by the fact that a media environment is contextualized by a complex set of practices, assumptions, habits, and competences, and cannot be measured with conventional tools used for the analysis of distinct categories. The matter is not only that media phenomena change and increase in number, but that some deeper processes undergo changes as well. Mediatization is not the modernization theory (or the Theory of Changes), but a new approach to the Theory of Mass Media and Communication, and to Social Theory as well (Kolomiets, 2012).

It is important to emphasize that mediatization has two approaches: global and regional. It covers all spheres of a modern person's life. In this regard it is global, though its concrete manifestations and realizations are always localized and caused by local circumstances (Chernov, 2012, 2013b).

These regional characteristics and measurements of mediatization as a social phenomenon require a special and complex inquiry.

They can serve the object of a special study within the field of Regional Media Studies. The core interests of this research area can be specific social practices, resulting from regional circumstances and contexts. These social practices are realized through media. They use media, and they produce and study media products, channels of their distribution, etc. At this level and at other levels, the ratio between the global and regional components is obvious. The Internet shapes global trends, but because of the great difference in access costs in the regions, the difference in the level of competition between regional Internet-providers, different

penetration rates of the high-speed Internet, and, finally, great differences in lifestyles, educational levels, and demographic characteristics of the population in different regions, global trends have very different regional target positioning.

The first and the second multiplexes will be used, consumed in different ways in different regions depending on their current or initial level of penetration of cable and satellite TV, and their quality of Internet access. It is possible to continue this list adding cultural, historical, economic and demographic distinctions.

In the context of our country with its vast area and inequality among its many regions, territories, metropolises, large cities, towns, and villages in their access to financial, educational, and informational resources, and their cultural and even “civilizational” distinctions, heightened awareness of the specifics of “mediatization loci” is quite justified.

Whether or not any settlement or city can be called a locus when we describe the mediatization process, is up for debate. Sociologists and political analysts, the first to investigate new research areas adding social contents to the sphere that traditionally was the domain of Economic Geography, are well aware of this debate. During these arguments a polysemic and widespread definition of a region was accepted: a region is defined as an independent spatial, geographic, administrative-territorial, institutional, political, economic, social, historical, cultural, ethnic, and demographic dimension (Volkov, 2004). It is quite logical to use this term in the research of media.

Thus, an interdisciplinary approach in Regional Media Studies is necessary and the main interdisciplinary ties are quite clear. These are the most obvious. Regional Studies has recently defined the problem of differentiating between global and regional issues in social, economic, and cultural aspects, as the main object of study.

The American geographer and economist Walter Isard, who laid the foundation for fundamental studies of the second half of the 1960s, is considered to be the founder of Regional Studies (Isard, 1960). In Russian science, similar approaches began to develop at the end of 1980s within the framework of Political Science, Economics, Anthropology, and Sociology (Analiz tendentsii razvitiya regionov Rossii: tekhnologiya regionov, vyvody i predlozheniya, 1996; Zubarevich, 2003; Modernizatsiya Rossii: territorialnoye izmereniye, 2011). Institutionalization of this research area happened when Russian Regional Studies and Foreign Regional Studies were introduced into university curricular. As a research topic, regional specifics and regional identity has already become commonplace in sociological and political studies.

In earlier works it was assumed that regional studies researches the industrial and territorial structure of the economic complexes of Russian regions, the main forms of economic organization, regional and trans-regional economic ties, and economic reforms in regions during the formation and development of a market economy (Morozova, 2004).

Later works placed the emphasis on social components. Russian Regional Studies takes certain revenge in those spheres that were earlier “closed” to researchers. It concerns, first of all, the problems of federalism, territorial asymmetries, regional depressions, inter-budgetary relations, foreign economic regional activity, uncontrolled population shift, and ethno-political conflicts, among other problems (Volkov, 2004).

Regional Media Studies is an integral part of Regional Studies in general. Moreover it is possible to define an even narrower sphere of research in the field of Regional Media Studies based on the research of the territorial (regional) behavior of Russians. “Any behavior is geographically determined”, sociologists I.P. Ryazanov

and A.Yu. Zavalishin say (Ryazantsev, Zavalishin, 2006). They note that the basis for their monograph on Russian territorial behavior, is a priori statement that territorial behavior represents a form of behavior—the main feature of which is the obvious direct connection with the territory (the place, the district, the region, the country, group of countries (macro-region)) where this behavior is observed (Ryazantsev, Zavalishin, 2006).

Territorial determination of individual, group, and mass behavior caused by long-term factors (from climatic to cultural and historical) distinguishes this form of social behavior from other forms.

The influence of geographical factors causes the formation of a regional behavioral pattern, which becomes the basis for the ultimate behavioral norm. The basic model of territorial behavior is a norm (a social fact, a rule, a tradition) influencing the social behavior of the subjects.

The authors of the research say that territorial behavior, among all other forms of social behavior, has the most integrative character, as it includes all possible types of behavior that have regional specific features (economic, political, religious, educational, ethno-cultural, migratory, etc.) (Ryazantsev, Zavalishin, 2006).

Regional Media Studies can become a new line of research studying the specifics of territorial media behavior of a people. We believe the field of Regional Media Studies focuses on two interconnected but not identical problems: the specifics of regional media systems (media production) and the specifics of regional media consumption. The connection between these two areas of Regional Media Studies is obvious. In each separate case a special research and assessment are required.

Conclusion

In summation, we will attempt to define Regional Media Studies. Regional Media Studies is a branch of mass media research, studying territorially influenced media behavior (media consumption and media production) as a certain behavioral pattern, regionally determined, long-standing, and creating the means and forms of mediatization specific to each region.

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**COMMUNICATING CHRISTIAN
“GOOD LIFE” VALUES
IN A SECULAR PUBLIC SPHERE**

**РАСПРОСТРАНЕНИЕ
ХРИСТИАНСКИХ ЦЕННОСТЕЙ
ПРАВЕДНОЙ ЖИЗНИ В СЕКУЛЯРНОЙ
ПУБЛИЧНОЙ СФЕРЕ**

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The Christian concept of the “good life” is well-articulated in the documents of various Christian denominations, but, despite of its accessibility, this idea has a low profile in public opinion and in everyday life of Russians. Based on original empirical surveys and a secondary analysis of sociological data the paper examines the problematic mediatization of the concept of the Christian “good life” in Russia and finds dysfunctions and systematic errors of the process. Communicating Christian concept of the “good life” in Russian secular public sphere encounters three main challenges located in: 1) articulation – lack of content production; 2) communication – lack of channels to translate

and 3) interpretation – lack of understanding. Beginning with the analysis of the audience this paper examines various anonymous texts of Russian internet users according to their religiosity, religious identity and attitudes towards God, Orthodox Christianity and the Russian Orthodox Church as an institution. The author proposes a normative model of interactions between media and religion based on the principles of transparency and availability of well-articulated religious values. The model criteria may also be considered as a check-list for empirical evaluation of the mediatization of religious values.

Key words: *Christian values; public sphere; mass self-communication; spontaneous texts; journalism; mediatization of religion; Russian Orthodox Church; dialogue.*

Христианское учение о добродетельной жизни четко сформулировано в открытых документах различных христианских конфессий, но, несмотря на доступность, христианская система ценностей слабо представлена в российском общественном мнении и в повседневной жизни. На основе эмпирических исследований и вторичного анализа социологических данных в статье рассматриваются проблемы медиатизации христианских ценностей, которая в российской публичной сфере сталкивается с тремя основными вызовами: 1) артикуляции ценностно-нормативных структур (производство контента); 2) коммуникации (каналы и коммутация) и 3) интерпретация (конфликт кодов и форматов). Анализируя отношения к Богу, христианским ценностям и Русской Православной Церкви в спонтанных текстах российских пользователей сети Интернет, автор предлагает нормативную модель взаимодействия религиозных организаций со СМИ, основанную на принципах прозрач-

ности и доступности четко сформулированных религиозных ценностей. Предложенные критерии можно рассматривать в качестве «контрольного списка» для эмпирической оценки медиатизации религиозных ценностей.

Ключевые слова: христианские ценности; публичная сфера; массовая коммуникация; спонтанные тексты; журналистика; СМИ; медиатизация религии; Русская Православная Церковь; диалог.

The Christian concept of the “good life” is well-articulated in the documents of different Christian denominations (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1992; Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, 2004; “The Basis of the Social Concept” of Russian Orthodox Church, 2000). It contains prescriptions regarding personal and family life, labor, health, property, as well as nation, state, law, international relations, politics, globalization, war and peace, crime, punishment, ecology and bioethics, science, culture, education, public morality, mass media, and other issues.

However, despite its availability, the Christian concept of the “good life” is not well known and not implemented in everyday life by Russians (Levada Center, 2014). According to public opinion polls, the level of awareness of how to live according to Christian commandments is still low in comparison to Western countries (Furman, Kirijajnen, 2006).

The contradiction between the availability and awareness of the Christian “good life” raises a number of questions about the reasons, obstacles, and communicative filters for its implementation. The answers to these questions are located in the *modus operandi* of two actors the journalists and the audience – and the *locus* of their interactions, which traditionally is deemed the public sphere.

Despite religion is still being described in terms of global “resurgence” (Toft, Philpott, Shah, 2011) and the widening presence of religion in the public sphere questioning the theory of secularization (Casanova, 1994), religious doctrinal texts transmitted and actualized by religious media play more and more marginal role in the forming of what scholars call “public religion” (Lovheim, 2014). Therefore “public religion” (what people truly believe in and consider to be sacred) differs greatly from dogmatic, theologically accepted religion. Such a phenomenon has been empirically described in Russia (Furman, Kaariajnen, 2006) and is still a key argument for understanding the nature of the Christian values’ transformation in a secular public sphere.

We assume that this corruption is caused by the secular media effect, but this process is not evident and transparent. Secular media are not just channels for the transmission of religious doctrines; they form sacred spaces for the exchanges of meaning, identities, and social relationships (Lynch, 2012). Moreover, media coverage of religious life and values dominates in the public sphere and provokes criticism towards institutional religion while strengthening individualized and eclectic, bricolage forms of religion (Hjarvard, 2012).

In the Russian context, the Christian concept of the “good life” faces 1) ignorance of media practitioners towards ethics and social accountability, 2) a normatively disoriented audience with a low level of media literacy and religious practice, and 3) predominant problems in social dialogue processing within the secular public sphere.

Beginning with the analysis of the audience, this paper examines communication in the public sphere, discovering the shortcomings in journalistic coverage of religious life and proposes a normative model of interactions between the media and religion based on the principles of transparency and availability of well-articulated religious values in a public sphere.

Audience: post-atheism trauma

The approach to attributing religious identity and discovering religious values in mass consciousness has always been a challenge for researchers – both in Russia and abroad. Scholars have suggested many criteria to assign subjects to a particular religious group because of certain empirically observable indicators (Media, Ritual and Identity, 1998; Taylor, 1989; Sinelina, 2001; Kloch, 2011; Campbell, 2013).

Different approaches to this classification often give contradictory results. The most natural approach is based on *self-identification data*. It works well in Western countries but fails in Russia. Approximately 60 to 80 % of Russian population claim to be Orthodox Christians. Radically different results are obtained by estimating the number of *observant followers* of every religion, because members of many ethnic groups often choose to self-identify as adherents to a certain religion for cultural reasons, although they would not fit any traditional religiousness criteria (church attendance, familiarity with basic dogmas of their faith). For example, even though 80% of ethnic Russians self-identify as Russian Orthodox, less than 10% of them attend church services more than once a month and only 2-4% are considered to be integrated into church life.

According to three sociological indicators of religiosity analyzed by Levada Center, the level of practicing (taking part in liturgical life), observing of God's commandments (i.e. do not kill) and Church commandments (i.e. to observe Lent), the Russian population is far from maintaining an Orthodox Christian identity (*Tables 1, 2 and 3*).

Table 1

Have you celebrated Easter and if so, what did you do during Easter time?
(In % of all respondents)

Painted eggs	73
Bought paschal cakes	50
Baked paschal cakes	24
Visited relatives/friends	24
Visited cemeteries	23
Received guests	22
Went to the Church to bless cakes	21
Cooked paschal food	11
Made gifts to relatives/friends	9
Attended Easter liturgy	6
Other	2
Did not celebrated Easter	9

Source: Levada, Center, 25-28 April 2014 (Levada 2014)

Table 2

Do you agree that abortion is a legal killing?
(In % of all respondents)

definitely yes	10
rather yes	18
rather no	35
definitely no	16
Difficult to answer	20

Source: Levada Center, 15-18 November 2013 (Levada, 2013)

Table 3

Did you observe Lent?
(In % of all respondents)

No	70
Partly	25
Fully	3
No answer	2

Source: Levada Center, 25-28 April 2014 (Levada, 2014)

According to the Levada Center’s longitude research, religious identity for Russians is still much less substantial in comparison with ethnic identity. Responses to the question “Who do you perceive yourself with pride and – with respect?” demonstrate that during the period from 1989 to 2008 the share of respondents who chose “I am Russian” rose from 43% to 50%, while those who chose the option “I am a believer” increased from 4% to 15%.

Sociologist D. Furman suggested in his research that the increase in ideological uncertainty and eclecticism with beliefs in reincarnation and astrology, ufology, energy vampires, witches, shamans and so on, rather than traditional religion demonstrates religion is not dominating atheism in Russia, rather atheism is overtaking religion (Furman, Kaarijainen, 2006).

The nation’s confidence in the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) may be also considered as a marker of Russian religiosity. The greatest degree of confidence in the Church is expressed by the inhabitants of small towns and villages (about 50%), while among the residents of Moscow and St. Petersburg only 31% said that “the Church is quite credible”. Highly educated and older people gave greatest amount of negative responses while the villages and

towns expressed the greatest number of positive attitudes toward the Church (Gudkov, 2012: 35).

Public sphere: attitudes towards God in mass self-communication

Underscoring the public opinion formation function, Jurgen Habermas mentioned the conditions of the public sphere as 1) open access to all citizens; 2) unrestricted discussions about matters of general interest, implying freedom from economic and political control (based on the freedom of assembly, the freedom of association, and the freedom to expression and publication of opinions); and 3) debate over the general rules governing relations (Habermas, 1989: 136).

Russian society and Russian media hardly fit into the criteria described above (Obshhestvennoe mnenie, 2013), therefore the engagement in public debate requires the active participation in Internet communication – uncensored, with much more lenient regulations in terms of gatekeeping and agenda-setting.

Not only public opinion polls, but also spontaneous texts of mass self-communication may become a source of valid knowledge about audience attitudes towards religion. Mass self-communication (Castells, 2007: 238) is becoming an increasingly promising subject of mass consciousness studies particularly of general and religious values. But at the moment the prosperity of “big data” research methodologies and techniques still has not provided academia with valid methods opinion surveys representing the public based on the analysis of texts of self-expression.

From a sociological perspective, texts of web discussions may be considered as “spontaneous responses to a big open-ended

question” and therefore allow more exploration of a subtle and detailed picture of Russian mentality and spirituality than can be obtained by representative public opinion polls (Anikina, Khroul, 2011).

German scholar Oliver Krüger highlights the promising perspectives of Internet based research: “Religious Internet research is just beginning and some of these questions have provoked initial answers – but most of the questions have stimulated even more issues with regard to substantial and methodological demands. The social aspects and consequences of religious Internet use, particularly, still have to be considered in further research. Immanent Internet research offers many new perspectives for religious studies. While traditional media like books, magazines, and television enable us to see only the supplier and the supplies on the *religious market*, the Internet – as an *interactive* medium – now makes it possible to be aware of the consumer’s perspective as well”. (Krüger, 2005: 1). Krüger suggests that despite of the Internet enabling us to trace many instances of “invisible religion,” the empirical field of research possesses some new methodological challenges that must not be ignored.

In order to receive a more detailed description of the religious beliefs and identity of Russian Internet users, we analyzed visitors’ texts on the *lovehate.ru* website, which is one of the most well-known places for spontaneous self-expression and discussions. As of August 10th, 2014, the site had 249,812 registered users (125,556 men and 124,256 women) who expressed their attitude about 76482 subjects with the total number of messages exceeding one million (1,000,352). The discussion topic “I love / I hate God” is one of the largest on *lovehate.ru*. We conducted an analysis of the semantics and structure of all 1,715 posts on that topic (“I love” = 1039, “I hate” = 676).

There are several hundred Orthodox groups on *Vkontakte.ru* (the largest group, *Pravoslavie*, is comprised of more than 70 000 users) and *Facebook.com*, demonstrating some orthodox media sites interact with the most popular social networks. Mostly all the groups and pages are those of believers and priests. They usually have some discussions, calendar, and useful articles. These groups recruit Orthodox or pro-Orthodox members and therefore cannot represent average users in comparison to *lovehate.ru* and other neutral websites.

The procedural “framework” for statements about God, which is set by the administrator, *lovehate.ru*, for all themes, is sharply polarized: I love / I hate. This division caused a certain confusion: “I write this column, not because I hate God, but because there is no neutral option”; “In my opinion, you can not just say I like God or not”. For example, in the “positive” column “I love God,” one of the users published the following messages: “I do not believe in God do not believe in the devil... I am my own god and the devil”; “I think so: one day you will understand that it is absolutely not necessary to believe in God”.

Several specific features of Russian Internet users’ relationships with God have been found after processing the data.

1. A relationship with God is described mostly in a personal and group (family) context, not the context of the public sphere.

The space of the relations between users and God is characterized by an evident shift towards personal space (40.7%) and small groups (family and friends – 27.8%), while society as a whole is mentioned in 13.8% of posts and global space is discussed in 23.4% of the users’ messages (total sum exceeds 100% because there are several levels in some posts).

This situation seems to be quite logical if we take into account the proportion of interpersonal communication in the religious

sphere. Meanwhile, a high percentage of the universal level can be explained by the allocation of respondents to various world religions, as well as the consideration of God as the creator of the world.

Many submissions emphasized the personal aspect of a relationship with God, and for some authors, religious dogmas are secondary in relation to the feeling, “Religion – this is what a person feels within himself”; “God is yourself, you can manage own destiny by yourself”; “God is not necessary to impose, God is personal to everyone”; “He is always with me, with my friends and relatives!”

In principle, the proportion of private, public and individual, and global aspects found in the texts on the target site can be assumed to reflect the proportion of the mass consciousness of Russians, but this assertion needs further verification using other methods (for example, opinion polls).

2. In spontaneous texts describing a relationship with God, Internet users mostly refer to their own experience (59.5%) and the experience of other people (16.4%), not on faith (10.6%), authority (6.1%), or tradition (3.1%).

Here are examples of a generalized theoretical understanding of personal experience: “Just can not live without faith, I can not believe in nothing”; “I communicate with God without intermediaries”; “I believe in God. Only a few in his own way, no incense and candles. Just he and I are good friends.”

Some posts represented concrete evidence of site visitors on the intervention of God in their personal experience: “I am not religious, and not from such a family. Just noticed a strange phenomenon – I feel bad and want to help. And then I come to the old icon and pray. And intervene unearthly powers! Helps for 6 day of my period is no easy exams!”

As a working hypothesis, we assumed that faith and tradition (“the holy Orthodox Russia – ‘Sviataya Rus’”) will be the dominant way to justify the relationship to God. However, this hypothesis has not been supported by data, since faith is referred only 10%. Orthodox Christianity is mentioned very rarely and mostly in a neutral or negative way: “I’m not sentenced to Christianity. I just believe”. Broken tradition is an essential obstacle for the transmitting and promotion of Christian “good life” model.

3. *The arguments in the text are based mainly on emotions and feelings (61.6%), much less on logical arguments (34.1%).*

Sometimes feelings are not specified, but simply described as existing (“God exists. Cause I can feel his presence”), and sometimes they are referred to as feelings (“I do not love God, I’m afraid of him”). Some users try to equate God with the mind (“This is the highest cosmic intelligence of the universe, without which there would be no life on Earth”), or to perceive its presence in all the surrounding world (“If he – all, how can you not love him and ignore him”) as well as to emphasize the rational principle in God (“The proof of the existence of God can be built on an empirical basis”, “There’s pure logic. And it’s pretty logical painted”). The opposite side is a uniquely configured and expresses itself in a less nuanced way (“Reason is the greatest enemy of faith”; “Any religion restricts the bounds of reason and imagination”).

Generally speaking, the textual analysis of the self-expressions and discussions on *lovehate.ru* shows that young Russians rely mainly on their own experience and the experience of other people (family and friends) in matters of belief/disbelief, and not on faith, authority or tradition, as would be expected initially. The most convincing evidence is the socio-historical explanation for this phenomenon: the Russian tradition of faith was consistently eradicated over a fairly

long period of time. This minimizing appeals to faith, tradition, and authority, and is the birthmark of Russian history, which can be described in terms of post-atheism trauma.

Another notable birthmark is the exclusion of religion from the public sphere from the minds of the Russians and the displacement of it *ad marginem* and into the inner circle of communication (family, relatives, friends). In Western societies, this process is related to the general secularization; Russia, after perestroika, probably expected a more active influence of religion in the public, up to its political manifestations when there was the creation of the Christian democratic parties. However, this has not happened. And, in addition to the external factors of a social nature, our investigation uncovered one of the internal reasons. People rarely even think about the possibility of a public level consideration of the relationship with God. The global level is manifested in the form of a stereotype (“all have to believe in God”/ “everyone understands that there is no God”).

It is also natural that the arguments in the texts about the theme “I love / I hate God” are based mainly on an appeal to emotions and feelings rather than on logical arguments. Here, the initial hypothesis has been confirmed.

This study can be continued by using qualitative methods. In particular, the analysis of 1715 texts may allow a more accurate description of “a matter of faith”, the subject of enunciation and reconstruct “credo” (“Creed”) of the *lovehate.ru* users with the possibilities of its extrapolation. In most of the texts, the authors quite specifically and clearly explain in whom or what they believe or do not believe. Such an analysis seems to be very important for understanding the current state of religion in the society.

Christian “good life” articulation and promotion: why so poorly visible?

The promotion of Christian values is hardly noticeable in the Russian public sphere. Christian churches and communities do not provide systematic moral monitoring of social events and phenomena in media. In this context the moral navigation of citizens is hardly realizable: being confused in conditions of varying values Russians are often not able to make sensible choices; they are liable to succumb to the normative pressure of different forces.

Even the voice of the most powerful sources and theoretically the most united community in modern Russia, the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC), is not heard regularly and systematically. The Church makes interventions in an *ad hoc* manner, such as when some scandalous and extremely immoral event happens. For instance, the Church intervened with the release of the film “The Last Temptation of Christ”, and with the concert of pop-singer Madonna crucifying herself on a cross, etc.

In ordinary life there is no regular production and distribution of moral judgments on television broadcasts and a wider enunciation of diverse socially significant problems and situations made by the Russian Orthodox Church. Moreover, as former ROC spokesman, priest Vladimir Vigilyanskiy, said, the Moscow Patriarchate did not plan to establish the structures for regular moral evaluation of cinema and TV production like the ones created by Roman Catholic Church (Vigilyanskiy, 2008).

As in some other European countries (Germany, France), Christian media in Russia lost a significant part of the audience because of normative, didactical style of writing “from above”, using language overloaded with ecclesial terminology, which many are not able to understand. This one-way style of communication

instead of dialogue led to economic problems because part of the audience was lost.

According to Anna Danilova, the Editor-in-Chief of the “Orthodox Christianity and the World” web portal (*Pravmir.ru*), there are several essential negative presuppositions of Orthodox religious identity for the missionary work within mass media. “Still for a religious community the process of exploring new media normally is connected with at least one of these potential obstacles: 1) the tendency of any religious institution to be conservative in everything including the media; 2) an unclear impact of the new media on the psychological state, society, and interpersonal relationships; 3) the tendency to interpret many innovations as diabolic ones (one of the best cases of which was demonstrated by the fear of many people in Russia to accept a personal tax identification code, even though the Church has officially stated that it had nothing to do with the number of the Antichrist)”, writes the Orthodox journalist. (Danilova, 2011: 20).

Contrary the topic of self-expression towards God, which demonstrated mostly positive attitudes (“I love” = 1039, “I hate” = 676), the analysis of *lovehate.ru* discussion topics about Orthodox Christianity and the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) evidently shows rather negative attitudes and opinions. Our observation is proved by the numbers of pro/contra messages “ROC” (46/151), “The idea of studying Orthodoxy in secondary schools” (227/507). Interestingly, the general evaluation of Orthodoxy is more balanced and less negative: “Orthodox Christianity” (191/195).

Social and political activity of ROC face more criticism than Orthodox Christianity as religion: “ROC proposal to impose a dress code for the people of Russia” (8/18), “ROC proposes to create a criminal penalty for heresy” (36/50), “when Orthodoxy is called the only true religion” (27/42). This suggestion may be proved not

only statistically and quantitatively, but also qualitatively, with the rhetoric of users' voices: "ROC is a bunch of scams, to brainwash people. Their desire is just power"; "What is the ROC? Ordinary sect, pumping money from gullible citizens and providing a corrosive effect on the moral and cultural foundations of the nation"; "ROC is a business project"; "ROC, in most cases do not care about people, but about the godless government".

The difference of the attitude towards Orthodox Christianity and ROC is evident in the following statements: "I love the Orthodox religion and Orthodox culture, myself, am an Orthodox man, but terribly hate ROC..."; "Orthodox faith, in my humble opinion, the only leads to salvation of the human soul ... But there is a wish to the ROC. I would not like to see our church was transformed into a house of merchants".

The arguments of those who are in favor of ROC and defend it are mostly rooted in ethnical and geopolitical discourse: "I am Russian and therefore I am an Orthodox. It is natural"; "ROC is an integral part of the thousand-year history of Russia, she has always supported our morals and I will always be with her, as the rest of the true believers"; "It is the link between Russia and Ukraine and other fraternal Orthodox peoples" (written in 2013, far before the conflict in Eastern Ukraine).

The objections and protests expressed by *lovehate.ru* users against the politically marked activity of ROC generated the set of arguments against the establishment of moral censorship in Russian media within the frames of public debates over the idea for a Public Council for Morality on TV (2008-2011). Finally the idea has been rejected both by the public and the State Duma (Khroul, 2010a, 2012b).

Elena Zhosul from Russian Orthodox University (ROU) mentioned during the conference at Moscow State University

in November 2012, “the question of mutual expectations of the Church and the media is the key issue that defines the background of discussion about religion in public space, which is now underway”. Zhosul suggested that “missionary work is the function of a narrow segment of Orthodox media”. According to the representative of ROU, there is a lack of mutual transparency: “Today Russian society wants to hear the Church voice on some sharp and crucial questions, actual for every citizen. Such as corruption, the legitimacy of the parliamentary elections, social instability, ethnic tensions. Effectiveness of public participating in combating social ills, such as alcoholism and drug addiction. Both society and the journalistic community await some honest, poignant and even undiplomatic answers from the Church. The readiness of the Church to such open discussion will determine the degree of credibility of Church on the part of the intelligent part of the society. I can say that this task is discussed in orthodox official and intellectual circles, and there are some evident steps toward its implementation. These rates may seem small and slow to someone. But to deny movement in this direction would be slander against the truth”.

The ROU Department, in partnership with the Synodal Information Department, is editing a specialized reference book for journalists, but still many reporters are indifferent to their own mistakes. This is an important aspect of relations between the Church and mass media today, because the willingness to understand each other is an important aspect of a constructive dialogue.

Media professionals towards Christian “good life” values

The logical processing sequence “*pluralism – dialogue – consensus*” in the context of religious identity in contemporary

Russia has problematic fields located in the *dialogue* area, which is the area where journalists play a major role as facilitators.

