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## Fragmentation and Polarization of the Public Sphere in the 2000s: Evidence from Italy and Russia

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**Abstract:** After the Arab spring, direct linkage between growth of technological hybridization of media systems and political online-to-offline protest spill-overs seemed evident, at least in several aspects, as ‘twitter revolutions’ showed organizational potential of the mediated communication of today. But in *de-facto* politically transitional countries hybridization of media systems is capable of performing not just organizational but also ‘cultivational’ roles in terms of creating communicative milieus where protest consensus is formed, provoking spill-overs from expressing political opinions online to street protest. The two cases of Italy and Russia are discussed in terms of their non-finished process of transition to democracy and the media’s role within the recent political process. In the two cases, media-political conditions have called into being major cleavages in national deliberative space that may be conceptualized like formation of nation-wide public counter-spheres based upon alternative agenda and new means of communication. The structure and features of these counter-spheres are reconstructed; to check whether regional specifics are involved into the formation of this growing social gap, quantitative analysis of regional online news media (website menus) is conducted. Several indicators for spotting the formation of counter-spheres and criteria for further estimation of democratic quality of such counter-spheres are suggested.

**Keywords:** Public counter-sphere, Italy, Russia, mediocracy, democratic quality of communication, fragmentation, public sphere

### Research premises

The context of the world economic recession of the second half of the 2000s has brought to light deepening socio-political cleavages previously less evident; political discontent of the less wealthy social strata with mainstream decision-making grew to the extent that it filled city streets with multi-thousand protest rallies across Europe and Americas. These ranged from the Occupy and DemocracyNow nearly-global movements to national and local street protest, both peaceful and violent, in the UK, Germany, France, Italy, Spain, Greece, Hungary, Russia and many other very different countries.

After the Arab spring, direct linkage between the growth of Internet usage and the hybridization of media systems and political online-to-offline protest spill-overs seemed quite evident to many commentators upon ‘tweeted revolutions’. Indeed, similarities in the process of offline network-building and communication inside the protest groups in the respective protesting communities were spotted (Castells 2012; Dang-Anh, Einspaenner, Thimm 2012). Other authors, though, reasonably warned of too simplistic approaches to causality in these cases.

Earlier, we have hypothesized (and at least partly proved) another view on the role of new politically and technically ‘hybrid’ media systems (Chadwick 2011) in triggering political protest (Bodrunova & Litvinenko 2013). Our empirical research on participants of the 2011-2012 ‘For fair elections’ Russian protest movement was carried out in summer 2012. The online survey based on 29-question questionnaire covered 652 protest rally participants (mostly from Moscow), with full response rate circa 2/3. To further check and interpret the results, 11 in-depth interviews were also conducted (4 expert ones and 7 ‘Internet users vs. non-users’ ones). The results showed that the role of media was not just organizational but also ‘cultivational’, as it helped prepare common ground for political protest via creating shared agenda, understanding of events, orientations, ethos and practices. We proved temporal correlations between changes in media diets of protesters and the growth of freedom in online behavior, as well as between dynamics of protest and consumption of special sorts of media and ‘junction’ persons. But we also found that there was no direct online/offline media opposition in media diets of the protesters and non-protesters, as the protest media diet was not fully dominated by online text media (portals, blogs, microblogs) or social networks; this contradicts some previous findings on digital divide or press divide in Europe and Russia (Castells 2007; Censis 2011; Chistov & Kazarjan 2011). Rather, the cleavage between media used mostly by the protest community and other media lay in the area of agendas and interpretations, not platforms. This is also supported by the spotted divergence trends in media consumption, like decline in use of mainstream TV channels parallel to growing consumption of radio and several online outlets. Thus, what we found for Russia can be described as the following: fragmentation of the nation-scale media use and agenda flows, with cleavages cutting across online/offline division and several new technologically ‘hybrid’ (online+offline) media clusters appearing, with the result of destruction of both agenda and discussion bridges between fragments of media-based public sphere. This encapsulation of several (in most cases, two) main audience groups within their agendas and deliberation milieus with almost no bridges between those two have lead us to the idea of formation of a *nation-scale public counter-sphere* – that is, of a major split between the dominant national deliberative space based on consumption of national media (federal TV channels and mid-market and tabloid newspapers) and a new, perhaps still vague and relatively small but politically active social milieu cutting across traditional demographic stratification.

The situation is strikingly reminiscent of the late Soviet times when the so-called 'first culture' and 'second culture' formed in big cities. Our results do not allow us to go deep inside the inner structure of the counter-sphere in terms of reconstructing interconnections of its bearers or assessing deliberative qualities of the new communicative milieu, but the mental construct of the counter-sphere provides us with a useful framework for describing the deliberative split.

At the same time, formation of new segments of media systems beyond traditional right-left or mainstream/opposition cleavage can be traced in other countries, of which we habitually think of as (at least more) democratic than of those of the Central & Eastern European (CEE) region. One of these countries is, to our viewpoint, Italy, where we have traced a similar rise of a 'new wave' of liberal-oriented information sources in 2009-2010 (Bodrunova 2011a), practically the same time such media appeared in notable numbers in Russia.

As objects for analysis, countries as different as Russia and Italy still have several features in common that allow speculations upon common trends. In at least several respects, for post-Soviet Russia as well as for the Second Italian Republic, the last 20 years were to be the time of transition to stable democracy or at least stable democratization. Italy has passed through a major 'denouement of the [political] system' in 1992-1994 (Bull & Newell 2005: 12), and the transition to the Second republic meant re-establishment of the system's democratic grounds, including the party, voting, and local administration systems in order to escape from partocracy, stabilize the political routines, and regain popular trust. Russia, after 1991, had to establish the democratic institutional framework practically for the first time ever, as pre-revolutionary experience of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century was too fragile and immature in terms of democratic quality and stability of the political system. The establishment of the new system had purposes very similar to those in Italy, as regaining trust, stabilizing the major political process and escaping from partocracy were among the major goals of the reform settlers.

The modernization of the respective political systems produced, seemingly, very different results. In terms of general democratic development, indices of democratization, proportion of material/postmaterial values as the basis for social consensus etc., Italy went well ahead of Russia; in terms of economic vulnerability, it proved to be weaker in opposing the pressures of the world recession. But, as theorists note, both countries are known for its antidemocratic drawbacks in many respects including failed prospects for formation of a healthy public sphere based on independence and democratic diversity of media, as well as upon equal access of citizens to political and deliberative involvement. If the formation of some new media clusters driven, at least partly, by extra-commercial reasons is a common trend for the two countries (and later on becomes one of protest triggers), one needs to look closer into how and why these cluster form and whether they really lead to formation of nation-wide splits in the national public spheres.

## Research theory and methodology

For today, in both Italy and Russia, we hypothesize the formation of nation-scale public counter-spheres across the hybrid media systems under pressure of a dominant political & communicative climate. Their formation, functioning and societal reaction to them, as reflected by the media sphere, may be assessed using theory on democratic quality of national public spheres, especially in terms of political diversity of media and alternation of information sources (Dahl 1979; Voltmer 2000).

Put simplistically, Habermasian theory of public deliberation as a way of democratic political participation describes the public sphere normatively, as an inclusive space of equal chances for political communicative action. But two objections relevant to our case have risen almost straight away.

First, with the mediatization of society (Mazzoleni 2008), the ideal information society, in political terms, has not formed: due to economic and organizational advantages available to formally licensed media no one can speak of equal deliberative potential for communicating actors; media are more and more perceived as the 'junctions' of main communication flows, and scholars talk of media-constructed public spheres (Calhoun 1992; Gerhards 1997; Schulz 1997: 59). Spatial metaphors of lattice, information flows etc., are drawn in to describe the 'junction' nature of media in the public spheres. Thus, we should expect a public sphere to consist of 'junctions' and 'environment'. This may raise an issue of communicative equality, as the ideal deliberative equality is distorted by social cleavages reflected in unequal access to expression of views and by varying social capital of the communicators, as well as by structural and political media biases (Voltmer 2000). This is why the democratization potential of Internet was, in first theoretical assessments, based on horizontalization of societal communication structures where media were to be put to the level of consumers.

Second, many conservative, liberal and left critics have, with equal eagerness, pointed out to the oppressive and anti-pluralistic nature of normatively understood public spheres (Negt & Kluge (1972)1993; Luhmann 1990; Mouffe 2000: 93, 2005: 3; Kleinsteuber 2001). Any stable situation in the public discursive space is perceived by them as 'temporary hegemony or instant stabilization of power' (Karppinen, Moe, Svensson 2008: 10). In such cases, *public counter-spheres* are said to be forming (Fraser 1990; Fenton & Downey 2003; Wimmer 2005).

As our previous research shows, such 'temporary hegemony / stabilization of power' may be gained by political actors when they dominate the discourse via spinning or emasculating it of substance. Such type of dominance provides 'political honeymoons' for relatively long periods (even years) but is destructive in the long-term perspective for the whole political system at the given level,

including the national one (Bodrunova 2010a). To spot such stabilization of power, we used situational analysis. The result of such situations may vary in its intensity, but it inevitably lowers legitimacy of incumbent executives, further polarizes divergent social milieus, and raises protest activity. Moreover, emasculation of political discourse leads to searching for alternative discursive milieus within the existing social cleavages, thus further fostering the fragmentation of the mainstream public sphere. In Italy and Russia of 2011-2012, we argue, the situation went that far as to the appearance of alternative, anti-mainstream public spheres that would reshape the mainstream approach to the growing left/right, urban/rural, native/migrant and many other tensions on the national level. In order to understand the shape and structure of the respective public counter-spheres, we need to reconstruct what they wanted to be delivered from.

