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RUSSIAN MASS MEDIA IN KAZAKHSTAN INFORMATION SOCIETY: SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH

The article reflects the role of the Russian mass media in the information space of Kazakhstan, and gives statistics on the number of Russian media in the Republic over the past five years. The author conducted sociological studies, interviewing political scientists on the impact of Russian media on the citizens' public consciousness. The results of the study revealed the prevalence of Russian media in the territory of Kazakhstan and the level of their influence on public consciousness. The author also identified the trends in the Kazakh media evolution, the prospects for their activities in preserving the national identity of the people of Kazakhstan.

Key words: media, television, newspapers, the Internet, Kazakhstan, Russia, public opinion.

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Ресейлік БАҚ қазақстандық ақпарат қоғамдастығында: әлеуметтанулық зерттеу

Мақалада Қазақстандағы ақпараттық кеңістіктегі Ресей бұқаралық ақпарат құралдарының рөлі, соңғы 5 жылдағы статистикалық деректер көрсетілді. Авторлар әлеуметтік зерттеулер жүргізумен қатар, азаматтардың жалпыға ортақ қалыптасуына байланысты БАҚ мәселелері бойынша саясаттанушылармен сұхбаттасты. Қазақстан аумағында Ресейдің пікір қалыптастыру фактісін көрсетті және жалпыға ортақ келісімге қол жеткізді. Авторлар қазақстандық БАҚ-тың дамуын, Қазақстан халқының болашақтағы ұлттық сәйкестігін сақтау қызметін айқындады.

Түйін сөздер: БАҚ, теледидар, газеттер, интернет, Қазақстан, Ресей, қоғамдық пікір.

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Российские СМИ в казахстанском информационном обществе: социологическое исследование

Российские СМИ в информационном пространстве Казахстана занимают особое место. В статье отражается роль российских средств массовой информации в информационном пространстве Казахстана, приводятся статистические данные о количестве российских СМИ в Республике за последние 5 лет. Авторы провели социологические исследования, интервьюирование политологов по вопросам функционирования российских СМИ в РК. Результаты исследования выявили факт монополии российских СМИ на территории Казахстана. Также авторы выявили тенденции эволюции казахстанских СМИ, перспективы их деятельности в сохранении национальной идентичности народа Казахстана.

Ключевые слова: масс-медиа, телевидение, газеты, интернет, Казахстан, Россия, общественное мнение.

Introduction

The one who owns the information, owns the world. Information in a rapidly changing world is really valuable, and that is indeed the case – agree first of all stock market participants. They have experienced the value of information and the destructive power of rumors on themselves, as a result, hit the jackpot, or lost everything.

The information society of a country in the global world, one way or another influenced from the outside: modern technologies, Internet, social networks, TV and more – all served as a catalyst for the creation and dissemination of information and its various products.

The trend of globalization did not miss Kazakhstan, which develops technologies and strives to keep pace with the times, creating conditions for technologies availability. For example, according to the Statistics Agency of the Republic of Kazakhstan on the level of users computer literacy as of 2012, 66.4% of the population are regular users, experienced users make up 11.7% of citizens, beginners 17.4% and only 4.5% of respondents did not have computer skills. The trend towards computer literacy, and thus increase access to information on the Internet is positive. On the one hand it creates conditions for the development of civil society in Kazakhstan, involvement in world community, increase in freedom of speech and expression, and on the other hand is a kind of threat to national identity and security of the country's information space.

However, the Internet is not the only area that forms an information society in Kazakhstan, a major role in this process play the media, designed to cover the events, informing citizens impartially, without manipulating the public consciousness in favor of various parties – the state, private owners, large corporations and others. The basis of any democracy is a free press, independent not only on internal factors but also on the outside.

Material and Method

Studying this issue worth considering of the following factors: historical relationship between Russia and Kazakhstan, current stage of the relationships, culminating at the moment with foundation of the Eurasian Union. It is also necessary to take into account the specificity of the information society in Kazakhstan, which is mainly divided into two categories on the basis of language: Kazakh language and Russian-speaking audience. This factor plays certain role in consideration of the Russian media influence on public conscience of citizens of Kazakhstan.