“The central purpose of being a journalist is to try to tell people the truth about important things”, said Nick Davies, the author of *Flat Earth News*, delivering public lecture at Coventry University (Davis, 2009). Does media always tell the truth about Christian values? Do media professionals consider these values to be important things to cover? Our surveys, conducted during last five years, make positive answers to the previous questions hardly possible. The marginalization of religious minorities (Khroul, 2010b), hateful speech towards new religious movements (Khroul, 2012a), and “mythologization” of Christianity in mass media (Khroul, 2013) empirically proved by content analysis and trace-studies, are the signs of flaws in the mediatization (Hjarvard, 2008) of religion in Russia.

Some of our observations in recent years, based on interviews with journalists and data analysis, lead to the conclusions of: 1) *reducing the possibility* for journalists to articulate Christian values and their identity (for example, some journalists have been fired for expressing their anti-homosexual views); 2) *narrowing the debate* on Christian values in mainstream media; 3) *removing the dialogue* on religious values and identity *into an uncensored and free area* of Internet resources, mostly to blogs or forums of users with similar value orientations.

Therefore, certain Christian concerns about the mediatization of values should be taken seriously. They can be generalized in a following set of objections: 1) the media tends to legitimize or impose *distorted models* of personal, family or social life; 2) the media is *subordinating humanity* and Christian values to agendas dictated by the dominant interests of the day; 3) the media is used for *ideological purposes*; 4) the media presents and supports *models*

of development which serve to increase the technological divide between rich and poor countries rather than reduce this divide. (Benedict XVI, 2008).

Since the level of making decisions has recently shifted up from journalists to higher media positions (top-managers), journalists themselves are less and less involved in processes of setting agendas; therefore their social mission is becoming unclear and reduced mostly to “infotainment”. These reasons lead to the journalists’ lack of responsibility, which is mostly ignored and substituted by obedience to media -managers. Almost half of Russian journalists (47.6%) suggest that the quality of journalism in Russia has decreased (*Table 4*).

Table 4

Quality of journalism according to journalists
(in %)

	Poland	Russia	Sweden
<i>Decreased</i>	61.8	47.6	38.8
<i>Stays the same</i>	18.6	30.6	26.8
<i>Increased</i>	10.8	16.8	19.4
<i>Don't know</i>	8.8	5	15

Source: The ‘Journalism in Change’ Project Survey, 2012.

In conditions of growing variability, the elaboration of a joint and united idea of what is *good and ethically acceptable* becomes increasingly problematic in Russia. For instance, a TV program where polygamy is represented in a positive way could be acceptable for Muslims but would provoke protests by Orthodox believers. The publication supporting the family status of homosexual couples

becomes the reason for indignation for followers of traditional religions while fitting sufficiently within the frame of liberal world views of modern youth. Public discussion about euthanasia, new for Russia, has already divided several European countries, and the list of examples could be continued.

The highest level for aggregate judgment on values and on what is *good* and what is *bad* (in particular, what is a *good life* and what is a *bad life*) is not representative of the entire country's society, but a *united homogeneous community* whose members have a consensus in values. Therefore, the final goal for media professionals is not a consensus on all the values, but the correct articulation and transmission of the different sets of values in order to make them apparent in the public sphere as well as promoting the social dialogue on these sets of values .

The problem of a fundamentally possible consensus on values brings us towards the explanation of a normative model of the interaction between media figures and religious structures. As the British scholar, Nick Couldry, mentioned during the most recent International Communication Association conference in Seattle (May 22-26, 2014), the ethical emptiness of mainstream media “calls to the models of normative debate”.

Supporting this call for a “normative turn”, we suggest that there is a time to rediscover the principles of the religious (Christian) values' optimization of dialogue focused on the basic principles of transparency and availability of well-articulated religious values in the public sphere. The proposed normative model presumes certain expectations from the *Religions (Christianity in particular)* and *media professionals* within all three stages (*pluralism – dialogue – consensus*) and also the *check-list* for the evaluation of present conditions for dialogue (*Table 5*).

The model of religious values dialogue optimization

	Religions	Media professionals
<i>Pluralism</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • try to ensure values transparency, availability of texts representing their normative models; • seek correct articulation of their values, use adequate symbolic systems, language and cultural codes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • try to present a complete spectrum of values and normative models (with respect to minorities); • optimize channels and information flows.
<i>Dialogue</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • respect other value systems and normative models they do not agree with; • use the framework of a common cultural code; • commit themselves to participation in the dialogue, send their experts to be active in the public sphere. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • organize and support the search for new subjects of the dialogue, the presentation of new models in mass communication space, mediate, moderate, create forums for discussions; • expand – quantitatively and qualitatively – the space for dialogue in various forms of communication.
<i>Consensus</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are seeking the common good; • are optimizing the “preaching”, the presentation of the religious values from the perspective of consensus. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consider consensus to be one of the most important goals of journalism; • are peacemakers during conflicts and tensions; • develop professional solidarity.

Conclusion

The contemporary Russian situation of dialogue about the Christian concept of the good life may be illustrated by the coverage

of one ROC initiatives. On the 25th of January 2011, the Russian Orthodox Church presented a list of so-called “eternal Russian values” for public discussion. According to one of the co-authors of the text, archpriest Vsevolod Chaplin, the project entitled “The National System of Values” had been elaborated in order to “fill in the vacuum of values in society”.

The list of ideals included eight public virtues ranked according to their importance, comprising of justice, freedom, solidarity, unity, self-restraint and sacrifice, patriotism, welfare, and love. Each point was accompanied by a commentary: freedom presumes personal freedom, freedom of expression and freedom of conscience, sovereignty, and independence of the Russian people. According to Chaplin, these virtues have remained invariable in Russia “despite all the conservation and modernization processes” (Chaplin, 2011).

The Russian Orthodox Church called for a public debate of the document, saying the list was not fixed and could be amended. “There were many interesting comments, and some of them are included in the document. It will be further updated and modified in line with the debates involving various non-government organizations”, Chaplin said.

But this discussion was almost ignored by the Russian media and was almost invisible to the Russian public sphere, and the dialogue about values failed because of the journalists’ ignorance. On the very first day of the document’s release, it was widely and fairly hatefully commented on over the Internet. However, the popular media were almost silent about the initiative, and the discussion died from the very beginning. The Church officials were portrayed as a rather aggressive people, imposing their values on the entire society.

The question of who is passive, journalists, the audience, or both, is always urgent in societies where the rules of the framework of interaction have been determined from higher positions.

The case previously described explicitly shows a lack of comprehending the necessity of public dialogue and the accountability of Russian journalists. Another question is whether journalists are free enough in Russia to be independent and influential actors?

The challenge for Christian values' mediatization in Russia is much broader, since it is located not only in the promotion and elaboration of an axiological consensus but also in the comprehension of the key role of media professionals in social dialogue of comprehended and well-reflected identities.

As Mia Lovheim stated recently, the mediatization of religion is “a dynamic process where religion is molded by the logic of particular media, but also – in a process of use and negotiation – molds these media to fit its particular dynamic of meaning making” (Lovheim, 2014: 558). This mutual interplay between religion and media cannot be described just in terms of technological functional interaction; it is always value-oriented and in some cases leads to conflict (from the relatively forgiving “Cartoon scandal” in Denmark to radically brutal approach to secular journalism in the so-called “Islamic state”). From a theoretical point of view, such interplay relationship cannot avoid normative modeling, and there is no way to escape from normativity or to hide yourself in ambivalent “functional interactions” analyses. Therefore, we are convinced that a “normative turn” in religion and media studies will help to understand and explain some phenomena and processes that are not clearly seen from other perspectives.

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Part 2

RUSSIAN MEDIA: ANALYZING CURRENT TRENDS

LOCAL NEWSPAPER IN MODERN RUSSIA: SPECIFICS OF DEVELOPMENT AND MAIN TRENDS

МЕСТНАЯ ГАЗЕТА В РОССИИ СЕГОДНЯ: ОСОБЕННОСТИ РАЗВИТИЯ И ОСНОВНЫЕ ТЕНДЕНЦИИ

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The present article is devoted to the condition of newspapers in small and medium sized Russian cities in 2010. It covers a number of topical issues, including: do local newspapers strive to reflect the most important problems of towns, to what extent do journalists and editors of local newspapers feel independent, how much are local newspapers ready to react to modern technological challenges, how effective are its ways of communication with the readers, what are the economic conditions of the editors offices of local newspapers, etc. This article is written based on a survey of 153 respondents in 66 editors' offices from 55 Russian towns.

Key words: *Russia; local press; the journalist in a local newspaper; the problems of a local newspaper.*

Статья посвящена состоянию газет малых и средних городов России в 2010-х гг. В ней затрагивается ряд акту-

альных в этом контексте вопросов, в том числе: стремится ли местная газета отражать наиболее важные проблемы вашего города; какова степень независимости журналистов и редакторов местных газет; насколько местная газета в состоянии отвечать на современные технологические вызовы; насколько эффективны ее формы коммуникации с аудиторией; каковы экономические условия работы редакций местных газет и др. Статья подготовлена по основным результатам опроса 153 респондентов в 66 редакциях 55 российских городов.

Ключевые слова: *Россия; местная пресса; журналист местной газеты; проблемы местной газеты.*

Introduction: the press of medium and small towns in Russia

The smaller towns traditionally are of great significance for Russia. The number of towns in the state is 1099, of which 155 were medium sized (with a population from 50 to 100 thousand people) and 780 small sized towns (with a population up to 50 thousand people). These smaller towns account for 85% of all the municipalities in the state, and their population is 27,310,615 (28% of urban population).

They historically developed as settled centers, important not only to urban agglomeration, but also for its outskirts. They are the gatherings of social, economic and cultural life of the region. Municipal authorities, educational and medical institutions, transport hubs, and trade establishments, which are used not merely by urban residents, but also by rural population, are situated there. Mid-sized and small towns contain Russian history, folk culture, folk craft, traditions, and customs. Undoubtedly they

are the most significant segment of the area for information and communication of the country and the regions. At times the local press is the only informer about the life of the town and the district.

The researchers specify various possibilities for the development of less populated towns in Russia depending on their location and resources. In general, these towns are the most organic environment for business, especially for smaller ones.

In this respect, successful functioning of a local press has a particular significance. There are no precise statistics on newspapers in smaller towns, but some data are available regardless of town types. According to the figures of the Foundation for Information Policy Development (FIDP), 2,884 (77%) of 3,741 newspapers are municipal editions founded by a municipality or (and) a territorial entity of the Russian Federation (Kolesnik, 2012). The statistics show that this sector of mass media is growing fast. Over the last 30 years, the number of local newspapers has increased dramatically: in 1989 there were 490 of them, now it approaches a sevenfold increase of 4,000. The circulation of newspapers has increased for this period as well.

The information above emphasizes the necessity of a federal program that shall be consistently implemented to support this category of cities. Such a program was first adopted in 1996 and for the second time in the middle of 2005. However, the federal level still lacks a coherent concept stipulating the function of medium-sized towns and especially small ones in Russia as well as their economic and socio-cultural role. Even high-ranking officials have made statements about the weak potential of small towns. Opponents of this viewpoint demonstrate their objections. Without the policy of preservation and development for this category of settlements, the processes of stagnation, depopulation, and degradation will further

spread to a greater or lesser degree through most cities and rural settlements outside the major agglomerations; tens or hundreds of small towns and thousands of rural settlements will become completely uninhabited. Demographic and economic processes of “desertification” will affect a number of historically populated and economically developed regions of central Russia, the Volga area, the Urals, Siberia, and the Far East.

Obviously, the government has recently changed their point of view, considering the Ministry of Regional Development of Russia has been currently discussing a drafted concept of the federal targeted program for economic development and improvement of living standards in small towns of the Russian Federation between the period 2015–2020. This program aims to create proper conditions for the development of a real economy in small towns and add to their marketability.

The researchers believe that in order to overcome difficulties and to ensure prospects of development for medium-sized and small Russian towns, both enlisting state support and enhancing self-development resources are necessary. The former shall be based on the well elaborated and consistently implemented nationwide program, and the latter will rely on a competent urban administration (town management) and an effective municipal government. Successes in various aspects of life in these towns will be unachievable unless the potential of their citizens is realized.

The research problem: the main trends in today’s local Russian newspaper

The successful performance of local press has a particularly special significance. Although there are no accurate statistics on

newspapers in mid-sized and small towns available, there are figures available without a breakdown by city type.

The local print occupies a fundamentally important place in the media landscape of Russia. Unfortunately, nowadays this resource is surely underestimated, as evidenced by the 2013 All-Russian Congress of municipalities, where, in the course of the discussion about important problems faced by municipalities, the essential issues of the local press were never raised. At this point, it is worth emphasizing that the local press must and is able to promptly inform the public about local troubles, engage civil society in the deliberations, and search for solutions. Newspapers in average-sized and small towns have very important communicative functions as a consolidation of the local community, infrastructure development, economic, socio-cultural potential of cities and regions, and contributions to solving specific problems of citizens. The local press performs a vital task of preserving journalism, which is close to the people's requirements and needs, and incorporating basic Russian values.

The local press has an essential function in the media environment of Russia. However, its value is underestimated these days, and insignificant attention is paid to its development. The local press must and can inform the population promptly about local problems, draw the civic society to their discussion and find ways to solutions.

The detailed analysis of the practice of newspapers in smaller towns, including scientific research, may contribute to improvement of their activity, and raise their role in the life of urban residents. Nowadays there is an obvious lack of such research, notwithstanding interesting and useful projects are available, for instance, those fulfilled by the Trust of Public Communications Policy Development (TPCPD) in 2006 (*Munitsipal'naya pressa, reforma mestnogo*

samoupravleniya i natsional'nye proekty, 2006), 2008 and 2012 (ibid). Various highly influential scientific publications (Tulupov, 2011) are dedicated to this subject (see e.g.: Kasyutin, 2011; Svitich, Shiryayeva, 2006). Typically research of the regional press is conducted without distinguishing it as a part of smaller towns. The research focused on the special role of local newspapers must be considerably updated to keep up with the changes that take place in the Russian media system.

In this respect, we find it important to study what the main trends and factors of evolution of a modern local newspaper in Russia are, and what would be the mechanisms of increasing its role particularly in the development of small and medium-sized towns and of the Russian regions as a whole.

Our main research questions are:

- How successfully does a Russian local newspaper perform in present-day conditions?
- Does a local newspaper strive to reflect the most important problems of the town?
- To what extent do journalists and editors of local newspapers feel independent?
- To what extent is the local newspaper ready to react to modern technological challenges?
- How effective are its ways of communicating with the readers?
- What are the economic conditions of the editors' offices of local newspapers?

In order to answer these questions we explored the attitude of the chiefs of editors' offices and journalists towards the position of newspapers in average and small towns, their problems, and their development prospects by means of a questionnaire method.

The specific character of the research methodology “Newspapers of medium and small towns in Russia in 2010s”, which is provided in this article, is the *sociocentric approach*, i.e. is the maximal consideration of social context, which demonstrates the range of problems that are typical nowadays of medium-sized and small towns. The comparative analysis of the feedback from the newspapers’ representatives allows the model of the issue and the degree of its implementation to be presented more on a case by case basis. The model was supposed to assess the opinions of the editors and journalists on a number of different aspects. The research method involves the polling of managers and journalists. Altogether and 26 federal districts (one in four, in average) were involved in the selection. A balance of varying areas of the Russian Federation (provinces, territories, republics, national areas) and part of the national communities (approximately 30%) is sustained. The following is included in the selection: 26 federal districts of the Russian Federation; 55 towns, 66 editors’ offices, and 100 journalists and 53 chiefs of editors’ offices. 153 people were questioned in total.

The main results of the research

One of the most important objectives of this research was to reveal the opinions of small town editors and journalists about the objectives that are covered by their publications (*Table 1*).

Table 1

Answers to a question: “What are the most important objectives of your issues today in your opinion?”
(as % of the number of respondents)

Very important objective	%
Informing of the most important events in the life of a town	96
Drawing public attention to the topical issues in the life of a town	83
Contribution to developing a feeling of a small motherland, belonging to the life of a town, community spirit of urban residents	77
Promotion of positive values, moral and ethical education	73
Informing of the decisions and actions of municipal authorities, informational support of decisions of municipal authorities that are of great importance for a town	68
Arrangement of public discussions on important issues of the life of a town, expression of the public opinion	68
Social protection of people, help in specific life matters	64
Forming public opinion	63
The advisory role, publication of practically useful background information	59
Contribution to the development of cultural and historical traditions	56
The educational role, widening of horizons, increase of a cultural level of the audience	56
Contribution to social and economic development of a town	55
Control over the activity of authorities	52
Contribution to the development of municipal government, civic society	52
Assistance in the communication and establishing of mutual understanding among different layers, groups of urban residents	45
Ideological, political orientation of the audience	32
Distribution of promotional information	31
Informing of the most important events in the life of a region	27
Informing of the decisions and activity of state authorities of a higher level	18
Assistance in recreation and entertainment of the audience	17
Informing of the most important events in the life of the country	12
Miscellaneous	—

As the data demonstrates, the most important objective is still informing the public about the most significant events occurring in a town (96%). The respondents believed that drawing the public attention to the topical issues of a town (83%) and contribution to developing a feeling of a small motherland, belonging to the life of a town, and increasing the community spirit of urban residents (77%), the next objectives of importance.

Interestingly, the entertainment of the audience is considered to be one of the least important objectives (17%).

After generalizing the information about the objectives, it should be mentioned that editors and journalists of newspapers in smaller towns consider everything to be important that is connected with the local community and the concerns of its residents, which corresponds with the peculiarities of this type of press.

The respondents were also asked a special question, which was meant to evaluate the attention that is really paid to certain objectives. The answers to this question revealed that the objectives that the editors and journalists consider significant are conveyed more successfully in their opinions.

The answers of journalists revealed that only two objectives are fulfilled quite comprehensively: informing of town events and covering the activity of governing bodies. The others are implemented insufficiently at the moment. The main reasons for that, according to the respondents, are connected to the deficiency in financial, technical, and staff supply (e.g. this is connected with the reduction of staff, increase in the amount of work of every journalist, reduction of proficiency of journalists, etc.).

Current affairs in local newspaper today

The objectives of a newspaper are naturally implemented through the content of publications. As soon as the contents of local newspapers

are primarily formed based on issues of a town and the life of its people, the research takes into consideration an open question about the most essential problems of a town that the newspaper publishes (*Table 2*).

Table 2

**The answers to an open question:
“What are the most important problems of your town?”
(as % of the number of respondents)**

Answers	%
Unemployment, industry is destroyed, township-forming enterprises and big production works are closed, decay of agriculture, lack of working places, lack of working places for the youth	50
Communal services problems	31
Population decline and ageing, shortage of personnel, flow of population to big cities, young people continue living in places they get the education, no places for leisure activity of the youth, apathy of the youth, migration policy	25
Lack of municipal improvement (insufficient development of the infrastructure, small part of taxes remains in the municipal budget)	22
Low remuneration, low standard of living	18
Bad condition of roads and transport	18
The condition of the culture and education, low level of culture, the condition of architectural monuments, insufficient attention to the historical legacy	14
Public health services	14
Incompetence and staff scarcity among the city leaders, corruption, closeness of authorities, red tape	13
Budgetary deficit of town councils, economic instability, the lack of investment, investment projects in the industry and agriculture, reduction of financial receipts into the budget	12
Shortage of places in day-care facilities	5
Staff scarcity among the police, lawlessness, crime	4
Apathy, depressiveness, alcoholism	4
Poorly diversified economy, small and mid-sized business are not developed	4

It's remarkable that the respondents pointed out the same subjects that are highlighted by experts conducting research on this situation in average and small towns (i.e. the staff of the local editorial offices clearly understands the real social context that a certain editors' office works within).

After the main enterprises were shut down, the major problem in smaller Russian towns became unemployment: the youth have no places to work, so they move to big cities. The problem of a decreasing population and an ageing population is tightly connected with the loss of jobs.

The research shows that editors and journalists clearly realize the problems of their towns, the interests of local residents, and the town's needs. They aspire to arrange the contents of newspapers in accordance with the most critical aspects of life.

The subjects connected to the daily routine of an ordinary person are considered top-priority topics for newspapers of mid-sized and small towns, yet those subjects are what the national press in Russia pays little attention to. Among these subjects are housing and utility sectors; construction and renovation of municipal housing and roads; operation of municipal transport; ecology; municipal improvement; human services; and operation of educational, medical, and cultural institutions (i.e. exactly the subjects that are the most burning for the residents of these towns and they must be in the center of attention of the authorities).

Solving these problems depends on the work of the authorities, as well as the work of law enforcement agencies, and crime prevention, which is something that the urban environment cannot be safe and comfortable without.

A town's economy, development of the production sphere, industrial enterprises, small and mid-size businesses, the sector of employment, development of a labor market, and job creation

take quite an important place, since these aspects are limited in the majority of smaller towns.

Unfortunately, the historical themes of a town, region, and tourism development are at the end of the list. Meanwhile, the development of these domains by means of drawing the attention through the press could help some towns, especially small ones, find the resources for the acquisition of their economic potential.

The audience and the forms of intercommunication with it

Local newspapers are really close to their audience, since they are aimed at all audience's groups, and they have mass amounts of readers. But according to journalists, the audience is mostly middle-aged adults and seniors with a secondary education background. Journalists and editors of newspapers believe their newspapers are insufficiently popular among the young audience, which is certainly not exclusively a problem of the local press. At the same time, the reasons for this are connected with the tradition of urban Russian newspapers focusing on adults.

Special youth newspapers were available almost in every town, however, now, especially in small towns, there is only one newspaper per town as a rule.

The journalists of local newspapers, primarily in small towns, know their readers fairly well and that is why they do not experience a severe shortage of knowledge about the audience's interests and preferences.

The research has allowed connections between the local press and the audience as well (*Table 3*).

Table 3

The answer to a question: “What ways of regular connection with the audience do you use?”
(as % of the number of respondents)

Answer options	%
Consultation of the visitors of editors offices	76
Connection through electronic mail	70
Reading letters to the editor	65
Face-to-face meetings with readers	49
Social networking sites	34
Forums on a newspaper website	31
Arranged meetings with readers (readers’ conferences, festivals, round tables, away editors offices, etc.)	25

As the answers demonstrate, the editors still receive the readers in editorial offices in the same traditional way, and it is the most popular form of communication (76%) along with letters from readers (65%). At the same time the modern forms of communication – connecting through electronic mail (70%), social networking sites (34%), and forums on newspaper websites (31%) are a large part of the communication with the audience. Answers received for questions about how often journalists use social networking sites reveal that only 14% do not utilize them, and about 60% use them on a daily basis or twice a week.

The potential of town residents influencing the content of a paper is seen as an important issue (*Table 4*).

Table 4

The answer to a question: “Do you think the common town residents have the possibility to influence the content of your paper?”
(as % of the number of respondents)

Answer options	%
Yes, significant	56
Yes, but insufficient	31
No	8
I don't know, no answer	5

The answers to this question are generally positive, although one third of the respondents think that these possibilities are insignificant.

Generally speaking, the results show the actions of the editors' offices in the intercommunication with town residents. Knowing the attitudes and needs of different layers of the population better is still insufficient, it is important to involve this information in the newspapers' content more actively, to make it apparent to the public.

The degree of journalistic independence

The freedom of the press and professional independence of journalists is a basic condition for the efficiency of the socially conscious press. Questions about the professional independence of journalists were usually asked in social research conducted at the Faculty of Journalism, Lomonosov Moscow State University

from the beginning of the 1990s (Svitich, Shiryayeva, 2006). The comparison of the journalists' answers on this subject displays some positive progress has taken place in recent years, but it is still insufficiently important (*Table 5*).

Table 5

The journalists' answers to the question:
“Please, evaluate the degree of freedom of journalist’s independence
in your town, based on your personal experience
or from your communication with colleagues from
other editors offices”
(as % of the number of respondents)

Answer options	2013	2006
Journalists are free enough, independent	24	21
Experience certain restraints	53	51
As a rule, do not feel free or independent	17	27
No answer	2	1

Editors feel freer than journalists. More detailed answers were received about people or things that abridge the freedom of editors and journalists (*Table 6*).

Table 6

The answers to the question: “Who or what, in your opinion, mostly abridge professional independence of journalists?”
(as % of the number of respondents)

Answer options	2013	2006
Financial dependence	39	61
Self-censorship, “inner editor”, own stereotypes of thinking	39	32
Authorities	29	18
Founders	24	42
Fear of being pursued for straightforward releases	17	4
The chiefs of editors offices	15	*
Sponsors, advertising spenders	8	3
Owners	7	*
Pressure from different organizations, institutions	6	4
Insufficiency of their own professional expertise	5	*
Pressure from the audience, public opinion	4	*
Miscellaneous	3	*
No answer	3	1

*This option of answer was not available in the research in 2006.

Financial dependence and self-censorship take the primary positions of the answers, especially in newspapers of medium-sized towns. Also the freedom of journalists is definitely restricted by the chiefs of editors’ offices. After calculating the influence of the authorities, founders, and owners together, this issue will take first place. In comparison with the research of 2006, financial dependence today is less significant than self-censorship.

Economic condition of the editorial offices of local newspapers

Since the economic factor is determinative in the state of today's press, some questions are dedicated to this subject. The general question about the state of editors' offices showed that 22% defined it as good, 57% as average and 21% as poor.

The answers of editors demonstrate that the main source of income of editorial offices is advertising (70% of answers) and subscription (57%), and 64% of editors of medium-sized towns chose subscription. 30% said that the source of budget is state and municipal financing. Thus, the perception that the local press in Russia fully depends on state financing is extremely exaggerated. A lot of newspapers are considered commercially successful and maintain their financial needs primarily by means of advertising and partially by subscriptions.

The research indicated that editorial offices hardly use potential sources, e.g., the funds of civic and social organizations, sponsorship of private individuals, or readers' charitable contributions. The proportion of secondary business information (printing of literature, forms, business cards, post cards, etc.) is not too popular.

In general, 60% of editors defined their papers as cost efficient. Without doubt, many editors' offices experience a shortage of funds. This, in turn, affects almost all the sides and conditions of work in editors' offices: quantity of employees, their proficiency, remuneration, in-service education, business trips, and the ability to purchase modern technical facilities as well as their integration into the work process.

Local newspapers and processes of convergence

One of most topical objectives of the research is to reveal the ways advanced digital technologies are introduced in local newspapers and the degree of their integration within the developmental trends of the modern media.

The answers of the chief editors and journalists show that these processes in Russian local newspapers are rather active. The content is primarily provided in the Internet. Although a small part of content is prepared for radio, television, and even for portable media, these forms of media convergence are not specific to newspapers of small towns.

In accordance with the answers, the issues presented in this research reveal 85% of information is posted in a certain form on the Internet. It is natural that the processes of media convergence are faster in newspapers of medium-sized towns: 54% of answers of their representatives say that there is an independent web version of an issue (only 29% in small towns). Almost 70% of the respondents checked the box “the multimedia content: photos, audio and video materials are ‘posted’ on the site” (only 29% in small towns). 20% of editors and journalists of newspapers in medium-sized towns informed about the practice of preparing the content for TV(11%) for radio releases (7%), and for portable media. All these forms have a smaller presence in newspapers of small towns.

Education, gender and age of the employees of editors’ offices

In this research, the situation of the personnel was studied in the context of the media environment’s development of a town.