Counter-spheres are usually studied on the level of a community (like subcultures) or even one media outlet as the bearer of a counter-mainstream culture (Mitchell 1998; O'Donnell 2001). They are perceived as phenomena local in terms of territorial reach and people involved. The notion of the counter-spheres near-to-never provided chances to be studied on the level of a social stratum or a society on the whole, due to the nature of the concept which implies opposition to mainstream, that is, opposition of the smaller (phenomenal) to the general (contextual). Previously, Internet-based spaces were thought to become counter-spheres, without specification on whether it could be Internet *loci* or the net on the whole as a sort of environment. But hybridization of media systems (Chadwick 2011), growth of Internet use and massive penetration of social networks allows us to suggest that counter-spheres may stretch from one media to cross-platform, audience-oriented, nation-wide communicative milieus, and these phenomena need to be assessed in terms of rise/fall of democratic quality of the national public spheres.

To prove our position, we will use situational analysis of the period of 2009–2012 to reconstruct the context of media-political interaction and the formation of public spheres in the two countries. As recommended for policy research by the Oxford school (Buse & Young 2006), consistent situational analysis needs to have actors, process, context, content and results examined. Under 'results', we will understand the rise of the counter-spheres; since we are not interested in policy content but in the context of social response to them, we will focus on 'context' involving social, political, and communicative conditions and examine media-political relations ('actors' and 'process') on the national level.

Second, we will try to see via quantitative analysis of online news sources whether the formation of counter-spheres in metropolitan areas is supported on regional and/or local level. We will analyze menus of several clusters of local online media to show shifts in basic agenda from local newspapers to news portals that can be described as those with alternative agenda.

In conclusion, several criteria for spotting the formation of public counter-spheres and judging their (anti-)democratic potential are suggested for further development.

### **Reconstructing context: ‘Antipolitica’ vs. ‘Second Stagnation’**

The socio-economic and political-process context of the development of Italy and Russia of the last 20 years is well described elsewhere (Bull & Newell 2005; Calise 2006; Ledeneva 2006; Shin & Agnew 2008; Newell 2010; Remington 2011; White 2011; Mendras 2012; Robinson 2012). Here, we will reconstruct only the trends that we consider: 1) common for both countries; 2) shaping the democratic quality of the respective national public spheres.

In sociological terms, the biggest possible framework for the discussion of fragmentation of the public sphere is the idea of multi-speed development of a polity, as communication is expected to be much more intense within the social milieus formed via speed differentiation than between them. The biggest societal cleavage of this sort is described today as ‘three Italies’ (Bagnasco 1977; Bull & Newell 2005: 69) and ‘four Russias’ (Zubarevich 2011) with varying (sometimes contrasting) levels of income and savings, ethnic identity, education, extent of exposure to manual labor, urbanization trends etc. In the case of Italy, the well-known division of the country into Northern, Mid and Southern Italy matters in terms of industry structure, labor-based stratification and voting preferences, separatist potential, cultural and ethnic origins, migration flows, language use etc. In Russia’s case, the division is more recent but also cuts across political, economic, and social parameters forming, in Natalia Zubarevich’s terms, four distinctive social milieus: that of post-industrial middle-class big cities (circa 21% of population in the 12 biggest cities only and over 36% if the cities of over 300,000 inhabitants are considered); that of over 300 industrial cities ranging from 20,000 to sometimes even 700,000 inhabitants with mostly Soviet habitus (circa 25%); that of the ‘vast periphery’ inhabited by the dwellers of villages and small cities (circa 38%); and that of areas of North Caucasus and South Siberia lacking industrial development (circa 6%).

To this list we will add general levels of media consumption, media diets of particular strata, levels of Internet penetration, and shape of digital divide. If in Italy the three zones have clear geographical tint, in Russia the description of basic milieus is more complicated; they cut across the country and are marked with, rather, urban/rural differences, like living in cities of a particular size population or having access to city attractions. These divisions are reflected in the respective divisions of the common communicative space, thus lowering its democratic potential by growth of exclusion practices and absence / low percentage of shared agenda between the milieus.



As the protest rallies in both Italy and Russia of 2011-2012 showed, the level of legitimacy of the national leadership and executives was minimal in at least one social milieu – ‘creative class’ or ‘angry city dwellers’ as a part of the ‘first Russia’ (Vezhlyan 2011; Kachkaeva 2012) and studentship and their parents and teachers in Italy – but in both cases the feeling was that ‘the society at large’ appeared on the streets (Della Porta, Mosca, Parks 2012). In Italy, ‘a considerable drop in trust’ to institutions was evident for commentators (Ibid.), but at the same time Edelman agency spotted a rise in trust to the same institutions for end-2010 (Seaman 2011). So, this suggests a growing split in public perception of the ruling elites, which inevitably fuelled the protest spill-over. And for us the crisis of legitimacy was connected to but not fully explained by the current political events in both countries (anti-austerity measures in Italy and parliamentary and presidential elections in Russia), and thus was deeper than annual fluctuations registered by polling agencies. We consider the current events to be just primary triggers of the spill-overs, but not their full explanatory causes. The crisis of legitimacy that could bring to the streets literally hundreds of thousands of city dwellers in Moscow and Rome of 2011 had to be prepared by more factors and in advance.

Below, we reconstruct the context in three areas at the national level: democratic development, media-political relations, and the very recent media system development that provides the dynamics to the mediated political process.

### ***Transitional drawbacks in political development***

Italy and Russia, though very different in most results of democratic modernization, show significant similarities in the democratic quality of several major features of national political process - which is reflected in its public perception. Common trends in politics that potentially lower the democratic quality of the public discussion are more than one.

First of all, many commentators have pointed to ‘transitional drawbacks’ in many terms (Bull & Newell 2005; Melville 2007; Hintba 2008), including electoral law (lowering proportional representation in Italy of 2006 and in Russia by several steps in 2000-2012). The signs of ‘comebacks’ to over-20-years-past were seen in several areas. First, it was lowering political rotation on the top level (personified by Silvio Berlusconi and Vladimir Putin) that lowered the belief in real change and importance of one’s own electoral voice. Second, there are evident signs of a comeback of habitual partocracy and failure of meaningful political competition. In Italy, after a short period of diversity of party positioning in the mid-1990s, the boiling grassroots and local political movements are, again, practically inevitably attracted to the left/right opposition on the top level (Bodrunova 2012). In Russia, the ‘United Russia’ party under Vladimir Putin’s (in)formal leadership has created major presence in regional and local elective and executive bodies, these activities mirrored, often farcically, by the four parties of the so-called ‘systemic’ opposition. Third, the very existence of systemic and non-systemic opposition, with high

barriers of entering parliament (for Russia) and complicated ways to form an *apriori* coalition (for Italy), may be considered 'prolongued drawbacks', as it resembles the times when big parts of population did not have any voice in the public sphere.

Another feature of similarity is the distinct clientelist nature of relations in political and civil service areas (Rimsky 2001; Hallin & Mancini 2004: 56-59; Briquet 2009). Here, one may recall everyday social practices of nepotism and horizontal networking, high levels of corruption and economic crime, tight connections of national politics with big business (the political role of Confindustria and Berlusconi's Mediolanum and Fininvest, among others, in Italy and industrial corporations with state stake-holding in Russia), non-overcome private interests and undercover lobbying in the absence of legal lobbyist mechanisms. Taken together, these features lead to re-feudalization of decision-making and policing (Habermas 1962). One more feature shared by the two countries is short-termism in policing (Neklessa 2006; Monti 2013) crucial for the basic configuration of political process (Pugachev & Soloviev 2000), which may be explained by relatively frequent and radical regime changes within the last 150 years in both countries. Another feature is all-catchism (Forestiere 2009; Wilson 2011) and populism in mainstream party politics. To support Berlusconi and Putin at the elections of 2008, ideologically and organizationally vague, catch-all, patriotism-based support movements were created, namely the All-Russian People's Front (ONF) for Russia and the transformed 'Popolo della Libertà' for Italy. In both countries, the vagueness of political positioning in moderate parts of political spectrum has pushed some substantial political initiatives out to end-of-spectrum and grassroots politics, among those – radical right and left, autonomist/separatist, and anti-political ones.

Maybe due to the population being tired of the malfunctioning politics, in 2008-2012, the last full electoral cycle in both Russia and Italy, the phenomenon of grassroots social and political movements became especially evident, though in a bit different ways. In Italy, further radicalization of youth movements could be spotted, the biggest initiatives (UltraS, Casa Pound and others) belonging to the far right part of political spectrum. Another sign of the 'social rise' was the appearance of non-economic-based strikes and manifestations of major scale, including the one in 2010 on the rights of free access to information, the action supported in many capitals of the world.

In Italy where work protest activity, including general strikes, is well-organized, regular and channeled by CGIL, FIOM and other trade unions: in 2011, of 172 strikes, '2 out of 5 were organized by informal groups, more than one third by trade unions, and one third by other formal associations <...>' making unions 'the single most active civil society actor organizing protest in the country' (Della Porta, Mosca, Parks 2012). But in Russia, which had not been used to organized corporate or social action, the 'social rise' became an almost equally wide



phenomenon, being the first manifestation of the latently existing public sphere beyond political and media discussion milieus. Its outbursts that received nationwide attention were local protests throughout the country against ‘monetization of social benefits’, protection of Khimki forest close to Moscow from state plans for highway construction, help to homeless people by MD Elizaveta Glinka (‘Doctor Liza’) and her allies, all-Russian and local networking in search for people lost in forests, or a struggle against Gazprom’s project of a ‘business tower’ in the city centre of St. Petersburg (the Okhta Centre case). This activism had two features: it did not interact substantially with any authority being based distinctively on horizontal networking, and it often substituted public functions of the state.

