

Opportunities of Mass Media in the Sphere of Formation of Political Activity of the Moscow Youth

Olga Kolosova

State University of Management
Moscow, Russian Federation
e-mail: olga_kolosova@mail.ru

Olga Kulikova

State University of Management
Moscow, Russian Federation
e-mail: kilka2002@yandex.ru

ABSTRACT

The article presents the results of a study conducted in 2018. The purpose of the study was to understand the bond between the media and young people in relation to their political activity. The main objectives of the study were to reveal the influence of the media on the political activity of the individual, as well as to consider several additional characteristics: the political activity of young people, the level of use of various sources of information by young people and attitudes towards political activity.

Keywords

Political activity of young people, personalistic factor, manifestation factor, ideological orientation, the Central media.

1. INTRODUCTION

Any political goals, including the reduction or increase in political activity of citizens, have a collective character, that is, it is necessary to realize and accept this goal by the members of the whole collective (group, social class, nation, etc.). For this process, the media is an ideal tool – they allow you to transmit information to a huge number of people, thereby coordinating and directing their activities.

2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The main way to receive information about the political life of the country is through the media, which form public opinion about political parties, movements, leaders, and they can also be used as a tool for manipulating the masses. Alas, now this is the case in the political reality of our state - subjectivity and deliberate distortion of information in favor of any party or leader, which thereby turns the media into the main instrument of the current government's confrontation with the opposition. The growing gap between information from the media and objective reality is reflected in the results of sociological studies, for example, they show the growing distrust of the population to the media. In the environment of megacities, the situation is different – the number of sources of information is huge and each individual group of the population has its own, respectively, oriented source. Everyone can compare the description of the event in several sources and build his own version, the one that will be considered the most plausible. But in regions where, for example, there is no access to the Internet or cable television, all information is delivered to the population through several Central state channels that cover events and incidents from one "correct" point of view. In such cases, the manipulation of information becomes very simple, because the residents of such settlements do not even think that the description of the same event can differ significantly.

It is clear that the media simply cannot be limited to the function of conveying objective information. The mass media create an information space, which immerses the person, and not only informs the person about something. It turns out that the media not only transmit information, but

also create the attitude of the viewer, listener, reader or user to this event or problem, form his experiences, thoughts and attitude within the framework of such almost virtual realities unintentionally or intentionally [2].

All classical methods of manipulation in the media are used to increase the political activity of young people. Young people can easily be persuaded of a favorable point of view for the subject of manipulation due to the low resistance to manipulation. Positioning a particular model of behavior as right (or wrong, depending on the situation) is one of the most effective ways to influence the masses. The media uses a variety of techniques of neurolinguistic programming that can effectively influence people's minds. For example, the positioning of a politically active young man as active, educated, interesting, beautiful and, most importantly, successful – can cause this image to be associated with the "ideal self" of the object of manipulation and, as a result, change his behavior [1].

At present, it is impossible to talk about the simple impact of the media on society. Now society has as much impact on the media as the media has on society. Media in its own way fulfills the social order – it must meet the needs and demands of society. Public, personalistic and manifestational factors also affect the ideological orientation of the Central mass media. Since the majority of Muscovites are supporters of the market, the Central media takes anti-Communist positions. Conversely, somewhere in the remote with a depressed economy and nostalgic for the Soviet past, the media have a pronounced Communist orientation. A different position will be simply unclaimed.

Trends in the development of post-industrial society dictate new rules of relations between society and government. It is not surprising that the ways of expressing public opinion are developing with the development of Internet communications, which has an impact on government decisions, changes the vector, fetters, strengthens or weakens their strength [4]. Now the main format of communication among the most active segments of the population are social networks. Social networks in the modern world are not just a means of communication, but a means of expressing an active position, forming an effective public opinion, influencing political decisions [5]. The Internet allows you to find like-minded people and create communities with them; allows you to constantly be aware of current events and monitor what is happening on-line (which, in fact, distinguishes it from other sources of information); as well as, the Internet makes it possible to find any information on any topic of interest, for example, unofficial biographies of politicians, information about the activities of public organizations, etc. However, information posted on social networks is often false, and the way it is presented is often too emotional. In fact, social networks are a special world where participants communicate in a different way than in real life. In this world, there are very different rules and the most attention of users is attracted by bright, emotional texts, which, however, are often based on unverified information, and mainly carry evaluative judgments.

