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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

- June 2009 Ekaterinburg, Russia
- April 2010 Brasilia, Brazil
- April 2011 Sanya, China
- March 2012 New Delhi, India

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*
(Nordenstreng, Vartanova & Zassoursky 2001-2002)
- *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)

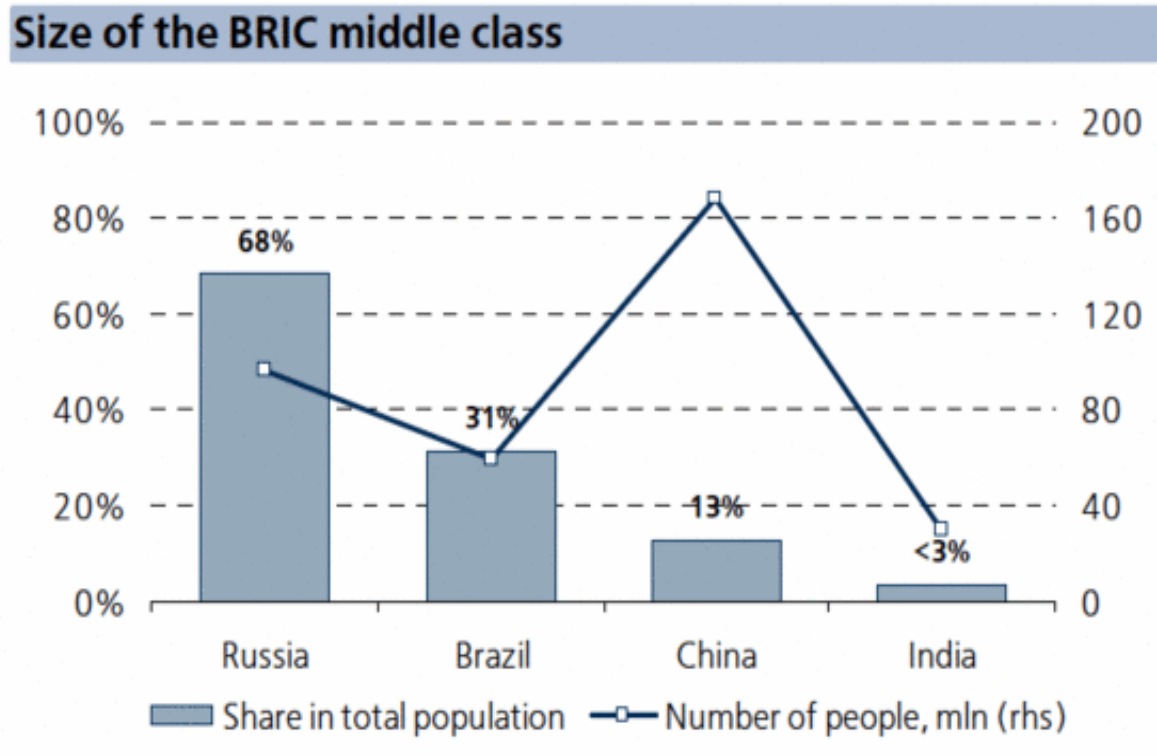
Russia in BRICS: Initiator

- 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



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 10th 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

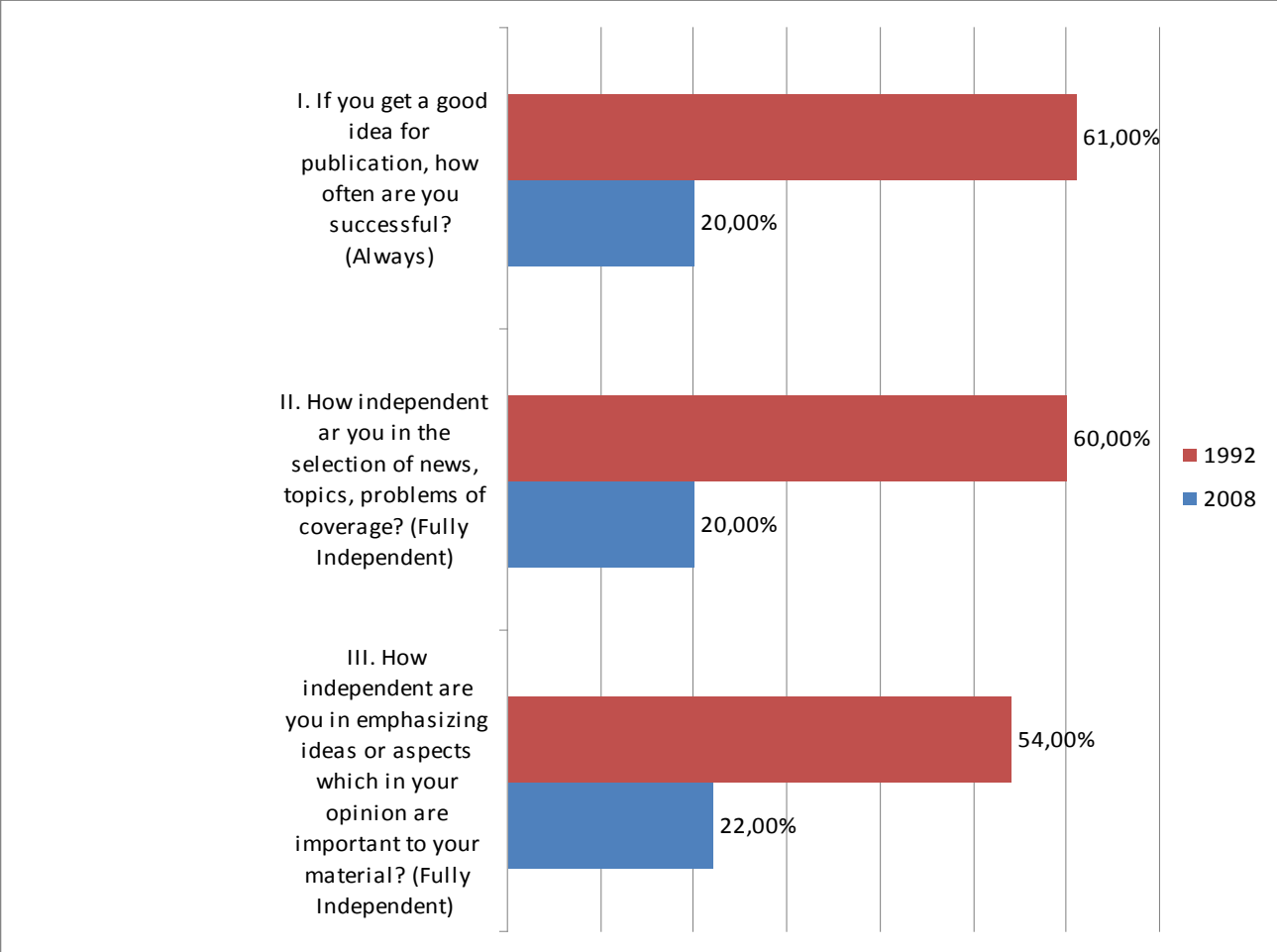
- Fourth paradox: Democracy vs. job
- On the one hand, the deterioration in the quality of democracy with a decline of media freedom
- On the other hand, the satisfaction of the majority of journalists with their jobs

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



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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