In that regard, the editors of issues were asked a question about how they estimate the situation with journalistic personnel in their town.

Unfortunately, 69% of editors say that there is shortage of journalists in a town, and 60% believe that their proficiency is not sufficient.

Judging by the answers of editors to this open question along with reports in newspapers, there is a need, for example, in columns, analysts and observers. Without doubt, photographers, web-designers, and representatives of other professions that use digital technologies are in demand.

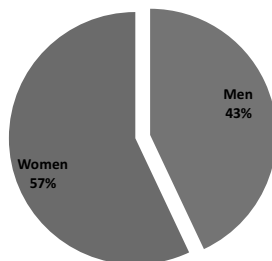
The large majority of journalists in local Russian newspapers have a higher education (85%). But only one fourth of journalists have a higher journalistic education. The most widespread type of education is philological and pedagogic.

The age configuration of the employees of editors' offices is insufficiently balanced, according to the opinion of chiefs of editors' offices: 40% of editors said that ageing people prevail in their offices. The most efficient and expert age in this profession from 40 to 49 years is a complete "gap".

The research also demonstrated that fundamental changes happened in the ratio of male to female personnel within the last years: there were 85% of women among the polled journalists. While approximately twenty years ago, 65–70% of men worked in newspapers, and now the situation is the opposite. It is indicative that the percentage of women among the chiefs of editors offices is a little less than among the journalists (53%), but nevertheless, they prevail over the men (*Figure 1*).

Figure 1

**“Gender structure of the chiefs of editors offices
of local newspapers in Russia”**
(as % of the number of respondents)



Thus, the research confirmed that the process of feminization of journalism as a profession was very concentrated in Russia over the past years. This was connected with a range of objective factors: during the restructure at the end of the last century, men quitted editors' offices because journalists' salaries were extremely low and they were unable to support their families with this money. At the same time the research dispelled a myth that women play an unimportant role in the media management in Russia: the proportion of the chiefs of editors offices is substantial and it is very likely to continue growing.

Conclusion

The research emphasizes that the editors and journalists of the towns of Russia are willing to work actively to satisfy the information and communication needs of their audience, assist the

development of their towns, and increase of the people's wellbeing. Vast successes are attained in the development of local newspapers in 2010s: they became more technically equipped, obtained digital technologies, and utilized various computer programs that widen the possibilities of editorial offices in the formation and presentation of newspaper content. Public relations are used in their work; the advanced technologies of modeling are used, design improves, and newspapers are issued in color more frequently. Related to convergence processes, all of the newspapers are fully published on websites. However, these processes are developed irregularly today as their arrangement depends on the financial situation of editorial offices as well as personnel proficiency. Editorial offices extensively use opportunities to attract people to public discussions about important town issues, both in traditional forms and on the Internet. However, the polled editors and journalists claim that newspapers reflect the interests and attitudes of different groups and layers of a population insufficiently. In accordance with the estimates of the employees of editorial offices, ageing people prevail in the real audience, and that is why the objective of attracting young readers is particularly stressed, which is associated with their interests considering content formation and introduction to specific pages, supplements, attachments, columns, etc. Comparisons between past research show that the situation connected with the information independence of journalists generally has improved.

The data received from the research allows us to make a conclusion about a certain exaggeration of widespread opinions that small-town newspapers are monetarily dependent and survive on government subsidies. The main sources of income are revenue from advertising and subscriptions, as editors stated. The research also confirmed that the process of feminization of the journalistic

profession recently has been very in Russia. As a result, about 85% of journalists in local newspapers are women. At the same time, the research dispelled a myth that women take an insignificant place in Russian media management: there are more female chiefs of editors than male in local newspapers.

According to the results of our survey, the most important factors for the future of local newspapers are the level of economic development of a town, financial material and technical provision of editorial offices, the legal and economic status of urban newspapers, social control of the society, focus on the needs of a population and demands of the audience, the formation of information policy by founders and owners, the provision of proficient editor personnel and efficient editorial management.

In general, the evaluation of the research output leads us to the conclusion that a local newspaper in Russia is not only alive, but it is also extensively developing and pretty eagerly demanded by its audience. The journalists of local newspapers, despite economic and other difficulties, are upbeat and ready to continue working on satisfying the information needs of its audience and contributing to the development of their towns.

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**NEWS COVERAGE OF THE 2012
RUSSIAN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION
(EXEMPLIFIED BY “ROSSIISKAYA GAZETA”)**

**ОСВЕЩЕНИЕ ВЫБОРОВ ПРЕЗИДЕНТА РОССИИ
В 2012 ГОДУ НА СТРАНИЦАХ СМИ
(НА ПРИМЕРЕ «РОССИЙСКОЙ ГАЗЕТЫ»)**

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This study investigates “Rossijskaya Gazeta’s” (an official publication of the Russian Government; it means “Russian Gazette”) coverage of the 2012 Russian presidential campaign. Overall, coverage of election information was the most common topic (62%), followed by voters (24%) and policy positions

(4%). Candidate Putin and his supporters received roughly the same amount of coverage (49% out of all statements in which any candidates and supporters were mentioned) as all other candidates and their supporters combined (51%). “Rossijskaya Gazeta’s” presidential campaign coverage was primarily neutral (63%), with a clear tendency to use a positive tone towards Putin and negative remarks concerning his main opponent Zyuganov. In closing there are data on analogous studies of news coverage of elections in Australia, Canada, Ghana, the United Kingdom, and the United States. However, to compare features of the media content in Russia and aforementioned countries was not the main goal of this study. Rather, these data are quite useful in estimating results obtained by this research against a backdrop of other countries.

Key words: news coverage; president; Russia; election campaign; tone; “Rossijskaya Gazeta”.

Статья посвящена анализу публикаций «Российской газеты» (официального печатного органа Правительства РФ) о президентских выборах 2012 года в России. В целом, чаще всего темой посвященных этому статей была информация о выборах (62%), мнениях и настроениях избирателей (24%) и позициях кандидатов (4%). Кандидат Путин и его сторонники получили примерно столько же внимания (49% от всех высказываний, в которых упоминались кандидаты и их команды), сколько и все остальные кандидаты вместе взятые (51%). Общая тональность материалов «Российской газеты» о президентских выборах была преимущественно нейтральной (63%) с ярко выраженной тенденцией использования позитивного тона в отношении В. Путина и негативного — в отношении его основного оппонента Г. Зюга-

нова. В заключительной части статьи содержатся данные аналогичных исследований применительно к Австралии, Великобритании, Гане, Канаде и США. При этом сравнение особенностей освещения избирательных кампаний в России и названных государствах не являлось целью данного исследования: приведенные показатели призваны помочь оценить характер медийной представленности выборной тематики в России на фоне других стран.

Ключевые слова: *освещение в СМИ, президент; Россия; избирательная кампания; тональность; «Российская газета».*

Introduction

Newspapers are an important source of information about political campaigns, such as those for presidents, chancellors, and prime ministers. For example, Hollihan noted that “for national political news coverage, the most thorough, comprehensive, and substantive information regarding political campaigns, political issues, and public policies is available to readers of comprehensive large city daily papers” (Hollihan, 2001: 79). NES data from 1960-2000 revealed that use of newspapers was associated with higher levels of knowledge in each of these campaigns (Hansen, 2004). Newspapers can be a significant source of issue knowledge for voters. This is particularly important in countries such as the United Kingdom where candidates are prohibited from running television spots; “major parties are allocated rationed blocks of free time for party election broadcasts (PEBs) during official campaign periods” (Scammell, Langer, 2006: 65).

This is important in Russia too. In April 2012, The All-Russia Center of Public Opinion Research conducted a survey concerning

the usage of different types of mass media in Russia. According to its results, television remains the most popular medium in Russia, followed by print media. Russians trust national and regional TV stations most of all. In terms of popularity, TV is followed by the federal and local press. This means the news, as a source of information about candidates and their policies is particularly important for democracy.

Another reason for the importance of news about election campaigns lies in the theory of agenda-setting. Cohen explained that the press “may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about” (Cohen, 1963: 13). In other words, news media may not create attitudes (tell people what to think about an issue), but they can tell people that an issue is something they should be thinking about (tell people it is an important issue). McCombs and Shaw coined the phrase “agenda-setting” to refer to this phenomenon: The frequency with which an issue was discussed in the news was positively related to the public’s perceived importance of that issue (McCombs, Shaw, 1972). Weaver, McCombs, and Shaw concluded that research “tends to support a positive correlation—and often a causal relationship—between media agendas and public agendas” (Weaver, McCombs, Shaw, 2004: 258). So, not only can the news inform the public, it also has the potential to influence public perceptions of which issues are most important.

Furthermore, newspaper readers are an especially important group of citizens. NES data from 2000 establishes that Americans who read newspapers are significantly more likely to vote than those who do not ($\chi^2[df = 1] = 101.93, p < .0001, V = .26$). This means that newspaper readers have a disproportionate impact at the polls. Thus, research on the content of newspaper coverage of political campaigns is clearly justified.

Research has shown that the amount of coverage received by candidates, the tone of the coverage, and the amount of horse race coverage focusing on a candidate can influence voters' perceptions of candidates (Ross, 1992). Furthermore, as Farnsworth and Lichter observed, "Polls have repeatedly shown that voters have a very good idea which candidate is likely to win the presidency, but voters are less able to demonstrate their knowledge of issue stands" (Farnsworth, Lichter, 2003: 53). However, issue knowledge is arguably what voters need most: Patterson and McClure (1976) note that "Of all the information voters obtain through the mass media during a presidential campaign, knowledge about where the candidates stand is most vital" (Patterson, McClure, 1976: 49; see also Hofstetter, 1976). Therefore, the nature and content of newspaper coverage of political campaigns merit scholarly attention.

Literature review

Studies have investigated coverage of elections in one country by newspapers in another country (Christensen, 2005; Husselbee, Stempel, 1997; Khineyko, 2005). Other research has explored television news coverage of election campaigns, including Comrie (2012), Dmitrova and Stromback (2011), Kohn (1984), Mendelsohn (1993), Peter, Lauf, and Semetko (2004), Schultz and Zeh (2005), Semetko (1991), De Vreese, Canducci, Semetko, and Goomgaarden (2006), and Young (2008). This review will focus on the most pertinent studies, those on newspaper coverage of political campaigns.

Benoit, Stein, and Hansen reviewed the literature on news coverage of political campaigns, finding that most studies report horse races as the most common topic, that character was discussed

more than policy, and that the tone of news coverage tended to be negative. They also content analyzed the “*New York Times*” coverage of American presidential campaigns from 1952–2000. The three main topics covered were “horse race” (40%), character (31%), and policy (25%). The three most common forms of “horse races” in these data were strategy (34%), events (24%), and polls (22%). The tone of coverage was more negative (57%) than positive (39%) with a few reports of defenses (4%). Reporters (statements without any other source indicated) were the most common source (44%), followed by candidates (35%), supporters (35%), and others (5%) (Benoit, Stein, Hansen, 2005).

One of the earliest studies of newspaper coverage of election campaigns was completed by Sinclair, who investigated coverage of the 1979 British election: 55% of coverage concerned issues, 34% “horse race”, and 15% character (Sinclair, 1982). Stromback and Aalberg looked at newspaper coverage of elections in Sweden (2002) and Norway (2005). The “horse race” and issues received equal attention in Swedish newspapers; “horse race” was a more common topic than issues in Norway (64% to 36%) (Stromback, Aalberg, 2008). Hansen and Pederson studied the 2005 Danish election: 9% of newspaper ads were mostly or entirely negative, 7% of party election broadcasts were negative, 29% of debates, and 22% of newspaper articles that quoted candidates were negative (Hansen, Pederson, 2008). Walter and Vliegthart investigated newspaper coverage of the 2006 Dutch parliamentary campaign. Most statements were positive (63% to 37%) and discussed policy more than character (58% to 42%; “trait” and “value” were combined in the character category) (Walter, Vliegthart, 2010). Amponsah, following the approach taken in Benoit, Stein, and Hansen (2005), looked at presidential campaigns in Ghana, 1992-2004. The “horse race” comprised 41% of newspaper articles, policy was 30%, and

character was 18%. The top three forms of horse race coverage were strategy (40%), events (29%), and endorsements (19%). Coverage was more positive than negative (74% to 19%) with few defenses (7%). Most statements were attributed to candidates (40%) or had no source (reporters, 36%); supporters (19%) and others (5%) were less common (Amponsah, 2012). Carstea analyzed opinion articles on the 2009 Romanian presidential campaign; around 90% of articles were negative. However, results on topics are mixed: policy was more common than horse race in two campaigns whereas horse race was more frequently discussed than policy in two campaigns (Carstea, 2012). Benoit, Compton, and Phillips studied news coverage of prime minister elections in Australia, Canada, and the U.K. In each country the most common topic of newspaper coverage was the “horse race”; in Canada and the U.K. (but not Australia) character was discussed more often than policy. In Australia, the most common topic of news coverage was strategy; in Canada and the U.K. it was polls. Coverage contained more negative than positive themes. Most themes had no source (were simply statements by the reporter) (Benoit, Compton, Phillips, 2013).

It is also worth mentioning that there are very few if any studies at all that investigate coverage of the 2012 Russian presidential election. Russian scholars prefer to research any aspects of the electoral process other than those pertinent to newspaper coverage of the 2012 presidential campaign. To date, only Osipova has made an attempt to analyze the correlation between mass communication content and election outcomes. She found that, on the one hand, the more often people watch TV the more likely they were to vote for Putin, and, on the other hand, the more often people use the Internet, the more likely they were to vote for Putin’s main opponent Zyuganov (Osipova , 2013: 118).

Purpose

This study investigates the nature of the newspaper coverage of the 2012 Russian presidential election. We ask the following questions:

RQ1: What is the most common topic of “*Rossiiskaya Gazeta’s*” coverage of the 2012 Russian presidential campaign?

RQ2: What is the relative proportion of comments from different sources (reporters, candidates, supporters, others)?

RQ3: Is there any difference in the amount of coverage devoted to individual candidates?

RQ4: What is the relative proportion of positive, negative, and neutral tone concerning different candidates in newspaper coverage of the 2012 campaign?

Method

We sampled a single newspaper, “*Rossiiskaya Gazeta*”. On the one hand, “*Rossiiskaya Gazeta*” enjoys official status, because acts of state effect their publication, but on the other hand, “*Rossiiskaya Gazeta*” is intended for the general reader, embracing everything from daily news, special reports, and interviews of government officials to expert commentaries on documents of state. Its daily circulation is about 180,000 copies. “*Rossiiskaya Gazeta*” has several news offices abroad: Great Britain, Albania, Belarus, Bulgaria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Belgium, Germany, Spain, the USA, Ukraine, France, South Korea, China, Turkey. During the first six months of 2010 “*Rossiiskaya Gazeta*” has topped the ratings of the most quoted socio-political editions according to TNS Media Intelligence. Taking into account “*Rossiiskaya Gazeta’s*” official

status, it is safe to say that its coverage is typical of all mass media loyal to the Kremlin. It is arguably one of the most important and influential newspapers in Russia and well worth scholarly attention.

Our sample includes all 104 articles published in 19 issues of “*Rossijskaya Gazeta*” over the course of one month before the Election Day – March, 4. The selection of articles was carried out by a keyword search using the term “election.”

Categorical content analysis was employed to describe the content of these news stories. Benoit’s Functional Theory (Benoit, 2007) serves as the theoretical starting point as extended for analysis of campaign news (Amponsah, 2012; Benoit, Compton, Phillips, 2013; Benoit, Hemmer, Stein, 2010; Benoit, Stein, Hansen, 2005). This theory posits that candidate discourse has only three functions (acclaims or positive statements; attacks or negative statements, and defenses or refutations of attacks). It also holds that candidate messages will address two topics, policy (issues) and character (image). News coverage of campaigns can address five basic topics: policy and character (from Functional Theory) as well as what is known as the “horse race”, voters, scandal, and election information. Horse race coverage is comprised of seven sub-categories: strategy, campaign events, polls, predictions, endorsements, fund raising, and spending. Taking into consideration that such horse race types such as endorsements, fund raising, and spending are very uncommon for Russian political practice, (there were no mentions of these sub-categories in our sample) thus we decided not to include them in final results. Tone is another variable for understanding newspaper coverage. The three functions of candidate discourse from Functional Theory (acclaims/positive statements, attacks/negative statements, and defenses/refutations of attacks) can describe the tone of both candidate and news statements. Finally, statements in a news story

can be unattributed (from the reporter), from the candidate, from a supporter, or from another source.

We used the codebook developed in earlier research (Benoit, Stein, Hansen, 2005), which contained definitions of these categories with an example of each category from newspaper stories. Coders divided the texts into themes, which are the smallest units of discourse capable of expressing an idea. Berelson defined a theme as “an assertion about a subject” (Berelson, 1952: 18). Holsti explained that a theme is “a single assertion about some subject” (Holsti, 1969: 116). Then each theme was coded for source, topic, tone, and subject.

Fleis’s κ was calculated (on a subset 10% of the texts) to determine inter-coder reliability because it controls for agreement by chance. Reliability for topic was .76, the κ for tone was .74, and κ for identifying the source of statements was .87. Landis and Koch explained that values of κ over .61 represents significant reliability, so these data should be considered quite reliable (Landis and Koch, 1977).

Results

The first research question investigated the topics of “*Rossiyskaya Gazeta’s*” articles on presidential campaign.

Table 1

Topics of election news coverage

Horse Race	Character	Policy	Voters	Scandal	Election Information
54 (5%)	13 (1%)	45 (4%)	246 (24%)	26 (3%)	639 (62%)

Table 2

Topics of horse race in election news coverage

Strategy	Event	Poll	Predict
16 (0.6%)	16 (1.6%)	16 (1.6%)	14 (1.4%)

As can be seen in *Table 1*, the most frequent topic was Election Information, followed by Voters. The smallest four categories (i.e. Character, Policy, Scandal and four types of Horse Race – see *Table 2*) together comprised only around 13% of the utterances in the sample. Among them, Policy was much more frequent than Character (4% vs. 1%, respectively) and only one percent less than all four types of Horse Race (5%). There was a significant difference in the distribution of these topics ($\chi^2 [df = 5] = 1760.71, p < .0001$). No significant difference occurred in the four forms of horse race.

Table 3

Source of election news coverage

Reporter	Candidate	Supporter	Other
480 (47%)	62 (6%)	82 (8%)	399 (39%)

Table 3 provides data to answer RQ2. As expected, Reporters were the most common source of information (47%). Surprisingly, they were followed not by Candidates (6%) or their Supporters (8%), but by Others (39%), i.e. officials, Central Electoral Committee officers, experts, and scholars. Again, there was a significant difference in the distribution of these types of sources ($\chi^2 [df = 3] = 541.69, p < .0001$).

Table 4

**Types of sources of “Rossijskaya Gazeta’s”
coverage of presidential campaign-2012**

Putin and his supporters	Zyuganov and his supporters	Prokhorov and his supporters	Zhirinovskiy and his supporters	Mironov and his supporters	Reporter	Other
71 (7%)	31 (3%)	19 (2%)	11 (1%)	10 (1%)	484 (47%)	397 (39%)

Table 4 shows us proportions of cases when candidates and their supporters were used as sources. Examining all seven possible sources, a significant difference occurred ($\chi^2 [df = 6] = 1703.43, p < .0001$). Focusing just on the five candidates, it is not hard to see that statements made by Putin and members of his “team” were referred to most often, followed by Zyuganov, Prokhorov, Zhirinovskiy, and Mironov ($\chi^2 [df = 4] = 59.83, p < .0001$). Interestingly, this order clearly correlates with the outcome of the 2012 presidential campaign. According to official data from the Central Electoral Committee of the Russian Federation, Putin got 64% of the vote, Zyuganov 18%, Prokhorov 8%, Zhirinovskiy 6%, and Mironov 4%¹.

That is not to say that it was “*Rossijskaya Gazeta*” that predetermined the final results of the election. We just assume that on the one hand, reporters might well anticipate the outcome of a campaign, and that on the other hand they could also have a desire to implicitly favor the likely winner.

¹ URL:http://www.vybory.izbirkom.ru/region/region/izbirkom?action=show&root=1&tvd=100100031793509&vrn=100100031793509®ion=0&global=1&sub_region=0&prver=0&pronetvd=null&vibid=100100031793509&type=226.

Having analyzed the tone of “*Rossijskaya Gazeta’s*” coverage of the 2012 presidential campaign, we found some evidence for this hypothesis.

Table 5

Tone of election news coverage

Tone with regard to candidates	Putin	Zyuganov	Prokhorov	Zhirinovskiy	Mironov	Neutral tone
positive	154 (15%)	22 (2%)	19 (2%)	13 (2%)	12 (1%)	648 (63%)
negative	14 (1%)	30 (3%)	0 (0%)	4 (0.5%)	5 (0.5%)	
neutral	47 (5%)	13 (1%)	21 (2%)	10 (1%)	11 (1%)	

First of all, we have to clarify here that coders were asked to use a neutral tone when a statement was about election itself and contained no reference to any of the candidates. Further than that, we have come to an agreement to identify tone (e.g. positive, negative, or neutral – say, Putin+, Putin-, or Putin=) with regard to any candidate mentioned.

As can be seen in *Table 5*, tone about Putin was, for the most part, positive. At the same time, the only candidate who suffered from negative tone more often than enjoyed the positive one (3% vs. 2%) was the main opponent of Putin – Zyuganov. We also ran a chi-square test of cross-classification on positive and negative statements about Putin versus Zyuganov ($\chi^2 [df = 1] = 60.46, p < .0001, \phi = .52$). Clearly, this effects size, which at *phi* = .52 is very large. Another chi-square goodness of fit test on positive and negative statements about Putin versus Zyuganov: ($\chi^2 [df = 1] = 61.16, p < .0001$). So, about three times as many evaluated comments addressed Putin

as Zyuganov (76% to 24%) but most of the comments about Putin (92%) were positive whereas most of the comments on Zyuganov were negative (58%).

It is also worth mentioning that Prokhorov was never discussed with a negative tone. These facts suggest that all this could have been done deliberately – in order to impose a negative slant on Putin’s real adversary Zyuganov and to put a positive spin on a relatively new Russian politician Prokhorov. The latter might well be done for a particular purpose – to divert those people who didn’t like Putin from voting for Zyuganov to voting for Prokhorov. Far be it for us to accuse “*Rossiyskaya Gazeta*” of doing this, but might it be just a coincidence? In any case, even if all this really intended to favor Putin, reporters had a right to do so as they work for an official edition of the Russian Government.

Discussion

It seems appropriate to compare some of the results we have gotten with those concerning presidential campaigns in other countries. By doing so, we do not pretend to draw a fully-fledged comparison. Instead, our aim is just to make specifics of the news coverage of the 2012 Russian election more clear-cut and salient.

Notable about topics is the fact that horse race, policy, and character are not very common in Russia. Benoit’s research on “*The New York Times*’” coverage of presidential campaigns in the United States revealed that the most common topic of news coverage was horse race, followed by character and policy (Benoit, 2005). Having compared this data with the data from Benoit’s (2013) and Amponsah’s (2012) research, we may conclude that almost the same is true for Australia, Canada, Ghana, and Great Britain.

Table 6

Topics of election news coverage

	Election Info	Voters	HR	Policy	Scandal	Character
Russia	62%	24%	5%	4%	3%	1%
Australia	6%	3%	53%	21%	3%	13%
Canada	0.4%	6%	46%	17%	0.6%	30%
Ghana	5%	6%	41%	30%	0.4%	18%
United Kingdom	0	4%	39%	20%	0	37%
United States	0.1%	4%	40%	25%	0.2%	31%
<i>Note:</i> The sources for the non-Russia data are articles of Benoit (2005 and 2013 – for the United States and Australia, Canada, United Kingdom, respectively) and Amponsah (2012 – for Ghana)						

As can be seen in Table 6, the contrast is very sharp here. In Russia, Election Information is the single most common topic while Horse Race was 5%. In the other five countries, Election Information ranges from 0-6% and Horse Race is the most common topic, followed either by Character (in three cases out of five) or by Policy (in two cases out of five).

Such a difference can arguably be explained by the fact that the outcome of the presidential election in Russia was quite obvious from the very beginning. If so, there was no need for reporters to devote much attention to candidates' intentions, beliefs, and characters, as well as different aspects of Horse Race. Instead, they preferred to report on the Central Electoral Committee's activity, the process of voting stations' preparation for the Election Day, and some other kinds of Election Information. Also, a relatively large share of coverage was devoted to voters' reactions, which supposedly

resulted from a number of rallies held in Moscow in February, 2012.

As for sources, there also are some significant differences between “*Rossijskaya Gazeta*” and newspapers of other countries.

Table 7

Source of coverage

	Reporter	Other	Supporter	Candidate
Russia	47%	39%	8%	6%
Australia	74%	4%	7%	15%
Canada	64%	7%	3%	26%
Ghana	36%	35	19%	40%
United Kingdom	61%	3%	9%	27%
United States	44%	5%	16%	35%
<i>Note:</i> The sources for the non-Russia data are articles of Benoit (2005 and 2013 – for the United States and Australia, Canada, United Kingdom, respectively) and Amponsah (2012 – for Ghana)				

“Reporter” was the most common source in Russia and in four of the other five countries (except Ghana). In Russia, “Candidates” were the least common source at 6%. In other countries the Candidate was the source for between 15% and 40% of statements. At the same time, “Other” was much more common in Russia (39%) and in Ghana (35%) as compared to other countries. In our opinion, the peculiarities of editorial policy of “*Rossijskaya Gazeta*” may account for this, i.e. a so-called “unspoken tenet/principle” to refer to someone else’s opinion rather than to express reporter’s point of view – in order to make a story seem more objective and less biased. The problem is that sometimes (arguably quite often!) positions of “others” clearly corresponded with those of “*Rossijskaya Gazeta’s*” editorial board.

Others have commented on the negative content of news coverage. Hart noted that “political news is reliably negative” (Hart, 2000: 173). Jamieson, Waldman, and Devitt observed that “In every presidential general election since 1960 reliance on news reports for information about the campaign would lead one to conclude that it contained a far higher level of attack than was in fact the case” (Jamieson, Waldman, and Devitt, 1998: 325). It is fair to say that this sample of stories does not correspond with these conclusions.

Table 8

Tone of coverage

	Positive	Negative	Defense
Russia	22%	5%	0*
Australia	32%	62%	7%
Canada	39%	55%	6%
Ghana	74%	19%	7%
United Kingdom	39%	58%	3%
United States	39%	57%	4%
<i>Note:</i> The sources for the non-Russia data are articles of Benoit (2005 and 2013 – for the United States and Australia, Canada, United Kingdom, respectively) and Amponsah (2012 – for Ghana)			

Clearly, tone was mainly negative in the United States and former countries of the British Empire. As for Russia, presumably, there was no need for “*Rossiyskaya Gazeta*” to use negative tone very often, as the outcome had been pretty evident from the very start of the 2012 presidential campaign. That was more than likely why Russian journalists preferred to make “neutral” statements. The newspaper’s emphasis on election information resulted in a neutral tone. In other words, they just reported on the main events of the

campaign and did not intend to influence people's choice to any great degree.

Conclusion

In America, the media tends to focus more on horse races and scandals rather than on substantive issues. Graber explains that a survey of newspaper and television editors found that the three most important factors in choosing whether to air or print a story are conflict, proximity, and timeliness; "Conspicuously absent from their choice criteria was the story's overall significance" (Graber, 1989: 86). Furthermore, Patterson explains "Policy problems lack the novelty that the journalist seeks. The first time that a candidate takes a position on a key issue, the press is almost certain to report it. Further statements on the same issue become progressively less newsworthy, unless a new wrinkle is added" (Patterson, 1994: 61). In Russia, "*Rossijskaya Gazeta*" preferred to focus on election information and – to some degree – on voters' reactions.

