

Russian internet news sites, 2008–2018.

# RHETORIC IN TEXT AND INFORMED AUDIENCES

by **Rutger von Seth**

## abstract

The short-lived apex of journalistic freedom that took place after Perestroika in the late 1980s and early 1990s has been followed by setbacks and stagnation of press freedom, in particular since Putin's accession to power in 2000. Despite this, qualitative text analysis of commentary articles in some of the most important current Russian news sites strongly indicates that during 2008–2018, readers of news sites were increasingly addressed as active and knowledgeable citizens. Four case studies are examined to cast light on the period, using the following methods: focusing on argumentation analysis, exploring whether arguments are valid, and the means of persuasion used. The findings imply that a number of Russian Internet outlets have strengthened their role as advocates of the Fourth Estate. The results further indicate a sharp distinction between news sites utilizing traditional Western journalistic devices, and those employing a traditional Russian/Soviet journalistic approach. Thus, the social roles of the audiences were to a certain extent reinforced during the period investigated, 2008–2018.

**KEYWORDS:** Russian news sites, argumentation analysis, journalism roles, citizen roles.

**T**he concept of free media currently seems to be in a process of transformation. The Fourth Estate's original role was to act as a watch dog and source of information for citizens vis-à-vis institutionalized power, above all the state. Western media today are increasingly cooperating with organs of state, big business, and other entities that are outside the reach of democratic control. In many polities, leading broadcast media in particular comprise state television outlets in tandem with governing parties.

At present, there is a considerable degree of interest in the propagandist role of Russian media outlets, such as RT (formerly Russia Today) and Sputnik, and how “trolls” are producing so called fake news both in Russia and abroad.<sup>1</sup> Today, the state of the Russian media has been radically changed by the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. The press and freedom of expression have been severely undercut<sup>2</sup> and many papers and news sites have been at least temporarily restricted, and subject to other encroachments since. At the same time, the majority of Russians seem to be on board with the media's interpretations.<sup>3</sup>

However, it is crucial to continue focusing attention on the everyday flow of news and opinion journalism. The recurring – but shifting – elements of news discourse have an important function for citizens' perception of their places and roles in society. Through a close reading of Russian media discourse, we may ascertain what social roles and identities the media assign to citizens as participants in politics and society at large. Citizens who



President Boris Yeltsin waves at the reporters on August 22, 1991.



Perestroika and Glasnost was introduced in 1985.

gain information about the world are formed as an audience by participation and consumption of mediated communication – the specific uses of language construct certain social relations and identities.<sup>4</sup>

A very limited number of studies have been carried out investigating the qualitative aspects of news output in Russia during the 2000s.<sup>5</sup>

This paper investigates what happened in Russian media production during the ten year period between 2008 and 2018, prior to the current Ukraine war. Could the media be said to have reflected the interests of the citizens? The analytical focus is on Russian Internet news sites from 2008 to 2018 that comprised the least controlled, and only growing, news medium during the period.<sup>6</sup> A total of eight sites in question was examined: *Novaya gazeta.ru*, *Meduza.io*, *Kommersant.ru*, *Lenta.ru*, *Vzgliad.ru*, *Vesti.ru*, *Rossiiskaia gazeta.ru* and *Zavtra.ru*. The first four can be broadly considered oppositional and the second four are regarded as pro-government. A qualitative reading of four case studies appearing on the eight sites during the period comprises the empirical focus of the present study. The project was part of a larger research scheme.

I START BY PRESENTING a historical overview of the Russian media landscape; a specific glance into the Russian online news media, followed by a look at role conceptions of Russian journalism, and then a short research survey of qualitative text studies on Russian media. This is followed by a presentation of the findings. I look at Internet news coverage of case studies, two foreign (but with Russia as an active part) and two domestic ones, namely the Georgian War of 2008, the parliamentary election of 2011, the Crimean Crisis of 2014, and the pension reform of 2018. The research question is: What linguistic means of persuasion are mainly utilized, and what ramifications for the audiences do

argumentative modes in the materials have? The hypothesis of this study is that to a considerable extent, Russian news sites, during the period of study, did fulfil the role of the Fourth Estate. The four case studies are intended to produce evidence relating to this statement. Firstly, a brief on the development of Russian journalism and some historical perspectives.

### Perestroika and glasnost

In the Soviet Union mass communication served as a tool for the Communist Party to propagate policies.<sup>7</sup> Journalistic representations were to be in accordance with the Socialist perspective, with the implication that “truth” had nothing to do with objectiveness.<sup>8</sup> Instead, the press came to present an idealized view of society, illustrating how it ought to be.<sup>9</sup>

Perestroika and Glasnost, the transformation of society that was introduced in 1985, changed the role of the media. Journalism started to address the needs and interests of the reading public.<sup>10</sup> Journalists expressed personal opinions;<sup>11</sup> timeliness of news items, as well as reporting on negative news, became more important;<sup>12</sup> articles were audience-related and addressed

the concerns of ordinary citizens;<sup>13</sup> and articles critical of the authorities doubled in number.<sup>14</sup> Gradually, papers developed an independent relationship to major political actors, in particular the Communist Party. The positive developments for the Russian media culminated in the 1990 Media Law, stipulating the abolition of censorship, permission of private ownership of outlets, and journalistic independence of editors/owners.<sup>15</sup>

### The Russian Federation

“Shock therapy” and the ensuing economic crisis that set in after the dissolution of the Soviet state in 1991 led to a deep crisis for the media, in particular for the press. One in five dailies disap-

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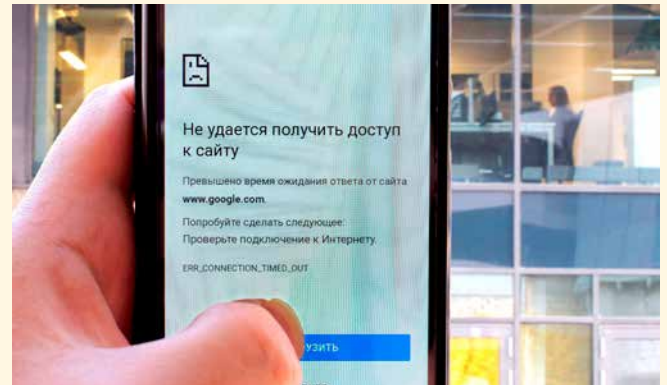


The non-state media's coverage of the Chechen war in 1994 led to strong antipathy from the authorities.

peared from the market, and circulation fell sharply.<sup>16</sup> By 1998, overall circulation had plummeted to only 20 percent of what it was in 1990.<sup>17</sup> During the first five years of the new, democratized Russia, the political arena was characterized by turmoil. During the 1996 presidential election, all the important media had finally taken a stand for the incumbent, President Yeltsin. The first decade post-1991 made the public associate the concepts of democracy, market economy and free press with economic and social hardships, as well as political chaos. The non-state media's (NTV) coverage of the Chechen war (1994) led to strong antipathy from the authorities. The free press was attacked by state officials, who used the term "permissive journalism" as a pretext for legal measures intended to increase control over the media system.<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, many thought it was simply irresponsible of the mass media to report information impartially. A survey conducted in 2002 indicated that relatively few Russians thought it was the task of the media to be objective in their reporting.<sup>19</sup> In fact, they believed that biased reporting is appropriate.<sup>20</sup>

**YET WESTERN SCHOLARS** have been prone to state too quickly that Russians wanted Soviet style journalism back.<sup>21</sup> Modern Russian news making is a product of the 1990s oligarch capture and economic crisis, followed by new forms of authoritarianism.<sup>22</sup> Moreover, self-censorship, which is a characteristic of Russian journalism,<sup>23</sup> depends on both political pressure and threats – but also on modern-day Russian journalists in the making.<sup>24</sup> Russian journalism is fragmented and driven by countervailing forces. As for the public, Russians have no experience of a free market and that it can regulate free speech; this might be a reason why they seemed to rely on the state to ensure it; and hence their preferences for more "biased" reporting.