### ***Media-political trends and the quality of the public spheres***

The re-feudalized nature of the national politics, especially in Russia, hampered the general mechanisms of incorporation of public opinion into political decision-making on the national level. Another way to re-feudalize the public discussion in both countries is reflected in mediocratic trends (Puyu & Bodrunova 2013) – that is, in antidemocratic fusion of media and politics (Rose 2001: 101; Graber 2002: 266, Osborne 2007). Several important elements of mediocratization may be spotted in both countries.

The first one concerns media ownership. In Italy, as well as in Russia, national television still remains the main news medium, and this means that it also remains the biggest (if not the only) common point of reference for the majority of population (not less than 70% by various data for Russia and circa 90% in Italy, making this country rank #3 in top10 TV-viewing countries in the world Bodrunova 2010b). In both countries, though, national TV channels belong either to mainstream political figures (like the three private channels in Berlusconi’s ownership) or to their close allies. In the Russian national TV segment, the state control of federal channels further enhanced in 2009, as news production at *REN TV* and *Pyaty Kanal* was given to *Russia Today*, the state-owned Russian foreign broadcasting channel (Harding 2009), and in 2011 as ‘Yury Kovalchuk, a co-owner of *Bank Rossiya* and a longtime Putin associate, purchased a 25 percent stake in *Pervy Kanal*, Russia’s main television broadcaster’ (Freedom House 2012). This creates conflicts of interests, but there are no legal mechanisms in both Russian and Italian media law to prevent further buying-out of TV shares.

The second most politically relevant media segment, namely the national quality newspapers (Voltmer 2000), suffers in both countries with several similar features, one of which is self-censorship (Bodrunova 2010b; Os’kin 2011), and the other may be conceptualized as partial detachment from standing on the readers’ positions. In Russia, main quality newspapers are business-oriented, and several ‘sociopolitical’ papers like *Izvestia* or *Nezavisimaya gazeta* hold, rather, a mid-market stand, rarely challenging the political elite for their decision-making. Recently, notable was a slow decline of both quality newspapers and magazines,

peaked with the closure of *The Russian Newsweek*, purchase of *Izvestia* in April 2011 by Aram Gabrelyanov, who publishes tabloids and editorial layoffs at *Kommersant-Vlast* magazine during the protests. Their place in agenda-setting, quite low for a long time already, was eventually captured by business news outlets like *Kommersant*, *Vedomosti*, or *RBC Daily*. In Italy, the situation in national newspapers would seem healthier thanks to *La Repubblica* and *L'Espresso* who are to represent the left-centrist positions. But as our earlier research shows (Bodrunova 2012), the political press in the country is still very much focused upon the 20-year-old Christian Democrat – Communist cleavage, and this idea is perpetually thrown into the mediated public sphere, which shapes the discussion in national papers by placing the newspaper positions within practically one-dimensional left/right spectrum, be it economic, ecological, migration, or other agenda that otherwise might have created its own splits in the newspaper discourse. Plus the language of the newspapers in Italy does not favor a wider readership, even if it may contrast with 'light' content (Urina 2005). Moreover, according to Censis, during the 'first big crisis of the information society' in 2008-2009 in Italy, data on regular readership shows significant and rapid decline – from 51% of population over 14 to in 2007 to 34,5% in 2009, while almost 40% of the population do not read papers at all and 53% do not use Internet, thus creating the specifically Italian *press divide* (Censis; cf Pratellesi 2009), and the market did not recover until today. In Russia, in the evaluation by Vasily Gatov, Vice President of the World Association of Newspapers, the audience of the quality dailies constituted in the late 2000s less than 1% of the population, namely 'the Facebook million' people that were considered the audience to compete for quality (mostly business) media.

Other trends include the growing amount of politainment on national TV (Sorrentino 2006; Mazzoleni & Sfaradini 2010; Smirnova 2010), personalization of 'top' political discourse with its simultaneous de-politicization, when national leaders participate in stunts (events organized especially to be televised) outside current political agenda (of ecological, personal-developmental, sportive, lifestyle nature), excessive intrusion of state into financial support of regional media (Lopez 2007: 7; Martynov & Os'kin 2007), political pressure upon editorship, and unequal electoral coverage on major national channels (partly due to the incumbency of candidates).

All these trends show *lack of political demand for alternative information in the public sphere* as one of the democratic premises (Dahl 1979). This, in turn, lowers the quality of the mainstream public spheres, which is felt by the growing number of its participants.

### ***The recent trends in media systems development: fragmentation of TV audience and growth of Internet media***

As many other media markets, both Italian and Russian media markets have gone

through meaningful transformations in the second half of the 2000s. In terms of efficacy of the public sphere, three tendencies seem relevant.

The first was gradual decline (for similar trends in newspaper consumption, often referred to as ‘fading’) of mainstream TV consumption, especially among younger audiences. For Russia, according to Sarah Oates of the University of Maryland, a decline of consumption of ‘federal’ channels could be a sign of a fundamental shift in the loyalty and attention of key segments of the Russian news audience (Oates 2012), so that it allowed speculations upon a ‘post-broadcast phase’ in the Russian media system (Strukov 2012) and of possible decrease of social solidarity (Gabowitch 2012: 214). For Italy, the corrosion of the television ‘duopoly’ between the state *RAI* and Berlusconi’s *Mediaset* was a bit less evident and connected not only with the *press divide* (Censis 2011) but also with proliferation of Murdoch’s *Sky* platform which begin to ‘eat out’ circa 1,5% of audience of the big players a year in the mid-2000s (Gangemi 2006).

The second tendency, made of an array of smaller trends, is the growth of Internet penetration and trajectories of development of Internet media. First of all, Internet penetration played a role in the corrosion of the TV audience in the younger and well-educated strata with a higher income. Then, it is the digital divide that has complicated cleavage lines as opposed to just generational ones, with income and exposure to technologies playing the key role in stratification (Censis 2011; Galitsky & Petuhova 2012). This can partly explain why counter-spheres, with their ‘media junctions’, formed not just online but across online/offline splits.

In Russia, Internet users get news almost equally from TV and online sources (Lebedev 2012; Oates 2012), and one can additionally suggest an inverse proportional relation between average credibility for TV and amount of online news consumption with the underlying factor of income; as in 2012 TV credibility was 62,5% for pensioners and 36% for ‘high resource employees’ (Galitsky & Petuhova 2012: 12). In Italy in general, despite the evident TV-dependence of the whole nation and growing general trust to media in the times of financial recession (up to 59%), indices of TV credibility are lower. While indices for ‘some trust’/‘tend to trust’ stay mostly below the EU average and rank from 35% for TV in general (for 2012, see Eurobarometer 2012: 19) to over 60% for TV/TV news (Edelman 2012: 16), making Italy a country that goes contrary to the general EU trend in media trust (Eurobarometer 2011a: 15; Eurobarometer 2011b: 16), the indices for ‘trust a great deal’ to TV or traditional media on the whole are even worse and do not always reach one third of TV viewers. The average figure for that spotted by several researches like Eurobarometer, Censis, Edelman and other agencies is circa 25%; in several strata (often described like ‘informed public’), while Internet media (with the exclusion of blogs) have already gained a higher credibility than traditional media (Edelman 2012: 14-16; Eurobarometer 2012: 19, 21). Interestingly, public trust to government, in Edelman’s assessment, shows similar figures: 73% of the ‘informed public’ respondents do not trust government leaders

(that is, only 27% or fewer do trust them) (Edelman 2012: 20).

One more distinct feature of Internet media spheres before 2009 that we need to mention was a special structure of online/offline parallelism of media outlets in both countries. Unlike most European countries, Russia and Italy from 1994-2003 demonstrated growth of online-only media with significant social impact. Thus, in Italy, 1997-2003 were the years of spurred growth of webzines (in both quantity and quality); among those, the famous *LaVoce.info*, the regions-uniting *Vivacity*, and 1380 others of which local news portals were the biggest group (Bodrunova 2007: 52–53). By 2005, though, almost all of them perished, as they could not compete with traditional media getting online, and the online/offline structural parallelism became much higher. In Russia, the number of projects was much lower, but in 1999-2000 most Russian online-only business-oriented news media existing until today like *Gazeta.ru*, *SMI.ru*, *Utro.ru*, *Lenta.ru* appeared in between State Duma and presidential election campaigns – but today no one would call them business news outlets, as by 2009 they turned to the ‘traditional’ news palette. By 2006, the aggregate revenue generated by online media segment reached European levels of circa 2% and was growing rapidly; this period ended with 2008 ‘heired’ elections, Russian–Georgian armed conflict, and the outburst of economic recession. So, by 2009, both countries had significant experience in democratic development of online ‘media junctions’.

Another very important trend was the rapid and practically full penetration of social networks: *Facebook* in Italy and *Vkontakte* (and several others) in Russia. In Italy, in the late 2000s, as stated by Audiweb, offline media gave up to tech giants and social networks: in 2011, there was no offline media website among top10 Italian web portals, *Facebook* being the second after Google. As to the politically relevant media within social networks, the second-biggest left-leaning newspaper *La Repubblica* and Beppe Grillo’s blog-casting have been 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> (Socialbakers 2012a). In Russia, as in Italy, both offline and online media are forced out of top10 online news outlets, besides one or two websites of best-selling Russian quality and mid-market dailies (Medialogia 2012). Social media showed extreme growth during the last three years, the leaders being Russian: *Vkontakte* (‘In contact’) with over 110 million Russian-language accounts, *Odnoklassniki* (‘Classmates’). They were just recently joined by *Facebook*, with over 9 million by September 2012 (Socialbakers 2012b), but this ‘*Facebook* millions’ being ‘generally of the wealthier, travelling, cosmopolitan variety, having foreign friends and tending to live in Moscow and St. Petersburg’ (Ioffe 2010). Today, Internet in Russia, as commentators note, is influenced by the distortions of the offline media system and can be better understood via the notion of national media models rather than via the normative Western ideas of the universal democratic impact of the web (Oates 2008; Alexanyan 2009; Gorny 2009).