In our opinion, this can be explained, in part, by several factors. The first one is the status of "*Rossijskaya Gazeta*". Being an official edition of the Russian Government, it had no choice but to steal the limelight from other candidates and give it to V. Putin. The second factor is closely connected with the specifics of the political regime in Russia. The role V. Putin plays here, in combination with a lack of real competition among candidates, determined the structure of media content with regard to elections. Finally, the third factor is likely tied with Russian journalistic culture. By nature, it may well be quite different from that of Anglo-Saxon nations. But, to be able to say for sure, one has to conduct separate thorough research.

Above all, this study provided a theoretical framework for examining the topics, tone, and source of news coverage of political campaigns. It also provides a framework for understanding the various types (sub-categories) of horse race coverage. It provides a look at one of the most important newspapers in Russia, “*Rossijskaya Gazeta*”. Finally, it compares the content of “*Rossijskaya Gazeta’s*” coverage of the presidential campaign in Russia with the content of coverage of presidential campaigns in Australia, Canada, Ghana, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

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THE RUSSIAN MAGAZINE MARKET AS A HUMANITARIAN SPACE

РОССИЙСКИЙ РЫНОК ЖУРНАЛОВ КАК ГУМАНИТАРНОЕ ПРОСТРАНСТВО

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As a type of periodical press, magazines have the most favorable conditions for actuating their societal and humanitarian potential. The present article presents aggregated results of the periodical press monitoring conducted in 2012–2014. The research objective is to define the volume and quality of social issues in themed universal and specialized magazines. The research results formed the basis for the evaluation characteristics given in the present article.

Key words: *media content; informative agenda; periodical magazine; humanitarian agenda.*

Журналы как тип печатных СМИ располагают особенно благоприятными возможностями для реализации общественного потенциала гуманитарной повестки. Статья содержит обобщенные результаты мониторинга печатных

СМИ, проводившегося в 2012–2014 гг. Цель исследования – выявление объема и качества социальной проблематики в тематически универсальных и специализированных журналах, результаты которого легли в основу представленных в статье оценочных характеристик.

Ключевые слова: *медиаконтент; информационная повестка дня; журнальная периодика; гуманитарная повестка.*

Mass media content is a relatively popular point of discussion in Russian scientific studies. In some cases the content is treated as a general category and connected with the professional mission of journalism (*Zhurnalistika v 2011 godu: Tsennosti sovremennogo obshchestva i sredstva massovoy informatsii*, 2012; *Zhurnalistika v 2012 godu: Sotsial'naya missiya i professiya*, 2013;), attention is paid to the conditions and demonstrations of mass media functional dynamics in the new social environment (*Vartanova*, 2009, 2013; *Ivanitsky*, 2010; *Kolomiets*, 2014; *Fomicheva*, 2012). In other cases research is made on particular media presentations (*Berezhnaya*, 2009; *Business journalism*, 2012; *Mass Media Issues*, 2008; *Mass Media and Politics*, 2007; *Frolova*, 2009), i.e. the ways in which the public media depicts individual societal problems. The media content of domestic mass media is subject to predominantly critical evaluation. Various grounds can be found for this purpose, but the disparity between the audience's expectations and the content offered by mass media is a fact recognized by all actors on the mass media scene (*Dzialoshinskiy*, 2012). The mass media dehumanization (*Zemlyanova*, 2010; *Zemlyanova*, 2012) is predominantly conditioned by this disproportion (*Yasaveev*, 2004).

In this case it is appropriate to refer to the term, which has established itself not only in the international scientific environment,

but also in the domestic one – this term is “agenda”. The study of agenda, understanding its varieties and structural elements allows us to measure the correspondence between the media content and its foundation factors more precisely and argumentatively. Agenda – “a set of themes and topics with priority status for the given subject within the given timeframe” (Kazakov, 2014: 67); media/informational agenda is a set of themes and topics with priority status, but this time for “mass media”. Another definition: “a list of topics considered by the society and (or) mass media to be the most important at the given moment of time” (Dyakova, Trakhtenberg, 2001: 102) – is widely recognized and can help during an evaluation of media content.

A global media agenda is a set of themed agendas. This definition represents the actual structure of information flows in mass media with regard to their problematic and thematic background, and more or less correlates with the basic areas of society. One such agenda is the humanitarian one, or social-humanitarian to be exact, which usually belongs to the “Society” section in the press, or some accompanying headlines, and depicts real social conditions and human interests (Frolova, 2014). In universally themed periodicals this agenda can occupy anywhere from 12 to 50% of the total space available; the humanitarian agenda in specialized humanitarian periodicals constitutes the major content segment and displays real detailed human conditions and needs.

This article contains a study on the presence of a humanitarian agenda in magazine periodicals, and its volume and quality as part of the general content. On the one hand, the necessity to turn directly towards the humanitarian agenda is determined by the severity of unsolved social and humanitarian issues in Russian society, and a number of other conditions, which apply in terms of the aforementioned media dehumanization problem. On the other hand, the magazine market and its continued expansion has created

especially favorable conditions to implement the vast potential of a media humanitarian agenda, because it is the abundance of magazine varieties along with single-disciplined segments that allow for a more complete account of diverse human interests.

This article contains the particular results of an analysis of published periodicals from 2012–2014. We decided to review the “Society” (or other similar) sections in themed universal magazines, as well as in specialized humanitarian periodicals, using the traditional method of qualitative analysis. This paper is based on a long-term survey of magazines with a special focus on qualitative characteristics of media content. The conclusions and findings presented in this paper resulted from a qualitative analysis, which also helped us reveal both positive and negative sides in magazines’ practices. We referred in this study to the typological characteristics of magazines to show that the very nature of magazines is an important factor that contributes to developing social themes on their pages.

The unit of analysis was the magazine issue number. Only the magazine issues for the middle weeks of each yearly quarter were selected. This method is wide spread in European research practices, and we find it to be convenient and sufficient to ensure proper representation of the studied materials. A total of 15–20 issues were reviewed for each weekly publication, and 10–12 issues of each monthly magazine. Significant attention was paid to the volumes of social and humanitarian themes in the general magazine content, as well as to its quality characteristics, which were organized based on the idea of the structural components of the humanitarian agenda (news events, themed structuring and personalization techniques, genres and particular textual forms, authorship types, positions and other elements). The given characteristics were chosen based on presentations of the actual media market segment condition in scientific and research literature. The accumulated data was used to

build the general characteristics of typological groups for magazine periodicals; work was done to formulate the most important peculiarities reflecting the general condition of the respective social issues and the actual development trends. The final review revealed that mass media practices could be very diverse in cases where common features are used for critical evaluation and analysis.

Magazine periodicals are an actively developing segment of mass media. They have a cyclic structure; therefore they contain the information required by society irrespective of the necessity to provide a quick response or reaction. Periodical magazines occupy a position, where they can deliver extremely informative materials, and provide thorough event overviews enhanced with analysis and good imagery – and this is how they can be convenient when developing various social and humanitarian issues and presenting diverse facts on human existence with a hint of reflexive contemplation. Magazine publications are more extensive and well-positioned, they are better concentrated by theme and audience; they deliver analytical, educational, fictional information, and news; “magazines provide the playground for detailed treatment and discussion of problems and situations, their clear interpretation and psychological evaluation techniques in the form of extended reports, essays, interviews accompanied by the visual effect of photos, pictures and collages” (Shostak, 2011: 253).

A peculiar feature of the magazine market, which nowadays accounts for around 15 thousand different brands, is its variability and a trend towards permanent expansion. There is still no generally accepted classification of magazines, however, scientists say that magazines can be categorized based on a number of criteria: subject matter, type of communication, style of presentation, target audience, functional aspect, and issue period – then it will be possible to distinguish between weekly and monthly periodicals, and specialized magazines and extended informational content,

targeted at satisfying the general social, professional or personal needs or interests, etc.

It is more common to differentiate between such groups of magazines, as socio-political, business, educational, informative, popular, recreational, and specialized (devoted to individual topics). This classification combines both content and functional criteria. This approach is considered to be acceptable. Each of the groups presented deals with particular social issues; each of them has its own humanitarian agenda. The difference between the agendas (with account of all structural components) is often very insignificant. It is worth noting that the great variety of magazines is itself a sort of demonstration of the subject potential of the general media humanitarian agenda, which cannot be applied to newspapers, where these agendas are compatible in terms of content specifics (first of all concerning event presentation). Proper analysis of an entire magazine typology is not yet possible. However, a provision of characteristics for the most comprehensive and substantial periodicals from the social and humanitarian point of view is certainly of great interest.

Within such a diverse magazine genre structure, it is possible to highlight the group of *information analysis weekly editions*: this category delivers quality and adequate analysis of social issues, though this is not its main focus. After establishing itself in the 1990s, this category quickly developed its own look and regular audience – people with active lifestyles not hesitant when making decisions. Periodicity of their issue allows them to combine a profound interpretation of events with regular informational content, and still respond to various news and developments, while also providing their reasoning and interpretation. “Events are magnified: first of all, by means of pictorial realism (reports, interviews with witnesses and participants), secondly, – using interpretation, analysis (commentaries, expert interviews, investigations). The global

effect of any weekly magazine is the panoramic effect; all events are presented, against the background of other situations, their outcomes and comparisons” (ibid: 255).

Business weekly magazines: “*Expert*”, “*Profile*”, “*Vlast*”

This group of magazines may be classified in different ways – either “social and political”, or “informational and analytical”, or “business”, or “business universal” (Murzin, 2007: 113). The absence of typological certainty implies a peculiarity that characterizes the subject-substantial preferences. These magazines feature the merging of economic issues with sociopolitical issues and seek to correlate between general development trends and the actual economy, which is favored by high social status and living standards of the target audience who are intensely interested in business information. In fact, these magazines are both business-focused and sociopolitical, which is important within the context of this work. They are eager to provide their audience with practically significant analytical information not merely about economic issues, but also about politics, social relations, culture, science, and sports as well. An analytical approach, a cause and effect analysis, a conceptualization and an evaluation of trends, the involvement of leading experts, a special style of narration (scientific and at the same time understandable style of writing), as well as forecasting – are the main features of these magazines.

These features apply to all subject areas, including social issues. In the first years of their existence these magazines almost lacked this content cluster, but throughout the current decade the reader may have noticed the considerable revival of interest in social issues, the comprehensive and thorough approach to their coverage, substantive expert analyses, and proficient modern journalistic techniques. Both

in print versions and on-line versions, columns and “Society” sections have appeared, which indicates a significant shift in the worldview of journalists and the target audience of these publications. For the time being, the content of social issues is less than the main content, but it is important that such issues are present.

In this regard, we want to emphasize the following point. For print media, with business information dominating a large part of the total content, it is understandable that social issues are not the highest priority. But does this mean that ignoring these issues is justified? We can hardly agree with this. The business community is a part of society, and the degree of its integration into social processes as well as an understanding of national interests, significantly influences the prospects for further development. According to the concept of corporate social responsibility, the business community shall be responsible to society in which they operate. In addition to ensuring efficiency, employment, profit, and compliance with laws, the business community should commit a portion of its resources and efforts to social issues, contributing to benefit and improve society. By doing this they create a favorable environment and future prospects for the business community, and change the attitude towards the community for the better. Having resources at their disposal and moral duties to society, the business community should voluntarily respond to social problems in any area – because it is impossible to continue to work in a responsible, while being in conflict with the need of the social environment (Mescon, Albert, Khedouri, 1998: 166).

For some time journalists’ attention was focused on the internal context of business activities – that was the period of the formation of new economic relations. But over the last few years there have been changes: an understanding that business is an open system has been growing. The more uncertain the external environment, the more difficult it is to find the effective solutions, which societal depends on.

By providing timely, high-quality, reliable, and trustworthy information about the social sphere, business magazines help their audience to form an adequate understanding of matters of national concern, as well as the condition of labor resources and consumers (Frolova, 2003: 108–124). It is also important that the audience of informational and analytical weekly magazines expands – society is concerned about how these focus groups understand the condition of society.

The aforementioned magazines now have pages dedicated to social issues and relations. Moreover, every magazine has its own opinions. “*Expert*”, from its very beginning, has been finding opportunities to publish thorough, proficient, socially-related articles, notably standing out against the general background: these could be general publications, an analysis of the situation in specific social sectors, monitoring innovation processes in education, health care, the pension system, or well-reasoned comments of columnists, containing an analysis of the social consequences of economic decisions. The magazine also publishes readers’ letters with responses to socially important events, and places increased focus on the development of the domestic market and consumer sector. One common idea, is that the only way to become a stronger society is to “break through all together” (Mechanic, 2002). Changes that take place in the content concept of “*Profile*” are also noteworthy: not that long ago it was an exceptionally business-related elite weekly magazine, but now it actively explores new thematic niches, satisfies the interest of its audience in social processes, successfully brings together a thematic agenda, and demonstrates the unity of the real world. The magazine is also known for its authors’ opinion pieces, a considerable portion of which are related to the condition of the social sphere and ethical collisions in society. “*Vlast*” (together with the entire editorial body of “*Kommersant*” publishing house), also contains a “*Society*” section, and can be proud of its group of reporters, recognized as one of the best in the country.

News magazines: “*Russkiy Reporter*”, “*Ogonek*”

These magazines are also general interest weeklies, however, their concept considerably differs from that of other social-political magazines. “*Russkiy Reporter*” is unique in its own way – as declared by the editor of the magazine V. Leybin: “We won’t avoid any subjects and we won’t claim to be of a scientific character or expertise, but we make it a serious conversation <...> From the soviet experience, it is clear to everyone how articles about pace-makers must be written, and from the post-soviet experience – how to write and photograph society sores, but it is not the most important thing that occurs in Russia and we want to see it, describe it, imprint it. We intentionally don’t make distinctions between the high and low, serious and popular, we want to look at the modern life without prejudice, to see life in all its completeness” (Leybin, 2007).

Defining the magazine as a “news” periodical, authors of the “Mass Media of Russia” basic textbook specify: it is about “new tendencies”, “the new unknown”, new recommendations, new useful knowledge, etc. (Shostak, 2007: 80). There we proceed: the novelty of these magazines is in the fact that they open up the daily routine to audiences, giving it the status of an important life sphere. “*RR*” succeeded in filling in the gaps characteristic of all journalistic periodical press pieces, and in implementing the concepts and formats – the absence of which is sharply felt. Firstly, it is completeness and dimensions in the reconstruction of social realities. Secondly, the magazine manages, through finding and reproducing realities, to place itself into modern interpreting contexts, which provides a chance to look for rational and acceptable decisions. Thirdly, the content of the magazine is balanced upon objects of attention – those can be representatives of the social “bottom”, as well as the middle class. The last is especially important: interest has shifted to

the social center, to ordinary people, creating a need to turn to the strategies of human development. From this perspective, a number of interesting subjects open up at once.

One more advantage is that “RR” tries to solve the problem of “positive criticism”: quite often, long texts depicting a far from ideal state of affairs in this or that geographical region, in any sphere of human life, in various areas of society and labor and household activity appear here. It is remarkable that journalists of this edition are tireless in their search for such private situations that illustrate common social and philosophical problems of life. Therefore, reporters of the magazine always aim to search for positive basing in these difficult circumstances. Social optimism is the main ideological trait of the magazine. As a result, the “Environment”, “Reporting”, “Trends” headings became a noticeable phenomenon in national journalism as new and modern formats. An optimum ratio of positive/negative, descriptiveness/analysis, world/national/local, publicity of the editorial position, well thought-over formats – all these things are the advantages of “RR”. Focus on solution finding through problem raising based on completeness, personification, integrity, and emotional adequacy in the reproduction of life realities – is almost an ideal formula of social journalism.

Creative searches of “*Ogonek*” are also attractive. The critical degree is higher here, but the aspiration of the magazine for new practices search and realization, for social reflection is the evidence to its constructive position. Texts about the social sphere are present in the magazine in equal numbers as compared to texts on political, economic, and cultural matters. It is defined as a “mixed” magazine that points to the substantial balance of the edition. “*Ogonek*” manages to discover fresh, interesting formats of social perspective – thus, in the “Epicentre” news section, as a rule, human-oriented thematic content is presented by an actual figure, “Heroes of

Week”, “Briefing”, “Mood”, “Blog-post” mini-headings, actual info-graphics, blitz interview of leading experts. The main thematic section “Russia and the World” is also shown through the lens of people taking part in the events. In conclusion, the “Man and Woman” heading becoming well known has raised actual gender problems in the manner of ethical descriptions and chronicles.

The news magazines – “*Russkiy Reporter*”, “*Ogonek*”, as well as “*Bolshoy Gorod*”, “*Afisha*”, and earlier “*Russkiy Ezhenedelnik*” – are most interesting from the standpoint of searching for new and effective presentation forms of a social and humanitarian agenda. These editions show that such a search is perspective; it can be successful and capable of extending to other editions, stimulating their own discoveries corresponding to their type and profile. As for the type of material, news magazines are closer to the mass press, however, without of its drawbacks. They aspire to standards of quality journalism and prove that social realities can be reproduced by means typical for them. For this reason, “*Russkiy Reporter*” is so popular and can aspire to a leadership position in the national humanitarian agenda. It is not by accident that these editions have received special attention in the newest anthology of the Russian journalism (The History of the Russian Media 1989–2011, 2011).

Weekly business magazines are closer to quality newspapers, but the absence of daily newspapers’ increased efficiency and ability for deeper penetration into a subject are obvious here – they also take leading positions in the discussed context. In these magazines, standards of new national journalism are formed and developed. However, the audience of weekly magazines is quantitatively small, it is a dialogue in a private circle of the educated citizen. It is difficult for these magazines to solve all the problems that social journalism faces. But being guided by the concepts of communication effects

(“two-level flow of information”, “diffusion of innovations”, etc.), studying it is necessary to recognize their value.

**Informative and educational magazines:
“*Vokrug Sveta*”, “*Chelovek*”, “*Diletant*”**

Customs, characters, routine, ceremonies, and rituals are one more side to disclosing people’s way of life in different countries and continents. The oldest national magazine “*Vokrug Sveta*” demonstrates the possibilities of a humanitarian agenda from the other side – human variety and unity that allow seeing the perspectives of operational information that filled other editions. “*Diletant*” also does this: here, the historical view on humanitarian problems is revealed giving a chance to connect moment uniqueness and historical repeatability. The educational humanitarian magazine “*Chelovek*” makes an attempt to unite different scientific approaches to human research – those of physiologists, psychologists, sociologists, and masters of the arts. These magazines connect socio-political, actual, and special problems, opposing “lifestyle” magazines with their facilitated approach to matters of sense and way of life. The purpose of educational magazines is to increase the need of life, true quality and style, and social cultural education in its daily routine (Sredstva massovoy informatsii Rossii, 2011: 258).

Specialized magazines

The group of specialized mass media is the most extensive in terms of quantity, and is also the most heterogeneous. The variety of magazines vividly shows the huge potential of a humanitarian

agenda – the breadth of human interests gives rise to new groups of editions. The situation in these groups is ambiguous: as positive, encouraging tendencies, so as dysfunctional in relation to mission tendencies are present. The journal periodical press segment is remarkable for exposing numerous social and humanitarian problems that are not covered in nationwide editions because of their limited capacity and for other reasons. It is important that the world of a human is inexhaustible, so as social and humanitarian distinctions are infinite. Undoubtedly, they have the right for coexistence; it is possible to claim that the abundance of such editions opens a scope for human personality development.

So-called *magazines of human interest* attract attention. This intensively developing journalistic segment draws attention through its existentially important subject: health, family, and the human inner world – a subject that always receives special attention from the audience. It is pleasing that today the Russian audience has no lack of such editions. Most “human interest” magazines are targeted towards a solvent audience. The interest attracts, but the advertising content often questions the mission of the magazine. There are a lot of lifestyle-magazines, and these groups are multiplied and divided actively. Processes of fragmentation and profiling can be welcomed as an aspiration to fuller satisfaction of personal requirements and interests, however, in substantial concepts of these editions, a lot of difficult, ambiguous, and even disturbing tendencies do exist. One of them is the illusiveness of solving certain problems important to the audience, with the publisher’s commercial interests being actually pursued beneath it.

For example, an analysis of magazines for parents-to-be showed that a large part of burning issues in these niche editions remains out of sight. The reasons behind the demographic crisis which Russia faces, lie in the axiological, not the economic sphere. However, these magazines are business projects first of all. The advance of

modern reproductive technologies has resulted in their bio-ethic and medical status being thoroughly discussed in society, and thus in such magazines. These technologies are presented to audience as useful and safe. Advertizing materials are most of all placed under headings that mimic “news”, “novelties”, “useful addresses”, or “the magazine recommends”. Extreme commercialization of content was evident in the whole series of manipulative techniques: journalistic texts “as advertizing”, happy “star” stories as provocation to luxury services consumption, advertizing expensive household standards inaccessible to a wide audience, the creation of new requirements, and embedded advertizing in the form of appeal to expert opinion (Zamotina, 2012: 127–129).

A similar situation can be seen in popular magazines about health: advertizing content here also quite often conflicts with postulated principles of a healthy lifestyle; their content is rather superficial; serious topics are avoided. External beauty and health are considered equally as necessary attributes of prestige, and are provided with such types of consumer behavior, which is offered by advertisers (Journalism for Health of the Nation, 2012: 94–99). However, the question of such behavior being appropriate for health improvement remains open. Only the “*Zdorovye*” magazine warrants a special remark: first published in 1955, it became the first—in its own way—mass magazine about methods for health preservation, and the establishment of healthy lifestyle promotion. It quickly won popularity (its circulation reached nearly 20 million copies). Having endured several stages of rebranding, “*Zdorovye*” became a full-fledged popular-and-scientific magazine, where both popular and serious articles are printed and qualified authors are involved. This magazine resists new “light” commercial-plenty magazines and continues to be a beneficial standard – but unfortunately, it is financially inaccessible to many categories of readers, unlike during the soviet period.

The conflict of values is revealed in *women's magazines*, as well as in magazines specializing on a *moral and psychological subject*. Having won popularity by appealing to a human inner world, to the sphere of feelings and experiences, and discussing psychological problems and difficult life situations, magazines declare their aspirations for independence and self-development as the woman's main resource. Quite often they mistaken as a feminist mouthpiece. But a careful analysis of these texts leads to the conclusion that, according to magazines, the internal harmonious state can be reached by a woman provided that she is able "to get along" with people around, and most importantly, with men. Often it occurs by means of psychological manipulations rather than as a result of psychological competence, independence, and inner dignity (ibid: 90–92).

The analysis of "*Psychologies*" (as well as many lifestyle editions) testifies: by discovering and promoting new problems to the masses, and shaping psychological and household culture, authors quite often create situations where the traditional values of domestic culture conflict with authors' recommendations. As a result, crisis situations become even more confused. At the same time, we cannot help but recognize that a "serious gloss" is definitely necessary for the audience – at least, this is an address to the subject that is extremely important but is often deprived of media managers' attention.

One more segment of journal editions is *press on pedagogic and education issues* – a large group that directly addresses social problems. Taking this segment as a typical example, it is possible to state that the character of branch problems covered by the press, and the dynamics of reforms in it, have a direct connection.

Thus, problems of education are widely discussed both in general political and in specialized press, however, this issue remains one of the sharpest and most unresolved issues despite all efforts. There are a lot of special editions dedicated to education in Russia – more than one

hundred newspapers, magazines, almanacs, bulletins, appendices, and collections. The extensive network of pedagogical editions in its key parameters was developed in the soviet period. In this segment, new types of editions appeared, but in general the pattern remained successive. The prevalence of magazines is noticeable, and there are some newspapers as well, along with some information bulletins and magazines catalogs that perform the function of efficient informing, and are published mainly by official bodies. The biggest share of editions is made up of magazines on school problems – methodical editions for teachers, and new generation professional and technological editions dedicated to alternative education. Non-teacher school workers also have their own types of magazines. Scientific and pedagogical editions, scientific bulletins of educational institutions, newspapers of educational institutions (corporate, educational, informal), and popular scientific magazines paint a colorful and varied picture. Almost all of them apply to a professional environment. Among them, there is no edition addressed to wide audience in which major all-national problems are comprehensively covered from a general society standpoint – no such edition that would be popular and modern.

Should this system be considered optimal? Does it correspond to those problems that our national education faces in the new century? It is hardly ever so. The typological structure of the pedagogical press isn't balanced, though, at first glance, it seems rather versatile. What matters is that this structure, developed long ago, reflects the traditional concept of education. For 80–90%, it is “customer” – the state – professional press, which reflects intra corporate, narrow-group interests. They do not always coincide with national ones. If interesting, and attention worthy, publications only appear in the professional press. They simply don't reach a wide audience and remain unknown. In the national press, authors

of texts and concepts are also the subjects of mainly pedagogical activity. The voice of the public is obviously not audible enough. But it is important not to forget that education is a national problem.

Let's pay particular attention to new editions in the structure of the pedagogical press. Editions serving the market of educational services, or business education, for example, have recently appeared and are actively developing – i.e. such editions that satisfy the solvent demand of audience. One of the most commercially successful groups of magazines is for parents. Problems connected with parenthood are acute within any era, but at turning points in history, the relationship between generations has always found some special sense. Special magazines for parents are necessary, but for many years, magazines for those who were engaged in the education of children because of their job position, according to professional status, were published (and continue to be published), and people closest to a child, parents, remained without their own special edition. Only one magazine tried to depict this sphere of relations – “*Semya i Shkola*”. In the 1990s, several new magazines appeared at once, and they continue to appear, while their profiles amplify. In all of them, there is a somewhat identical set of main sections: these are the problems of daily child care, preparation for a child's birth, children's health, inner family relations, education, and upbringing. The volume of information is inversely proportional to the age of the children – a great deal of information about babies, less about teenagers. It occurs because more attention is paid to childcare which, naturally, small children demand most; the same age group is the most commercialized one.

Another layer of information is connected to the participation of parents in children's familiarization with social and cultural values, and with child identity training and development. Children at this level of parenthood are not only the object of caring, but

a boast, a prestige element; their progress is the consolidation of their own social positions (Kon, 1988, 1989; DeMause, 2000). The aspiration to provide food-dress-shoes “in a proper way”, daily care, sometimes heroic efforts in creating normal living conditions for children, often leads to inner meaning of this work escaping. Care for the child leaves out the other world. But parenthood is not only material care for the child. Is it reflected in the substantial concept of editions? This question has no definite answer. Our magazines about parenthood are magazines only for a small portion of the greater audience, i.e. a group capable of spending a considerable sum of money. No matter how good magazines are, how well they adhere to new humanist views on parenthood, or how successful a new business model they use – they reflect only a small range of parenthood problems in modern Russia. The large part of burning issues remains out of coverage, because they are beyond the concepts determined by an advertising strategy. Therefore, there are no bases to be under a delusion that the abundance of such editions successfully solves social problems.

A similar situation can be observed in groups of family, youth, leisure, and gender focused editions. Brightness of counters can not hide the substantial imbalance of the journal market despite of all its branching and high competition in separate clusters. Here, the competition of advertisers for audience resources is observed but not the competition of ideas and values in the most important questions of life. Today the victory is won by consumer values, not humanitarian ones, understood as priorities of life-purpose and meaning.