Further, after Putin's accession to power in 2000 a number of laws were enacted aimed at controlling freedom of expression. The 2002 Law on Extremism stipulates the right of any federal organ to close outlets if they believe media are "involved in extremist activities".<sup>25</sup> A very broad range of content falls under "extremism", including terrorism; violence – and criticism of the state: any political opposition to the state government may



Roskomnadzor was created in 2008 with the purpose to block or blacklist media that are alleged to spreading unlawful material.

be classified as "extremist". There is also the "Yarovaia Law" that restricts journalism entities that are regarded as "foreign agents". Subsequently, the use of law enforcement (what we may call "lawfare") procedures to bring about changes in ownership or orientation has become widespread.

### The Russian online news media

The press and broadcast media have been subjected to harsh state regulation, severely limiting their freedom of expression. Audience figures have been affected. Between 2010 and 2020, the television audience has diminished from 87% to 71%, and trust in television has diminished while trust in internet news sites has risen.<sup>26</sup> The Internet, on the other hand, is a steadily growing part of the public sphere in terms of audiences, or users (74% in 2017, 79% in 2020).<sup>27</sup>

However, the RuNet is also subjected to state control. Control is enacted above all by indirect regulation of online speech<sup>28</sup> and transfer of media ownership.<sup>29</sup> Most outlets are controlled directly or indirectly by the government, through government corporations, or by regime-friendly businessmen. Russian journalists have not experienced any direct control as in Soviet times, but a host of economic and legal measures, as well as threats.<sup>30</sup>

In 2008, Roskomnadzor was created, the purpose of which is to block or blacklist media that are alleged to be spreading unlawful materials. This agency can revoke their state licenses – without a court decision. Since the establishment of Roskomnadzor, state interference on the Internet is more extensive, with exhaustive and pervasive filtering practices.<sup>31</sup> The blocking of websites has decisively restricted freedom of expression on the Internet.<sup>32</sup> Since non-compliance with blocking notifications leads to liability, Roskomnadzor acts as a collateral censor. This problem is caused not only by vague legal definitions, e.g., "extremism", but also by the strategic tactics applied by Roskomnadzor.<sup>33</sup>

**A SIGNIFICANT PORTION** of the Russian Internet is regulated post-publication and without court oversight, which poses the risk of politically motivated blocking. Since 2010, RuNet is also con-

trolled by “digital vigilantes” reporting on negative (unlawful) online content. The MSB (Youth Security Service) collaborates with “citizen investigators” cooperating with the police.<sup>34</sup> The prosecution of citizens for sharing and liking content has also served to reinforce individuals’ restraint, or self-censorship, on speaking out online.<sup>35</sup>

In Russia, oppositional outlets such as Lenta.ru (which transitioned to a pro-government stance in 2014 after its editorial team was replaced as a result of regime pressure), Dozhd’.ru and Novaiagazeta.ru have been consistently blocked and attacked by the government on numerous occasions.<sup>36</sup> In sum, authorities can block access, prosecute and intimidate both users and journalists to deflect attention from content on the Internet.

## Role conceptions in Russian journalism

According to a survey among contemporary Russian journalists, journalism often becomes a tool for propaganda in the hands of authorities and businesses.<sup>37</sup> How did this come about? Journalism textbooks emphasize that news representations should not be “exclusively based on truth”<sup>38</sup> or “objective reporting”.<sup>39</sup> In addition, Russian journalists believe that journalism “should be assigned a higher cultural mission”, rather than simply to inform. Thus, objectivity plays at best a subordinate role.<sup>40</sup> It appears that the current (2008–2018) Russian journalist is assigned an uncritical role as in Soviet times, rather than engaging in free journalism. It seems that conditions for the Russian media to develop, as it were, a third standpoint as a political actor do not exist as journalists are exhorted to take sides in conflicts. There are thus ample opportunities for traditional Soviet-type news production in Russia.

Nevertheless, in contemporary Russia during the period studied there are a limited number of regime-critical outlets facing ongoing repression of their freedom of expression. But their activities, according to Slavtcheva-Petkova,<sup>41</sup> bear witness that there are journalists who “practice the kind of ideal journalism Western journalists today only pay lip service to – namely in the public interest with the aim of holding the powerful to account”.<sup>42</sup> Furthermore, other scholars have noted that online journalists still “accumulate substantial political discontent and foster cumulative formation towards authorities”<sup>43</sup> – attesting there are certain elements of dynamic post-Soviet public spheres. We see that we can discern at least some independent alternative news media. Thus, we observe a divergence as to journalism roles in Russia.

## Research overview

Research on discourse analysis or linguistic analysis of Russian newspapers’ role in the democratization process remains relatively sparse. While there have been important works on

the politics of the Russian media – apart from those already mentioned<sup>44</sup> – the qualitative focus on press and online media text discourses exploring how democratic values are related to media output is limited.

In recent decades, however, a few projects have begun to explore discourse studies in Russia. For example, Voltmer finds that *Izvestiia* was more audience oriented in 1988, since articles addressed the problems of ordinary citizens; conversely, the range of topics in 1996 was significantly broadened.<sup>45</sup> Additionally, a recent (2022) examination by Pasti, Logunova and Davydov points out that in 2018, half of the news in the papers *Moskovskii komsomolets* and *Rossiiskaia gazeta* relied on a single source. They emphasize that news had a “preference for official sources” and were “unbalanced and biased”.<sup>46</sup> Furthermore, Pasti *et al* state that the “watch dog function – monitoring those who wield political power – has failed to take root as a norm in the practice of national level journalism”, with this responsibility largely falling to minor “niche media”.<sup>47</sup> Thus, alternative media, however weakly developed, do exist to provide conditions for independent journalism.

## Theoretical framework

Discourse, deliberation, communicative action and validity are some of the core concepts in the theoretical framework.

*Discourse* is shaped by social structures, institutions and generally held norms and values. It is also constitutive, in that it helps to form all those dimensions of social structure which shape and constrain it.<sup>48</sup> Media texts offer interpretational patterns for the understanding of reality<sup>49</sup> affecting the development of institutions and citizen perceptions.<sup>50</sup> The media in the public sphere are central to democracy. Serving as arenas for political dialogue, their treatment of matters of the day has vital importance for how the public perceive and participate in social life.