Scientific methodology

Information only becomes a fact of our life when of real relationships, as innovative or consolidating element. All this indicates that the information is, in fact, the result of reality reflection by a cognizer. Therefore, the adequacy of the reflection is a whole series of conditions and circumstances, which are determined by developing level of knowledge and historically dependent height of the person and measure of its impact on the world around us. A growing array of information, exactly as escalating of society into the information society, should generate not only 'shopy' wishes in the accumulation of knowledge, but also encompass growing public interest in the ever expanding socio-historical horizon of world view and accounting its consequences in science and technology " [1].

Due to the geopolitical position of the country, long border of Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation – 7500 km – makes relations between Kazakhstan and Russia quite close. Historically, fates of these countries are connected, for example, the Kazakh Khanate as part of the Russian Empire existed from the XVIII century to its end. Therefore, the first newspaper that appeared on the territory of modern Kazakhstan, such as "Turkestan ualayatynyn gazety" and "Dala ualayatynyn gazety" published tzar's decrees [2].

The next major step of the relationships was in period of the Soviet Union, when the Kazakh SSR and Russia were part of the same country. Accordingly, the media situations were almost the same – the media were used as a mouthpiece of government, ideology, propaganda [5]. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, relations between Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation have remained close, countries continued cooperation in a number of issues. That's what it said in the letter, "The country's Stability and Security In New Century" of President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev : "After independence, Russia has become not only one of the neighboring states. It is time to understand and accept that a partnership with Russia in the coming century will be one of the indispensable conditions for ensuring strategic security of the country" [3].

This position, taken not only by Kazakhstan, Russia as well has friendly attitude towards the neighboring country: "We in Russia highly value a good neighborhood with Kazakhstan. For us, your country is close partner, and more than that – close friend. Kazakhstan is key ally and reliable business partner. And we know that on Kazakhstan land you express same warm feelings to Russia, to Russian people. After all, we must not forget that behind us

we have several generations of Kazakhstani and Russian people, are inextricably linked by centuries of brotherhood, common life, memory, and just by kindred, what created our common cultural and intellectual wealth, “- Russian President Vladimir Putin said [4].

Kazakhstan and Russia have strengthened their relationships by adoption of the Customs Union, as well as the creation of the Eurasian Union, which in addition to these countries includes Belarus.

“It is the economic component of the model proposed 10 years ago, that proved to be workable in practical terms. We proceeded from the fact that it is not the old political structure, not the restoration of the former USSR, but the economy of national states which can serve as a real basis of integration. Actual experience has shown that neither past political history, nor the unity of cultures and languages nor the presence of powerful ethnic communities, linking the different countries, are not a sufficient basis for the integration process. And for Kazakhstan independence of the state is the issue number 1. We never put into question the independence that our people sought for hundreds of years of struggle. I believe that other nation states feel the same way. And in the case of the integration any state transfers part of its sovereignty to common whole only in order to acquire in this way even greater sovereignty”[5].

Review Ledger

It is necessary to focus on concepts of “information society” and “information” to better understand the importance of the issue under study. In theory of the “information society” D. Bell held the view that industrial society will be more dependent on technology [6], Brzezinski saw in this benefits to the United States [7], I. Masuda believed that the concept of “information society” will expand human interaction [8].

Results and discussion

Thus Kazakhstan information space from the time of joining the Russian Empire is inextricably linked to the Russian media. After the collapse of the Soviet Union it has been more than 20 years, but now Kazakhstan still feels the presence of the ‘neighbor’s’ voice on their territory. Some journalists, political scientists and public figures are concerned with such situation, and some say that it threatens national information security.