The third trend in the media system was relative stability of oppositional media and their audiences in both countries, thus providing a chance for its most radical

critics to label them as ‘a part of the system but inversed’, even if ‘oppositional media’ in Russia and Italy mean different things replicating the structure of the respective party-political spreads. In Russia, the oppositional media reflect the major split between ‘systemic’ and ‘non-systemic’ opposition, namely those who constantly get into parliament (and are considered by the ‘non-systemic’ opposition to be toothless and inherently support the ruling party) and those who have no chance to surpass the 7-% threshold and thus can’t have real influence upon decision-making but are believed to represent a bigger share of the population than the election results reflect due to many reasons including election fraud. Thus, in Russia, Moscow-based ‘non-systemic’ oppositional media *Ekho Moskvy* radio station (even if there are doubts for its ‘real-oppositional’ status), *Radio Liberty*, *Novaya gazeta*, *The New Times*, and several online news and discussion outlets created a field of reference, even if relatively small, for criticism of the political mainstream.

In Italy, rotation of left/right in power is much more evident, and thus ‘non-systemic’ media are quite marginal even in comparison with other political press which itself has low circulation figures. The split of the newspaper market reflects the major cleavage very clearly (Bodrunova 2012), especially in case of national papers and political magazines where the stable point of criticism was represented by Editoriale L’Espresso titles, mainly *La Repubblica*, even if this paper was also marked by some ‘weathercock’ behavior regarding its right-wing opponents: if Berlusconi or his allies expressed left views, the opposing *La Repubblica* and political press would prefer to express right views than to agree with opponents.

### **‘Degraded democracies’: ‘Antipolitica’ and ‘Second Stagnation’**

The public perception of the unfinished democratic transition is well documented by polling by independent polling agencies. In one poll, the Russian society split almost 1:1 in answering ‘yes/no’ upon existence of the Russian democracy (41%/48%) (Zircon 2010). In a poll of 2009 with scaled questions, though, only 4% of Russians were sure of the existence of Russian democracy, and 33% more considered it partly established (Levada Centre 2009). These figures strikingly resemble the latest available Eurobarometer data for satisfaction of the quality of democracy in Italy (2004): 3% only think they are satisfied with the state of democracy in Italy, and 33% more are fairly satisfied (Eurobarometer 2004). At the same time, the social demand for democratic development is approximately two times higher in the core of the ‘first Russia’ – 57 to 62% (higher education, 18-29 years), being two times lower in the opposing strata – 32 to 35% (low-level education, over 60) (Yurgens 2008: 54); by another poll, the first figure is characteristic for the whole Russian audience and is quite stable, drifting 2005 to 2009 between 56% and 67% (Levada Centre 2009).

The dissatisfaction with the current political-communicative climate was reflected in critical (or even pejorative) social labeling of particular events or the whole



political situations. Thus, in Russia, the post exchanges by Vladimir Putin and Dmitry Medvedev were called ‘rokirovki’ (‘castlings’). The personalized, ‘manual’ styles of ruling by the national leaders were called, respectively, ‘Berlusconism’ and ‘Putinism’ (Pyontkovsky 2000; Bodrunova 2011b). Among public labeling of the whole political situations as emasculated and inefficient in terms of politics (and communication), one could spot two labels. ‘*Antipolitica*’ has, at least since 2000, been the word widely used to mark the complex drawbacks of the political process and ‘degraded democracy’ of Italy (Mastropaolo 2000, 2005; Campus 2006; Mele 2012; Travaglio 2012). In Russia, public labeling of the 2000s has run into deliberate attempts of pro-state media to label the 1990s as ‘evil 1990s’ and the 2000s as ‘stability years’. But despite of, indeed, relatively stable performance of Russia throughout the economic recession, the public labeling of the political situation popular in liberal circles of Moscow and St. Petersburg was ‘Vtoroy zastoy’, or ‘*Second Stagnation*’, after Leonid Brezhnev’s last years in power known today as the Stagnation.

## **Mediated public counter-spheres: a plea for a return of substance**

### ***‘Scomparsa dei fatti’ as the common frame of the counter-spheres***

The basic notion that, to our mind, fostered the formation of a large alternative public domain was the ‘disappearance of facts’ (‘scomparsa dei fatti’) in the mainstream public sphere, as Italian journalist Marco Travaglio put it (Travaglio 2006). The shared plea of the participants in both countries was the return of factual basis and socially-, not politically- or elite-oriented interpretations of events and agendas. The many problematic zones in both societies that did not get enough critical reviewing by the mainstream media (especially TV), as well as new urban- and online-based lifestyles, formed alternative agenda for the counter-spheres. Existing left/right or systemic/non-systemic cleavages based on polarization towards the same agendas had almost inevitably to be rejected or transformed. Speaking in terms of political spectrum, the counter-spheres provided a second (or multiple) axis (axes) to the one-dimensional political polarization of mainstream media and politics.

Hybridization of the media systems, thus, in accordance with Chadwick’s (2011) theoretical assumptions, was not only technical; it also had a political dimension. The ‘opportunity gaps’ for the counter-spheres appeared throughout the media segments and practices, including online-only projects and convergent projects like online TV (*Annozero* multiplatform programme in Italy, *Dozhd’* online+cable TV channel in Russia) and radio (website of *Ekho Moskvuy* in Russia, *Passaparola* podcasts and editorial videocasting in Italy).

The alternative deliberative spaces and ‘media junctions’ in them could constitute an alternative to the mainstream if only they had a critical amount of audience – at



least above statistical significance. For the 140-million Russia, several million people exchanging information and opinions within a communicative milieu would work; for Italy, a 3-4 times smaller figure, one million, would be enough. We argue that it is these millions of people who de-virtualized in 2011-2012 at protest rallies.

The common features of the counter-spheres in Russia and Italy were the following. First, they had *similar composition* in terms of who/what constituted the 'media junctions'. These included:

- established oppositional media of all types and across platforms, e.g. *Ekho Moskvy* radio, *Novaya Gazeta* newspaper and *Grani.ru* discussion portal in Russia, *La Repubblica* in Italy;
- alternative-agenda media in metropolitan and regional urban areas established in 2000s, like *Dozhd'* online TV station, *Bolshoy gorod* city magazine or *Snob* project in Russia, *Il Fatto Quotidiano* newspaper, *Annozero* and *Servizio Pubblico* TV-based projects, or *Passaparola* multimedia project in Italy;
- business newspapers, since in both countries they tended to have a (left)liberal stance rather than a conservative one. In times of protest between 2011-2012, especially in Russia, further anti-government polarization took place in editorial opinions expressed in *Kommersant* or *Vedomosti* in Russia, *Il Sole 24 Ore* in Italy, as the papers followed their polarizing readership;
- blogs (especially in Italy), including comedian and politician Beppe Grillo's personal blog, *Piovono Rane* and *Byoblu* blogs and several others in Italy; solicitor Alexey Navalny's blog in Russia; the blog authors became mediated (or, rather, 'bloggiated') public figures;
- projects in social networks (like *Informazione Libera* or *Altra Notizia* in Italy) or social networks in their national making on the whole, like *Facebook* in Russia where a phenomenon of 'exodus from *Livejournal*' blog platform took place approximately a year before the outbreak of protests, making *Facebook* a new virtual milieu for 'Runet intelligentsia' (see below);
- creators of online media texts of a mostly critical, analytical, or even artistic nature. In Russia, a return to traditional cultural textocentricism was spotted in how journalists of online-only media, famous writers, and experts were the main opinion leaders of the 'For fair elections' protest movement (Bodrunova & Litvinenko 2013). In Italy, several 'big figures' of journalism like Michele Santorò, Milena Gabanelli, or Marco Travaglio constituted the activist group that created projects of critical journalism in search of facts and real issues and organized events like the internationally-supported demonstration for information rights in 2010;
- constellations of interconnected portals that included think tanks, universities, thematic sites, blogs, and news portals.

Thus, in Italy, the counter-sphere is centered around several journalists and

politicians of a new formation serving as ‘junctions’ of the sphere and incarnating the convergent nature of today’s journalism, as well as around several *Facebook* projects with distinctive purpose of reconstructing the free flow of ‘true facts’. In Russia, it was centered more around convergent media outlets themselves, several activists like Navalny, Olga Romanova, Yevgenia Chirikova and Sergey Udaltzov, and *Facebook* itself after the ‘exodus from Livejournal’. It is evident that in both countries the cleavage between mainstream and counter-spheres grew mainly in metropolitan and large urban areas, where ‘new’, business, and online media were available to the majority of politically and socially active audience. This raises the question whether regions, especially more rural areas, were really involved into the process of fragmentation of the public sphere in a way similar to that in big cities.