It should be said that journalistic texts are not objective reflections of facts: Formal choices are choices of meaning: one word rather than another, one grammatical construction rather than another. Where words are different, there will be differences in meaning.<sup>51</sup> Journalistic texts constitute a certain meaning potential. We establish that specific language causes audiences to make certain associations and inferential leaps, and not others.

**THE CONSTRUCTION** of social identities feasible to democracy is largely a function of communicative activity in the public sphere.<sup>52</sup> Identity is crucial in understanding civic agency. In order to participate as an active citizen, it is necessary to regard oneself – and to be regarded – as a citizen.<sup>53</sup> In the public sphere, citizens communicate in pursuit of their interests. This is done by discussion, deliberation and media consumption.

**“IN CONTEMPORARY RUSSIA DURING THE PERIOD STUDIED THERE ARE A LIMITED NUMBER OF REGIME-CRITICAL OUTLETS FACING ONGOING REPRESSION OF THEIR FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION.”**

Such interaction shapes individuals' identities and fosters values suitable for democracy.<sup>54</sup> "Specific uses of language offer certain interpretational patterns for the understanding of reality and also construct certain social relations and identities which are a precondition for the citizens' participation".<sup>55</sup>

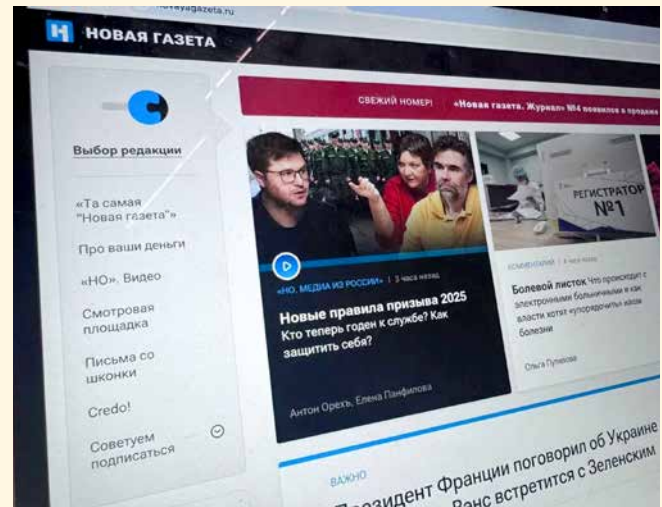
Media language consists of criticizable utterances, the assessment of which is the foundation for arriving at a common definition of a problem. Utterances should have truth-value, i.e., be propositions and have the possibility to be objectively true and criticizable. The quality of political arguments may be assessed according to the degree to which they are valid and criticizable to audiences/users. Related to this, objectivity is understood in the present study as the use of propositions that can be either true or false and thus can build up arguments; or the criterion that a multitude of voices having different opinions on a matter are presented.

**THE VALIDITY OF** uttered sentences (i.e., statements that can be true or false) is cognitively testable to hearers according to whether they are true or false (the objective world) and normatively right or wrong (addressing the social world).<sup>56</sup> Truth and rightfulness are criteria relevant to political journalism, and they will be treated as synonymous in this study. An utterance is valid when the validity-claim (truth or rightfulness) of the uttered sentence is justified.<sup>57</sup> In assessing the speaker's propositions, the reciprocal bonds between speaker and hearer are provided with a rational basis: "The success of public communication is measured by the formal criteria governing how qualified public opinions come about".<sup>58</sup>

## Analytical toolbox

**Argumentation.** The argumentative structure is analyzed above the level of the single sentence. Attention is paid to how words, phrases and sentences are structured together to support theses. In assessing media text arguments, one pragmatic model, the "criterial approach", establishes three criteria that a good argument must satisfy. First, argumentation should be based on propositions, or statements, i.e., sentences that can be true or false. So the first criterion is that an argument should be based on true propositions (truth-claims): are we justified in accepting the premises? The second criterion is that the premises should be relevant to the conclusion. And the third criterion is that the premises should be adequate to support the conclusion. If an argument meets these criteria, one should conclude that it is a valid argument. If an argument fails to meet any one criterion, one should regard it as invalid, weak, or a fallacious argument.<sup>59</sup>

The specific ways that theses are put forward can comprise entire frameworks according to which experience, interpretations and perceptions are labelled and evaluated.<sup>60</sup> From the point of departure of logos, ethos and pathos as major means of persuasion it is possible to discern different modes of rationality in specific article texts. Rhetorical argumentation analysis is chosen for analyzing the sample texts as it pinpoints frameworks according to which interpretations are made in the text. Sentences and utterances can comprise different means of persuasion:



Novayagazeta.ru is one of the news sites examined in this article .

**Logos** denotes utterances dealing with facts that have the property of being true or false, and conclusions, to support theses.<sup>61</sup> Focus on logos implies that argumentation analysis looks primarily at the question of whether argumentations are valid.<sup>62</sup> **Ethos** deals with the effect or appeal of the speaker's character on the audience. Credibility and authority is displayed by linking the thesis and rhetor with what the audience may consider as virtuous, such as being a public authority, "intelligence", or "knowledge". Also, by appealing to the rhetor's (the text's) own authority, authoritative quotations, or the "general opinion", ethos is invoked. Antithesis works by contrasting differing values and entities. Furthermore, goodwill can be established by means of identifying with the audience members, by appealing to a "sense of we".<sup>63</sup> **Pathos** concern appeals to generate feelings in the audience to make them react favorably to the rhetor's purpose. Emotions that are frequently played on are anger, hope, fear, pride, duty, or a sense of justice. Emotions can furthermore be evoked by references to real or fictitious people or events.<sup>64</sup> Figures of speech are important as they make the audience regard a certain phenomenon from a certain angle. In question here are the associations and values that are invoked.<sup>65</sup>

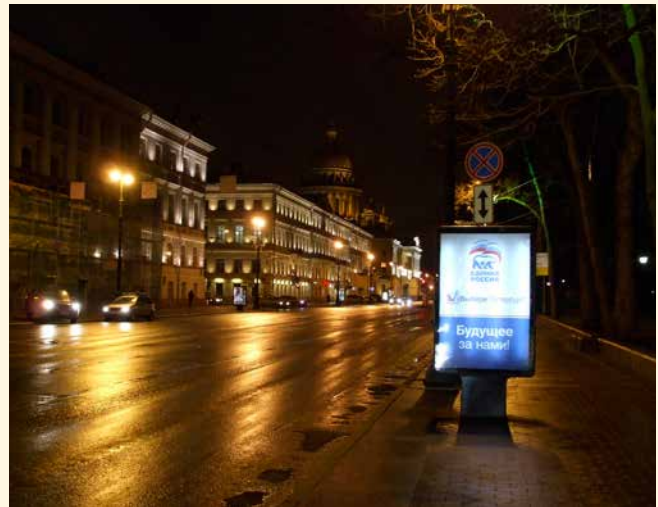
Moreover, texts construct particular social and political relationships. Actors can be "positioned" as passive and ignorant subjects, or active and knowledgeable ones.<sup>66</sup> So, for example, truth can be overridden in political discourse for the purposes of representation and misrepresentation; contents can be characterized by implicit and inadequate or irrelevant ways of representing reality.<sup>67</sup>

## Analytical method

The utterances/wordings leading to the conclusions are the main focus of attention. They can be basically of the logos, ethos and pathos types. Does one of the means of persuasion – logos, ethos or pathos – dominate in the sample texts? Are argumentations valid? If theses are built on valid frameworks, argumentations appeal to active and knowledgeable citizens.