Nowadays almost every political party has its own account in social networks: Vkontakte, Odnoklassniki or Twitter, which publishes the latest news, information about party members and information about past or upcoming events. Social networks as a source of information are convenient because the information is tracked online. News or newspaper releases occur regularly, but there is still a period of time between the event itself and the news release. And social networks make it possible to receive information immediately. Now, when every second person in the phone has a camera and access to social networks is set up, the very creation of news has reached a new level – everyone can do it on their his, it has ceased to be a privilege of the media. You can instantly access information and photos of the participants of the events, but again, getting only evaluative judgment.

Many journalists or politicians have their own semi-official accounts, where they express their personal opinions about the events taking place in the country. It is actively used by political strategists as a way of manipulation. Public people are a priori reference persons for certain groups of people on whom the opinion expressed in the social network has a decisive influence. Young people base on the opinion of journalists or politicians with similar beliefs in building their position, as a social community with not yet fully formed values.

The objectives of the empirical research conducted in 2018 were to study the impact of the media on the political activity of young people in Moscow. The main tasks of the study were to reveal the impact of the media on the political activity of the individual, as well as to consider several additional characteristics: the political activity of young people, the level of use of various sources of information by young people and attitudes towards political activity.

Respondents were young people aged 16 to 34 years living in Moscow.

The study involved 520 people. As a result of the survey, the sample structure is divided into three age ranges: from 16 to 20 years, from 21 to 25 years and from 26 to 34 years (the last interval is extended because of the inaccessibility of respondents). Within each interval, the sample is distributed by sex as follows: in the range from 16 to 20 years - 38% of men and 62% of women, in the range from 21 to 25 years - 38% of men and 62% of women, in the range from 26 to 34 years – 48% of men and 53% of women.

First main question was about the types of activities, in which respondents participated over the past 2 years, and the answers were as follows – 78 % went to vote, 33% participated in rallies, demonstrations or pickets, 21% signed collective appeals or petitions, 15% participated in the activities of public organizations and 5% in the activities of political parties. The percentage of those who went to vote and those who participated in various types of protest activity is higher among men (55% among women and 82% among men).

Among women, the percentage of those who participated in the life of public organizations is slightly higher, but it should be noted that the questionnaire did not specify the nature of the public organization, the respondents could be regarded differently, for example, as a youth political movement "Our" or membership in the student Council at their University. The older the age of the respondent, the more different kinds of activities the respondent was involved in.

Also, among the younger age group the most are those who did not participate in any kind of political activity. Firstly, this is due to the age limit of 18 years, necessary for participation in many of the activities, and secondly, the great dependence of this age group on parents, who may

consider participation in rallies as a potentially dangerous action. In general, at this age, people are less socially responsible – they are not yet fully accustomed to the set of adult roles.

The respondents were asked whether they were following political news at all, and if so, how often they read political news to assess the level of political activity. 47% of respondents were constantly aware of political news (the sum of answers "I am constantly aware of events / read political news several times a day" and "Once a day").

Political news is more interesting to men than to women - 37% of women and 57% of men read political news more often than once a day. This is also due to the status of respondents from the older age group – many need to be aware of the latest news because of work, students are free to be in an information vacuum, for them political news is not something important (except for those events that relate to them personally), but also perceived as something uninteresting and boring. When we asked whether the respondents discuss political news with their friends, relatives or acquaintances, 67% answered positively. This indicator is important because it reflects the real interest of the respondent in politics and the dynamics of the political process as a whole. The opportunity of the respondent to discuss the latest political developments with someone is a positive external factor and has a positive impact on the level of political activity and political education.