“Human rights activist Yevgeny Zhovtis said that Russian media are using modern anti-Western Soviet phobias, conspiracy theory: that all is direct-

ed against Russia, which, they say, is the guardian of “traditional values.” – They are, in fact, form a whole psychology of attitude, including as citizens of Kazakhstan, to Russia’s policy in relation to the events in Ukraine. In view of Russia’s policy – clearly neo-imperialistic, clearly revanchist – Russian media are instruments of this policy – said Yevgeny Zhovtis. Russian policy itself is, according to him, the obvious threat to Kazakhstan’s security, because Kremlin considers as its own interests surrounding post-Soviet space. The personification of Russia’s neo-imperialistic and revisionist policy, according to Zhovtis, is President Vladimir Putin, who sees the disintegration of the Soviet Union as a geopolitical tragedy. At the end of last week Putin, also, announced that in 2018 will once again participate in the presidential elections «. [9]

However, Kazakhstan in its majority does not follow this position, according to the opinion poll of 2016: almost three-quarters of the population of Kazakhstan are Russia positive (73.1%). Indifferently northern neighbor is perceived by every fifth respondent (20.2%), while a negative attitude towards the Russian Federation is expressed by only 5% of the population. Russia, according to the survey participants, in their relations with Kazakhstan, is motivated, above all, by the desire to equal co-operation of both countries (31.3%). The second opinion of the prevalence is that Russia is interested in political and economic influence (27.8% of respondents). One in six said that Russia is interested exclusively in the natural resources of Kazakhstan (15.7%) [10].

Events in Ukraine have become a kind of litmus test for the Kazakhstani society. What is the position of Kazakhstani people in this regard on some extent depends on their political views and opinions formed by media as Kazakhstani and Russian and some foreign media. [11].

Tengrinews.kz News Agency published an article that provides media statistics in Kazakhstan in 2010. «Among the 2700 Kazakh periodicals in Kazakh language is only 453, and 2303 – in Russian. In addition, in the territory of the Republic there are distributed 5.2 thousand Russian newspapers and magazines, of which only 2.7 thousand were registered in the Ministry of Culture of Kazakhstan. Thus, in total volume of media Kazakh language editions occupy only 5.99 percent. As for online publications, only 5.6 percent of sites have content in the Kazakh language, and there are mainly media sites and government agencies. It should be noted, at the same time, the report showed a trend of increasing support of Kazakh language editions by the state. It is mainly carried out by the state orders. So,

thanks to this content in the Kazakh language in the state media is more than 70 percent «[12]. In 2015, according to the Information and Archives Committee of the Ministry of Culture of Kazakhstan in all 2711 existing media in Kazakhstan there are 550 media published in the Kazakh language, 776 media in Russian and 741 media in the Kazakh and Russian – in the Kazakh, Russian and other languages – 654 media.

Thus, there is the fact of the predominance of publications in Russian in the information space of Kazakhstan.

Not less popular is the cable television Kazakhstan, which also has its owners. The predominant channels on cable TV are Russian TV channels NTV, STS, Cinema and many others, are popular among domestic audiences.

Hence the formation of the system of public conscience of Kazakhstanis through the prism of Russian media. The most massive is the TV, which is not presented with alternative channels to Russian and Kazakh ones. The only exception is Russian-language channel «Euronews»[13]. .

Thus, in Kazakhstan, a large percentage of Russian-language press, but this is linguistic issue, not political, and the Russian media often have no relation towards the Russian-speaking mass media of Kazakhstan. «[14]. However, the percentage of Russian media broadcasting in Kazakhstan or local branches of Russian media is quite large, and thus their impact on the information environment and social conscience cannot be ignored. To the question «What are the Kazakhstan media, which in your opinion, have the greatest impact on public opinion,» respondents answered as follows: AiF – 41.2%; Karavan – 33.2%; Vremya – 20.6%; Svoboda slova – 9.7%; Komsomolskaya pravda – 7.6%; Vecherniy Almaty – 5.9%; Kazakhstanskaya Pravda – 3.4%; Panorama – 2.1%; Izvestiya – 1,7%. It is worth noting that occupying the first position in the ranking newspaper «Argumenty i Fakty Kazakhstan» is a regional version of the central Russian newspaper «Argumenty i Fakty». The number of participants in focus-media team entered as favorites newspapers «Karavan», «Vremya», «Argumenty i Fakty», the magazine «Imena», TNT, OTK, ORT, CNL, NTV, Eurasia, KTK, 31 channel, Mir, Rahat. Favorite TV-shows were called «Portrait of the Week», «Profession – Reporter», «Maximum», «Criminal Russia», «Russian Sensations», «The Fight for Responsibility» [15].