Russian occupying army near Zugdidi in Georgia during the Russo-Georgian war in 2008.



One of many United Russia posters in St. Petersburg on election day, December 4, 2011.

Accordingly, the analysis of the sample texts strives to establish whether texts can be broadly classified as contributory to the development of an active and informed citizenry, even though we know that texts are polysemic. We attempt to make interpretations about audiences, although we are not dealing with reception studies. Conclusions are made based on a linguistic classification of texts, not audiences.

### Citizen roles

The properties of the sample article texts have distinct implications for the readerships. I propose ideal typical ‘citizen roles’, which are defined according to the communicative relationship that is implied through the specific modes of argumentation that are performed. The specific citizen roles are classified accordingly: Critical reflection – low degree of manipulative rhetoric, i.e., the communicative level that is striven for in a functioning public sphere. Functional reception – higher degree of manipulative rhetoric, but largely allowing relevant interpretation of issues. Instrumental repression – which denotes deceptive language that is directed at a passive and ignorant audience.

### Selected text samples

*Article text classification.* The sample has been selected from eight Russian language news sites. It comprises commentary/editorial texts: “opinion piece commentary texts”. This constructed analytical category is based on the general purpose and objectives of a commentary article.

In practice, the criteria of the “opinion piece commentary”

cover genres like *analiticheskii otchet*; *analiticheskaiia korrespondentsia*; *analiticheskii opros*; *beseda*; *stat’ia* and *kolonka*. Frequently, these genres are present under named headlines. Opinion piece commentaries will fall under the traditional category of *analiticheskie zhanry* [analytical genres].<sup>68</sup> It has the following pragmatic criteria: The purpose is to 1) comment; 2) argue a case and 3) persuade

The linguistic criterion for this type of article text has the following characteristics: Texts are A) interpreting and B) explaining – from the point of departure of a number of aspects on one societal problem or issue.

The examination covers 60 opinion piece commentaries. The project is part of a larger study, covering 250 article sample texts.

### Purposes, topics

The sample is aimed at, firstly, reflecting the broad pattern of political views existing in Russia up to the year

2018. Secondly, the sources should exemplify some of the most often visited news sites. Thirdly, the goal has been to mix sources that only appear on the Internet with sources that also are examples of national papers with high circulations.

**THE KIND OF APPROACH** that we are using has not been utilized by other research projects within Western journalism research. The period of study will also reflect “the latest” developments in news sites prior to the Ukraine war. Further, the sample reflects a 10-year period which makes it possible to compare contents over a considerable time span. The sampled topics were chosen because of the high public salience and their potentially high

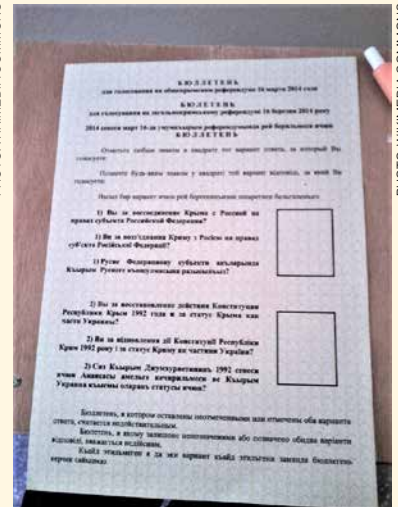
**“THE SAMPLE ARTICLES REFLECT COMMENTARY TEXTS ON FOUR MAJOR SUBJECT-MATTERS DURING 2008–2018. IT COMPRISES TWO DOMESTIC, AND TWO FOREIGN EVENTS WHERE RUSSIA IS A MAIN ACTOR.”**

PHOTO: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

PHOTO: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS



Protest rally against the pension reform in Moscow on July 28, 2018. Various organizations, parties, trade unions, and public associations participated in the rally.



A ballot paper for the 2014 Crimean referendum.

political impact. The samples are also intended to mirror both domestic and foreign news.

**THE NEWS SITES** under examination that only exist on the Internet are: Vesti.ru; Lenta.ru; Vzgliad.ru and Meduza.io. All aforementioned are included on *Statista's* (2021) listings of the ten most popular Russian news sites. *Zavtra.ru*; *Novayagazeta.ru*; *Kommersant.ru* and *RG.ru* are also newspapers. Lenta lost its regime critical staff around 2015 – and is substituted in the sample by Meduza.io. In sum, Vesti.ru, Vzgliad.ru, *Zavtra.ru* and *RG.ru* are considered broadly pro-government, whereas Lenta.ru, Meduza.io, *Kommersant.ru* and *NG.ru* are considered oppositional, or independent.

The sample articles reflect commentary texts on four major subject-matters during 2008–2018. It comprises two domestic, and two foreign events where Russia is a main actor. The article texts reflecting the Russo/Georgian/Ossetian conflict of 2008 have been chosen accordingly: one week prior to the war breaking out on 9<sup>th</sup> August and two weeks directly afterwards. All weekdays were selected. Relating to the parliamentary election of 2011: articles were picked from election day and two weeks afterwards. Selection days: December 4, 5, 10, 12, 15. For the 2014 referendum on the Crimea: articles were picked from the two weeks leading up to the referendum, on 16 March. Selection days: March 3,4,5,6; 14,15,16. For the pension reform of 2018: the day of the announcement of the reform, and during the following week, then two weeks, one month after the announcement. All weekdays were selected. Each article was then randomly selected.

## Findings

*Argumentation. Opinion piece commentary texts.*

All materials can be broadly divided into either pro-regime or regime-critical coverage. The assumption of the examination is

therefore that a regime-critical attitude is the basic criterion of manifoldness of opinion.

The materials show proof of either valid or invalid argumentations.

There is also a category that can be called “near arguments”,<sup>69</sup> i.e., texts that appear as arguments, but in a strict sense are not. In my sample I have two such cases, namely “reports of arguments” and “explanations”. There are also homiletic texts.

*Report of arguments* is a statement that says that X argued in a certain way. Someone else argued *p*; it may be valid and true, but its truth consists only in that it reports correctly how someone reasoned.