Second, *formation of the counter-spheres had a ‘wave’ character*. In Italy, a rise of the second big generation of webzines appeared in 2009-2010; they were accompanied by blogs of today’s top 10 in Italy and *Facebook*-based aggregation projects named above. Offline, this was supported by appearance of new print media, TV and radio shows, personal communication of journalists at press conferences, and book publishing in newly-created publishing houses. In Russia, several ‘alternative journalism’ online-only and online/offline projects appeared, bearing features of fiction, blogging, and cinematographic style in genre structure (*Russkiy Reportyor*, *Openspace*, *Slon*, *Snob*, *Bolshoy gorod*, *F5*, *The Village*, *Bumaga* and others), and *Facebook* suddenly became an attractive space for the most active bloggers from the ‘elite’ blog platform – *Livejournal*. An ‘exodus to *Facebook*’, as it became known, began as a growing wave in 2010, and by 2012 most part of the top 2000 *Livejournal* bloggers had their accounts connected to *Facebook* where their main writing activity was now performed. Another part of the ‘wave’ was rapid polarization (against the ruling elite) of the national business papers and online news outlets like *Lenta.ru*, which may be explained by following their readership, even if partly sacrificing to it insider connections within the ruling mainstream.

Third, a *new (‘anti-mediocratic’) form of fusion of media and political activities* may be traced. To prove this, we draw the examples of Beppe Grillo, Italian comic, journalist, one of the world’s top 10 bloggers and founder of ‘MoVimento 5 Stelle’ (‘5-Star MoVement’), as well as Alexey Navalny, Russian solicitor and blogger, whose public activities started with blog-publishing of inner reports of state and private monopolies, with access to them obtained via minority shareholding, and lead to creation, *i. a.*, of ‘RosPil’ anti-corruption crowd-funded project. The activities of both bloggers blurred borders between mainstream political practices (like creating a party, taking part in local elections, or entering a coordination committee of opposition), grassroots activism (creating movements, socially-oriented projects etc.), opinion leading (‘publizistik’ and criticism) and media production (blogging). Not only ‘mediated activism’ (reposting, sharing, liking) but also creating content *and* activist practices were a distinctive feature of the counter-spheres, personified by approximately a dozen people in each country.

Fourth, the counter-spheres *concentrated around an alternative agenda*, forming online/offline networks of ‘junctions’ that included think tanks, parties or movements and their websites, single-issue activist/project portals, adherent media resources, personal or campaigning blogs, and other media outlets. They were also linked to *Facebook* communities. We will take the micro-network around *Libertiamo.it* as an example, which connects to Gianfranco Fini’s ‘Future and Liberty for Italy’ and its youth part ‘Generazione Italia’, two liberal think tanks (Center for Liberal Studies and Bruno Leoni Institute), LiberiLibri publishing house, projects such as GayLib (right-wing gay community), La Valle del Siele (market-oriented regional agriculture free of state control) and Disarming the Green (discrediting the typical green agenda), a finian (that of Fini’s followers’ who became known as ‘finians’) news portal *Il Futurista*, two other notable broadly-liberal news portals and several blogs including opinion blogs of liberal-critical stance (Chicago Blog, Noise from Amerika) and blogs by MPs and high-profile activists. In Russia, a much lower number of alternative-agenda media appeared, and they were divided into two broad groups: the one without connections to think tanks and the one with them, and the first group (mentioned above as ‘alternative journalism’) was, in public mind of the above-mentioned ‘first Russia’ of Moscow and St. Petersburg, the real ‘new’ or ‘alternative’ media. The alternative agenda, for those, could be any that went beyond traditional left/right cleavages in politics, economics, and social life, as media discourses based upon such traditional cleavages are perceived as emasculated and mediocratically distorted. In such an agenda, at least three features are expected to show up. First, the agenda *is issue-oriented*, as ‘search for real facts’ creates not just factual reporting but produces stories and raises issues within reshaped understanding of relative importance of problematized areas, which makes ecology or inter-European relations form new social divisions. This is why, second, this agenda *tends to avoid traditional politicization* while politicizing previously non-political agenda by turning, e.g., reporting on arts into social critique via various means, from selection of events to drawing lines of argument. And third, this agenda *addresses individual levels of relevance* instead of addressing feelings of national or territorial unity. This, in turn, shifts foci of agenda building, say, from ‘youth policy’ to ‘parenting issues’ or ‘kids’ life’.

### **Growth of alternative agenda: quantitative analysis of website menus**

‘Alternativity’ of the newly-created news sources is quite difficult to prove, even if it seems evident for a constant viewer. But as we told above, the new agenda and news judgment principles showed up in editorial gatekeeping and selection of news; this inevitably results into new configurations of editorial attention to events and current affairs, that is, into new issue structuring of the content. This reflects in the basic structuring of news output, e.g. in newspaper sections or website menus.

To show that the ‘waves of new journalism’ in the two countries really differed from their predecessors, we will look at the basic level of the structure of online news sources – that is, at website menus. Our basic hypothesis is that the traditional menu structure of the newspaper of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries (‘news, politics, economics, society, culture, sports’, maybe ‘world news’ and ‘opinion’), will shift more on portals of 2008-2013 to (or be enriched by) urban life, global news, lifestyle topics, protection of rights, ecology, and issues (as complimentary to news), and this trend will be observed in both states.

We will compare four basic groups of portals that contain journalistic content: 1) online representations of the newspapers that had been established before the collapse of the previous regime (1993 for Italy and 1991 for Russia); 2) regional/local webzines of 1994-2007; 3) regional/local webzines of 2008-2013; 4) ‘alternative’ media portals chosen separately for each country (see below). Our operational hypothesis is that the menu structure will gradually shift from Group 1 to Group 4 towards more ‘alternative agenda’ tags; it is particularly interesting to know whether local websites between 2008-2013 support the ‘wave’ of alternative websites (characteristic mostly for capitals and big cities) on the local level (by Group 3).

To show the shifts in editorial decision making, three mechanisms were chosen. First, most ‘weighty’ (addressed more often than others) menu entries had to be defined in the samples, as they show editorial priorities in choosing overall agenda frameworks in groups of websites and help detect inertia in ‘menu thinking’. To define ‘weight’ of menu tags, tag lists were created (44 to 48 tags for Italy and 64 tags for Russia) based on all tags met within the respective datasets; similar entries were collected into bigger tags: e.g. ‘charity and activism’ included ‘charities’, ‘NGOs’, ‘voluntary work’, ‘activism’, ‘associations’, ‘solidarity’, and ‘community activities’. Several entries had to be slightly changed according to their shape within particular datasets; e.g. ‘books & literature’ could transform into ‘books’ and ‘media & literature’. Then an individual website’s menu tags were assigned numbers from the biggest on; thus, in a four-tag menu, ‘latest news’ would be given 44, ‘politics’ 43, ‘economics’ 42, and ‘sports’ 41. Then, the assigned figures were weighted against the number of tags in the respective menu; that is, ‘latest news’ would receive 11 and ‘economics’ 10.5 as their final ‘weights’ for this website. These ‘weights’ were not additionally weighted against circulation, regional/local status or distribution area, as we looked at news judgment rather than at newspaper/website impact upon readers. All ‘weights’ were summed up for their tags, and the 20 most ‘weighty’ tags were ranged 1-20 in Appendix 1 (see ‘Most “weighty” menu entries’).

Second, probable menu lists had to be generated for the samples based on whether menu tags occupy more or less stable slots in the lists, as it shows relative importance of particular issues for various groups of websites. To know just the ‘weight’ of a tag is not enough, as we also need to spot its place in the menu and

whether there is movement of some tags to positions closer to #1, as entries closer to it are generally considered more important; this is why (quite rare) websites with alphabetic order of menu tags were excluded from our analysis. We took the threshold of 29-30% of all cases for one entry in getting to the same slot (*e.g.* #3) for smaller datasets and 25-26% for bigger datasets as 'stably getting to #3'; in cases when there was no stable getting to the same slot, average positions were calculated (the biggest and the smallest number excluded, all the rest taken as mean), they are marked as 'ave' in Appendix 1 (see 'Probable menu structures'). Probability coefficients were not calculated, as it needs more discussion on what these could be; for us, it was enough to calculate the actual slot distributions within the datasets, as it tells a lot about the actual shifts in agendas.

Third, it is not enough to range the 'weighted' tags to show their real weight, as ranging 1 to 20 creates a false feeling of a regular step between entries. To show large gaps in individual 'weights' of the menu entries (up to over 10 times), Wordle representation is used (see Pic. 1 and 2).

### ***Sampling and website selection***

Unfortunately, there are no exhaustive collections of regional/local news portals (or even newspapers) available via online means for any of the two countries. For Italy, we used manually double-checked data from the national audit bureau of circulation for 2010, but data on, *e.g.*, local newspapers had to be seriously augmented (at least for 2/3) from six other online lists of regional news media, including *AgoraIt.tv Lab*, *Giornali locali* project, and *Wikipedia*. After additional research, we could estimate that our list is practically exhaustive in terms of representation of regions as well as of circulation levels (regional, provincial, local, city, community/district papers).

For Italy, over 500 portals were checked manually. For Group 1 (newspapers), 89 portals were chosen for analysis; to check the difference between papers of the First and Second Italian Republic, the Group was analyzed in aggregate and then divided into two sub-groups, local newspapers of 1664-1992 of foundation (48 cases) and those of 1993-2009 (41 cases). In several cases, one paper represents several 'publishing units' (with the same publisher and menu structure), like in the case of *La Gazzetta di Bari* with versions for neighboring towns, or several portals with the same template (and, thus, the copied menu structure), like in case of papers by Editoriale L'Espresso or Dmedia Group; so the coverage of the data set is actually bigger than 100 publications, not 89. Each of such 'representative' newspapers represent not over 5 other papers; we consider such 'representation' legitimate, since if we were to introduce all-the-same menus in the datasets, the picture of editorial preferences would be distorted towards just one model; instead, we are interested in a diversity of approaches, rather than in depicting certain editorial models. Thus, for over 40 newspapers of Dmedia Group we have 8 newspapers, 4 in each sub-dataset.