According to the results of this study it is also obvious that Russian television is popular among Kazakhstanis. Russian media affect the informa-

tion society in Kazakhstan, positively adjusting it to Russia and its policies, but the extent of political purpose is not known until the end, because the Russian media can work in Kazakhstan for profit. Also, in formation of positive image of Russia partially participate and Kazakhstan state-owned media, which hardly covered the events in Ukraine and in general promote the friendly relations between the neighboring states. Using the Kazakh or Russian language is not identified with origin, the trend of increasing Kazakh-speaking audience understandably leads to a weakening of the influence of Russian media outlets that broadcast in Russian.

Russian channels receive government subsidies for the promotion of information policy among the Russian-speaking population in Kazakhstan. This was mentioned in panel discussion at the VII Mediakurultay, which ran November 14 in Almaty, said General Director of «Channel 31» Bagdat Kodzhahmetov: «This, I think, is not a secret that the Russian mass media (media holdings) periodically receive subsidies from Kremlin to disseminate information outside of Russia (...) this is infopropaganda. They (Russian channels – authors note) broadcast to the whole world, including in Kazakhstan, and that's fine «. [16]

Kodzhahmetov also commented on a noticeable decline in the volume of advertising on TV channels of Kazakhstan. First of all, he says, this is due to factors such as the devaluation, the ban on advertising of beer and pharmaceuticals.

Let's note that the Russian channels are really prevalent in Kazakhstan. According to recent data, 158 Russian TV channels registered in the country, while the total number of foreign channels – 235.

Thus it is possible to draw the following important conclusions:

- Russian media are one of the main agents of influence on Kazakhstan's information space, but their role is gradually weakened with the increase of Kazakh-speaking audiences

- Coverage of world events (the Russian-Ukrainian conflict) to some extent is viewed by Kazakhstan media through the prism of the Russian

- There is a linguistic duality, the difference in the form of information and its perception

- Kazakhstan Society split in connection with the events in Ukraine, according to the principle of confidence in the Russian media

In the study of the preservation of national identity of Kazakhstan mass media, there is a need to study the current situation. An important issue is to determine in which the information space are Kazakhstanis. According to data obtained by the theo-

retical study material (articles, statements of political scientists, public figures) there are a number of factors that indicate a slight degree of presence in and in some cases dominance of Russian media in Kazakhstan's information space.

In order to try identifying in which information space are Kazakhstanis, a sociological poll was conducted on the streets of Almaty by random sampling method. All respondents were asked two questions: «Where did you hear the news?» and «Where do you learn world news?». Summing up the results of the survey revealed that young people prefer to get news from the Internet, while older people watch television and read newspapers. Also, the trend of Russian mass media popularity appeared obvious, namely television channels like «Pervy Kanal Eurasia», «NTV», the newspaper «Argumenty i Fakty», social networks mail.ru and vk.com [17].

This survey has outlined certain trends, but the poll was attended by only 11 respondents, therefore, there was held one more stage of poll – a large-scale sociological survey. For convenience and purity calculations, it was decided to conduct the survey on the Internet and spread through social networks.

The poll is one of the most effective methods of survey, which helps to trace certain trends, analyze the situation and respondents' attitudes to certain things.

This survey took 406 participants, the analysis made based on 300 participants for technical reasons, namely the restriction by site surveymonkey.com on the number of respondents. Thus, there were three identical surveys, in each the first 100 responses were analyzed.

Following analysis – is the whole survey analysis, including answers to the three surveys, which means the responses of 300 respondents.

The first question «Your age group» was asked to determine the age of the respondents. Of 300 people who took part in age «under 17 years» category are

17 people, accounting for 5.7%. 172 people who participated in the survey, aged 18 to 21 years – this is the most numerous category and is 57.3%. Respondents aged 22 to 29 years old account for 29.3% of all survey participants and constitute the second largest category – 88 people. 3.7% in the age group from 35 to 45 years old, which amounted to 11 people. 3% – are respondents older than 45 years, 9 people. And 1% of respondents did not wish to disclose their age, that were three people out of 300 respondents.