An *explanation* is something that is close to an argument in appearance, but tells you why or how something happens rather than that some statement is true (argument).<sup>70</sup>

A *homiletic* text belongs to the fourth rhetorical genre<sup>71</sup> and implies the art of preaching. Homiletic is historically directed at explaining the Bible – but also at creating and confirming a religious community.<sup>72</sup>

## 2008–2018 text examples. Main rhetorical means of persuasion

**Logos.** Logos is a most pertinent feature, especially in *Novaia gazeta*, *Meduza*, *Kommersant* and *Lenta*. It is, however, also an important strain in *Zavtra*, *Vesti*, *Vzgliad* and *Rossiiskaia gazeta*.

1) Discourses about law and ramifications thereof are common in the sites:

The present Russian law on referendums could equally well be renamed as the law making referendums impossible. Because a right exists only when it can be exercised. But the law is such that a referendum in Russia can only be carried out on one condition – on orders

from the top. Judging by the fact that the Central Electoral Commission has already once postponed its examination of the wording of the question that the KPRF has proposed for a plebiscite, the Kremlin has not yet taken any decision on the matter [...]<sup>73</sup>

The argument in compressed form:

- p1: Referendums cannot be carried out if war or a state of emergency prevails anywhere in the country.
- p2: In the country, there are regions where a permanent state of emergency prevails.
- Conclusion: It is not possible to carry out referendums in the Russian Federation.
- This is a valid argument. Throughout, text examples 1– 5 comprise propositions, i.e., sentences that can be either true or false.

2) Foreign political matters with a bearing on Russia is a topic of *Kommersant.ru*:

The Trilateral declaration mentioned a rapid ratification of the START-2 Agreement. But START-2 was never ratified by the U.S., although it was ratified by the Russian parliament. The fact that the U.S. should respect the independence and sovereignty and the existence of state borders... did not stop it from promoting the separation of Kosovo from Serbia --- One can assume that in the foreseeable future, the question will arise of creating in the Black Sea region a nuclear weapon-free zone. Independently of the future status of the Crimea, such a move would be in the interests of both Russia and the U.S.<sup>74</sup>

The argument in compressed form:

- p1: The U.S. has supported the agreement on the Crimea.
- p2: The R.F. has not.
- p3: The U.S. supports the regime in Ukraine.
- p4: The R.F. does not support it.
- C: It is necessary to negotiate a new agreement.
- This is a valid argument. Fact-based statements characterizing reasoning about law characterize this text.

3) Pension reform is discussed in great detail in, e.g., *Meduza*. Different voices participate:

[...]Thesis. Vladimir Putin briefly explained what the problem is with the Russian pension system. In the Great Patriotic War the country suffered enormous demographic losses: millions died – and millions were

never born. As a result, the able-bodied population is diminished and there is nobody that can make the payments for pensions (...) as a result of this, every 25–27 years fewer people are born than there could be. One of these periods was the mid 1990s [...].

Fact check.

In short. In the 1990s it was not that bad; in any case, comparing the demographic problems of the 1990s to those of the second world war is plain wrong. The problems of the pension system are connected not only with demographic problems. [...] (Professor Andreev says that:) [...] people live longer, start working at an older age, spend more time on education, – but the age at which you take out your pension remains the same. Therefore... all developed countries are increasing the pension age.<sup>75</sup>

The argument in compressed form:

- p1: Relevant aspects of Putin’s pension reform proposal are criticized by the use of pro/con premises.
- p2: The pro/con analysis shows that Putin has omitted an alternative reform model. Various relevant voices put forward statements.

C: An alternative pension reform exists.

This is a valid argument. The article is marked by matter-of-factness, but is also highly engaging and involves a number of voices.

**Ethos.** The knowledgeable journalist who possesses explicit opinions, and is therefore authoritative, is frequently present in the materials. It is a tendency that is most pronounced

in *Novaiagazeta*, *Meduza*, *Kommersant* and *Lenta*.

4) For example:

[...] That United Russia might lose on 4<sup>th</sup> December is out of the question. With the margin of safety, that the party, guaranteed by its VP, will not get less than 50 per cent of the vote even if it does not make any particular effort. As pollsters have shown, this party traditionally gets the vote of practically the entire public sector, the whole bureaucracy, all the military, the self-employed, those employed in large corporations, especially those belonging to the state (‘goskorporatsii’) [...]<sup>76</sup>

The argument in compressed form:

- p1: The United Russia Party is striving for a high turnout in regions where the party is strong, and for a low turnout where the party is weak.
- p2: If the economy is too good, however, the party is weak-

**“THE KNOWLEDGEABLE JOURNALIST WHO POSSESSES EXPLICIT OPINIONS, AND IS THEREFORE AUTHORITATIVE, IS FREQUENTLY PRESENT IN THE MATERIALS.”**

ened, because demands for a state governed by law may arise.

C: United Russia will win the election – if turnout in the regions is low, and the times remain tough.

This is a valid argument. However, it is dominated by the knowledgeable journalist, who does not use any quotes or other references, and delivers all arguments and reasoning himself.

5) A “sense of we” is a common trope.

[...]By no means all Russians want to live under Moscow’s rule. And on the other hand, there are certain areas inside the country from which the Russians were driven out a long time ago. The inhabitants of traditional Russian regions, for example the above-mentioned Vologda, do not see anything positive in the Russian Federation. The rights of Russians in Russia are violated more in our country than in Ukraine.[...]77

The argument in compressed form:

p1: The text lines up a number of negative features of the R.F.

p2: Only some of them are mentioned in relation to Ukraine.

C: The Russians in Russia are more oppressed than the ones living in Ukraine.

The text consists partly of propositions, but the argument is invalid. It uses a false dichotomy between Russia and Ukraine. Instead, a strong antithesis is fomented throughout – the one between Russians that are loyal to the state, and those that are not, creating, a strong “sense of we”.

6) Tropes as lengthy quotations linger in *Rossiiskaiagazeta.ru* but also, for example, in *Vesti.ru* and *Vzgliad.ru*. Below is an RG article that quotes six different officials, and the site itself only provides a short presentation of the actors. The piece praises a project by Prime Minister Medvedev – and no commentary is expressed:

[...]The experts have commented on the political initiatives of Dmitry Medvedev.

Vitaly Petrov, head of the Scientific Office [...]

“I notice a couple of things. The first is the consistency.

If we analyze [...]

The second thing is the competition [...]

Finally, I note an openness and competition.”

Leonid Radzichovsky, political scientist and publisher:

“In my view, it is the most interesting project Dmitry Medvedev has presented [...]

Olga Kryshstanovskaya, head of the Institute for Applied Politics:

“Taking in the proposals of Dmitry Medvedev on the political reform...They are very elaborated [...]”78

(A long quotation follows in extenso.).

The thesis in compressed form – no argument using premises, or statements – is used:

The text heaps up in extenso quotations from various of-

ficials and experts. They are all moderately or strongly positive towards the Prime Minister’s initiative. This “unity” is supposed to create trust in the sources. The text has a palpable Soviet feel to it since it is built only on lengthy quotations and has no comment emanating from the journalist.