Summarizing the results of journealese periodical press market monitoring, it is necessary to emphasize: the question of values is actual for all of them – in fact, it is the central problem of all humanitarian problems. Distinctions of a humanitarian agenda are

predetermined not just by the typology of editions. Humanitarian values, according to which an agenda is built, are not yet formulated by Russian society as a certain general ideological platform that allows setting national objectives for human development. Value discrepancies seriously influence the communicative strategy of various mass media making responses to resonant events that are diametrically opposite. Audiences of these forms of mass media don't strive for understanding and consent. The situation in which "we and they" counteract splits society and actually interferes with the formation of a general anthropocentric paradigm in the Russian media-space.

Let's sum up the review results. Magazines have particularly favorable opportunities for the realization of a humanitarian agenda. The practice of news information-and-analytical weeklies seems to be the most effective of all printed media, all typological niches being different in their completeness, integrity, and emotional adequacy, aiming to find solutions through problem setting. Specialized mass media of social orientation makes up a heterogeneous and inconsistent picture: such problems conflict with the advertising content and declared substantial concept, and a contradiction between subjective and functional components of content, and a conflict of values, etc., take place here. As a result, a set of questions existentially important for the audience, the answers to which it has the right to look for in these editions, only complicate the readers' life situations and ideologically disorient them.

Finishing the review of a magazines practice, from positions of their compliance to humanitarian values and estimating such practice – both current and previous – considerably in a critical way, we believe that the potential for journalism and mass communication to positively influence human development in Russian journalism is not exhausted to a large extent. Sharing

the viewpoint on the “considerable potential of this process [developments of civil institutes. – *T.F.*] promotion in mass media within the general population” (Vartanova, 2010: 29), we emphasize that this optimism is based on the evidence of long-term mass media research studies, and their data shows: the situation changes, society and journalism turn to the understanding of humanitarian problems and understanding their role in social development. It is rather slow process, burdened by various circumstances, but it does go on.

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Part 3

**JOURNALISM STUDIES IN RUSSIA
AND ABROAD**

**DATA JOURNALISM AS A NEW TYPE
OF MEDIA COMMUNICATION.
ACTUAL APPROACHES
OF THEORETICAL RESEARCH**

**ЖУРНАЛИСТИКА ДАННЫХ КАК НОВЫЙ
ФОРМАТ МЕДИАКОММУНИКАЦИИ.
К ВОПРОСУ ФОРМИРОВАНИЯ ТЕОРЕТИЧЕСКИХ
ИССЛЕДОВАТЕЛЬСКИХ ПОДХОДОВ**

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This study explores the complex, scientific, theoretical, and pragmatic characteristics of the new format of analytical media content using digital computer and Internet databases (data journalism). The author, for the first time, identifies the significant transformation of the communication pattern of data journalism on the Internet, and defines data journalism as a new format of media communication. The paper presents the analysis of Russian data journalism projects and for the first time describes a national model of data journalism. Data journalism fundamentally

determines new opportunities for the strategic development of media content and media communication; functions of journalism as an element of open public governance and socially integrated communication systems; and for the development of media theory media as well.

Key words: *human technology; media; media communication; the Internet; fact; data; data journalism; national model; open governance.*

В профессиональной коммуникации использование цифровых компьютерных и интернет-баз данных определяет параметры нового формата представления аналитического медиаконтента и появление нового формата медиакоммуникации — дата-журналистики. В статье представлены методологические подходы исследования феномена дата-журналистики в рамках формирования современной науки о медиа, комплексно исследуются научно-теоретические и прагматические предпосылки его появления, характеристики. Автор впервые выявляет существенные трансформации свойств, модели, функций журналистики данных в Интернете, определяет дата-журналистику как формат медиакоммуникации. Анализ российских практик дата-журналистики впервые фиксирует свойства и особенности национальной модели данного формата профессиональной медиакоммуникации.

Ключевые слова: *гуманитарная технология; масс-медиа; медиакоммуникация; интернет; факт; данные; дата-журналистика; национальная модель; открытое управление.*

Introduction

The mass media is undergoing significant changes as an industry and a scientific field. In this decade, theoreticians and specialists of mass media are searching for optimal economic and creative models of media, because journalism is still under technological pressure.

Experts (UNESCO, 2011) have identified a number of trends that could “grow” in global practices of media this decade, such as new technologies, new screens and portals for information delivery, increasing participation of consumers based on creativity and self-expression, and the rise of using of gaming technologies in discourse as well.

Digitalization, convergence, and the Internet have constructed the features of a new model of communication between media professionals and their audiences. In 2014 more than 97% of information in the world became digital. In 2018 the half of global population, media professionals, and audiences will be connected by the Internet and communicate virtually and digitally. Among the essential characteristics of digital communication and communication on the Internet, are databases (open, linked data) of digital information.

According to Gartner (Gartner, 2011), “big data” is the second greatest challenge (after virtuality) not only of media, but also of contemporary civilization. In other words, big data is a concept that is attracting and increasing attention in many different quarters, as well as praising the business, economic, political, and social potentials. Many fields that previously had been separated from computer science and the Internet are now using big data. The growing interest in data occurs in business and politics (Mayer-Schönberger, Cukier, 2013).

Thus, mass media based on new interactive and creative technologies would become more and more technology mediated.

In this context, contemporary journalism becomes a kind of human technology (Gorokhov, Shilina, 2014). The newest fields in journalism using computational techniques and tools illustrate this computational journalism (Cohen, Hamilton, Turner, 2011), as well as increasingly contributing to data journalism.

Contemporary journalism research means focusing on the integrative (or convergent) nature of media communication and on technological and technical aspects which define journalism. Contemporary journalism studies are a multidisciplinary field on the borderline between humanities, social sciences, technology, computer science, and now data science.

Background

The newest practices of journalism (since 2005) are connected by using large amounts of various types of data (big, open, linked data).

What makes data journalism different from the rest of journalism? According to “The Data Journalism Handbook”, the difference is the new possibilities that open up when a journalist combines the traditional “nose for news” and ability to tell a compelling story with the sheer scale and range of digital information, which is now available.

According to Appelgren and Nygren, data journalism is a form of storytelling based on journalistic research in the form of collection, compilation, processing, analysis, and presentation of large datasets. This form of journalism is often presented as interactive graphics or simple interfaces for the user on web-pages or on mobile publishing networks. It is published in combination with news articles and print, audio, or video content. (There are many other definitions

of data journalism, but here we use this one, describing the main characteristics of this phenomenon.)

Data-oriented journalists (Lorenz, Kayser-Bril, McGhee, 2011) even stated that mass media should leave the old business model, based on selling the attention of their audience to advertisers, alone. To illustrate this they mentioned that mass media should adapt to new technologies and opportunities and become data hubs, which build infrastructures that turn them into centers of reliable data.

Data journalism practices are more than discussed. Most publications on this theme are non-academic articles in the press. Data journalists have described their experience in interviews and articles (Nippard, 2011; Rogers, 2011; Cohen, 2014), and submitted the best ones to “The Data Journalism Handbook” (Gray et al., 2012). Scientists mentioned that data-journalists and researchers are just making the very first steps in this field. There are only a few attempts to describe practices of data journalism and to analyze some features of this phenomenon. There were some case studies published about data journalism in Sweden (Appelgren, Nygren, 2013) and Russia (Begtin, 2013; Shilina, 2013), EU (EJC, 2010) and about trends in using Open data (Sirkkunen, Aitamurto, Lehtonen, 2011).

According to Appelgren and Nygren, data journalism is still “one example of an area in the borderlands of journalism – hard to define, and consisting of a combination of several previously separate trades and skills.” In fact, there is no academic definition of data journalism. So, this field strongly needs complex research.

Methodology and methods

In journalism studies as multidisciplinary field theories, methodology and methods from interconnected areas are used,

and this multidisciplinary approach, both humanitarian and technological, is useful when it comes to data-journalism. In our study, systematic and function methodology were used.

From technological point of view, the emergence of the data journalism concept is associated with massively increasing opportunities for assembling data via the Internet and growing statistical and technological power for processing data.

The term “data” describes large volumes of digital computer information, but in the humanities, from the communicative point of view, the database definition was not given. In this study we use a definition based on the interpretation of Article 1280 of the Civil Code of the Russian Federation and a number of definitions of communication. The database is presented in the form of an objective set of materials (statistics, articles, etc.), systematized in such a way that the data can be found and processed digitally. The term “database” is used today to refer to various types of databases, including the important social digital data that can be stored in the public domain, used freely by the mass audience.

From communication and social (and economic, political) points of view, data journalism raises a vast number of questions that need to be addressed.

In the present study, we sought to investigate and define data journalism as a type of media communication. The key research questions guiding this study are: what is data journalism as a type of media communication? How do technologies determine data journalism? Is data journalism technology mediated in a new and specific way? This paper presents an attempt to analyze the main origin of data journalism, a data journalism communication model, its basic elements and functions, and a technological cycle.

Also we will discuss the current development of data journalism in Russia, and how data journalism projects are created in leading

Russian newspapers, magazines, news agencies, and Internet news organizations. What are their aims, values, tools and results? Our research interest is focused on communicative model features of these data projects as well. This part of research is based on analysis of the first 10 data journalism projects (beta versions), gathered in Russia in 2013, and interviews with the key experts of those teams devoted to the main aspects of these cases.

Media communication and media system: contemporary paradigm shift

The classic model of journalism was hierarchical, author-oriented, and of one-to-many formats. In this model, the journalist always was a unique subject of communication, and the audience was an object (usually of passive mode). Messages in this model have been created by the journalist, and the content has been strictly determined by channels (print, audio, visual media). The basic function of journalism in this classic model was to present various types of information.

Since 1960s all basic elements of contemporary journalistic communication have been significantly changed by the influence of digitalization, convergence, and the Internet.

After presenting some methodological points in the field of communication on the Internet, which is important for this research, we argue that the most important feature of communication on the Internet is web hypertext, which determines the basic properties of technical, technological, and social human-centered levels of interaction in this virtual and physical space (convergence both physically and digitally), makes it phygital. Hypertext provides subject-to-subject interactivity and also provides hyperlinks and multimedia synergy of two opposite processing formats of

communication such as logical and associative. Other characteristics of communication are openness, non-limited access to information, and enhanced speed of presenting and distribution of information.

In fact, due to those characteristics any content can be characterized as media content on the Internet, and the former is available for consumption and changes by the audiences.

New dominant professional capabilities are related to the role of the author in the media communication model: a journalist becomes not only a “news-maker,” and a “sense-maker,” but also an analyst implying increasing demands for competence, social role, and determines the need for creative solutions based on ICT. A professional journalist might be an “emotion-maker,” while at the same time considers interactivity of audience, common readers and users, and so called citizen journalists (as elements of media communication models with new functions).

And another change within the area of journalism is journalists collaborating with computer scientists, programmers, web designers, or the audience (Shilina, 2013).

Techniques and methods of work (and text writing) have been changed, and they are still permanently changing. For example, now the audiences are interactive, and consumers need the integration of news with the social context, so they seek information not only about the event, but also the information about social problems and trends, which journalists should offer.

Now journalists use computers and ICT in every field. Cohen et al. (Cohen, Hamilton, Turner, 2011) even describes journalism as computational study. Broadly defined, it can involve changing how stories are discovered, presented, aggregated, monetized, and archived. Cohen stresses that computation can advance journalism through innovations in topic detection, analysis, personalization, aggregation, visualization, and sense-making.

Thus, in the new digital space all the elements of media communication model have been changed profoundly. In the contemporary media communication model a journalist is collaborating with programmers and web-designers; audiences “work” as consumers; content becomes integrated. The basic functions of journalism are to involve audiences in communication and to construct participation. Media communication as the basic element of a media system changes the system in the same way.

Data journalism: genesis, features & functions

Data journalism as a kind of professional communication and creation of media content, which based on the use of large amounts of digital and Internet data, appeared in the first decade of this century.

Foreign and Russian practices of data journalism are in the process of formation, but the examples of using various types of data to create a more effective journalistic text are dated back by some scientists to the beginning of the 21st century. In particular, Simon Rogers describes the first example of data journalism as the article in the British newspaper “*The Guardian*” (1821), where a list of schools of Manchester with its number of categorized pupils were analyzed and published. Rogers emphasizes that “data journalism has been around as long as there’s been data” (Rogers, 2011). Rogers mentions that data journalism may be trendy, but it’s not new.

The protoforms of today’s data journalism phenomenon is the latest journalistic practice of using computer equipment, digital and Internet technologies for analysis, and the presentation of journalist information in various media sources.

In the present study we sought to mark different types of collecting, using, and presenting facts influencing journalists of “computer” times. In the 1950s electronic computer information, the concept of usage, and the presentation of information, primarily in the U.S., has changed due to digitalization. The distinctive feature of the computer-assisted reporting (CAR) is the systematic use of computer and digital information, facts, statistics, studies, and the analysis of databases to enhance the quality of content and strengthen the evidence base, especially in the investigative journalism.

At this time another direction of journalism developed based on literary fiction and images that shaped differences in methodology of professional creativity. So-called new journalism (or new conceptualism) was based on the use of literary techniques (plot, dialogue, fiction, etc.).

In the early 1970s, alleged precision journalists have applied sociological research methods in order to work with information.

According to Meyer, the practice of precision journalism based on large data sets adapts to the scientific method, scientific objectivity, and scientific ideals of the process of mass communication (Meyer, 2002).

The main differences and disadvantages of such approaches were outlined by American journalists at once. According to Dennis and Rivers (1974), “at the moment we have the means like the census, public opinion polls, the detailed results of the election that allow us to achieve exactly that tell us a lot about people. (...) The problem is that when you turn the charts in the article, it makes people yawn. (...) To read the same materials written by “new journalists” is like to read fairy tales”.

Thus, assayed and interpreted facts were seen as opposing. But now on the Internet, due to hypertext (and multimedia), all these

features are integrated and used in journalism and data journalism as well.

For the first time the term “data journalism” was defined in 2006 by one of the first American data journalists Adrian Holovaty as outlined, structured, machine-readable data, which is used with traditional media texts (Holovaty, 2006).

At present, this definition of data journalism is not quite correct because data journalists use not only computer and Internet data and communication, but also many new different types of integrated content, which becomes increasingly diverse.

The specificity of data communication is the author’s use of digital data not as a tool for creating text, images, or infographic series for it, but as a major source for the formation of topics as a key condition for choosing the genre. Implementation of this online format means the use of united multimedia hypertext as a new type and method of media communication in every media model: the data and the author, the author and the content, the data and the audience, the audience and the content, the audience and the author, etc.

Patterns of data communication and data journalism, noted above, are different from the classical analytical journalistic texts. According to Tertychny (Tertychny, 2010), the types of classical analytical journalism are: report, correspondence, interview, survey, discussion, comment, reply, profile, sociological summary rating, monitoring, review, article, version, experiment, epistle, essay, and recommendation.

According to Rogers (Rogers, 2011), journalists have to analyze data as quickly as they can, and do it correctly; with the right tools of analyses anyone can do it, but only professionals can produce a good design and visualization. Rogers mentioned that the bigger task is to conceptualize the data like a journalist rather than an analyst.

So, answering main professional questions (What's interesting about these numbers? What's new?) is more important than programming. In addition data journalism (as 80% perspiration, 10% great idea, 10% output, by Rogers) is about telling the story in the best way possible.

As the leading data journalist of "*The Financial Times*", John Burn-Murdoch, mentioned in the interview (28/11/2014) that "data is the foundation, not the facade, and the reader should not have to know it".

According to Cohen (Cohen, 2014), "the first priority is reporting rather than data".

Database and programming tools (SQL, R, various command, etc.) are open and freely used, so the main aims of a journalist working with data are methods of analysis, interpretation and presentation of content.

According to Burn-Murdoch, the goals and guidelines of data journalism are based on serving current and prospective subscribers and meeting their expectations.

The typical example of data journalism is the data blog of "*The Guardian*" (Guardian Data blog, launched in 2009 by Simon Rogers). Today at least three to five journalists write to the blog several times a day, which illustrates the increasing demand of such information.

According to our analyses of the texts of "*The Guardian*" (2010-2014) and "*The Financial Times*" (2013-2014), the British model of data journalism is a form of storytelling based on journalistic research. Information is often presented as text, diagrams, graphics, or simple interfaces for the user on web-pages or in mobile publishing channels to access. It is in the form of news articles with primarily printed content, and photo, audio, video, or multimedia content is rather rare. Texts are non-interactive as usual. And the main author

of the story is the journalist. Practices of BBC are similar, but they use greater varying types of content in data journalism materials. BBC develops this field of journalism, with the special Data News Lab. In British data journalism model, the main function is rather classical: to inform.

The practices of most popular American news organizations, for example “*The New York Times*” (2009-2014), demonstrate that data journalism is becoming increasingly popular as well. According to our analyses of data journalism texts of *NYT*, the model of American data journalism presents a form of storytelling based on journalistic research presented as text or a project. Texts are published as combination of verbal and visual content and are usually interactive. The main function in an American data journalism model is not only to inform, but to involve audiences in the communication.

Journalist Sarah Slobin (“*The Wall Street Journal*”) gives simple, understandable information to the reader, which is personally oriented and an effective example of data journalism, realized by “*The Las Vegas Sun*”. Journalists have published several articles about health care, prepared about the analysis of 2.9 million hospital records, invoices from public sources, which are allowed to disclose 3,600 injuries, infections, and surgical errors that could have been prevented. The interactive graph, which identifies the problems in all hospitals, gave the readers an opportunity to view information relatable to each of them, so they can choose the best hospital for themselves.

What are the main features of data communication and content? The main features are formed at all stages of the process. Journalists, web-designers, and programmers as subjects in this communication model find the threads of information, analyze it using software (MySQL, Python, R, etc.), visualize and present original data in the

story (or as an equal part of the plot). The authors have to be good analysts, writers, and users of technical tools for data visualization (e. g. Google Docs, IBM ManyEyes, Wordle, Excel, etc.). Thus, data journalist should possess various types of thinking: both logical and associative.

According to Cohen et al. (Cohen, Hamilton, Turner, 2011), in order for journalists and computationalists (programmers and web-designers as well) to work together to create a new generation of reporting methods, each needs an understanding of how the other views all basic parameters of the working process and primarily “data”. The key competencies in this field are: combining information from varied digital sources, making an information extraction, document exploration and redundancy, audio and video indexing, extracting data from forms and reports.

According to Burn-Murdoch (2014), the main condition and aim of the work is a collaborative effect from the involvement of reporters, correspondents, editors, as well as interactive teams.

Data journalism as a profession and as a field of research becomes increasingly integrated.

Data, both on the computer and Internet, is a source of information for journalists, an original tool for creating a new type of content and communication, and it’s a basis for all journalistic classical genres in all types of digital media.

Data journalism, due to the openness and accessibility of data on the Internet which may be shared between both a journalist and any user, has the ability to create and publish texts on the grounds of professional online media, as well as increases the media literacy of readers and the quality of open media content. It’s free of charge as well. According to Cohen, engaged citizens need computer scientists more than journalists and journalism of the public interest.

Additionally, the potential damage from the incomplete disclosure of information, such as the error in the analysis of large data sets, especially in the forward-looking research, is potentially boundless, which increases the responsibility of the journalistic analyst. Another problem, despite the obvious potential of vast and open data, is a growing amount of private personal data and its disclosure which may violate the rights of readers. There are also many technical problems; in particular most of the data generated now, is unstructured and informally organized so that it cannot support the validity of the analysis.

Data journalism in Russia: analyzing first cases

In Russia the media system has changed profoundly over recent decades through market influence, and the consequences have been similar to those in foreign media including “a restructuring of the media system, quantitative growth, increased diversity in media channels and media content, regionalization of the media markets, and the introduction of ICT into the media infrastructure and into the media system itself” (Vartanova, 2013). So, the trends of Russian media development could be similar to those in the world industry, particularly in media trends and data journalism.

The media sector of Russian Internet (Runet) is one of the most rapidly developing fields of professional information and communication. But there are digital divides, which include the lack of broadband access all over the Russian territories, the low technical culture of society, and rather high prices for Internet services.

According to Lukina (Lukina, 2013), “the development of the sector is also limited because of the lack of legal base in the field, the lack of respect to copyrighting, and poor personal data

protection mechanisms”, and Lukina concluded, “however, despite the objective difficulties the dynamics of Internet usage in Russia is growing positively and contributes to consumers’ demand for online information. This fact encourages renovation processes in Russian digital media”.

In Russia examples of data journalism are rather rare. However, more data developments are presented by civil activists. For example, the data project “Journalism and Public Investigations: new methods, technologies, practices” of the Press Development Institute – Siberia (Novosibirsk), Information Culture (Moscow), and the Branch of the Union of Journalists of Russia in Perm have been working in Siberia since 2014. A data journalism school for youth was opened in 2014 by the Federal Educational Project “Information Stream”. First courses of large and open data, data driven journalism, and PR were provided by the Higher School of Economics (2014, Integrated Communication Dpt.).

One of the first examples of Russian data projects is “Accidents with pedestrians in Novosibirsk”, which began in 2011 (this project won the first prize of Data Journalism Awards in 2012, organized by the Global Editors Network). Journalists and citizens of Novosibirsk collected and analyzed the data of the local traffic police and resources that provide information about the most dangerous streets for pedestrians in Novosibirsk for a year.

This part of our study was designed for the analyses of ten data journalism projects developed in Russia with framework for the project “Great Russia – big data” (RIA “*Novosti*”¹). These practices are representative of the national model of data journalism and relevant to the global mass media models as well. The chairman of the jury, Antoine Laurent (France), mentioned in an interview with

¹ Now international news agency “*Russia Today*”. URL: <http://www.mn.ru/society/20131120/363029873.html>

the author of this study, “Russian projects have demonstrated high level, and international standards” (Laurent, 2013).

In data project “Pulse” (“Big City”) the journalist team presented an interactive map of Moscow, which allows audience to explore, where residents spend their free time. The project monitors the activity of Muscovites on the basis of users’ “check-in” on the Russian social network “VKontakte”. On the map so called power spots, broken down into administrative city districts, were presented. The team has imposed this data on such factors as gender, age, presence of higher education, marital status, and others. As a result, the audience can discover “power spots” existing for different groups of citizens. For example, single men and single women choose different places to rest in the city center. With the information from this project, everyone can test various hypotheses about the life of real people in Moscow.

According to Daniar Shekebaev, the online producer of “*Big City*”, this project helps Muscovites identify themselves at micro level, for example, as Muscovites of Khamovniki.

The essence of the project “Where in Russia life is good” (“*Argumenty i Fauty*”) is that the user is prompted to answer a series of questions about the criteria for the optimal place to life. After that, there were five options offered to possibly move. The thickness of the lines on the map shows how option meets the criteria of the user. This allows one to see the overall ranking of cities according to the selected criteria. Every user can compare specific datasets of criteria (acceptable distances to a new location, population, rent prices, wages, unemployment, crime, security, kindergartens, hospitals, cultural level, traffic jams and so on) of each city. If a person wants to move to another city, the test will give him or her a rough idea of conditions of the proposed area of relocation.

According to Sergey Kondratyev, head of the design, infographics, and illustration department for the development of new digital media trends of “*Argumenty i F акты*”, their newspaper has more than 35 regional sites, and their readers were interested in comparing the conditions of their region. Journalists decided to help them to change their lifestyle.

The data project “Emotional twitter background” (“Mercator”) makes an emotional “cardiogram” of Russian language on Twitter. After analyzing several dozens of profiles in the Russian language on Twitter, the team calculates the difference between the number of positive and negative words in the posts. In fact, Internet users can watch the mood changes of the participants of Twitter.

According to Andrey Skvortsov, director and co-owner of “Mercator”, the authors can measure the “positive” and “negative”, “confidence” and “uncertainty”, and political preferences in the direct speech on Twitter in order to find external impact on the audiences.

The project, named “From Moscow. Russia is big, where would you move?” (“*Moscow News*”), helps users find a location that suits them more than their recent one. For each locality, the team analyzed various indicators and data from certain sources (population density, unemployment, average temperature, and average salary). Industrial cities were selected due to the ratings of the “*Urbanik*” Institute, and villages were chosen from the ratings of the most amazing villages in “*Forbes*”. This project will help thinking about the differences of Russian cities, and will help to learn a lot about them.

According to Philip Katz, editor of the infographic studio of RIA called “*Novosti*”, all the migratory routes in the country clearly go from the smaller villages to the larger ones and towns. According to data (2011), more than half of all journeys in Russia are moving to Moscow, and such a migration path does not allow people to compare settlements. So, the team decided to help this issue and

suddenly found that the provincial town or village will be even better than Moscow to settle.

The team of “the debt load of the population in Russia” (Economic Information Agency “Prime”) presented an interactive map of Russia, which helps to analyze the situation of Russians’ debt over the last three years. The team wanted to show credit figures and levels for the average resident of various Russian regions. The project was based on data of individuals in four groups – consumer, mortgage, car loans, and credit card transactions. This allows citizens to think about the economic risks, and what is dangerous in them.

According to Alexei Timatkov, editor of the design center of RIA “Novosti”, they are alarmed by the abundance of Russian media coverage devoted to problems associated with the loans, due to economic ignorance driving the citizens into a trap. They wanted to explore this theme in order to help people.

Figure 1

Data project “The debt load of the population in Russia”, main visual

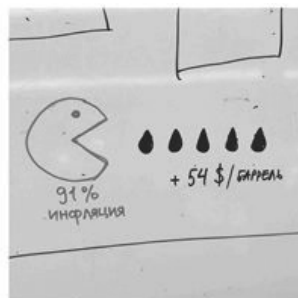
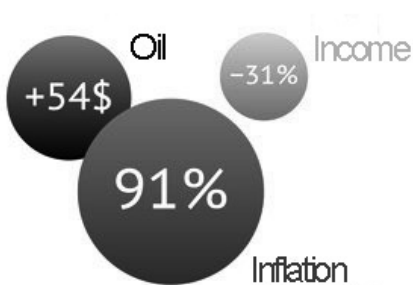


The next project, “2013-2030: how the oil will affect the salary” (*RosBusinessConsulting, RBC*), presents the graph of wages affected by Russian oil prices. The team compares different salaries (2008-2013) with prices of oil at the same period. Users can track how their salary will depend on the fluctuations in the price of Russian oil, and can calculate what their salary will be salary in 2030. The journalists reveal which professions will suffer from inflation as well. So, this project exposes interesting professions that are independent from “oil effects”.

According to Edik Tsvettsih, head of the design and usability department of RBC, this popular topic was chosen when the Ministry of Economic Development published a forecast for the Russian economic development until 2030, and the team decided to explore how people in Russia will spend money and feel in 2030, and to help them defend themselves from these risks.

Figure 2

**Data project “2013-2030:
how the oil will affect the salary”, main visual**



“*Rossijskaya Gazeta*” wanted to compare statistical figures with the people of the project “Biographies of Russia”. The program tells the user if he or she lives in better or worse conditions than his

or her peers in a particular region. The program also issues a small prediction based on statistical data. For example, the program shows what the probability that the user will double his or her income in the next three years is, and what the probability that he will live up to 68 years or become a parent of three children is. This project is very interesting and is even exciting for users.

According to Yevgeny Volk, a web analyst (web site *rg.ru*), the analysts want to create a reliable picture of the Russian population using all these statistical supplements along with users' input. Volk mentioned, that the main problem of all projects is that the team does not know who their audience is. And the team has created a panel, which gives a clear understanding of where the users live, how much money they earn, whether they have children, what are their educations. Such interactive projects would help to create a better portrait of audience.