Groups 2 and 3 together consist of 165 portals (74 and 91, respectively). In Appendix 1 (1), they are analyzed first all together (to see the difference between print newspapers of the Group 1 and online-only media of Italy), and then in Groups. Representativeness of the Groups is high, as they cover all the regions of Italy and were selected from the biggest online collection of local digital media at *AgoraIt.tv* (contained 375 portals marked 'local digital media'). All 'local digital media' were checked manually by us, and a half of 375 were either without menus suitable for analysis, non-renewing, non-working, non-existent, were content aggregators, or did not contain any sign of the date of establishment.

Group 4 was made up of the websites marked separately as 'liberal sources' by *ArcoIris.tv* and/or linked to *Informazione Libera* page on *Facebook* from 2011-2012 (24 portals altogether). There was no intersection among any two sets of the four.

For Russia, we used *Liveinternet* ratings of media websites for Russia of early 2013 ([liveinternet.ru/rating/ru/media](http://liveinternet.ru/rating/ru/media)). 3666 portals were listed (Moscow and St. Petersburg excluded), but with much broader scope for inclusion than in Italian lists, as the list contained city portals, official administration websites, TV and radio portals, regional news agencies, online town guides, and local news media. 83 cities were listed, which corresponds to the number of Russian regions (83 without Moscow and St. Petersburg), with 44 portals a city on average. Of the 83 cities, 15 (18% of the city sample) possessed over 60 portals; of them, at least 50% were looked at; of the resting 68 cities (82%), all the portals were looked at at the primary stage. Of the list of 3666, we manually searched not less than 1400 portals (circa 40%), as we tried to exclude TV and radio, news agencies and non-journalistic websites while looking at the titles already. Of those opened, 233 regional news portals were selected for analysis. Though they represent only 6,4% of the whole 'media' content at the list, the selection is representative for news portals, as it is practically exhaustive for news & issues portals of those listed. Of those, 49 belong to Group 1, 44 to Group 2, and 140 to Group 3. Group 4 (23 portals altogether) consists of Moscow- and St. Petersburg-based media mentioned by respondents of the survey upon protest media diets conducted in 2012 (Bodrunova & Litvinenko 2013) and regional and local portals named by two experts (editors from Moscow and St. Petersburg), analyzed both separately and in aggregate (see Appendix 1). We also drew as examples two portals sponsored by sources close to the political establishment (*Dni.ru* and *Vz.ru*) that try to be part of the online political discussion and are created to counter-balance the deliberative potential of the liberal portals, for us to see the 'inertia of thinking' in pre-establishment political journalism reflected in their menus' closeness to the classic set of 'politics, economics etc.'



## ***Interpretation of results***

*Italy.* As expected, there is a dramatic difference between local papers and portals, from one side, and alternative-agenda portals, from the other side. Groups 1, 2 and 3 are dominated by latest news and sports. Newspapers show traditional economics, politics, culture, and regional news as their priorities in top10 menu entries. The only difference between newspapers of the First and Second Republic is appearance of 'alternative' agenda in newer-established papers in cases of 'education' and 'nature & ambience', while more traditional 'work' and 'house' slide down to under top 10. As to the Group 2 and 3, 'local news' join 'latest news' and 'sports' in the preferred menu, and there is minimal difference in the top 12 between 1994-2007 and 2007-2012 portals. This tells us that in the case of Italy our hypothesis of support of the 'liberal wave' in local news sources is not supported. But, this shows a major cleavage between the 'new-wave' agenda of city media and the traditional news judgment of the mainstream regional editorship.

In the case of Group 4, the shift in topicality was so big that even our tagging had to be expanded to include 'society and family', 'world and globalization', 'justice and human rights', 'social troubles', 'media and regime' (which shows that mediocracy as a topic is serious enough to create a separate entry in many portal menus), 'environment', or world regions including Middle East and Europe. The menu is much more issue-oriented and much less entertaining, as there is no 'free time'/'entertainment' tags in the top20 tags.

As to the probable menu structure, it is worth noting that the number of menu tags grows in Groups 3 and 4 – from 8-9 to 11-12, and this similarity needs to be looked at closer in the future, as it may tell that recent local news media may easily shift to a more alternative agenda, as they have higher flexibility due to the adjustment to a habitually bigger number of menu entries. We may also spot that there are two menu models in the local digital media of the recent years, as there is a number of portals with 'art' as a #1 entry – that is, their overall orientation is cultural, but the menus are more or less 'generalist'. This may point out to politicization of cultural discourse in online media. In alternative-agenda menus, there is still a clear reminiscence of a traditional menu, but news agenda is nation- and world-level oriented and is practically deprived of sports. Alternative agenda is created by entries 5 to 10, thus representing one way of extending a news portal menu: rather than highlighting events, entertainment, shows or cars, these websites extend their agenda to axes of political polarization alternative to left/right cleavage and creating critical stance by writing upon troubled world regions, social issues, or art. This, presumably, is a part of struggle for the return of facts in their factuality, rather than placing them into left/right dichotomies.

Wordle visualization of the differences (Group 1, Groups 2 & 3, Group 4) is given at Picture 1.

**Picture 1. Wordle visualization of the menu tag clouds of Italian online news media: (A) regional and local newspapers (Group 1), (B) local digital media (Group 2 & 3) and (C) alternative-agenda media (Group 4)**

(A) Italy: Group 1, 1664-2009 years of establishment



(B) Italy: Groups 2 & 3, 1994-2013 years of establishment



(C) Italy: Group 4, 2008-2012 years of establishment



*Russia*. Local media in Russia, both newspapers and portals, demonstrate striking unity in weights of traditional menu entries, but in a bit unusual order: ‘economics’, ‘society’, ‘sports’, ‘culture’, ‘politics’, ‘latest news’. This marks the traditional orientation of Russian local newspapers (and websites probably following them due to inertia of thinking and traditional media practices done by the same people online and offline) towards argumentation and ‘publizistik’, rather than towards news alerts. In their menus, Russian local newspapers until today contain official municipality news (as often they are financed by local municipalities) and information on law and order, rural and agricultural news not found anywhere else, descriptive stories upon local land and news on local industries. Menu entries meaningful for the first wave of local digital media reflect the troublesome state of the country in 1990s – early 2000s, as they focus upon emergency, accidents, crime and corruption, community facilities, and health treatment. In the later 2000s, there are meaningful differences that may reflect social demand for more analytical content (within the 10 most ‘weighty’ tags) and movement towards international agenda (‘world news’, ‘technology’) and professional journalism (‘reportage and stories’). In probable menu structure, it is worth noting that ‘city & community’ tag is competing with ‘latest news’ for #1 entry, and this is a clear indicator of a pool of ‘city media’ in our sample.

This tag repeatedly appears on its place in all the alternative-media datasets, and this means that city media are, evidently, the main cluster of alternative media; this is where an alternative agenda mainly starts from. This means that the new cluster of regional urban media are ready to produce an alternative agenda, as metropolitan urban media models may be corrected and reproduced in regional cities. And this is what has actually been happening, as one may see from the list of 11 regional news portals advised by experts, including *Bumaga* in St. Petersburg, *Vladivostok3000* at the Far East, *Tayga.info* in Siberia, *New Kaliningrad*, and *Downtown.ru* in Voronezh. In their aggregate ‘weighted’ menu, traditional topics (‘politics’, ‘economics’) neighbor city topics (‘various sports’, ‘reportage & stories’, ‘transport & infrastructure’, ‘cinema & TV’), ‘extended’ specialized agenda (‘technology’, ‘education’) and opinion building (‘opinion’, ‘analysis & issues’) in a nice balance. As to the metropolitan media, they openly refuse to include ‘politics’ into their menus, shifting towards arts and social topics close to the urban upper middle class, like ‘kids’ or ‘health treatment’. It is here where an oppositional agenda shows up (in ‘rights & freedoms’ or ‘power & state’), though 5 of 12 portals are specialized, of which 4 are non-political.

Wordle visualization of the differences (Group 1, Groups 2 & 3, Group 4) is given at Picture 2.

**Picture 2. Wordle visualization of the menu tag clouds of Russian online news media: (A) regional and local newspapers (Group 1), (B) local digital media (Groups 2 & 3) and (C) alternative-agenda media (Group 4)**

(A) Russia: Group 1, established before 1992



(B) Russia: Groups 2 & 3, 1994-2013 years of establishment



(C) Russia: Groups 4, 2008-2012 years of establishment





*Comparative analysis.* As we see, in traditional media and those local digital media that followed suite, Italian media were historically more focused on the latest news, sports and politics being all in all more news-oriented, while Russian media focused on regional social, economical and cultural stories being more publicistik-oriented. Despite this difference, the direction that the 'new waves' of alternative media took were similar, as reflected in their menu lists: the agenda opened towards world news, specialized extensions including arts, and topics close to individual level of urban life. Italian alternative media went further on the way of opening to second and third axes of political agenda, while Russian media went more towards social critique. But both lists contain 'world news', 'national news', 'media'(!), 'city & community', 'analysis & issues', 'opinion/forecasts', 'science', 'arts' and 'education'. Thus, our main hypothesis is fully supported. As to the second hypothesis, the process is a bit differently shaped in the two countries. Italian alternative websites are mostly regional in their provenience but are oriented often more to national and world agenda in opposition to local media, thus creating the alternative 'wave' on the local level and showing potential to greater extension of agenda; Russian websites in regions, though, already combine a mixture of traditional, local, urban and 'opinionated' topics, thus showing that metropolitan formats influence regional media startups.

## **Conclusion**

Results of our situational analysis and content analysis provide, to our viewpoint, two sets of implications.