**Pathos.** Pathos appeals are most common in *Zavtra*, *Vesti*, *Vzgliad* and *Rossiiskaiagazeta*.

7) Negative emotions about the U.S. are frequent:

[...]The U.S. has made another mistake, Gorbachev underlines. – Peace in this region is indeed in everybody’s interest, however, elementary common sense demands recognition of the fact that it is precisely Russia that is linked to the Caucasus through its geographical position and centuries of history. Russia does not strive for territorial expansion, but she has every reason to have legitimate interests in the region [...]<sup>79</sup>

The thesis of the text in compressed form:

The text mostly uses utterances that are not propositions – utterances of ethos and pathos. The article is a description of how in various ways, the U.S. is the main enemy of the R.F. and Georgia. It strongly condemns “powers outside the region” (the West) for poking their noses into the situation.

Texts (7–11; except text 8) generally do not use propositions.

8) Absolutely dominant are appeals to negative emotions. Here about the West:

[...]Now as the Crimea is calmly and decisively deciding its future, Western media again takes to manipulations, claims a member of the European Parliament.[...]80

The argument in compressed form:

p1: The plebiscite is legitimate, as it both encouraged an ‘enormous turnout’ and is supported by international observers

p2: The West and the Ukrainians understand they must exist alongside the R.F, and not interfere

C: A legitimate plebiscite in carried out in the Crimea supported by international experts.

The text contains enough propositions for argument analysis, but is an invalid argument, since few observers from the West are cited (that were mostly highly critical). The claim that the plebiscite was legitimate is based on unacceptable truth-claims. Instead, the article is based mostly on utterances of pathos: Russian national pride and claims that talk of “Western deceit”. General discontent with Ukraine is also palpable.

9) However, positive feelings are also induced, not least in discourses related to President Putin. It is a distinctive feature of the article texts in *Zavtra*, but also in *Vesti*, that government policies are rather harshly criticized at times – but Putin as an individual is beyond criticism.

Table 1. **Dominant means of persuasion in single article texts.** Number of articles distributed according to periods of study.

	2008			2011			2014			2018		
	Logos	Ethos	Pathos	Logos	Ethos	Pathos	Logos	Ethos	Pathos	Logos	Ethos	Pathos
<b>Novaia Gazeta</b>	2						2	1		3	2	1
<b>Meduza</b>							2			5		
<b>Kommersant</b>	2			2		2		1				
<b>Lenta</b>	2				3			2				
<b>Vzgliad</b>					2				2			2
<b>Vesti</b>	2						1					2
<b>Rossiiskaia Gazeta</b>					3						3	
<b>Zavtra</b>	2	1		1		1			4			2

Example:

[...]Russian history knows occasions when great leaders, inspired by some Great Idea of the State, radically changed direction and struck at centers of power. Such was Ivan IV Groznyj, who destroyed the appanage of princes and created the class of service nobility, which ruled Russia for 300 years. Such was Peter the Great (...) Such was Josef Stalin (...) Putin has to choose between greatness and deviousness, between history and political fixes, between a tragic divine eternity and convenience for the short term... Politics have burst out onto Bolotnaia Square, and blood has poured into people's hearts. And the new times that people have been dreaming about so much and anticipating with such passion – the new times have begun.[...]81

The thesis in compressed form:

The text has actually no clear-cut thesis but is an instance of explanation.

A strong sense of 'we' is invoked through the description of Putin's inner and outer development – "into something great and new". Ethos is also played upon by means of the author of the article, A. Prokhanov, who is allegedly highly respected by the audiences. Even so, pathos is the most pertinent textual element. The text is constructed on invocations of shame (a weak people); the threat of the West and the pride of Russia and Putin as the "sole hope". In addition, the article has a sense of the homiletic to it. The description of the unity of Putin's soul and the people is a motif that runs through the text.

10) In addition, drastic language and the ornament of heaping is ubiquitous. In the text below that covers a little more than a single A4 page, and whose topic is the outbreak of hostilities be-

tween Georgia and South Ossetia/Russia, the word "Russia" and "Russian" is mentioned 23 times, and "West" and "Americans" are mentioned 7 times. This overlexicalization gives an idea of the focus of Zavtra's articles in these coverages – it is geopolitics and, for example, not the suffering of the people in the war.

[...]Saakashvili was let down by his abnormal hysteria. Instead of patiently waiting for a suitable occasion to start war under the safe cover of a "victim of aggression", thus fulfilling the main task of his handlers, namely providing the opportunity to portray Russia as the aggressor.[...]82

The thesis in compressed form:

The article has no clear-cut thesis. It is an explanation of how the R.F. has defeated Georgia and stopped Western territorial expansion. The text is constructed around strong utterances of threat (the U.S.), but mainly on claims expressing national pride; national interests; defeat of Georgia and the winning of the propaganda war. Pathos is also manifested by a drastic vocabulary: "terrorism", "blitzkrieg", "lies" and "hysteria" – on the part of Russia's enemies.

11) Pieces on Zavtra seek to confirm a religiously colored viewpoint on a community that is presumed to inspire Russians. The text below is characterized by emotions of explicit hope and aspiration, and it gives expression to a strong sense of commonality. Appeals to God and heaven appear. It uses anaphora: "свою бесконечность ...свое божественное..."

свое небесное...; Каждый русский... каждое наше сердце [...] (*its infinity...its divine...its heavenly...; Every Russian... every heart of ours*).

[...] I will go on talking about the Russian dream. Telling my people that it is the most sublime thing... And now, the

**"THE DOMINANT LOGOS ELEMENT APPEARS AS THE MOST IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENT IN NEWS DISCOURSE SINCE PERESTROIKA IN PARTICULAR."**

Figure 1. **Argumentation.** Article samples and their argumentative characteristics. 60 article texts.

	Major means of persuasion			Valid	Non-valid	No argument
	Logos	Ethos	Pathos			
<b>Novaia gazeta</b>						
11	7	3	1	7	4 Faults: false dichotomy; fallacy of affirming the consequent; unacceptable truth-claims.	
<b>Meduza</b>						
7	7			6	1	
<b>Kommersant</b>						
7	4	1	2	4		3 reports of argument
<b>Lenta</b>						
7	3	4		3		4 reports of argument
<b>Vzgliad</b>						
6		4	2		3 Faults: question-begging. Slippery slope fallacy.	3 reports of argument
<b>Vesti</b>						
5	2	1	2	2	2 Faults: Unacceptable truth-claims; equivocation.	1 report of argument
<b>Rossiiskaia gazeta</b>						
6		3	3	2		3 reports of argument
<b>Zavtra</b>						
11	2	1	8	3	3 Faults: Question-begging; straw man fallacy. Unacceptable truth – claims	5 explanations 3 homiletic

In total there are 60 articles distributed over four case studies.

people will overcome this darkness, and will not lose their dream of the great state... Even in the darkest of days... the Russian dream inspired the divine Russian soul.

“And one officer asked me what I think about the novel by Daniil Andreev, *Roza Mira (The Rose of the World)*

They profess the religion of the Russian dream, because Roza Mira is the Russian dream.

A Russian man feels his infinity, his divine origin, his heavenly duty”.