Next question: «Where do you learn the news more often» was aimed at identifying the main respondents' source of information and implied the answers such as: television, radio, newspapers, the Internet and rumors. 10.3% of respondents chose the option «TV», 1.3% prefer radio, only 1 out of 300 people responded «newspaper» – 0.3%, 252 people voted for the «Internet», which is 84%, 11 people get information from the rumors – it's 3.7% of all respondents.

Thus, the most popular source of information is the Internet. However, it is necessary to take into account the fact that the survey was conducted by means of the Internet, and the answers to this question are not very objective. They express the view of certain segment of Internet users, i.e. people aged 18 to 21 and category in age from 22 to 29 years. However, the main purpose of this survey is not a determination of the source of information but sources of information relation to a particular information field of the country.

Based on this, the most important issue of the survey can be considered the question of the credibility of certain media in Kazakhstan. Respondents were asked to place their confidence level in the following media: national newspapers, Russian newspapers, Kazakhstan radio and TV, Russian radio and TV, the media abroad, as well as Internet: Kazakh, Russian and sites abroad. The results are shown in the table below.

Table 1 – What is the extent of credit to following mass media (?)

	Completely	Partially believe	Do not believec	Do not use
Kazakhstan newspapers	12,6	44,6	7,4	35,4
Russia newspapers	5,1	36,2	16	42,7
Kazakhstanradio and TV	15,2	62	11,3	11,7
Russiaradio and TV	9,3	54,4	14,4	21,9
Foreign media	11	57,6	12,5	18,9
Internet (Kazakhstan sites)	11,8	68,3	15,3	4,5
Internet (Russia sites)	5,6	60,2	22,2	12
Internet (foreign sites)	11,4	63,3	16	9,3

The greatest credibility of Kazakhstanis belongs to Republic radio and TV – 15.2%. The second place on the credibility of the media occupied by Republic newspapers – 12.6%. Despite the fact that these media types cause biggest trust of the audience, 35.4% of respondents answered that they do not use newspapers, in lack of demand they are second only after Russian newspapers – 42.7%.

Least of all Kazakhstanis trust the Russian segment of the Internet – 22.2% of all respondents. The second line shared by the Russian newspapers and foreign media. “[18].

Continuing to analyze the Internet segment we can conclude that the credit of trust to Russian sites by Kazakhstanis is even lower than to foreign sites, namely Kazakhstanis fully trust Kazakhstan sites – 11.8% of respondents, sites far abroad – 11.4% and Russian sites only 5.6% of respondents. On the issue of partial-trust, the Russian sites also ranked third. As well as the highest percentage of respondents in the Internet segment, considered that they do not use Russian media sites – 12%, mean while 9.4% do not use far-abroad sites and 4.5% of the respondents do not use Kazakh sites to obtain information. “[19].

Thus, the largest number of respondents preferred the Internet, where they underline predominantly Kazakhstan sites. Despite the fact that this study mainly affected only the audience between the ages of 18 to 29 years (active Internet users) it is possible to come to the conclusion that Kazakhstani online publications win, or rather win back the attention of Kazakhstanis.

Conclusions

Prospects for the media in the preservation of national identity.

In order to optimize the information space we should pay particular attention to the following factors and parameters:

- Achievement of efficiency of legal regulation of the media activities;
- Information Security;
- Dissemination of false information;
- Questions of private media, in particular, the closure of media outlets for technical reasons;
- Participation of foreign capital in the financing of Kazakhstani mass media;
- Introduction of uniform penalties for obstruction in obtaining information and dissemination of false information, i.e. distinctly determine the right of journalists to obtain information and the responsibility for presenting materials;
- ensuring the transparency of the information market.

We should also highlight the problem of the digital divide, more developed countries with large media holdings, funds and turnover have more opportunities and a greater sphere of influence in less developed country and mass media.

It requires a scientific approach to understand the language processes occurring in the country at the moment. As well as a deeper and more comprehensive approach in addressing this issue. It is necessary to study the nature of the language arrangements in the country and come to a common solution. Since the linguistic duality in some ways becomes political, ethnic print that contains some kind of danger.

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