Figure 3

Data project “Biographies of Russia”, main visual



In the project “Milk for harm” (“RIA Ranking”), the team gives an analysis of the environmental situation in the Russian regions compared to economic parameters. The project helps people to understand if they live in the region with a poor economic environment, and live with or without any compensation. Compensation index (“milk index”) consists of the local authority’s spending for the community, the number of doctors per capita, and the average wage in the region. Looking at the map, many users can recognize that their region is not as prosperous as they thought. After understanding the source of the issue, residents can raise this problem to state or federal authorities.

According to Andrew Manko, head of the financial institutions analysis department (RIA “*Novosti*”), the project team would like to develop a more detailed map of the regional, municipal, and urban district level. They also had to examine more than a million cells of information. And the problem of data quality is not completely solved. For example, six regions have no data at all, such as Chechnya and Ingushetia. Statistics on these republics began to appear only recently.

On the map of the project called “Decent state. Kindergartens” (“*Tatar-Inform*”), the user can select a district, such as Tatarstan, and can see how authorities solve problems with state and private kindergartens. This project also can compare the districts by the number of kindergartens. So, people can compare the quantity and quality of kindergartens and local authorities.

According to Maxim Tolchinsky, the executive director of the agency “*Tatar-Inform*”, the team wants to demonstrate how data projects can truly help people. In the future they will develop a project demonstrating this, and they will uncover all the other social problems in the region.

The project “Changing Russia” (“*Esquire*”), based on English Wikipedia articles, is devoted to the perception of Russia in the world. On the map of Russia, the audience can see what information about the country and abroad the Russian people are most interested according to Wikipedia foreign users.

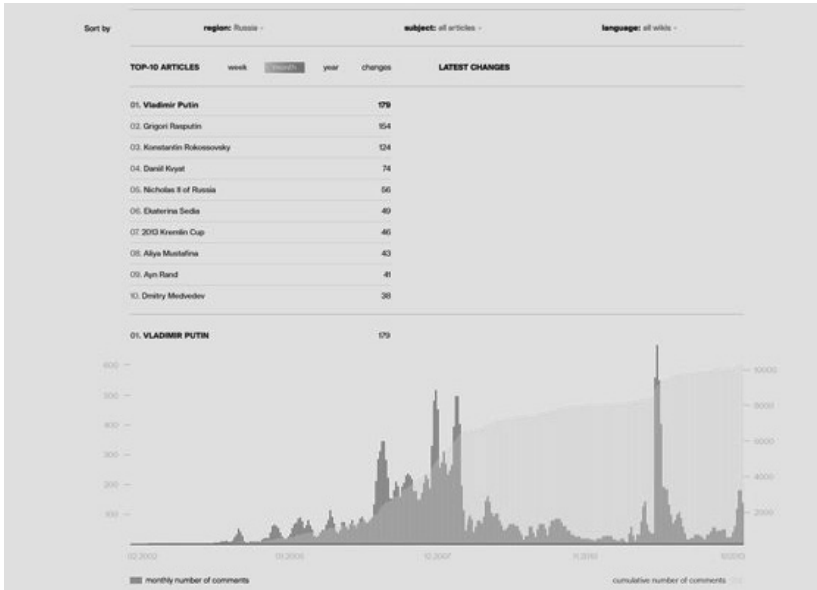
Figure 4

Data project “Changing Russia”, main visual



Figure 5

Data project “Changing Russia”: statistics, diagram



According to Dmitry Golubovsky, the chief editor of “Esquire”, the team has created a working prototype of the services that will be available soon on their website. They have long been interested in Wikipedia as, which organizes human communication and knowledge.

Table 1

First Russian data journalism projects. Communication models
(beta, n=10)

Project	Data	Subject of Communication	Object of Communication	Message: Text, Visual, Multimedia	Type of Interactivity	Model of Communication
“Pulse” (“Big City”)	126,000 “check-in” in 62,000 profiles of “Vkontakte”	Journalist, web-designer, programmer, on line producer. Not obvious interactive	Not obvious interactive	Verbal text, interactive mapping	Interactive programming. Passive subject and object	Hierarchical
“Where in Russia life is good” (“Argumenty i Fauty”)	Rating of Russian regions” of “Urbanik” Institute (St. Petersburg) the datasets of Rosstat	Journalist, web-designer, programmer. Interactive.	Interactive	Verbal text, interactive mapping of different types	Interactive programming. active subject and object	Non-hierarchical
“Emotional twitter back-ground” (“Mercator”)	The archives of the project “Open Data Hub”, twitter data, library of positive and negative words	Journalist, web-designer, programmer. Not obvious interactive	Not obvious interactive	Interactive diagram	Interactive programming. Passive subject and object	Hierarchical

Project	Data	Subject of Communication	Object of Communication	Message: Text, Visual, Multimedia	Type of Interactivity	Model of Communication
“From Moscow. Russia is big, where would you move?” (“ <i>Moscow News</i> ”)	14 cities, 13 industrial cities, 16 provincial towns, 14 villages and seven places for solitary life	Journalist, web-designer, programmer. Interactive.	Not obvious interactive	Verbal text, mapping	Interactive programming, active subject	Hierarchical
“The debt load of the population in Russia” (“ <i>Prime</i> ”)	National Bureau of Credit Histories and Rosstat.	Journalist, web-designer, programmer. Interactive.	Interactive	Mapping	Interactive programming, active subject and object	Non-hierarchical
“2013-2030: how the oil will affect the salary” (<i>RBC</i>)	The data on wages, the stock information on the prices of Urals.	Journalist, web-designer, programmer. Interactive.	Interactive	Diagram, images	Interactive programming, active subject and object	Non-hierarchical

“Biographies of Russia” (“ <i>Rossiyskaya Gazeta</i> ”)	Rosstat, Russian census of 2002 and 2010, open data of the Ministry of Health	Journalist, web-designer, programmer. Interactive.	Interactive	Verbal text, images	Interactive programming, active subject and object	Non-hierarchical
Milk for harm” (“ <i>RIA Ranking</i> ”)	Rosstat.	Journalist, web-designer, programmer. Interactive.	Interactive	Interactive mapping	Interactive programming, active subject and object	Hierarchical
“Decent state. Kindergartens” (“ <i>Tatar-Inforn</i> ”)	Data on kindergartens, data of “people’s control”	Journalist, web-designer, programmer. Interactive.	Not obvious interactive	Interactive	Interactive programming, active subject	Non-hierarchical
“Changing Russia” (“ <i>Esquire</i> ”)	English-language Wikipedia articles, data editing, and site dbpedia.org,	Journalist, web-designer, programmer. Interactive.	Not obvious interactive	Interactive mapping	Interactive programming, active subject	Hierarchical

First Russian data journalism projects. Functions and type
(beta, n=10)

Project	Aim	Function	Type of Involving	Values	Type of project
“Pulse” (“Big City”)	To present and to test free-time life of Muscovites	To inform	Passive, technology mediated	Social Identity of Muscovites	Social
“Where in Russia life is good” (“ <i>Argumenty i Fyty</i> ”)	To show real conditions of proposed relocation in Russia	To involve	Active, technology mediated	Complicity, Social Identity of Russian regions	Social
“Emotional twitter background” (“ <i>Mercator</i> ”)	To watch the mood of the main characters of Twitter	To inform	Passive, technology mediated	Individual Identity	Social
“From Moscow. Russia is big, where would you move?” (“ <i>Moscow News</i> ”)	To help users to find a location that suits them more	To inform	Active, technology mediated	Social Identity of Russian regions and Russians	Social
“The debt load of the population in Russia” (“ <i>Prime</i> ”)	To analyze the situation with the debt load of Russians and to choose correct model of behavior	To change type of economical thinking and acting	Active, technology mediated	Economic education	Social

<p>“2013-2030: how the oil will affect the salary” (<i>RBC</i>)</p>	<p>To analyze the economic situation and to choose correct model of behavior</p>	<p>To change type of economical thinking and acting</p>	<p>Active, technology mediated</p>	<p>Economic education and professional identity</p>	<p>Social</p>
<p>“Biographies of Russia” (<i>Rossiyskaya Gazeta</i>)</p>	<p>To analyze real lifestyle of Russians</p>	<p>To involve into journalists project</p>	<p>Active, technology mediated</p>	<p>Social Identity of Russians</p>	<p>Data journalism, social</p>
<p>Milk for harm” (<i>RIA Ranking</i>)</p>	<p>To analyze the environmental situation in the Russian regions in comparison with the economic parameters</p>	<p>To involve into social life</p>	<p>Active, technology mediated</p>	<p>Social help</p>	<p>Social</p>
<p>“Decent state. Kindergartens” (<i>Tatar-Inforn</i>)</p>	<p>To analyze social problem and help people</p>	<p>To inform</p>	<p>Active, technology mediated</p>	<p>Social help</p>	<p>Data journalism, social</p>
<p>“Changing Russia” (<i>Esquire</i>)</p>	<p>To show the parameters of Interest of foreigners to Russia</p>	<p>To inform</p>	<p>Active, technology mediated</p>	<p>National identity of Russians in the world</p>	<p>Political</p>

First ten Russian data-journalism projects (beta versions) demonstrate new formats of media content, which are not journalistic (data journalism interactive projects, not texts, 100%; 2 mixed projects – data journalism and social project both) with high level of interactivity (100%) and social integrity (100%).

All the projects are completely technologically mediated. The majority of creative ideas of the projects (80%) depend on original technological solutions even more than on journalistic ideas. Moreover, the majority of projects (90%) may exist only due to interactive programming.

Journalists had chosen economic (4 projects), social (4), and political (1) themes for their data projects. These projects are of city (1), regional (1), interregional (4), national (3) and global (1) levels.

Models of communication are classical and hierarchical (50%) and non-hierarchical (50%). The authors are from diverse creative teams in all the projects (journalist, web-designers, programmers, and producers). But the interactivity of professional authors during the project is not clearly stated (only 70%).

The audience has to be interactive in many ways, but the audience's interactivity is not obvious (50%). In fact, in these first Russian projects about data journalism has a level of interactivity with audience higher than that of professionals.

The type of content is substantially visual. Visualization models are rather classical (mapping, 70%; diagram, 20%) and not totally interactive.

In spite of a high level of social relevance, professional novelty, and creative interactive formats of communication, the aims designated by professional media teams were rather traditional: to present (3) and to analyze the information (6), as well as to help people (6). Also the functions of data-journalism in these projects

are meant to inform (5), to be involved in social life (3), and to change personal and social life for the better(2).

These are the main characteristics of the Russian data journalism model. As a result, all the cases demonstrate new types and models for media communication, which is rather social than journalistic.

Conclusion and discussion

The study of data journalism as a phenomenon, a process, and a type of media communication allow us to define data journalism:

- as a integrated set of specific skills of creative teams consisting of journalists, web-designers, programmers, and producers to search, analyze, and present information from digital and Internet data sources allowing the construction of unique analytical content for effective interaction with the audience;
- as the method of creation, transmission, consumption of large and open datasets, which can be used as meta-analysis for various, new, journalistic genres;
- as a type of integrated digital media text, based on original info and new categories of data.

All of the analysed projects of data journalism are completely technologically mediated. Data journalism demonstrates creative possibilities of methodologically facilitated professional communication. But it also strengthens human, rather than technocratic, trends in media communication, because the creation of original content based on open information requires specific interpretation and analysis.

The communication model of data journalism, presented in the paper, presented transformations of all classic elements and

links in it. As a result, data-journalism is a new type of media communication. Additionally, this would change many features and functions of the media system.

The first ten Russian data journalism projects demonstrate new features of national journalism. New formats of media content from these data journalism projects are more social and “citizen”-oriented than journalistically oriented, and all of them demonstrate a high level of interactivity and social integrity. The communication model is constructed by a diverse team (journalists, programmers, web-designers, and producers). The levels of interactivity of audience in data journalism projects are higher than that of professionals. The majority of these data journalism projects may exist only due to interactive programming. Also, data journalism content is technologically determined. But functions of data journalism developments are still rather classical, such as the main function of data journalists being to inform.

From the theoretical point of view, the paper for the first time supplies a new format of the synthesis of fundamentally different approaches for using facts as a main category of journalism as well as the possibility for synergy of all journalistic genres.

The emergence of data as a new type of factual information and media communication displays that journalism has a new level of functioning in society. This category of media content on the Internet makes the development of a new format of construction not only of opinions, but also of knowledge possible. Data journalism is an effective source of media literacy.

This paper raises several questions for future research: Is data the most useful tool for contemporary journalism? Does the audience select, analyze, and present data with or without a journalist? What are the types of integration (or convergence) of data content? What would be the new types of content? How should we use data in media

economics, media business processes, and internal communication in media organizations?

For clarification, let us note that data journalism corresponds with the government programs of open governance around the world and in Russia, which contribute to the development of these types of databases, and consequently contribute to data journalism as a new and significant leader of social development.

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**MULTIMEDIA LONGREAD STORIES
AS A NEW FORMAT FOR ONLINE JOURNALISM:
“SNOWFALL” PROJECTS
AND OTHER EXPERIMENTS WITH CONTENT**

**МУЛЬТИМЕДИЙНЫЙ ЛОНГРИД
КАК НОВЫЙ ФОРМАТ ИНТЕРНЕТ-
ЖУРНАЛИСТИКИ: “СНОУФол” ПРОЕКТЫ
И ДРУГИЕ ЭКСПЕРИМЕНТЫ С КОНТЕНТОМ**

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The article examines a new format in online journalism, which is taking shape and developing very fast: multimedia long-read stories. Different definitions of this new format are presented. Additionally, the authors try to outline what makes this new phenomenon so popular, and how it differs from other pieces of multimedia content. The second part of the work is devoted to the analysis of Russian multimedia stories, which are inspired by the famous multimedia masterpiece of “The New York Times” – the “Snowfall”.

Key words: *multimedia story; media text; presence effect; parallax; online journalism.*

В статье рассматривается новый формат онлайн журналистики: так называемый мультимедийный лонгрид, который сейчас приобретает осязаемые черты и развивается очень быстро. В работе приведены различные определения этого нового мультимедийного произведения. Кроме того, авторы пытаются ответить на вопрос о том, почему этот формат приобрел такую популярность и чем он отличается от других мультимедийных произведений. Вторая часть статьи посвящена анализу мультимедийных историй, появившихся в российских СМИ и вдохновленных знаменитым проектом газеты Нью-Йорк Таймс под названием “Сноуфол”.

Ключевые слова: *мультимедийная история; медиатекст; эффект присутствия; параллакс; онлайн-журналистика.*

Introduction

During the last few years, the amount of produced multimedia content in the sphere of journalism is growing rapidly. Both traditional

media in their online versions and exclusively online projects try to experiment with multimedia. The journalism community is now taking multimedia journalism seriously and realizes that it has a great potential, which is needed to find how to use multimedia. One fact proves this statement: the prestigious US Pulitzer Prize changed its entry requirements in 2011 allowing journalists to take part in it not only with print publications, but also with any kind of multimedia materials.

We witness a significant growth not only in the quantity, but also in the quality of multimedia content. The materials become increasingly compelling with a combination of audio, video, text, and graphics. Different experiments along with multimedia content have given rise to new genres and formats. One of them is the multimedia story. This term has come to Russian journalistic theories from the West. We easily noticed that this format is already taking shape, but very often different terms are used to describe it. Among them we find such collocations as multimedia articles, interactive features, web-documentaries, etc. However, we believe the multimedia story is the most appropriate one, as it presents the features of new multimedia texts in the best way. This term is used by researchers from the New Media Research Centre at the University of Berkley, and it has been introduced in the thesaurus of both practitioners and theorists.

The emergence of this new format is an important step in the formation of a new kind of digital storytelling, which is embraced by many news organizations and is said to be the future of journalism. That is why it is especially important to study these pieces of multimedia content as a new type of media text and to define its core characteristics, as well as to realize how different it is from traditional storytelling.

In this paper we focus particularly on a specific type of a multimedia story: the multimedia long-read materials called the “Snowfall” projects. The first news outlet to start producing this kind of multimedia content was the world renowned newspaper, “*The New York Times*”, which published on its website a multimedia story called Snowfall, which combined a long text and a number of multimedia elements (video, audio, animation, infographics, etc). The project became so popular that it produced a wave of similar multimedia stories in the U.S. and abroad. Russian online news outlets followed suit and made a number of “Snowfall” projects.

Literature review

Multimedia journalism is developing rapidly, and news outlets all over the world are increasing the number of multimedia materials in their content, however, there are very few research papers devoted to the analysis of various modern kinds of multimedia formats in online journalism. This lack of literature is partly connected to the fact that the multimedia stories are a new phenomenon, which emerged just a few years ago. One can find a number of journalistic articles in this field, but almost no in-depth research works, analyzing the characteristics of these new types of media texts.

However, there are scholars who started analyzing the Internet content from the beginning. One of them was Mark Deuze from the University of Amsterdam, who was among the few researchers trying to define multimedia journalism and the challenges it poses to traditional storytelling. In one of his works, he argues that multimedia journalism forms a new professional identity of journalists, and it sometimes questions the traditional idea that journalists are the ones who define what the public sees or hears

(Deuze, 2004). He also attempts to differentiate multimedia and online journalism, saying that “digital storytelling using multiple media can be seen as a potential but not a necessary element of added value to an online journalistic presentation” (Deuze, 2004: 140). In another paper, he analyzes news sites and defines three major qualities of online journalism: hypertextuality, interactivity and multimediality (Deuze, 2003).

Recently, more scholars have turned to the analysis of multimedia content. Susan Jacobson, for example, focuses on the multimedia published on “*The New York Times*” site for almost a decade: from 2000 until 2008 (Jacobson, 2010). Her research analyzes a wide range of materials labeled as multimedia in the newspaper’s search engine. She pays special attention to the interactive features, some of which can be regarded as predecessors of the multimedia long-read stories. According to her findings, during the period from 2000 until 2008 the number of multimedia materials on the site, nytimes.com, has increased sevenfold. She also uses the term multimedia story, but she does not give it a distinct definition in her paper.

Russian researchers have also tried to analyze the field of multimedia journalism. In 2010, several scholars from the Faculty of Journalism at Lomonosov Moscow State University published a book based on their research of multimedia formats. One of the definitions, which may be found in the course book “Internet medial: theory and practice”, is as follows: “Multimedia story – a journalistic material, where the topic is presented using different platforms: text, audio-visual means, the unity of which creates a multidimensional picture of an event” (Lukina, Loseva, 2011: 343).

Another definition may be found on the site of the Knight Foundation for Digital Journalism (University of Berkley)¹. These

¹ URL: <http://www.nytimes.com/projects/2012/snow-fall/#/?part=tunnel-creek>

researchers believe that a multimedia story is a combination of text, photos, videos, audio, graphics, and interactive elements, which are presented on the website in a non-linear form where various elements of the story are complimentary and not redundant (Stevens, 2013).

More or less the same thought is expressed by the authors of the textbook, “Internet media” (Lukina, Loseva, 2010). They note that the inability to get access some of the elements of the story should not distort the general message of the story and prevent the user from understanding the material.

Many researchers note that multimedia stories are the height of creative endeavors in many convergent newsrooms. All multimedia elements should be combined with such kind of content, balanced perfectly, and we should take advantage of the strong points of each mechanism. Thus, we can say that such materials express the fundamental goal of multimedia, which is to have an over-all impact on the audience through the use of a whole set of tools (audio, video, graphics, text, animation, etc.). The way multimedia is regarded by many scholars, who define it as a metamedium, is something “that would appeal to all the senses simultaneously – a medium that would mimic and enhance the creative capacities of human mind” (Multimedia: from Wagner to Virtual Reality, 2002: xvi).

We should acknowledge that not all events can be presented in the format of a multimedia story because of its special orientation towards visualization of information. As Maria Lukina and Natalia Loseva note, an event should meet certain criteria to be transformed into a multimedia story. Here are some of them:

- the news story should evolve in time;
- the news story should include episodes, which can be described with the epithet “the most”;
- the news story should contain details, which can be easily presented; graphically, rather than described with words;

- it should have many opportunities for shooting videos;
- the story should contain a lot of background information;
- the news story potentially may be developed with the usage of user generated content (UGC) (Lukina, Loseva, 2011).

As we can see, there are many events and news stories, which can be used as the basis for a multimedia story. That is why it is especially important to note that this is not a genre, but a format, presented in various genres: multimedia reportage, feature, interview, etc.

Multimedia stories are usually based on certain topics. For example, the life and death of a famous hockey player, the story of a group of tourists who are climbing a dangerous peak, etc. To be able to present a theme, the journalist must use different elements – slideshow, audio-podcasts, video, separate photos, texts, etc. As a result, we produce a very compelling and vital story. Because of the whole set of expressive means and the special orientation towards visualization, the audience gets great emotional reactions. The effect of presence and empathy contribute very much to the popularity of this format among users. Additionally, the work on multimedia stories requires on-the-spot reporting and recording information directly from the scene where the event is unfolding. Thus, the format is oriented toward great actuality and exclusivity of the content.

As some theorists argue, multimedia stories can be presented not only in various genres, but also in different formats depending on the structure of the material. Researchers from the media centre at the University of Berkley tried to classify different types of this media text. They distinguished 17 different formats (Grabowicz, Hernandez, Rue, 2010). Two special types have become very popular now: immersive multimedia and timelines. These two terms have

already been introduced into the lexicon of Russian journalists and theorists.

The most recent work devoted to the “Snowfall” projects belongs to the researchers David Dowling and Travis Vogan from the University of Iowa. In their article they analyze three pieces of multimedia content, including the “Snowfall” project itself and the trend present in contemporary multimedia journalism: the growing number of projects similar to Snowfall. They also address that “digital long-form... represents a major shift away from brief breaking news toward a business model built on a carefully crafted multimedia product sensitive to users’ appreciation of multimedia narrative aesthetics” (Dowling, Vogan, 2014: 12).

Methodology and hypothesis

The empirical base of this study comprises of 5 multimedia stories, which were published on the websites of various media outlets from 2012 until 2014. The sample includes the original “Snowfall” piece and another similar story, which was produced by “*The New York Times*” a year after that – “The Game of Shark and Minnow”². The other 3 stories were made by Russian media outlets: *Lenta.ru* (“The end of the Soviets”)³, the wire news agency *ITAR-TASS* (“900 days of life”)⁴, and the newspaper “*Kommersant*” (“Alienation land”)⁵.

² URL: <http://age.lenta.ru/1993>

³ URL: <http://itar-tass.com/tsp/900days>

⁴ URL: <http://kommersant.ru/projects/chernobyl>

⁵ URL: <https://source.opennews.org/en-US/articles/how-we-made-snow-fall/>

All the stories fall under the definition of a multimedia long-read piece: they are based on a long text, which lies in the center of the story; they comprise various multimedia elements (video, audio, animation, infographics, etc.); they are published on a separate webpage and form a unique multimedia canvas; and they are read in a linear form which can be moved further by scrolling down.

Since we wanted to do an in-depth analysis of each media text and find certain regularities in their creation, the number of stories is connected with the goals of our research. The chosen time slot enables us to analyze the way multimedia long-read pieces evolved over time.

The two main methods chosen for the research were a) a complex analysis of the multimedia stories and b) in-depth interviews with the creators of the long-reads. The complex analysis included thorough analyses of the materials, their genre, their composition and structure, the design particularities of different elements of the story on the webpage, and the meaning of each part of the story. The in-depth interviews were supposed to shed light on the working process of the journalists. Additionally, during the interviews we managed to collect information about the feedback the media outlets received from their audience after the publication of these stories. In the case of “*The New York Times*”, we used interviews available online, which explain the creation process of the two long-read stories analyzed in this paper (“How we Made “Snowfall”, interview on the website).

The main hypothesis of the research was: multimedia long-read stories represent a new type of media text and vividly illustrate the new, specific features of multimedia storytelling. They change the way journalists work on their stories, but, at the same time, they still need to rely on basic journalism principles, such as information balance, double-checking, and impartiality.

Our research was aimed to answer the following research questions:

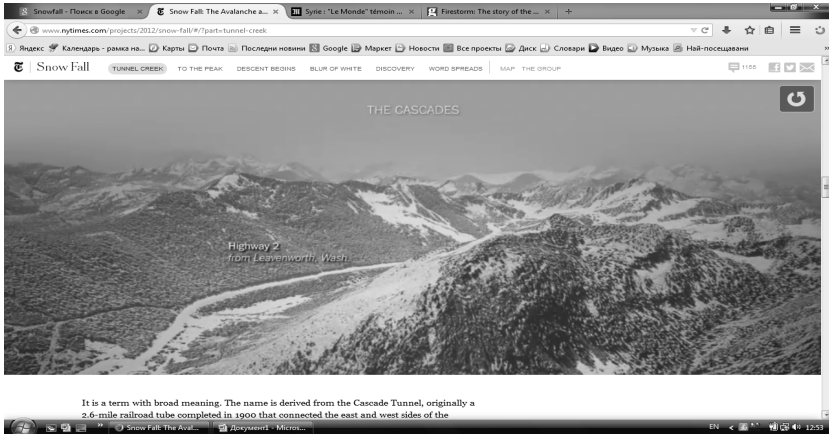
- What are the core characteristics of a multimedia long-read story?
- How it is different from other multimedia formats?
- What are the specific features of the working process, when creating a multimedia long read? How different are they in comparison to the work in traditional journalism (especially in print)?
- What feedback do journalists get when creating such stories?

Results

The original “Snowfall” project was published on the website of “*The New York Times*” in 2012 and described a journey of a group of US skiers who went to the Cascade Mountains and witnessed an avalanche. Several people were killed by the thick layers of snow. If we try to define the genre of this story, we would definitely lean towards the genre of a feature story. From a reader’s point of view, this story provokes genuine human interest, as it deals with life and death in extreme conditions. All the elements are designed in such a way that the material creates great effect of presence and empathy. On the screen the users can see smoky snow and hear wind howling, and the audience is almost transferred to the scene when seeing a 3-d model of the mountains.

Figure 1

“Snowfall” project done by “The New York Times”



However, the structure of the material is the factor that really matters. First of all, the story is situated on a separate webpage with special design. The multimedia elements are not put to the side, but appear smoothly in the long text, which is the logical core of the story. Scrolling down we automatically open different multimedia materials (audio, video, graphics), which appear on the screen progressively. Here we can see for the first time the parallax effect, which creates an illusion of a three-dimensional space. Parallax (from the Greek “change”, “alternation”) is a special technique in web-design, which is based on the change of the apparent position of an object against a remote background when viewed from a different angle. It has been used in online games; however, “The New York Times” was the first media outlet to use it in a journalistic project.

It is quite interesting that “Snowfall” first emerged as a traditional story for print. In February 2012, the newspaper published a piece about an avalanche on its front page. However, the multimedia editor

realized the story had a big multimedia potential. It was then that the idea to make an in-depth multimedia project emerged. Nine months passed from the first sketches to the actual publication of the project online. However, the work on the multimedia story was interrupted from time to time due to other projects.

The first person, whom the editors turned to, was the reporter John Brunch, who was actually the journalist who prepared the initial story about the snowfall for the print edition. Photographers and video-journalists worked with him extensively. According to the creators of the project, at first they all shared their ideas and produced patchwork, and in the beginning they didn't have a vivid understanding how the story would look on the webpage. However, journalists and editors realized that they would like to produce a unified multimedia canvas, where all the multimedia elements would be complimentary to the text and would be inserted in the right place to create the effect of additional reading with video clips and photo illustrations.