Situational analysis of the two cases allows speculation upon possible indicators in media & political areas that would suggest the forthcoming formation of a 'big', 'cross-cutting', or 'generalist' (non-specialized around a topic or social trauma) counter-sphere. These could be:

- drops of trust to mainstream television and refusal of TV as of the main information source;
- critical rates of Internet penetration and, more important, critical amount of use of social networks in terms of 'online population' share;
- a wave of rise of urban 'advanced lifestyle' print and online media;
- a wave of rise of alternative-agenda media, including regional news portals, with 'extension' of agenda to topics breaking off from traditional left/right deliberation; rhetoric of 'search for true facts / real life' in the foundation of new media outlets;
- fusion of individual media production and activism.

Following the thought of media-based public spheres that are formed throughout the mediated milieus, we could spot the constellations of 'media junctions' and 'waves' of new journalism in Italy and Russia of 2008-2012. We also described the 'wave' character of the rise of the counter-spheres, their orientation to 'real facts'

and person-appealing, issue-based and newly-politicized nature, and its direct connection to mediocratic processes on national level.

Our content analysis provides just one example of how cleavages in news flows may be detected. What we have tried to show was the changing nature of news judgment in the newly-formed counter-spheres. Our first conclusion is that diversification of deliberative climate was strikingly similar in terms of the general split (international vs. national, community vs. national, analysis vs. news, arts and education vs. 'just culture'), but took differing routes in terms of how the traditional menus were extended or changed. Thus, in Italy, alternative media went towards creation of additional axes in right/left cleavages, while in Russia general politicization of non-political topics and issues took place. This reflects the differences in the quality and structure of political competition mentioned above (rotation of right/left in Italy and a long-time split between 'systemic' and 'non-systemic' opposition in Russia).

The second conclusion may seem a bit ahead-of-events but still important. The matter is that the communicative milieus belonging to the counter-spheres tend to close up the same way as mainstream media do, thus breaking the bridges between the two discourses via alternation of agenda, expressing rigid opinions, and acting in a way that often 'parallels' or substitutes state-funded institutions. This social cleavage, which we observe, needs to be carefully described in detail and studied further. Today, we already can name several indicators of formation of such counter-spheres of 'generalist' nature, very dissimilar to 'traditional' counter-spheres based on subculture, hobby, or political radicalism.

For the purposes of this article, it is enough to show similar trends in the formation of new social and communicational cleavages. For further research, one will need to estimate the (anti-)democratic potential of the counter-spheres forming today. If we consider them media-constructed and nation-wide, general criteria for democratic quality of media in a political system may be applicable to assess whether the formation of the counter-spheres rises or lowers the democratic quality of the 'big' national public spheres. One of these criteria, as formulated by Dahl, is alternative information sourcing potential (Dahl 1979; Voltmer 2000). Another criterion would be political inclusiveness, e.g. political involvement parameters' rates for the counter-spheres in comparison to the overall population rates. The third would be the connection between the mainstream and alternative public spheres – judged, for example, by studying agenda flows and opinion sharing. The reconstructed counter-spheres need to be evaluated against these criteria, and parameters of detecting of such processes need to be suggested, in order to be able to detect as soon as possible the rises and drops of efficacy of the national public spheres in other countries, not only in Italy or Russia.



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**Appendix.** Menu structure of online versions of Italian (1) and Russian (2, 3) regional, local, and alternative-agenda media: most ‘weighty’ menu entries and probabilistic menu compositions

(1)

	Local newspapers’ (1664-2009) portals	Local newspapers’ (1664-1992) portals	Local newspapers’ (1993-2009) portals	Digital media with local focus, 1994-2013	Digital media with local focus, 1994-2007	Digital media with local focus, 2008-2013	Alternative-agenda news portals, 2008-2012														
<b>Most ‘weighty’ menu entries</b>																					
1	Latest news	Latest news	Latest news	Latest news	Latest news	Sports	Economics														
2	Sports	Sports	Sports	Sports	Sports	Latest news	Politics														
3	Economics	Regional news	Economics	Local news	Local news	Local news	Culture														
4	Shows&Performance	Economics	Politics	Politics	Politics	Politics	World and Globalization														
5	Local news	Shows&Performance	Culture	Shows&Performance	Shows&Performance	Events	Latest news														
6	Culture	Local news	Shows&Performance	Culture	Regional news	Shows&Performance	Sports														
7	Regional news	Culture	Local news	Events	Culture	Culture	Society&Family														
8	Politics	Work&Career	Regional news	Economics	Society	Economics	Science&Technology														
9	Work&Career	House	Education	Society	Economics	Society	Opinion&Issues														
10	House	Shopping	Nature&Ambience	Regional news	Opinion&Issues	Regional news	Justice&Human rights														
11	Shopping	World news	Society	Opinion&Issues	Travel&Tourism	Opinion&Issues	National news														
12	World news	National news	Work&Career	Health	Events	Health	Other														
13	Society	Politics	House	Travel&Tourism	Work&Career	Cooking&Eating	Shows&Music														
14	Education	Cars	Health	Nature&Ambience	Nature&Ambience	Travel&Tourism	Environment														
15	National news	Events	Crime	Work&Career	Health	Miscellaneous	Social troubles														
16	Opinion&Issues	Travel and Tourism	Opinion&Issues	Cooking&Eating	Free time	Nature&Ambience	Health														
17	Events	Society	Miscellaneous	Education	Education	Art	Education														
18	Cars	Opinion&Issues	Shopping	Art	Cooking&Eating	Work&Career	Media&Regime														
19	Nature&Ambience	Education	Free time	Miscellaneous	World news	Education	Europe														
20	Health	Free time	Events	World news	Art	Other	Middle East & World Regions														
<b>Probable menu structures</b>																					
	<i>Entry name</i>	#	%	<i>Entry name</i>	#	%	<i>Entry name</i>	#	%	<i>Entry name</i>	#	%	<i>Entry name</i>	#	%	<i>Entry name</i>	#	%			
1	Latest news	1	48	Latest news	1	58	Latest news	1	46	Latest news	1	55	Latest news	1	58	Latest news	1	53	National news	1	45
2	Politics	2	42	Politics	2	45	Crime	1	100*	Politics	2	33	Free time	2	38	Art	1-2	38	Latest news	1	35
3	Economics	3	34	Economics	2-3	48	Regional news	2	44	Economics	3	29	Politics	2-3	43	Politics	2	39	Politics	1-2	48
4	Sports	3-4	43	Sports	2-3	44	Politics	2	40	Culture	3-4	37	Events	3	35	Economics	3	32	Globalization	3	36
5	Local news	3-4	ave	Regional news	3-4	ave	Economics	3	39	Events	4-5	32	Cooking&Eating	3	29	Culture	3-4	42	Society&Family	3	Ave
6	Work	4	39	House	4	46	Work&Career	4	60	Society	4-5	31	Nature&Amb.	3-4	38	Work	4	32	Economics	3-4	41
7	House	4	35	National news	4	33	Free time	4	50	Travel&Tourism	5	29	Travel&Tourism	4	38	Travel&Tourism	4-5	35	Culture	4-5	32
8	Shows&Perf.	4-5	35	Local news	4-5	ave	Shows&Perf.	4-5	42	Art	5-6	ave	Society	4	ave	Events	5	ave	Education	5	33
9	Regional news	4-5	ave	Work&Career	5	46	Sports	4-5	41	Sports	6	ave	Economics	4	ave	Sports	6	ave	Justice&Rights	6	Ave
10	World news	4-5	ave	Culture	5	31	Society	4-5	ave	Local news	6	ave	Sports	5	ave	Local news	6	ave	Media&Regime	6	Ave
11	Shopping	5	57	World news	5	31	Shopping	5	100	Nature	6	ave	Local news	5	ave	Education	6-7	44	Europe	6	Ave
12	Culture	5	37	Performance	5	ave	Culture	5	43	Education	6-7	38	Opinion&Issues	5	ave	Miscellaneous	6-7	ave	Health	6-7	55

13	Society	6	ave	Shopping	6	82	Local news	5	ave	Work&Career	6-7	ave	Culture	6	ave	Shows&Perf.	7	ave	M.East&Regions	6-7	Ave
14	National news	6	ave	Education	7	29	House	5	ave	Opinion&Issues	7	ave	Work&Career	6	ave	Society	7	ave	Environment	7	36
15	Education	7	56	Events	7-8	67	Opinion&Issues	5	ave	Shows&Perf.	7-8	ave	Art	6	ave	Nature&Amb.	7-8	30	Opinion	7	Ave
16	Opinion&Issues	7-8	ave	Society	7-8	ave	Events	6	33	World news	7-8	ave	Education	6-7	ave	Regional news	8	ave	Music&Shows	8	Ave
17	Events	7-8	ave	Cars	8	ave	Education	7	73	Regional news	8	ave	Shows&Perf.	7	ave	Opinion&Issues	8-9	ave	Science&Tech	8-9	Ave
18	Nature&Amb.	8	38	Opinion&Issues	9	ave	Nature&Amb.	8	55	Miscellaneous	9	30	Health	7	ave	Other	8-9	ave	Sports	9	31
19	Health	8	31	Travel&Tourism	9-10	42	Health	8-9	60	Health	10	ave	World news	7	ave	Health	9	ave	Other	9	Ave
20	Cars	8-9	ave	Free time	9-10	ave	Miscellaneous	8-9	ave	Cooking&Eating	10	ave	Regional news	8	ave	Cooking&Eating	11	ave	Social troubles	11-12	Ave

\* - we put 'Crime' ('Cronaca nera') here on the second position, rather than of the first one, despite the fact that 'Crime' is placed first whenever it appears on the menu, due to the fact that it appears in just one menu model (newspapers of Dmedia Group) represented by four newspapers with the same menu in our sample (representing, in their turn, over 20 regional newspapers of this media holder).