It turns out that the most active age group (18-25 years) is ready to participate in politics more. This is logical – students have a lot of free time and energy, which, as an option, can be directed towards political activity. But, again, they do not always have such an opportunity, at the moment not all Universities cooperate with any kind of political organizations that allowed to acquaint young people with politics and integrate them into the political system. The fact that there are almost no representatives of the older group among those who are ready to take a more active part is explained by the fact that at this age the vast majority has a job and has already formed the usual rhythm of life, which they would not like to change. That is, in fact, to engage in politics more actively for them means to begin to engage in politics at a professional level, which explains the high percentage of those who are not ready to do it.

Among the age groups, young people of the middle age group (from 21 to 25 years) are most interested in politics. This is due to the fact that the worldview is not yet fully formed in the younger age group, and they often do not have enough political education to clearly understand how the authorities are arranged and realize their ability to influence them. The middle age group consists mainly of the last year students or energetic young professionals who have both knowledge and time to participate in political life.

Women are more likely to characterize a politically active person as educated and proactive, while men are more likely to describe him as enterprising and modern.

Respondents were asked to identify three political or public figures they trusted and three whom they strongly distrusted. Most respondents (25% of the total sample) indicated Alexei Navalny as a figure who can be trusted. Almost two times less (13%) scored Vladimir Pozner, and closes the top three most popular among young political leaders Russian President Vladimir Putin (8%). It is important to note that 57% of respondents either found it difficult to answer this question or answered "No such / trust no one". This is a very bad indicator for the political system – it turns out that either more than half of young people does not trust the current government and does not see anyone worthy of attention among the opposition, or most of them just do not care [3].

Such popularity of Alexei Navalny is explained by the nature of the sample. Respondents were asked to assess their attitude to the current government, choosing suitable judgments, for example, "I have a positive attitude to the current government and do not think that something needs to be changed" or "I rather have a negative attitude to the current government, I am not satisfied with the situation in the country." According to the survey, 70% of respondents have a negative attitude to the current government, that is most of the young people attuned oppositionally, which, in turn, explains the popularity of Alexei Navalny as a person who can be trusted.

Vladimir Putin is the leader among those who do not trust the most respondents, 47% of respondents indicated him as a person they do not trust.

At the same time, among those who noted Vladimir Putin in this matter, 20% did not name anyone they could trust. This is an extremely negative indicator for the political system, in the future it can lead to political anomie, apathy and instability of the political system in general.

All respondents were asked the question "Do you have a feeling that the majority of media work for the state, and provides information in a favorable light for the government?" at the same time, it was specified that we are talking about Central TV channels and radio stations, that is, those media that are available to the majority of the population. The majority of respondents (73%) answered in the affirmative, 20% found it difficult to answer this question and 7% answered in the negative.

Several conclusions can be drawn from the study. The Internet is the most widely used source of political information among young people. Such types of media as radio and print media are used by young people much less, because of the specifics of the information supply and less availability, compared to the Internet. Television, which used to occupy a leading position in the coverage of the audience, gradually recedes into the background. The vast majority (73%) has a feeling of distrust to the Central TV channels. The majority of respondents receives necessary information to choose a candidate or information about upcoming protest events from the Internet. The Internet as a mass media is developing very quickly, most of the information content is either already translated into electronic form, or is in the process of translation. Internet as a means of mass communication in the conditions of constant technological progress displaces television, radio and print media, as the Internet itself includes all of the above media. Obviously, the Internet is an inaccessible luxury for most Russians, but this statement applies to the youth of megacities. The main "place" of communication on the Internet are social networks that unite millions of people. On the one hand, social networks allow the ordinary users to follow the news and the latest events in the lives of politicians, public figures and journalists, and on the other hand, they allow to impose certain behaviors, using the image of a public person as an example, or by any other means. Political parties and candidates actively use the Internet, and, in particular, social networks as a space for election campaigning during the pre-election period. But, as the results of the survey show, no one is engaged in agitation of young people and raising the level of their political education and political activity. At the moment, there is no youth organization that is not tied to any political party and is characterized by a variety of ideology, an organization that could provide an opportunity for self-determination and self-realization of the young man in politics. Also, the government does not make any attempts to increase the level of political activity of the population and youth, in particular. It turns out that there is a tool that has a

huge potential to influence young people, but it is not used to increase political activity.

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