One of the main challenges the crew faced during production was connected to the need to select the right materials from huge volumes of photos and video footage. Often they had to combine the text and the visuals in different ways, dismissing the video clips and photos that were repeated the text. Usually the visual part was inserted when it was easier to use a visual elements (still or moving), rather than describe something in words.

Another problem, which the creators had to face, was linked to the adaptation of the project to different platforms (tablets, mobile phones, netbooks, etc). Journalists and editors in "*The New York Times*" wanted the readers to be able to feel the visual potential, which was based on the story, regardless of the platform they use. At the same time it was crucial to avoid the users getting tired of a heavy load of information.

In the table below we presented an overview of the analysis of the long read story.

Table 1

Analysis of the “Snowfall” multimedia story

Facts and figures	
URL	http://www.nytimes.com/projects/2012/snow-fall/#/?part=tunnel-creek
Genre	Feature
Number of parts (chapters)	6
Text length	16, 635 words
Overall number of multimedia elements	53
Usage of parallax effect	Yes
Number of people involved in creation	17
Duration of work	9 months

As we can see from the data, the work on the multimedia piece involved a large crew and was really time-consuming. According to the creators, they even had to hire a physicist, who would help them create an online animated model of the snowfall.

The project became a hit on the Internet and brought a Pulitzer award to the creators of this multimedia masterpiece. The “Snowfall” was “retweeted” and posted on different social networks, as well as being viewed by more than 3.5 million users. “*The New York Times*” received more than 1000 comments on the project. The site gave the possibility to “retweet” the link, post it on Facebook, or send it as an email. Those three buttons were integrated into the story.

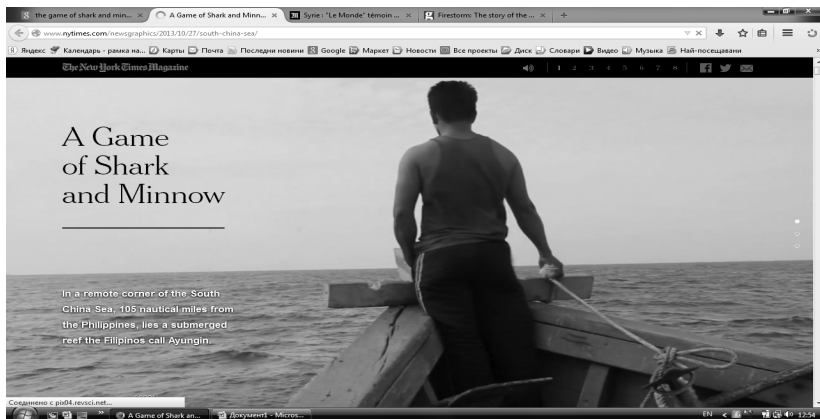
Despite the huge breakthrough in multimedia journalism, the “Snowfall” also received some negative comments from some media theorists and practitioners. The main reproaches were connected with the text-centric model of the project. Some specialists argued

that it was highly unlikely that there were many people, who actually read the whole story from the beginning until the very end. The vast amount of information involved could have scared away some users.

“*The New York Times*” crew realized the drawbacks of their first multimedia long-form piece and soon produced another story, which took into account the reproaches. The new project appeared online in 2013 and was called “A Game of Shark and Minnow.” It described the story of the Spartly Islands, a disputed territory in the South China Sea, where the Philippines, China, Taiwan, and Malaysia have settlements. The reporter of “*The New York Times*” magazine spent some time on an abandoned ship near the islands, and he tells the story of the ordinary people who live there. If we define this story, we can define it as a feature story.

Figure 2

“A Game of Shark and Minnow” project done by “*The New York Times*”



The story, in many ways, has the same characteristics as the “Snowfall” project. It is based on a separate web-page, integrates different multimedia elements smoothly, uses the parallax effect, and has a long text as a central element. It also is divided into several chapters and uses the presence and empathy effects, which are achieved due to a number of multimedia techniques. The users can hear the sound of the sea waves, and the trembling of the camera in different video clips recreates the feelings of a person experiencing the vessel rocking.

However, there are significant changes in comparison to the “Snowfall” project. “A Game of Shark and Minnow” achieves a better balance between the text and the visuals. There are more video clips and photos, than in the “Snowfall” piece. Also, the text length is different – only 6,712 words compared to the 16,635 in the Snowfall. In addition, the creators managed to solve another problem of minimizing the resources for the work. They had a lot of experience with coding the “Snowfall” project and some aspects managed to fall into templates, which facilitated the work. According to the creators, it took them only a month to put the project together and they had only 10 people involved in its creation. Thus, the creators managed to challenge the myth that Snowfall-style projects are too expensive and difficult to achieve for news organizations with limited resources.

Table 2

Analysis of the story “A Game of Shark and Minnow”
(*NYtimes.com*)

Facts and figures	
URL	http://www.nytimes.com/newsgraphics/2013/10/27/south-china-sea/
Genre	Feature
Number of parts (chapters)	8
Text Length	6 712 words
Overall number of multimedia elements	36
Usage of parallax effect	Yes
Number of people involved in creation	10
Duration of work	1 month

Another change in the user experience was the way different multimedia elements opened. There was no need to click on the “play” button; they automatically turned on by scrolling down. This was a significant difference in comparison to the “Snowfall” project, where the slideshows, audio podcasts, and video clips turned on only by clicking.

“A Game of Shark and Minnow” also received a lot of positive feedback from the readers. The creators of the project did not include a comment bar to the webpage, but left the three options – “retweet”, share on Facebook, or email.

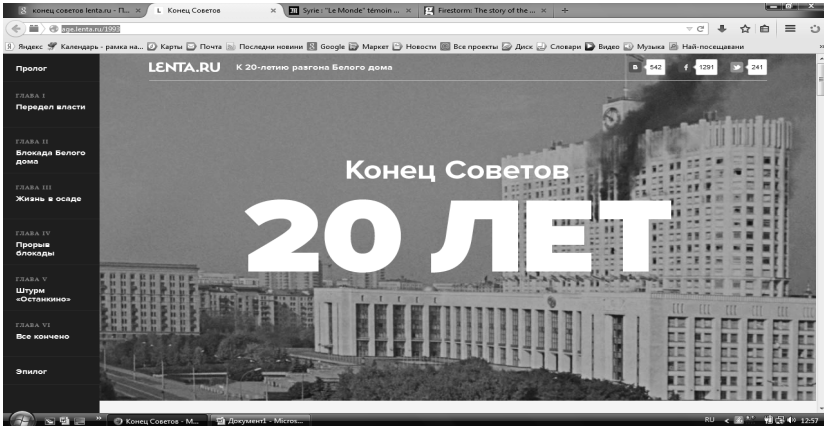
Since the launch of the two projects of “*The New York Times*”, the fashion for “snowfalls” came along to the media sphere, and many online media outlets tried to make something similar. These attempts were made not only in the USA, but also in other countries (stories like Firestorm done by the UK newspaper, The Guardian,

and some attempts done in the field by the French newspaper *Le Monde*). Thus, we can say that the “Snowfall” has become a common noun; many journalists started calling any multimedia project of a similar format, which are designed with the usage of the parallax effect. Additionally, a special verb emerged: “to snowfall,” meaning creating a story using the same technique that was used by the *NYtimes.com*. However, we believe that we should not abandon the term “multimedia story,” as the “Snowfall” project is only a particular case. It is characterized by a number of specific features, which allow us to distinguish it into a separate group called multimedia long-read. First of all, the core element of this story is the text. Secondly, it is perceived as a unique multimedia project, since it is presented on separate webpages, and the multimedia elements are smoothly inserted into the story. Thirdly, we see the parallax effect, and, lastly, the story is perceived in a linear manner.

In Russia the fashion for “Snowfall” projects came a little bit later than in some other countries. The first multimedia stories, which tried to copy the way “*The New York Times*” masterpiece was done, were not so technically impressive and lacked some significant features of the original material. One of the first pieces of multimedia content, inspired by the “Snowfall” project, was the material of *Lenta.ru* information portal called “The end of the Soviets: 20 years.” The story described the events, which took place in Russia in 1993 during the siege of the White House and was published in 2013, marking the 20th anniversary of this historical event.

Figure 3

“The End of the Soviets” project by *Lenta.ru*



At first, the material has some resemblance to the Snowfall, as it is situated on a separate webpage, it is composed of several chapters containing still photos and videos, and the text story is the core element.

However, there were significant differences in comparison with the original “Snowfall” project. First of all, the creators of the story didn’t use the parallax effect. The web-page doesn’t look as sophisticated as “*The New York Times*” masterpiece and the layout is not quite functional. The multimedia long-read uses only three types of content: still photos, videos, and text. There are only a few slideshows and no complex animation clips included. The video shots are embedded from Youtube, so the story resembles a blog with a lot of text material, accompanied by different multimedia elements.

As for the text, it is quite long and fragmented. It is hard to define the genre of this piece, as it consists of quotes belonging to different

participants of the events. The authors quote some paragraphs from newspaper accounts. Thus, they try to achieve an effect of a documentary, in which the story is told in an unbiased and balanced way and all the viewpoints are expressed.

Table 3

Analysis of the story “End of the Soviets: 20 years” (*Lenta.ru*)

Facts and figures	
URL	http://age.lenta.ru/1993
Genre	Fragmented text
Number of parts (chapters)	6
Text length	4,936 words
Overall number of multimedia elements	16
Usage of parallax effect	No
Number of people involved in creation	6
Duration of work	1 month

As we can see from the results, the newsroom of *Lenta.ru* managed to prove that Snowfall-like projects don’t always need to be very expensive and time-consuming. The programming tools they used were very basic and didn’t require additional coding specialists.

This multimedia project had significant feedback from users, who commented on it and posted the story in the social networks. However, some media theorists and practitioners expressed the thought that too much information was packed into one story, so you could hardly find a reader who read the entire text attentively (the same reproach, which was addressed to the creators of the original “Snowfall” long-read).

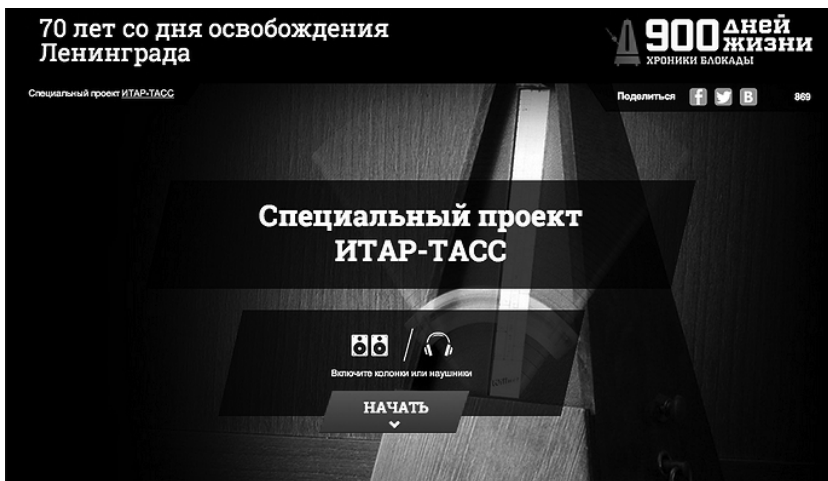
This project could be regarded as one of the first long-read stories in the Russian segment of the Internet. From a journalistic

and historical point of view it is very progressive, since it tries to reconstruct the events of a certain time and gives many valuable archive materials.

Another Russian media project inspired by “Snowfall” is the multimedia story created by the *ITAR-TASS* news agency dedicated to the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Leningrad after the siege by the Nazi regime during World War II.

Figure 4

“900 days of life” project done by *ITAR-TASS* wire agency



The city was blockaded for 900 days, which the journalists attempted to document in their multimedia story. We should note that for the news agency this project is the first piece of multimedia content of such a large scale that involved so many interactive elements. “900 days of life” exists on a separate webpage and gives a detailed account of life in the city. The users may click on different

buttons in order to view interactive maps, showing the movements of the Russian and German troops. The project also includes interviews with veterans, who witnessed the siege. The structure of the story is linear and orients all the events that unfolded during the siege in chronological order. Similarly to the “End of the Soviets” story, this one uses a lot of archive photos and videos, allowing the journalists to reconstruct the events. Special attention is paid to the music, which accompanies the historical pictures and maps. However, there are some differences, which make the *ITAR-TASS* project different from the story of *Lenta.ru*. First of all, the structure of the text is even more fragmented and presents short descriptions of different events. Sometimes the texts look like captions to the photos, and the story includes slideshows. There is a navigation bar on the left side of the page, which allows the users to jump from one date to another and skip some descriptions. In general, it is more interactive than the project of *Lenta.ru* and uses more visual information.

Table 4

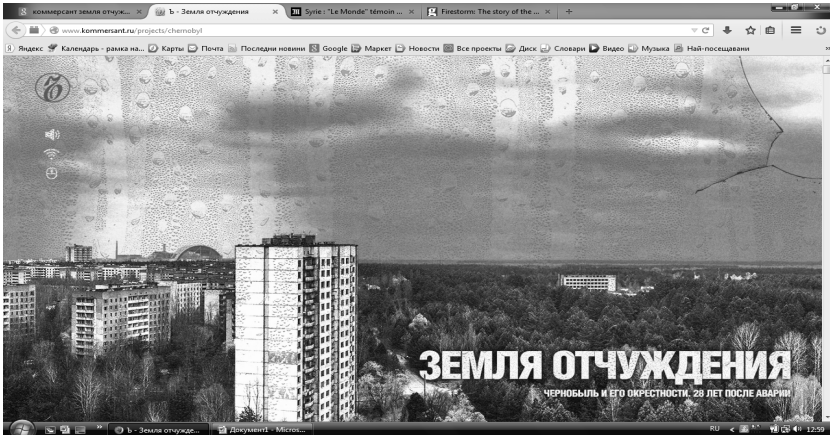
Analysis of the “900 days of life story” (*ITAR-TASS* news agency)

Facts and figures	
URL	http://itar-tass.com/tsp/900days
Genre	Fragmented text
Number of parts (chapters)	4
Text length	n/a
Overall number of multimedia elements	53
Usage of parallax effect	No
Number of people involved in creation	Nearly 20
Duration of work	1 month

Although there are various Russian projects copying the “Snowfall” story, there is one which actually is the closest analogue of the US multimedia masterpiece, and, for that reason, it deserves special attention. It was published on one of the biggest Russian business newspaper sites, *Kommersant.ru*, in 2014 and marked the anniversary of the tragedy of the Chernobyl nuclear station. The creators of this multimedia piece had to face a serious challenge because there are so many stories written and published about this event. It was really hard to surprise the audience and make something genuinely new. However, they managed to be successful in their endeavors. The story called “Alienation land” revealed what is happening now on the territory having been infected by the nuclear leakage.

Figure 5

“Alienation land” done by *Kommersant.ru*



“*Kommersant’s*” journalists tried to show an undistorted image of the life in the alienation zone and challenge the myth that

Chernobyl is a haunted and abandoned place. Since the newspaper is also famous for the coverage of business affairs, it also touches upon another angle – the shady deals with the construction of the new dome, which is supposed to protect the nearest territories from the nuclear radiation.

The creators of the story confess that their work was inspired not only by the Snowfall, but also by other projects, including the Firestorm⁶ created by the Guardian and “*The New York Times*” “A game of shark and minnow.” According to them, their main goal was to show the users a place where the audience would hardly go and to make the story immersive and compelling.

They managed to meet their goals and create a very impressive and capturing story. They used the parallax effect for the first time in the Russian media. The immersive potential of the project was very strong thanks to the wise usage of different types of mediums.

“Alienation zone” is a chronological story of the trip to the Chernobyl station, and it documents the atmosphere in different places near the nuclear plant. “*Kommersant’s*” journalists especially emphasized the photo galleries, since this news outlet is famous for its talented photo correspondents. However, video is also used widely. As in the “Snowfall” project, multimedia elements open automatically by scrolling down. The presence effect also relies on different sounds from the scene. For example, the cover photo of the project is accompanied by the sound of a squeaking radiation detection device.

The crew of the *Kommersant.ru* tried to put an emphasis on the exclusiveness of the content. They recorded special interviews with the locals, liquidators, and officials. The journalists managed to generate a special algorithm for how to produce a multimedia

⁶ URL: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/interactive/2013/may/26/firestorm-bushfire-dunalley-holmes-family>

story. They came to the conclusion that it is important to outline a detailed plan of the future story, including drawn plans with marks showing where to put a photo or a video. Thus, the work in the field becomes easier and you may economize valuable time.

Surely, there were a lot of challenges and problems accompanying the project. First of all, they were presented with a massive load of information, which is a problem for different browsers. The computer specialists managed to solve this issue by making the webpage download gradually. Another challenge was the adaptation of the format for various devices: tablets, mobile phones, etc.

Table 5

Analysis of the story “Alienation land” (*Kommersant.ru*)

Facts and figures	
URL	http://kommersant.ru/projects/chernobyl
Genre	Feature
Number of parts (chapters)	4
Text Length	4,559 words
Overall number of multimedia elements	33
Usage of parallax effect	Yes
Number of people involved in creation	13
Duration of work	1 month

However, despite the obstacles, the story was a success, which the figures prove. Within the first week the project received more than 200,000 visitors. More than 70% of the visitors viewed all the slideshow photos. About 90% of the audience didn’t include loyal “*Kommersant*” users, but it included new people, who usually don’t visit the site on a daily basis.

Later “*Kommersant*” used the valuable experience of their first project to create other multimedia long-read stories, which also were welcomed by the audience. While working on their “Snowfall” they managed to master other smaller multimedia formats such as photogalleries, video podcasts, etc.

Discussion

The conducted analysis of multimedia stories allows us to point out that a multimedia long-read project is a special piece of content with some specific features. It is a text-centric, linear material, which is devoted to a certain topic and includes multimedia elements that are embedded smoothly into the text. This kind of multimedia content has a strong immersive potential and gives the reader a very genuine reading experience due to different design techniques (parallax effect, scrolling down). As we can see, most of the stories represent feature materials, which are connected to the nature of such media texts. Feature stories usually don’t have a strict deadline and require more time and effort during production. That is why features are rather popular as a genre for multimedia stories.

We should also point out that a digital long-form piece, as the analysis shows, requires an in-depth analysis of the subject. Very often journalists have to spend at least a month or two in order to collect the needed information. They use various types of sources and very often turn to journalistic observations as a leading method. It should also be noted that multimedia long-reads rely heavily on basic reporting principles, which are common for printed journalism. However, the story should also have strong visual potential to be transformed into a long-form piece.

Although at first Snowfall-like projects were regarded as bizarre and too complex to be implemented by a regular newsroom with limited resources, practice shows us that this type of content can be created rather easy, if the journalists manage to realize the basic production principles. Now there are many template widgets, which facilitate the creation of “Snowfalls” and make this format more accessible to various news outlets.

Conclusion

The “Snowfall” project created a whole trend in multimedia journalism, reviving the long-read pieces and allowing newspapers combine visuals with profoundly interesting texts. Some analysts say this contradicts with the general fragmentation and miniaturization of texts and messages. However, the revival of long formats is a positive outcome for journalism in general, which cannot compete with news sites and bloggers in speed of production, but can in in-depth reporting. At the same time, a multimedia story is still a developing format, which may not be based on long-read materials. Multimedia journalists still have a lot of room for experiments and may further explore the endless potential of multimedia content.

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**THE RECONNECTION OF CRIMEA AS VIEWED
BY THE TURKISH MEDIA (FOLLOWING
THE COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF “TODAY’S
ZAMAN”, “HÜRRIYET DAILY NEWS”,
“DAILY SABAH”, “GOOD MORNING TURKEY”,
AND “JOURNAL OF TURKISH WEEKLY”)**

**ПРИСОЕДИНЕНИЕ КРЫМА ГЛАЗАМИ
ТУРЕЦКИХ ЖУРНАЛИСТОВ
(СРАВНИТЕЛЬНЫЙ АНАЛИЗ ПУБЛИКАЦИЙ
“TODAY’S ZAMAN”, “HÜRRIYET DAILY NEWS”,
“DAILY SABAH”, “GOOD MORNING TURKEY”
И “JOURNAL OF TURKISH WEEKLY”)**

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Turkey’s reaction to the Ukrainian crisis and the reconnection of Crimea in particular, was different from the viewpoint presented by the Western media. On the other hand, the Turkish government was placed in quite an ambiguous position – to support Russia’s reconnection of Crimea would have definitely lead to breaking

with the West on a political and economic level, something that Turkey would never wish for due to the country's ambition to be integrated into the European Union. Our main goal was to find out whether the political duality of Turkey influenced the country's media content. We assumed that the official political agenda would influence the media content. We specifically addressed the Referendum in Crimea, as it was one of the moments when media interest reached its peak. Based on an empirical analysis of the articles published shortly before or after the referendum in Crimea in "Today's Zaman", "Hürriyet Daily News", "Daily Sabah", "Good Morning Turkey", and the "Journal of Turkish Weekly", the author came to a number of conclusions, which to a large extent have proved the original hypothesis to be true.

Key words: *Ukrainian crisis; Russian-Turkish relations; Crimea reconnection; Turkish media; news coverage.*

В статье рассматривается специфика освещения кризиса на Украине турецкими СМИ. Эмпирическую базу данного исследования составили публикации "Today's Zaman", "Hürriyet Daily News", "Good Morning Turkey", "Daily Sabah" и "Journal of Turkish Weekly" – качественных англоязычных изданий, рассчитанных как на внутреннюю, так и на внешнюю аудиторию. Автором были проанализированы 30 публикаций (электронные версии), посвященных референдуму в Крыму. Данная тема вызвала интерес у автора, поскольку позиция Турции в данном вопросе кардинально отличается от позиции США и большинства стран-членов ЕС. Гипотеза может быть сформулирована следующим образом: официальная позиция страны должна была повлиять на специфику освещения украинского конфликта качественными СМИ. По итогам анализа публикаций автор пришел

к выводу, что официальная позиция Турции в большей степени нашла свое отражение на страницах печатных СМИ.

Ключевые слова: *кризис на Украине; российско-турецкие отношения; присоединение Крыма; освещение событий турецкими СМИ.*

Introduction

The international community is carefully watching the development of the Ukrainian crisis, mainly due to the presence of geopolitical interests in this region. The Referendum on the official status of Crimea seemed to be one of the turning points of the conflict: it not only attracted international attention, but it also provoked a round of economic sanctions against Russia, as a UN Assembly Resolution proclaimed the Referendum to be illegitimate. Turkey's reaction to the entire situation including the reconnection of Crimea was different from the one presented by the Western media. On the other hand, the Turkish government was placed in a quite a difficult position – to support Russia's reconnection of Crimea would have definitely lead to a break with the West on a political and economic level, something that Turkey would never wish for, due to the country's ambition to be integrated into the European Union. Therefore our main goal was to find out whether the political duality of Turkey influenced the country's media content.

Since the crisis in Ukraine occurred quite recently, there are not many media oriented research papers or academic articles relevant to this issue. However, there are a number of publications, where the authors concentrate on the Ukrainian coverage and the outcome of the reconnection of Crimea. Both Jeffrey Mankoff (Mankoff, 2014) and John J. Mearsheimer (Mearsheimer, 2014)

studied the Ukrainian crisis in their publication “Russia’s Latest Land Grab”. Kemal Kaya, an author for the Turkey Analyst, focused on the Crimean crisis in his research titled “The Crimean Crisis: Turkey’s Priorities Differ From the Western Powers” (Kaya, 2014). One of the most profound and thorough studies dealing with the complexity of the entire situation in Ukraine was an article by Esen Berk and Imre Kertész Kolleg Jenae entitled “The Portrayal of the Ukrainian Crisis in the Turkish Media”. The authors focused on the political protests in Kiev, and on the subsequent government crackdown (Berk, 2014). However, most of the authors provided a general analysis of the media content, without drawing particular attention to the Crimean Referendum and its outcome. Therefore we can say that the issue we are focusing on in our analysis is quite new from the academic point of view and is worth addressing.

One point that should be taken into account, is the fact that Turkey has ethnic, historical, and cultural ties with Crimea, especially with the regard to the status and fate of the Crimean Tatars - people of Turkic origin who were deported from their homeland by the Soviet leader Joseph Stalin after the end of WWII and returned to Crimea after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. The status of Crimean Tatars remains a serious problem for the entire country. Another major concern is country’s dependence on Russia in terms of energy. That said, the official position of Turkey could be stated in the following way: although Turkey has joined the international chorus in its official rhetoric in stating that the Russian reconnection of Crimea is illegal, in practical terms, Ankara’s position is much more ambiguous. Some experts like Kemal Kaya, (Kaya, 2014) even argue that Turkey has *de facto* accepted Crimea’s reconnection by Russia. Thus, a hypothesis could be structured in the following way – the national political agenda probably influences the content of the Turkish media. The reason we focused on the

Referendum on Crimea is because this was a period, when media interest reached its peak.

We assumed that due to the specifics of Russian-Turkish relations, the general tone of the coverage would be less critical and more balanced, unlike, for example, some European and most American media. We also assumed, taking into account Turkey's official position on the Crimean issue, that the general tone of the coverage would reflect the difficult position in which the country had been placed.

Among the key tasks of our research were:

- 1) the study of the relations between Russia and Turkey from political and economic points of view,
- 2) the study of the official position of Turkey referring to the Crimean reconnection, and
- 3) comparing those to the general tone of reporting.

The **methodological basis** of our study included a content analysis of articles published in the Turkish media. In particular, we addressed all the English language publications where the Crimean issue was mentioned. We have chosen the most respected English language newspapers, including “*Today's Zaman*”, “*Hürriyet Daily News*”, “*Daily Sabah*”, “*Good Morning, Turkey*” (all dailies) and “*The Journal of Turkish Weekly*”, which is a monthly journal. We must admit that, in fact, there were certainly other publications related to this issue published in Turkish-language newspapers and on the internet, but we decided to focus on the media sources mentioned above, since the content presented there is meant to satisfy the needs of both a national and an international audience, and besides, these were the only sources available in English referring to the issue discussed¹¹. We analyzed 30 publications, that were published shortly before or

¹ URL: http://www.todayszaman.com/diplomacy_turkey-may-act-as-mediator-between-russia-crimean-tatars_342673.htm

after the Referendum in Crimea – exactly at a time when the media attention to this issue reached its peak (this occurred mostly in March 2014). However we did address a number of articles published in April, September, November and December 2014 – this was the case, for example with the “*Journal of Turkish Weekly*”, which is a monthly journal. Our main selection criteria were keywords (tags – Crimea Referendum, Ukrainian crisis, Russian-Turkish relations), as we searched for articles on the Crimean Referendum and looked both for stories, based on hard news, editorial columns, and opinion articles. We looked at the arguments used by the journalists and the general tone of the reporting (neutral, positive, negative). The final results of our observation are presented in *Table 1*.

As noted by Esen Berk (Berk, 2014), there were three critical events, referring to the situation in Ukraine, when media’s interest peaked. The Referendum on the status of Crimea was one of them. Therefore, we decided to focus on the stories published before and after the Referendum in the first half of the year (March 2014), since they seem to be more relevant in terms of the current political situation: the Referendum was held in March, a new set of sanctions was established by the EU and the USA against Russia, and major discussions about the political and economic outcome were in full swing.