Each and every Russian is Roza Mira. Every heart of ours is a vessel for the Russian dream. If you listen to your secretive heartbeats; then you will understand that Roza Mira – it’s you! [...]

The article has no thesis. On the contrary, it is the strongest example of the homiletic in the sample.

It is painted with pathos: it contains worries and wrath, that

in the end, “billionaires” will not respect the will of the people (in the referendum). It tells the tale of the “Russian Dream” and the Great State, it talks of the “divine Russian soul”. This tale, the “Rose of the World”, according to the article text, is the future religion which will “unite the people and defeat the Antichrist”. The article is composed by *Zavtra*’s chief editor, A. Prokhanov.

## Summary and results

In **Table 1**, we see that there is a fairly even spread of the major means of persuasion. There is however a clear tendency to use more logos-type persuasion than the other means. Further, there is no significant diachronic difference as regards using different means of persuasion. The differences have to do with the types of sources: whether or not they are regime-critical. The dominant logos element appears as the most important development in news discourse since Perestroika in particular – but also compared with the press of the 1990s and the early 2000s.<sup>83</sup>

In **Figure 1**, we note that propositions (utterances that can be either true or false) are made, and arguments are constructed. As a rule, claims are open to contestation. Thus, claims about how social relationships and states of affairs are to be interpreted

are capable of being assessed. Ratio, reason as a critical and conclusive instance, has gained increased significance.

Arguments are, however, not always valid. And as regards political discourse, invalid arguments are often a result of manipulation, and the truth of the matter does not appear. The fairly numerous uses of reports of arguments and explanations are, however, not to be regarded as flaws of argumentation, but are a standard way of referencing various sources.

Accordingly, logos is the single dominant means of persuasion in the sample. It is particularly pertinent in Kommersant, Meduza, NG and Lenta – but it is also present in RG, Vesti and Vzgliad.

Ethos is still an important means of persuasion, though not a primary one. Frequently, ethos takes the shape of the ‘knowledgeable journalist’ who acts as an authoritative person familiar with the material. This type of ethos is manifest in all sites. Frequently, especially in Rossiiskaia gazeta, longer quotations without editorial comment appear. Varying devices of invoking a ‘sense of we’ are also found in the samples.

**PATHOS IS A KEY MEANS** of persuasion. It is a particularly salient feature in Rossiiskaia gazeta.ru, Vzgliad.ru, Vesti.ru – and not least, Zavtra.

Pathos evokes negative as well as positive feelings. Through overlexicalization it invokes feelings of pride and shame in instances in the sample. For the most part, negative emotions are appealed to – with the exception, interestingly, of Zavtra. Here, frequently positive feelings are invoked. This feature is prominent in the form of various depictions of Russia and its leader. Pathos is also displayed in Meduza, Kommersant, NG and Lenta – yet it occurs more frequently in Vzgliad, Vesti, RG and Zavtra. The homiletic element in Zavtra serves to address the reader in a strongly emotive fashion. Articles appear as highly “morally instructive” for its readers. Zavtra has apparently a close relationship with its audiences.

Finally, we can conclude that the above tendencies in the text materials have been drawn from a fairly small sample of article texts (60). However, the tendency of regime-critical sites to use logos – often enough valid – is evident, whereas regime-friendly sites primarily rather use ethos or pathos argumentation. A larger sample of article texts would plausibly lead to similar conclusions.

We can also note that Pasti et al.’s<sup>84</sup> contention that the norm of monitoring political power holders “has failed” in national level journalism is rather precipitous. On the contrary, as we have seen, we find that very function in Meduza, Novaia gazeta and Kommersant, and in earlier coverage by Lenta.

What implications does this have in terms of audience relationships to the political world? Articles in Rossiiskaia gazeta.ru,

Vzgliad.ru, Vesti.ru, Zavtra.ru generally propose invalid arguments and base their materials instead on ethos; however they primarily use pathos argumentation. Pathos arguments frequently conceal what is in fact at stake as to the subject-matter, and blurs the limits of understanding. Zavtra’s use of homiletics is a special case and it often backgrounds relevant matter in articles. Yet, on the other hand, it does arguably establish a close rapport with its audiences, making them potentially engaged in the subject-matter presented. Lenta.ru, Novaia gazeta.ru, Meduza.io, and Kommersant.ru frequently, more often than the other sites, propose valid argumentations and article texts are fundamentally based on logos. Validity is a guarantee of the usefulness of an argument in a political context.<sup>85</sup> Claims are subject to neutral criticism, assessment – and a multitude of voices is utilized. Ethos (the ethos of the journalist) is, in addition, a major means of persuasion.

## Conclusion

The above has distinct implications for the participants/audiences. Lumbardo *et al.* (2020), as well as previously Mueller (1973) and Bernstein (1971), suggest that implicit and emotive encoding

of messages are effective means of deceptive argumentation in that they serve to encourage diffuse interpretations of doubtful content.<sup>86</sup> By contrast, texts that are marked by an explicit, unemotional and abstract mode of reasoning encourage a critical stance.<sup>87</sup>

**IN THIS REGARD**, Rossiiskaia gazeta, Vzgliad, Vesti and Zavtra deliver implicit and emotional messages and bear the distinct features of the Soviet press<sup>88</sup> – whereas Lenta, Novaia gazeta, Meduza and Kommersant have explicit and reflective features. The implied citizen role

for the readerships of the former sites, even if they are not equal on all points, is therefore tantamount to “functional reception”. The implied citizen role for the latter news sites is “critical reflection”, through which qualified public opinions can be formed.<sup>89</sup>

As we have seen, both journalist education and the general public’s perceptions give rise to expectations that journalism should not be objective, nor should it conform to any concept of Western journalism, based on classic liberalism. State-led attacks against media outlets and individual journalists also occurred during the period under study.

In spite of the fact that there are such negative conditions for free journalism, we have clearly seen that a number of news sites contradict the notion of partisan and biased media. They use validity and plurality of viewpoints in their representations of subject-matter. They present journalism sine ira et studio.

The above conclusions are relevant to the investigated news sites in the Russian public sphere until 2018. Subsequently,

**“IN SPITE OF THE  
FACT THAT THERE  
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SITES CONTRADICT THE  
NOTION OF PARTISAN  
AND BIASED MEDIA.”**

measures were taken against Kommersant.ru, and their staff was exchanged for a more pro-government one. Furthermore, Meduza.io and Novaiagazeta.ru have been blocked during the current war.

**AT ANY RATE**, we saw that in spite of the fact that there are such negative conditions for free journalism, a number of news sites contradicted the notion of partisan and biased media. They were using logos and valid argumentations and a multitude of voices in their representations of subject-matter. It falls outside the scope of the present investigation – but it would seem that these news sites during the investigated period operating in a more open and democratic fashion than most of their western counterparts.