(2)

Local newspapers' portals, papers before 1992		Digital media with local focus, 1994-2013		Digital media with local focus, 1994-2007		Digital media with local focus, 2008-2013						
<b>Most 'weighty' menu entries</b>												
1	Society	Economics		Economics		Economics						
2	Economics	Society		Society		Society						
3	Sports	Sports		Sports		Sports						
4	Culture	Politics		Politics		Politics						
5	Politics	Culture		Culture		Culture						
6	Latest news	Latest news		Emergency&Accidents		Latest news						
7	Education	Emergency&Accidents		Crime&Corruption		Emergency&Accidents						
8	Law, Order, Persecution	Analysis&Issues		Latest news		Analysis&Issues						
9	Emergency&Accidents	Crime&Corruption		Education		Opinion						
10	Rural news & Agriculture	Education		Health treatment		City&Community						
11	People	City&Community		Community facilities		Health&Wellness						
12	History & Local studies	Health&Wellness		City&Community		Cars	<i>Video content</i>					
13	Official news	Opinion		Health&Wellness		Regional news	Cars					
14	Local news & Stories of the land	Cars		Analysis&Issues		Technology	Regional news					
15	Health&Wellness	Regional news		Cars		Reportage&Stories	Technology					
16	Industries & Local production	Technology	<i>Video content</i>	Entertainment		World news	<i>Blog content</i>					
17	Crime&Corruption	People	<i>Photo content</i>	Opinion	<i>Interviews</i>	Crime&Corruption	Reportage&Stories					
18	Power&State	<i>Thematic projects</i>	Health treatment	Technology	People	Opinion	People	<i>Photo content</i>				
19	Analysis&Issues	<i>Photo content</i>	Reportage&Stories	People	History & Local Studies	People	Education	World news				
20	City&Community	Power and State	World news	Health treatment	Regional news	History & Local Studies	Power&State	Crime&Corruption				
<b>Probable menu structures</b>												
	<i>Entry name</i>	#	%	<i>Entry name</i>	#	%	<i>Entry name</i>	#	%	<i>Entry name</i>	#	%
1	Politics	1	52	Latest news	1	61	Latest news	1	70	Latest news	1	70
2	Latest news	1	39	City&Community	1	35	City&Community	1	36	City&Community	1	34
3	Economics	2	35	Economics	2-3	46	Politics	1	33	Politics	1-2	45
4	History & Local studies	2-3	36	Society	3-4	45	Economics	2	32	Power&State	2	44

5	<i>Video content</i>	3	38	Culture	4-5	38	Crime&Corruption	4-5	44	Economics	2-3	41
6	City&Community	3	33	Emergency&Accidents	5	ave	Culture	4-5	41	Society	3	32
7	Power&State	3	ave	Education	5-6	40	Society	5	ave	Culture	4-5	37
8	Society	3-4	33	Sports in general	5-6	36	Community facilities	5	ave	Emergency&Accidents	4-5	29
9	Rural news & Agriculture	4-5	30	Analysis&Issues	6	ave	Education	5-6	39	Cars	5	ave
10	Culture	6	26	Regional news	6	ave	Health treatment	6	ave	Education	5-6	42
11	Crime&Corruption	7	ave	Health treatment	6-7	ave	Emergency&Accidents	6-7	ave	Sports in general	5-6	40
12	<i>Thematic projects</i>	7	ave	Health&Wellness	6-7	ave	<i>Interviews</i>	7	ave	<i>Interviews</i>	5-6	38
13	Education	7-8	ave	Crime&Corruption	6-7	ave	Regional news	7	ave	Analysis&Issues	5-6	ave
14	Health&Wellness	7-8	ave	World news	7	ave	Sports in general	7-8	39	Regional news	5-6	ave
15	Industries & Local production	7-8	ave	<i>Video content</i>	7-8	ave	Cars	7-8	ave	Crime&Corruption	6-7	33
16	Law, Order, Persecution	8	ave	Cars	8	ave	<i>Photo content</i>	7-8	ave	World news	6-7	ave
17	Sports in general	8-9	33	Photo content	8	ave	Health&Wellness	8	ave	Health treatment	7	26
18	Emergency&Accidents	9	ave	Technology	8	ave	Opinion	8	ave	Reportage&Stories	7	ave
19	<i>Photo content</i>	9	ave	People	8	ave	Analysis&Issues	9	ave	<i>Blog content</i>	7-8	31
20	Analysis&Issues	9	ave	Reportage&Stories	8-9	ave	Entertainment	9	ave	People	8	ave
21	People	10	ave	Opinion	10-11	ave	History & Local Studies	11	33	<i>Video content</i>	8-9	ave
22	Local news	10	ave	-	-	-	People	11-12	ave	Technology	9	ave
23	Official news	11	ave	-	-	-	-	-	-	<i>Photo content</i>	9	ave
24	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Opinion	12	ave

(3)

All alternative-agenda news portals, 2008-2012		Metropolitan alternative-agenda news portals		Regional and local alternative-agenda news portals		Pro-government 'alternative' portals, mid2000s – 2012	
Most 'weighty' menu entries							
1	Society		Arts		Society		Politics
2	Economics		Society		Economics		Economics
3	City&Community		Economics		Latest news		Society
4	Arts		City&Community		City&Community		Emergency&Accidents
5	Education		Opinion		Culture		Opinion
6	Entertainment		Kids&Youth	<i>News to use</i>	Various kinds of sports		Sports in general
7	Analysis&Issues	<i>News to use</i>	Entertainment	Kids&Youth	Politics		Culture
8	World news	Analysis&Issues	Health treatment	Entertainment	Technology		<i>Photo content</i>
9	Kids&Youth	World news	Education	Health treatment	Regional news		Analysis&Issues
10	Health treatment	Kids&Youth	World news	Education	People		<i>Blogs&amp;Multimedia</i>
11	Latest news	Health treatment	Analysis&Issues	World news	Sports in general		Show business
12	Culture	Latest news	National news	Analysis&Issues	Emergency&Accidents		Cars
13	National news	Culture	Forecasts&Reviews	National news	Education		<i>Video content</i>
14	Cinema&TV	National news	Science	<i>Photo content</i>	Transport&Infrastructure		-
15	Media	Cinema&TV	Cinema&TV	Forecasts&Reviews	Reportage&Stories		-
16	Politics	<i>Blogs&amp;Multimedia</i>	Media	Science	Cinema&TV		-
17	Forecasts&Reviews	<i>Photo content</i>	Rights&Freedoms	Cinema&TV	Opinion		-

18	Science	<i>Thematic projects</i>	Culture	<i>Blogs&amp;Multimedia</i>	Analysis&Issues	<i>Blogs&amp;Multimedia</i>	-					
19	Regional news	Media	Books&Literature	Media	Entertainment	Analysis&Issues	-					
20	Various kinds of sports	Politics	Power&State	<i>Thematic projects</i>	Social security	Entertainment	-					
<b>Probable menu structures</b>												
	<i>Entry name</i>	#	%	<i>Entry name</i>	#	%	<i>Entry name</i>	#	%			
1	Latest news	1	50	National news	1	67	Latest news	1	42	Analysis&Issues	1	100
2	National news	1	50	CinemaTV	1-2	100	Society	1	33	Economics	2	100
3	World news	2	33	World news	2	40	Education	3	40	Politics	2	ave
4	Education	3	40	Entertainment	4	100	Technology	3	ave	Society	3-4	ave
5	Science	4	67	Science	4	67	Transport&Infrastructure	4	100	Emergency&Accidents	5	100
6	Arts	4	ave	Arts	4	ave	Economics	4	43	Sports in general	6	100
7	Kids&Youth	4	ave	Kids&Youth	4	ave	Cinema&TV	4-5	67	Culture	7	100
8	Cinema&TV	4	ave	Opinion	4-5	ave	Politics	4-5	ave	Opinion	7	ave
9	Culture	5	33	Health treatment	5	100	Social security	5	100	Cars	8	100
10	Society	5	ave	Culture	5	67	Reportage&Stories	5-6	ave	Show business	9	100
11	Politics	5	ave	<i>News to use</i>	5	ave	Culture	6	ave	<i>Photo content</i>	10	100
12	Forecasts&Reviews	5	ave	Forecasts&Reviews	5	ave	Regional news	6	ave	<i>Blog content</i>	11	100
13	Opinion	6	ave	<i>Blog content</i>	5	ave	People	7	50	<i>Video content</i>	12	100
14	Health treatment	6	ave	Education	6	ave	Sports in general	7	50			
15	<i>Photo content</i>	7	33	Media	6	ave	Emergency&Accidents	7	50			
16	Economics	7	ave	<i>Photo content</i>	7	50	Analysis&Issues	9	ave			
17	Media	7	ave	Power&State	7	ave	<i>Blog content</i>	9-10	ave			
18	Analysis&Issues	8	ave	Society	8	67	City&Community	10	ave			
19	<i>Thematic projects</i>	8	ave	Analysis&Issues	8	ave	Opinion	11	ave			
20	<i>Blog content</i>	9-10	ave	<i>Thematic projects</i>	8-9	ave	Various kinds of sports	12	100			
21	Entertainment	10-11	ave	Economics	9-10	ave	Entertainment	13-14	ave			
22	City&Community	11	ave	Books&Literature	9-10	ave	-	-	-			
23	Various kinds of sports	12	100	City&Community	12	ave	-	-	-			
24	<i>News to use</i>	15-16	ave	Rights&Freedoms	19	ave	-	-	-			