The Russian Media System in the Context of BRICS

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What is BRIC?

• BRIC as an acronym for four countries: Brazil, Russia, India and China
• Countries of big populations and growing economies
• By 2050 they would have constitute the largest and most influential economies in the world
• Economic strength will lead to political influence, with BRIC shaking the geopolitical balance of the international system
From BRIC into BRICS

• 2010: Inclusion of *South Africa* into the BRIC group: five countries in BRICS, covering
  • 30 percent of the world’s landmass
  • 42 percent of the world’s population
• 2012 Indonesia began efforts to join BRICS: the world’s fourth largest population would expand BRICS to the Islamic World – BRIICS
## Summit meetings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June 2009</td>
<td>Ekaterinburg, Russia</td>
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<td>April 2010</td>
<td>Brasilia, Brazil</td>
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<td>April 2011</td>
<td>Sanya, China</td>
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<td>March 2012</td>
<td>New Delhi, India</td>
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New project *Media Systems in Flux: The Challenge of the BRICS countries*

- Proposal submitted to Academy of Finland
- Theoretical concepts of
  - media system
  - role of media and journalists in democracies
  - freedom and independence of media
- Empirical mapping of
  - citizen participation in and through media
  - professional orientation of journalists
  - education of journalists
Earlier research on Russia

• *Russian Media Challenge*

• *Russian journalist in the context of change*
  (Pasti 2004)

• *Witnessing Change in Contemporary Russia*
  (Nordenstreng & Pietiläinen, in Huttunen & Ylikangas 2010)

• *Russian Mass Media and Changing Values*
  (Rosenholm, Nordenstreng & Trubina 2010)
Russia in BRICS: Initiator

• President Putin’s proposal for practical collaboration
• September 2006: a series of high-level meetings of BRIC countries in New York City
• May 2008: a full-scale diplomatic meeting in Yekaterinburg
• 2010 President Medvedev: “Russia would like the cooperation between the BRIC countries to become a major factor of multilateral diplomacy and to make a substantial contribution to promoting the nascent multipolarity and development of collective leadership by the world’s leading countries.”
Russia: Most equal within BRICS

• Inequality in Russia is growing more slowly than any of the BRIC countries
• Incomes are more evenly distributed than in the United States (Business New Europe 2010)
• Sweden is the most equitable nation on earth with a gini coefficient of 23 and Namibia is the least with 70
• Russia’s gini coefficient from 39.9 in 2001 to 42.3 in 2008 – lower than the USA and lower than any of the other BRIC countries
BRIC middle class

Size of the BRIC middle class

- Russia: 68%
- Brazil: 31%
- China: 13%
- India: <3%

Note: Based on per capita PPP income of $6,000.
Source: National statistics services
Russia’s media system: Paradoxes

• First paradox: Media market

• On the one hand, this is ranked $10^{th}$ in the world by economic indicators (Pankin 2010)
• On the other hand, nearly 80% of the press consists of non-market publications affiliated closely with financial-industrial groups and partially serve as a cloak for business, or state-owned organizations with financing from regional and local budgets
Russia’s media system: Paradoxes

• Second paradox: Marriage of liberalism and authoritarianism

• On the one hand, the same logic of commercialization, concentration, convergence as in the West - to homogenization of media systems and the triumph of the liberal model

• On the other hand, the authoritarian approach of the government: “instrumentalization of media” (Zassoursky 2004) and “market authoritarianism” (Shevtsova 2005)
Russia’s media system: Paradoxes

• Third paradox: Profession itself

• On the one hand, journalism is a dangerous job: “Over 300 killed, majority in home cities”
  (Pavel Gutiontov, Russian Union of Journalists in 2000)
Russia’s media system: Paradoxes

• On the other hand, journalism is a very fashionable occupation: the growth of journalism schools, number of applicants, many from wealthy families

• Journalism shines as PR and show business, where big money moves and personal career advancement is achieved, especially in large cities
Russia’s media system: Paradoxes

• Fourth paradox: Democracy vs. job

• On the one hand, the deterioration in the quality of democracy with a decline of media freedom

• On the other hand, the satisfaction of the majority of journalists with their jobs
World Audit Democracy: Russia

http://www.worldaudit.org/countries/russia.htm

• Out of 150 countries Russia occupied place 134 – between Yemen and Chad

• Democracy rank in last 13 years from place 106 to 136

• Press freedom rank 130

• Corruption rank 127 – twice worse than China’s (61) and what Russia had 10 years back (76)
Editorial autonomy 1992-2008

I. If you get a good idea for publication, how often are you successful? (Always)
- 1992: 61.00%
- 2008: 20.00%

II. How independent are you in the selection of news, topics, problems of coverage? (Fully Independent)
- 1992: 60.00%
- 2008: 20.00%

III. How independent are you in emphasizing ideas or aspects which in your opinion are important to your material? (Fully Independent)
- 1992: 54.00%
- 2008: 22.00%
Satisfaction increased

- Number of independent reporters decreased from two thirds in 1992 to one fifth in 2008

- Main constraints in the work in 2008 were the local authorities and the editorial bosses

- Who were satisfied with their jobs increased in 2008 (72%) in comparison to 1992 (62%)
Two main trends of Russian media system

- **Etatization**
  - Gives obvious guarantees against market uncertainty
  - At the same time it does not impede

- **Commercialization**
  - Journalism finds itself being with the state and market
  - Typical journalist is a happy journalist with two identities: loyal staff employee and market freelancer
China as point of comparison (Sparks 2010)

• Russia and China - the fourth media model *authoritarian corporatist*

• China’s specifics: no change in the political structure

• Communist Party recruits the young and talented, still ideologically hegemonic

• China provides a refutation of repeated assertion that the middle class is the natural bearer of democracy
China’s specific
(Sparks 2010)

- State broadcasters and market oriented
- High importance of connections, personal power networks and family privileges
- Non-transparency of media ownership
- Political control with strong market orientation
- Corruption in the media and political intervention of the party committees
Russia with similar specifics

• State (in)directly control Russian media
• Unclear who really owns media, non-transparency of media market as in Russian economy at large
• Journalists do not look fighters for democracy
• Corruption is taken as a private matter
• Family privileges and personal networks
Russia and China

• Political control over media

• Market-driving orientation of media and journalists

• Conformism by default among professionals
Protest growing in both countries

- Communist Party rule is challenged by widespread discontent amongst workers and peasants, often spilling over into savage anti-authority riots
- In China 450 riots in year have been suppressed
- In Russia social networks (Facebook, vkontakte) had played the important role in rise of protest movements on winter 2011-2012
- They forced to change agenda of internet media (Morev 2012)
Thanks for your attention!

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