We can also discern a tendency towards more independent journalism in online milieus during the investigated period and that these environments tend to be based outside of Russia (read: Meduza). Developments seem to imply that traditional media are less prone than online media to independent journalism. Further research comparing the press and the broadcast media output with online media would be welcome. ❌

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- 73 "Призрак референдума" [Phantom of referendum] *Novaiagazeta.ru*, July 30, 2018. Original version in Russian "Действующий российский закон о референдуме тоже вполне может быть переименован в закон о невозможности проведения референдума. Потому что право существует только тогда, когда оно может быть реализовано. Но закон таков, что референдум России может быть проведен только при одном условии – по команде свержу. Судя по тому, что ЦИК уже однажды перенесла рассмотрение формулировки вопроса, который КПРФ предлагает на референдума, в Кремле решение по этому вопросу пока не принято."
- 74 "Цена вопроса" [The price of the question] *Kommersant.ru*, March 14, 2014. Original version in Russian "В трехстороннем заявлении сказано о скорейшей ратификации договора СНВ-2. Но СНВ-2 никогда не был ратифицирован США, хотя и был ратифицирован российским парламентом. Обязательство, же США уважать независимость и суверенитет существование границы государств... не помешало им способствовать отторжению Косово от Сербии --- Можно предположить, что уже в обозримой перспективе станет актуальным вопрос о создании в Причерноморском регионе зоны свободной от ядерного оружия. Вне зависимости от будущего статуса Крыма такой шаг был бы и в интересах РФ, и в интересах США."
- 75 "Повышать пенсионный возраст приходится из-за потерь Великой Отечественной Войны и тяжелых 1990–х годов" [It is necessary to raise the age limit for pension due to the losses of the Second World War and the difficult 1990s], *Meduza.io*, August 29, 2018. Headline:) Original version in Russian "Тезис. Владимир Путин вкратце объяснил, в чем трудность с российской пенсионной системой. В Великую Отечественную войну страна понесла огромные демографические потери: миллионы людей погибли миллионы не родились. В итоге трудоспособное население сокращается, делать пенсионные взносы некому (...) из за этого каждые 25-27 лет во взрослую жизнь, в России вступает меньше людей чем могло бы. Один из таких периодов пришелся на середину 1990–х'. Фактчек Коротко. В 1990–е было не так страшно; в любом случае, сравнивать те демографические проблемы с Великой отечественной войной – просто неверно. Проблемы пенсионной системы связаны не только с демографическими проблемами. --- (Профессор Андреев говорит что)... люди живут дольше, начинают работать позже, тратят

- больше времени на образование, а возраст выхода на пенсию так и остается прежним. Из за схожих тенденций... все развитые страны и повышают пенсионный возраст.
- 76 "Ни отдать ни взять" [Neither sell nor take], *Kommersant.ru*, November 1, 2011. Original version in Russian "О том что «Единая Россия» 4 декабря потерпит поражение, не может быть и речи. При том запасе прочности, который ей обеспечивает Владимир Путин, партия не получит менее 50% голосов, даже если ничего не будет для этого делать. За нее, как выяснили социологи, традиционно голосуют чуть ли не вся бюджетная сфера, вся бюрократия, люди в погонах, индивидуальные предприниматели, работники крупных бизнес-структур, особенно если это госкорпорации."
- 77 "Введите воска в Вологду!" [Move troops to Vologda!] *Novaiagazeta.ru*, March 7, 2014. Original version in Russian: "не все русские хотят жить под властью Москвы. И с другой стороны, есть известные территории внутри страны, откуда русские давно изгнаны. Жители традиционных русских регионов, например, уже упоминавшейся Вологды, ничего хорошего от Российской Федерации не видят. Интересы русских ущемлены в нашей стране больше, чем в Украине."
- 78 "События и комментарии. Сделать вовремя" [Events and commentary. Acting in due time], *Rossiiskaiagazeta.ru*, December 23, 2011. Original version in Russian: "Эксперты прокомментировали политические инициативы Дмитрия Медведева. Виталий Петров, руководитель научного совета.: Отмечу несколько вещей. Первая, это последовательность. Если му проанализируем... Второе постепенность[...] \* Наконец движение к открытости и соревновательности [...] \* Леонид Радзиховский Политолог публицист : На мой взгляд, это наиболее интересное послание Дмитрия Медведева[...] \* Ольга Крыштановская, директор института прикладной политики: Воспринимать предложения Дмитрия Медведева по политической реформе... Они очень продуманы."
- 79 "Михаил Горбачев предлагает создать на Кавказе систему безопасности" [Mikhail Gorbachev prepares to create security systems in the Caucasus], *Vesti.ru*, August 13, 2008. Original version in Russian: "США допустили очередную ошибку, – подчеркивает Горбачев. – Мир в этом регионе действительно отвечает интересам всех, но элементарный здравый смысл требует признать, что именно Россия связана с Кавказом общей географией и столетиями истории. Она не стремится к территориальному расширению, но у нее есть все основания иметь законные интересы в этом регионе."
- 80 "' возвращаемся на Родину!' первые итоги 'кримской весны'" "We return to our Motherland. The first results of the 'Crimean Spring'", *Vesti.ru*, March 17, 2014. Original version in Russian: "Сейчас когда Крым организованно спокойно и уверенно решает свое будущее, западные СМИ вновь идут на манипуляции, констатирует депутат Европарламента".
- 81 "Волга Вытекает из болот" [Volga flows from swamps] *Zavtra.ru*, December 14, 2011. Original version in Russian: "Русская история знает случаи, когда великие лидеры, одухотворенные огромной государственной идеей, резко менялись наносили удары по штабам. Таким был Иоанн IV Грозный, разгромивший удельных князей, создавший класс дворянства, который триста лет правил Россией. Таким был Петр I... Таким был Иосиф Сталин --- Путину предстоит выбрать между величием и лукавством, между историей и технологией, между трагической божественной вечностью и сиюминутным комфортом.... Политика вырвалась на Болотную площадь, она хлынула в людские сердца. И новое время, о котором столько мечталось и которое так страстно ожидалось, это новое время началось."
- 82 " Вкус победы" [A taste of victory], *Zavtra.ru*, 13.08.2008.
- Original version in Russian: "Саакашвили подвела его патологическая истеричность. Вместо того, чтобы терпеливо выжидать удобного повода и начать войну только под надежным прикрытием овечьей шкурки «жертвы агрессии», тем самым выполнив главное задание своих кураторов – дать возможность выставить Россию агрессором."
- 83 See, e.g., Murray 1994; Voltmer 2000; von Seth 2013.
- 84 Pasti *et al.* (2022).
- 85 Hughes (2000).
- 86 E. Lumbardo, L. Valluri, D. Baranzini, D.Cimmino, F. Comminetti, C. Coppola, and G. Mannaoli, "Implicit argumentation and persuasion. A measuring model." *Journal of argumentation in context*, vol. 9 (2020): 95–123,1; C. Mueller, *The politics of communication. A study in the political sociology of language*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973).
- 87 Mueller (1973):73; B. Bernstein, *Class, codes and control: Volume 1 – Theoretical studies towards a sociology of language*. (London and New York: Routledge, 1971).
- 88 See, e.g., McNair (1994), Pietiläinen (2002), von Seth (2013).
- 89 Habermas (1999).