Political reporting – concepts and approaches

Reporting politics has always been a complicated task. Politically oriented news stories tend to be dependent on political agendas more, rather than on an objective vision of an issue, especially if we consider the changing culture of political journalism and society as well. According to Brants (Brants, Voltmer, 2011), the culture

of political journalism is changing: “not only are the avenues of political communication multiplying in a process that is becoming more diverse, fragmented, and complex, but also, at a deeper level, power relations among key message providers and receivers are being rearranged; conventional meanings of “democracy” and “citizenship” are being questioned and rethought” (Blumler, Kavanagh, 1999). Professor Hillel Nossek’s theory also helps in understanding the key-factors that influence reporting (Nossek, 2004). As stated by Nossek, news coverage, and in particular foreign news coverage, depends on a number of factors. One key idea to be taken into account is the “definition” of news: when a foreign news item is defined as “ours”, then journalists’ professional practices become subordinate to national loyalty; when an item is “theirs”, journalistic professionalism comes into its own (ibid).

Therefore, we can conclude that the influence of the official governmental agenda on the news, and especially foreign news coverage, is out of the question. In our analysis we would like to focus on the general tone of reporting referring to Turkish media content. Following Nossek’s logic, in order to analyze the coverage of the Ukrainian crisis properly, it is important to get a clear view of the current political agenda i.e. to compare the official governmental position with the general tone of national reporting.

Covering political conflicts seems to be even more challenging. This issue has always attracted media attention, mainly because very often, media interest is stipulated by the fact that the journalists are actually capable of easing the tensions of a given situation or, aggravating the situation further (Kaloyeva, 2004). Sometimes mass media might even become a weapon in the information war. Conflict coverage has been examined in many different studies conducted by Russian (Stanovaya, 2006; Krivdyuk, 2007) and foreign scholars. For example, Gutman and Rieff in their book “Crimes of War:

the Public Should Know” touch upon the issue of political aspects of modern conflicts and provide a broad definition of “international humanitarian law” (1999). Huntington in his work “The Clash of Civilizations?” (1994) focuses on cultural and political identities as the primary source of conflict in the post-Cold War period. Wardlaw, in turn, contemplates the media’s role in struggling with terrorism (1989). One contemporary scholar who specializes in the coverage of political conflict in Ukraine, is Greg Simons. In his article “Ukraine and the Questions of Boundaries and Nationalities” he describes the crisis in Ukraine from the perspective of ethnicity and identity (2014). Another recent research that has to do with ethical crisis coverage, was conducted by Duggan (2014). In his article “Responding to an Ethical Crisis: Three Critical Questions Demand Answers” he focused on the way the audience might respond to the ethical crisis and what are the questions that should be answered by the readers to prevent confusion regarding information about the crisis.

As we have already noted, in our study we are going to focus on the political crisis that occurred in March 2014 – the Crimean reconnection and its coverage by the Turkish media. It is worth mentioning that the state of media in Turkey is not that stable, especially under the ruling Justice and Development party (AKP). As some national experts argue, Turkish media has been suffering from political pressure: the AKP government forces newspapers to toe the official line and refrain from criticizing its policies, which has definitely weakened the press, while newspapers lost substantial parts of their readership and revenues. Besides, the national dailies were compelled to scale down their international news desks and coverage of world politics. As suggested by Kaya, the national media receive their news not from foreign correspondents, but through foreign media and several Turkish news agencies, such as the state-run Anatolian agency (Kaya, 2014). Whether or not this fact had an

impact on the general coverage of the Crimean referendum will be addressed in the following paragraphs.

Russia and Turkey today – friends, rivals, or partners. The official position of Turkey on Crimea reconnection

Since the start of the Crimean crisis, Ankara's rhetoric on the crisis was simply repeating its position that the territorial integrity of Ukraine must be respected. Alexander Rogozhin, a contributor to the online magazine "*New Eastern Outlook*" explains Turkish responses to the current crisis the following way: "We need to take into account the specific character of Turkish-Russian relations. The parties managed to de-escalate tensions, experienced in the last decades of the 'Cold War' and worked on ending them. Since the beginning of 21st century, both countries have focused on improving their economic relations" (Rogozhin, 2014).

In general, Turkey-Russia relations can be summarized in three areas: *economy, energy and tourism*. Economically, Turkey-Russia trade volume reached \$24 billion, and is expected to increase by 8 percent to \$38 billion by the end of 2014. Both countries have expressed a desire to see trade volumes rise to \$100 billion. Moreover, economic relations between the two countries have been characterized by large investment projects, such as the Turkish construction companies' involvement in building the infrastructure for the Sochi Olympic Games. In 2013, Russian investors poured \$843 million into Turkey. Other vital areas of economic cooperation range from an increasing flow of Russian tourists visiting Turkey. According to the Ministry of Tourism, in 2013 more than three million Russians came to Turkey and 380 thousand people from Turkey visited Russia (Idiz, 2014).

Some experts, like Semih Idiz mark out a *personal factor* that surely plays role in establishing international relations: “In addition to the improved economic and diplomatic relations at the country level, Erdogan and Putin also have a good personal relationship. Erdogan attended the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games in Sochi, despite strong objections from the Circassian diaspora in Turkey” (Idiz, 2014).

Although Turkey and Russia had been on opposite sides in such major issues as the Syrian civil war, states Rogozhin, they stuck to a pragmatic approach in their relations, and tried to smooth over their differences, in order to improve their economic and diplomatic ties. “On the other hand, it became apparent that the situation in Ukraine seriously hampers Turkey’s maneuvering. If Turkey were asked to support economic sanctions or, even worse, military action against Moscow, it would have to choose between its allies and the new partner” (Rogozhin, 2014).

When it came to the UN Resolution’s results on the Crimean Referendum, Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu has spelled out Ankara’s “bottom line” as far as their legal position is concerned over the way Russia wrested the Crimean Peninsula from Ukraine’s control, and this is largely in tune with the position of the West. Davutoglu’s remarks reflect ambivalence with regard to Russia, a superpower Turkey cannot afford to alienate without ultimately harming its own strategic security and economic interests. Moreover, the former head of the Crimean Tatar Mejlis (parliament) and now a deputy in the Ukrainian parliament, Davutoglu attempted to sound a firm note when he said the recent referendum in Crimea on the region’s status was a *fait accompli* that lacked legitimacy. “Crimea’s territorial integrity is paramount. Any discussion on this topic must be based on Ukraine’s territorial integrity,” Davutoglu said, underscoring the fact that

Ankara will not accept the results of the Crimean referendum (Idiz, 2014).

The fact that Turkey has ethnic and historical cultural ties with Crimea should also be taken into account. The status and fate of the Crimean Tatars, a Turkic people, is one of the most serious concerns for Turkey. Prime Minister of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan stated that Turkey fully supports them. Crimean Tatars were deported from their homeland to Siberia by the Soviet leader Joseph Stalin after the end of the WWII. Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, around three hundred thousand Tatars have returned to Crimea. At the same time, some scholars have stated that the degree of Turkish interest in the Crimean Tatars should not be exaggerated due to the specifics of a political agenda. However, the Russian reconnection of Crimea may still have an ideological effect. The point is that the reconnection of Crimea occurred at a time, when the ruling political party (AKP) has come to distance itself significantly from the West. Therefore, some researchers assume, that although judging by the official rhetoric, Turkey would seem to have rallied to the Western point of view, signs below the surface and nuances suggest otherwise. That is exactly what we are going to address in the next paragraph of our research (Kaya, 2014).

Discussions: publications' analysis

Speaking about the general notion conveyed by the media, it looks like the correspondents were not reporting from the area in question, but rather relied on external sources, like Reuters, for example, or on the local media agencies, though it would have been more interesting in this case in particular to follow the features of a classical report, to feel the spirit of particular event, and

ultimately get to the final analysis. Therefore, for the majority of publications it was quite hard to identify the author's positions, since the main focus of the stories was on historical background, retelling the results of some official meetings held between EU and US representatives.

For example, most of the articles published in “*Today's Zaman*” simply paraphrase official messages conveyed by the government, with only the slightest analysis. Yet, there were some publications, where a more thorough analysis was provided. For example, in the publication “Turkey May Act as a Mediator Between Russia, Crimean Tatars” the narrative, for example goes from optimistic ideas at the beginning to certain downsides of the current situation and Turkey being involved in the conflict. At the beginning it was stated that “*after Russia signed a treaty on Tuesday annexing Crimea despite threats of sanctions from the US and Europe, Turkey may be able to mediate between Russia and Crimean Tatars though it remains a question to what extent Turkey is prepared to oppose Russia*”². Actually the last sentence very much reflects the general narrative introduced by the Turkish media – yes, Turkey is concerned about the outcome of the Ukrainian crisis, the fate of the Crimean Tatars, and the way the Crimean Referendum might influence the geopolitical situation, but the top question which still remains is how far Turkey is willing to go to join the Western rhetoric: “*Turkey, a NATO member, has to follow a balanced policy as it does not want to jeopardize its relations with Russia*”. The ambivalence of the Turkish position is also highlighted in the last part of the publication: “*Turkey, a NATO member, has to follow a balanced policy as it does not want to jeopardize its relations with Russia. Turkey's heavy dependence on*

² URL: http://www.todayzaman.com/diplomacy_turkey-will-continue-to-protect-crimean-tatars-rights-says-davutoglu_341491.html

*Russian energy resources stands as one of the main factors that reduce room for diplomatic maneuvering over the crisis in Crimea” (Today’s Zaman, March 2014)*³.

A column by Hasan Kanbulat should also be taken into consideration as here a similar attempt was made. This article was published shortly before the Referendum was held, but we assumed that it would be worth analyzing because of its general style and the presence of the author’s position. Following the standard concept of classical reporting, the journalist digs into the very roots of the conflict in Ukraine, comparing the Western reaction to the Crimean referendum to the one shown in Russia. Kanbulat also touches upon the issue of Crimean Tatars, stating that “Moscow was caught unprepared when it came to the change of rule in Ukraine, and the situation in Crimea”. The author also contemplates the possible outcomes of the conflict, suggesting that there is a chance that dangerous games might backfire, mentioning “*the further development of the nationalists’ activity in Ukraine, a complete change of the Russian-Ukrainian relationship, a worsening of the political and economic situation in Ukraine*” (“Today’s Zaman”, March 2014). Still the general tone of reporting regarding “*Today’s Zaman*” coverage of Crimea reconnection proves to be more neutral, rather than critical³.

If we look at the “*Daily Sabah*”, we will notice a slight difference in the way the news is framed. For example, the headlines demonstrate a more negative attitude towards the Crimean Referendum and its possible impact on the geopolitical situation: “Crimea to Hold Referendum under Russian Occupation”, “Russia Increases Aggression Through Raids on Tatar Properties”, “HRW Reveals Serious Human Rights Abuses Against Crimean Tatars”, “Tatars

³ URL: http://www.todayszaman.com/diplomacy_turkey-may-act-as-mediator-between-russia-crimean-tatars_342673.htm

Boycott Crimean Referendum”. The main message that is being conveyed by the reporters is connected with the issue of Crimean Tatars and appears to be more critical in comparison to the “*Today’s Zaman*” rhetoric: “After Russian reconnection, the Crimean Tatars have become the victims of political repressions and humiliation. Russian aggression has led to violations of human right against Crimean Tatars, according to a report, released by U.N. a few weeks ago”. In the editorial, which was published right after the Referendum, this topic was touched upon. The author notes: “...less than a handful of Crimean Tatars turned up to cast ballots and those who voted were Russians and Ukrainian...” (“Daily Sabah”, March 2014). The rest of the article dances around the way Referendum Results would be discussed by the international community, the current situation in Ukraine regarding the murder of two young men in Kharkov, and pro-Russian activists. But again, the author’s position seems to be hidden, which is probably normal for such a controversial and difficult news item.

Critical, official, but still balanced, – this could be a way to characterize the universal mood of “*The Hürriyet Daily News*”. First of all, the news is provided by Agence France-Presse and Reuters, therefore the authors’ presence could hardly be recognized. Most publications contain official information, provided by the information sources in Moscow or Ankara. The headlines actually repeat the official statements made by Russian, American, and Turkish diplomats: “Tatars Split Over Russian Rule After Reconnection of Crimea”, “Crimea’s Tatars Considering Their Own Referendum”, “Crimea Votes to Join Russia, Setting Referendum on March 16”, “Turkey Refuses to Recognize ‘Unacceptable’ Crimea Referendum” (“*Hürriyet Daily News*”, March 2014)⁴. For

⁴ URL: <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkey-refuses-to-recognize>

instance, the article “Russian parliament vows to back Crimea referendum results” gives an account of the Russian State Duma position and the position of Valentina Matvienko, the Federation Council Speaker, who justified the Crimean Parliament decision by pointing to Scotland, which was supposed to hold a referendum on independence from the United Kingdom: “*The decision by the Crimean parliament is fully in line with international practice. ...No-one says that Scotland referendum is illegal*”⁵. One of the publications which looks more like an opinion article is called “Turkey Boxed in by Russian Moves in Crimea”. The introductory paragraph focuses on the official Turkish perception of the Ukrainian crisis, which we have already described as complicated in terms of its obligations and political choices it has to make in the near future. The author contemplates the fate of the Crimean Tatars, the possible behavior of the Turkish opposition and analyzes the development of the Russian-Turkish relationship, as well as the possible outcome of the referendum. The closing stage actually repeats the notion about the uncertainty of the entire situation: “Clearly there is much more to this story to come in the coming days and weeks” (“*Hürriyet Daily News*”, March 2014).

If we take a closer look at the publications of “*Good Morning Turkey*”, we will notice that most of them are basically news items, provided by the agencies like Anadolu Agency, Cihan/Ria. One particular story “Putin Tells Merkel, Cameron that Crimea Referendum Was Legal” gives an account of how different the approaches are to the results of the Crimean Referendum – the same notion that has been exploited by most of the media. One of the sources mentioned in this particular story is the Kremlin

⁵ URL: <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/crimea-votes-to-join-russia-setting-referendum-on-march-16.aspx?pageID=238&nID=63269&NewsCatID=353>

press service, which says: “Putin stressed, in particular, that the steps taken by the legitimate government in Crimea are based on the international law and are intended to defend the legitimate interests of Crimean residents” (“Good Morning Turkey”, March 2014)⁶. The rest of the article summarizes the outcome of the Ukrainian crisis at its current stage. Other articles published by “*Good Morning, Turkey*” appeared to more upfront in terms of stating the Turkish position and expressing concerns regarding the issue of the Crimean Tatars. But the major issue for reporters seems to be the situation in Ukraine, the crisis that needs to be resolved by any means. And again we find it quite hard to identify the true position of the author as there are no explicit accusations, nor are there any statements with a strongly articulated negative connotation.

“*The Journal of Turkish Weekly*” offers a rather analytical approach while covering the Crimean Referendum compared to the previous sources, although the same issues seem to be on the agenda: the future of Crimean Tatars, gas trade between Russia and Turkey, the reaction of the US and the EU to the Ukrainian crisis. But the author’s presence in at least one article entitled “Crimean Tatars in the New Crimea” is more obvious, probably due to the fact that this is an Op-ed page. The article was published in September, therefore the author had at least some time to analyze the development of the crisis and come to certain conclusions. One of the paragraphs, which bears a subheading “Post-Reconnection Reality”, is worth referring to for a number of reasons. First of all, the authors goes back to the Spring events, in particular to the promises made by the Russian government with regard to the issue of the Crimean Tatars and then compares the real situation

⁶ URL: <http://www.goodmorningturkey.com/putin-tells-merkel-ferguson-crimea-referendum-legal/>

with the way it was supposed to develop. The reporter highlights: *“...Crimean Tatar activists are persecuted by the new government. In accordance with a court decision, the Crimean Tatars had to vacate the building that Mejlis used to occupy in Simferopol and terminate all of its personnel. Meanwhile, the Kremlin continues to convince those discordant with its policies to adopt Russian citizenship... Such oppression of the Crimean Tatars provoked a response by their leaders”* (“Journal of Turkish Weekly”, September, 2014)⁷. Later that author clearly states that despite what is going on at the moment, Turkey will avoid direct confrontation with Moscow for economic reasons. Besides, recent bans on Russia might even boost Russian-Turkish collaboration, which is not only about trade, but also about the implementation of some joint infrastructure projects. At the end the author comes to the conclusion that *“considering economic cooperation between Russian and Turkey any action of Ankara towards the Crimean Tatars requires serious consideration”* (“Journal of Turkish Weekly”, September 2014)⁸. What we see here is again very careful reporting, without direct accusations, as the author’s main message repeats the official agenda and could be paraphrased in the following way: “We are concerned about the entire situation in Ukraine and the future of the Crimean Tatars, we do not approve of the Crimean referendum, but we would abstain from any kind of direct accusations and unequivocal rhetoric”.

⁷ URL: <http://crome-extension://oemmnrcbldboiebfnladdacbfdmadadm/http://iisa.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Russia-Turkey-and-the-crimean-tatars.pdf>

⁸ URL: <http://crome-extension://oemmnrcbldboiebfnladdacbfdmadadm/http://iisa.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Russia-Turkey-and-the-crimean-tatars.pdf>

Conclusions

The portrayal of the Crimean issue in the Turkish media has actually proved our hypothesis to be true. Based on the empirical analysis of the publications, we can state that the general tone of reporting on the Ukrainian crisis corresponds with the official position of the government, which could be called ambivalent or sometimes even vague. Out of the **30** publications **20** were classified as ones where the general tone appeared to be neutral, **9** – with negative and **1** – with positive. It is worth mentioning that even the ones where the authors argued one of the most burning issues – the future of Crimean Tatars were not that harsh in terms of criticizing Kremlin's intentions.

Regarding the Crimean issue, there happened to be less opinion articles, and more publications representing the hard news. It looks like Turkish correspondents were not reporting locally, but rather relied on external sources, like Reuters, for example, or on the local media agencies. Therefore, for the majority of publications it was quite hard to identify the author's position, since the main focus of the stories was on historical background, and retelling the results of some official meetings held between EU and US representatives.

Reporters paid serious attention to the following issues: the future of Crimean Tatars, the gas trade between Russia and Turkey, the reaction of the US and the EU to the Ukrainian crisis. One of the major concerns for the Turkish audience and the indeed appears to be the situation with the Crimean Tatars. A strong desire has been projected by the journalists and politicians to “protect Crimean Tatars' Rights”. Speaking about the effect of economic sanctions, Turkish journalists remain calm and well-balanced to a large extent, adding a slight shade of optimism concerning current and future cooperation between Russia and Turkey.

Table 1

The name of the newspaper	The title of the article	Date of publication	Type of article	Main arguments
“ <i>Hurriyet Daily News</i> ”	Turkey Boxed in by Russian Moves in Crimea	March 4, 2014	extended newstory	Turkey itself remains uncertain regarding the situation in Crimea. The only concern is the one referring to the fate of Crimean Tatars – “all groups should coexist peacefully, including the Crimean Tatars and representatives of other groups, inhabiting the Crimean peninsula”. The narrative revolves around Putin’s visit to Crimea to celebrate the Victory day, the first visit since the reconnection took place. The author contemplates the development of the Ukrainian crisis, highlighting the reaction of the EU, the West, and further measures to be taken into consideration by the US and the EU countries.
	Putin Visit Annexed Crimea Amid Separatists Moves in Ukraine	May 9, 2014	extended newstory	A draft legislation has been already submitted to the Duma to make it easier for Russia to incorporate part of a foreign country. The author describes the preparation for the Crimean referendum and underlines the point made by Valentina Matvienko about the decision by the Crimean Parliament to be fully in line with the International practice.
	Russian Parliament Vows to Back Crimea Referendum Results	March 7, 2014	extended newstory	

The name of the newspaper	The title of the article	Date of publication	Type of article	Main arguments
	Tatars Split over Russian Rule after Reconnection of Crimea	May 15, 2014	extended newstory	The Crimean Tatars are put under a quandary over cooperating with their homeland's Russian authorities or resisting them. The issue of Crimean Tatars is being addressed in a balanced way and studies from different perspectives - some Tatars believe that it is better for them to be with Russia, while some don't trust the Russian authorities.
	Crimea Holds Secession Referendum amid Ukraine Turmoil, as Tatars Boycott	March 16, 2014	extended newstory	The military invasion of Russia into Ukraine did take place, but the point about self-determination is brought up as well, and parallels are drawn regarding Kosovo's decision to leave Serbia. There are both types of arguments presented by the author: people in Crimea are eager to join Russia, anticipating historical choice and positive changes, but there are others who do not approve of this decision.
	Crimea's Tatars Considering Their Own Referendum	April 2, 2014	extended newstory	On the one hand, some of the Crimean Tatars (representatives of the Turkish speaking Muslim-groups seek more self-rule, they boycotted the Referendum as they they want to be part of Ukraine. On the other hand, it was suggested by the leaders of the regional legislature that Tatars should be actively involved in decision-making

The name of the newspaper	The title of the article	Date of publication	Type of article	Main arguments
	Crimea Votes to Join Russia, Setting Referendum on March 16	March 6, 2014	extended newstory	Crimean Parliament voted unanimously to join Russia. The Referendum was backed by the Russian government, while the US authorities blame Russia and its President Putin for threatening the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine.
	Turkey Refuses to Recognize "Unacceptable" Crimea referendum	March 17, 2014	extended newstory	Turkish foreign minister stated officially that Turkey does not and would not recognize the results of the Referendum on the status of Crimea as the referendum violates the territorial integrity of Ukraine.
<i>"Today's Zaman"</i>	Turkey May Act as Mediator between Russia, Crimea Tatars	March 23, 2014	extended newstory	Assessing Turkey involvement in the Crimean issue, Turkey can act as a mediator, although it might be tough. However, it is a must for Turkey to follow a balanced policy with Russia as both countries share common strategic interest.
	Russia's Geopolitical Change after the Crimean Referendum	March 17, 2014	column	The author contemplates the possible scenarios considering the developing crisis in Ukraine: Moscow might work to encourage the young Ukrainian nationalist movement and in this case the situation in Ukraine could not be guided.

The name of the newspaper	The title of the article	Date of publication	Type of article	Main arguments
	Russia Holds war Games near Ukraine ahead of Tense Polls	March 15, 2014	extended newstory	Although initially Merkel seemed to be more cautious than other Western leaders in responding to Russia's seizure of Crimea, she has now changed her mind and become one of the toughest critics of the Kremlin political course.
	Turkey Calls Crimea Referendum Illegal, Illegitimate	March 17, 2014	extended newstory	Turkish Foreign Minister called the poll illegitimate, stating that Turkey does not and would not recognize the results of the Crimea referendum. He also mentioned the issue of Crimean Tatars as one of the major concerns for Turkey.
	Turkey Says Crimea Part of Ukraine	February 24, 2014	extended newstory	Turkish Foreign Minister noted that that Crimea is part of the territory of Ukraine and Turkey would call the leaders of ethnic and religious groups in Crimea to come together for the stability and peace of the region. As for the Crimean Tatars, they are ready to fight for Ukraine and their European future.
“Daily Sabah”	HRW Reveals Serious Human Rights Abuses Against Crimean Tatars	November 17, 2014	extended newstory	Crimean Tatars have been facing severe abuses of human rights. The Russian security forces have been said to be involved in this problem as they continue to be aggressive towards the Tatars self-governing body of Mejlis

The name of the newspaper	The title of the article	Date of publication	Type of article	Main arguments
	Russia Threatens ex-Soviet States Territorial Integrity	September 29, 2014	extended newstory	Russia threatens ex-Soviet states territorial integrity as another ex-Soviet republic, Moldova, has been sharing the same fate as Crimea due to the breakaway territory known as Transdnistria.
	Tatars Boycott Crimea Referendum	March 17, 2014	editorial	On the one hand, the Crimean parliament took a decision to join Russia, but the international reaction appeared to be critical , as NATO for example, has called Russia to withdraw its military base from the Crimean territory. The G-7 countries have also denounced Russian intervention in Crimea.
	Russia Increases Aggression Through Raids on Tatar Properties	September 29, 2014	extended newstory	The defenseless Crimean Tatars have been facing severe human right violations and attacks in Crimea. Russia's mistreatment of the defenseless ethnic minority has been an incessant problem since reconnection. Democratic right of the Crimean Tatars have been severely deteriorated.
	Crimea to Hold Referendum under Russian Occupation	September 15, 2014	extended newstory	The referendum on official status of Crimea is to be held soon, although there are certain doubts among the population. The Turkish Tatars and the Ukrainians are not going to vote at all.

The name of the newspaper	The title of the article	Date of publication	Type of article	Main arguments
	Crimea, from the Ottomans Empire to the Russian Federation	March 9, 2014	extended newstory	The author highlights the main stages concerning the history of Crimea starting from the Ottomans empire period.
	Turkey Refuses to Recognize Crimea Referendum	March 17, 2014	extended newstory	Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu stated that Turkey would not recognize the Crimea referendum. He also visited Kiev earlier this month, where he met with Ukrainian officials and representatives of the Tatar Community.
<i>“Good Morning Turkey”</i>	Putin Tells Merkel, Cameron that Crimea Referendum Legal	March 9, 2014	newstory	Russian President Vladimir Putin claims that decision to reclaim Crimea was within the framework of international law.
	Crimea votes to Join Russia, Setting Referendum on March 16	March 6, 2014	newstory	Although the European diplomats and the US government took steps to punish those who threaten the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine, Russian President Vladimir Putin says Russia reserves the right to intervene militarily if Russian interests are in danger.
	Turkey Refuses to Recognize Unacceptable Crimea Referendum	March 17, 2014	newstory	Turkey does not recognize the results of the Referendum in Crimea, especially considering the fact that 12 % of the population of Crimea are Turkish-speaking Tatars.

The name of the newspaper	The title of the article	Date of publication	Type of article	Main arguments
	Crimea Tatars: May 25 Referendum Unacceptable	March 1, 2014	newstory	Crimea Foundation, another Tatar organization based in Ankara, issued a press release condemning the forcible entering of parliament, calling it a «terrorist act»
<i>“Journal of Turkish Weekly”</i>	Crimea Tatars in the New Crimea	September 30, 2014	Opened	During the mass rallies in Ukraine the position of Crimean Tatars was different from the majority of the Crimean population. Six months after the reconnection Crimean Tatar activists are persecuted by the new government. Thus, any further actions of Ankara towards the Crimean Tatars require serious consideration.
	Turkey Says Russia's Ready to Improve Rights of Crimea Tatars	December 2, 2014	newstory	Turkish Prime Minister Recep Erdogan approved of the Russian decision to grant the ethnic and cultural rights of Crimean Tatar people. Erdogan found this approach positive.
	Turkey Urged to Impose Sanctions on Russia	November 25, 2014	newstory	The Crimean Tatar leader called on Turkey to impose sanctions on Russia considering the situation with the Crimean Tatars. Besides, the Crimean Tatars opposed the peninsula's referendum.

The name of the newspaper	The title of the article	Date of publication	Type of article	Main arguments
	Turkey Seeks Higher Gas Discount from Russia	December 2, 2014	newstory	Turkey's counter-offer to Russia for a natural gas discount has not been finalized yet, although Russia's discount offer is a positive step towards strengthening Russian-Turkish cooperation
	Obama, European Council President Mull Russia Sanctions	December 2, 2014	newstory	US President and EU leaders discussed tougher measures against Russia
"Al-monitor"	Russia Manages Turkey, Crimean Tatars in Ukraine	March 11, 2014	newstory	The results of the referendum on the status of Crimea will surely affect Turkey and Russian-Turkish relationship, therefore Ankara should not be indifferent toward the recent turbulent developments in the Crimea and its surroundings. «It will be a real loss for all of us if the Middle East becomes a victim of a new conflict between the West and Russia, this time over Ukraine.

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