Russia's political system has since the 1990s undergone a radical change, followed by economic and social crises in which the media system, too, has radically changed. This is in contrast to Sweden, where adaptation of media and society to global changes has taken place continuously in a context of relative economic and political stability.

This anthology presents a group of articles based on quantitative and qualitative research performed within the project "The Role of Media for Identity and Democracy". The project involves interviews with media experts in St. Petersburg and Stockholm, analyses of the media structure and media contents, as well as comparative analyses of two age groups – 17-year-olds and middle-aged people – in the two cities.

The project aims at illustrating the interplay of society and media, on the one hand, and, on the other, people's media use and preferences, their leisure, consumption and cultural identity, their work activities, social background and poverty-welfare, and their perceptions of societal institutions and democracy.
Use and Views
of Media in Sweden & Russia
A Comparative Study
in St. Petersburg & Stockholm
Edited by Cecilia von Feilitzen & Peter Petrov
Södertörns högskola
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Foreword and Introduction

Cecilia von Feilitzen & Peter Petrov

This anthology presents a group of articles based on material collected within the research project “The Role of Media for Identity and Democracy”, an interdisciplinary project that was funded by The Foundation for Baltic and East European Studies and ran between 2006 and 2009.

In light of established media theories, the project aims at illustrating the role of media in people’s perceptions of the social world, their cultural identity, experience of democracy and corresponding values and behaviours in different social environments.

Empirically, the project involves a comparative analysis of two age groups in two cities – St. Petersburg (in Russia) and Stockholm (in Sweden) – focusing primarily on people’s social background, beliefs, values and lifestyles, of which media use, leisure and work activities are important parts, but also on the media structure and contents. The cities are characterized by different economic, political and cultural traditions, at the same time as their media environments are becoming more similar given the presence of a growing number of common trans-national print and broadcast media, films, music, computer games, and the spread of the Internet. By making a comparative study, we hope to establish a better basis for analysing the role of media culture than we would have had if we had independently collected data from the cities or age groups. In this context, we have completed the following empirical studies:

A. Quantitative data collections using an extensive questionnaire answered by about 1600 respondents in the two cities – ca. 400 17-year-old adolescents and an equal number of adults 45-55 years of age in each city. The age groups were selected with reference to the historical development since the 1980s, which among other things implies that the young St. Petersburg participants in our study mostly grew up after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, while the period in question has entailed major political, economic and social changes for the adult respondents in St. Petersburg. During the same period, the social climate has been much more stable in Sweden.

The size of the sample is a function of the available financial resources and the number of statistical variables (questions) studied. We preferred to delimit the
number of respondents chosen from different strata of society in both cities, and
instead constructed an extensive questionnaire studying in detail the media
access and media use, lifestyles (different values, trust in media, leisure and
social activities, opinions about society, etc.) as well as the background of the
respondents. Our previous experience\(^1\) shows that resulting databases of this
kind are very well suited to multivariate analyses, which in their turn have
proven to be of great value for theoretical inferences – assuming of course that
the surveys are well designed.

B. The quantitative surveys were followed-up by a number of in-depth group
discussions with ca. 100 participants in these surveys (or ca. 25 persons in each
sub-sample, strategically chosen on the basis of gender and education) in order
to more closely illuminate our research questions. The discussions were record-
ed and transcribed.

C. Extensive in-depth personal interviews (on average ca. 90 minutes long) with
32 media experts (journalists and programme presenters, editors, advertising
and PR managers, as well as media politicians, 16 in each city). The interviews
were recorded and transcribed. The Russian interviews – as well as the group
discussions with survey participants – have been translated into English.

D. In the beginning of the project, we conducted a limited content analysis of
some selected television channels and radio stations in the two cities. A similar
analysis of four Russian newspapers was also performed, as well as a mapping of
the media situation in St. Petersburg.

E. An additional analysis of the press discourse concerning three social issues
(corruption, global warming and ethnic conflict) was also launched. This part of
the project could be implemented only in St. Petersburg and is presented in
Olessia Koltsova’s article.

More details concerning the data collections are available in the Appendices.

The databases compiled through the project constitute a rich source for analysis,
and some central aspects are developed in this book. The first four articles build
on comparative analyses of the quantitative surveys, the qualitative group

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\(^1\) Petrov, Peter & von Feilitzen, Cecilia (1995) *Musiksmak och livsstilar* (Music Taste and Life
Internetanvändning* (Stockholm Adolescents’ Internet Use). Stockholm, KTH, CID. Petrov,
Peter & von Feilitzen, Cecilia (2005) *Virtuellt rum och socialt rum. Om IT i vardagslivet* (Vir-
tual Space and Social Space. On IT in everyday life). Huddinge, Mediestudier vid Södertörns
högskola 2005:3.
discussions and the interviews with media experts in the two cities. The last three articles are valid for either Russia (Articles 5-6) or Sweden (Article 7).

Article 1, *Some Comments on Media Typology, Media Preferences and Cultural Identity in Stockholm and St. Petersburg* (Cecilia von Feilitzen & Peter Petrov), presents a short review of the situation in Stockholm and St. Petersburg regarding the typology of the media and some overall results from our quantitative surveys concerning the media preferences and music tastes of the participants in the four samples. The results are discussed in light of some theories that have guided the design of the project and that are also central to the comparative analyses presented in Articles 2-4.

Article 2, *New Media and Social Divides. A Comparative Analysis of Stockholm and St. Petersburg* (Cecilia von Feilitzen & Peter Petrov), explores the issue of whether the Internet contributes to increased equality, democracy and civic participation. The analysis compares the four groups – 17-year-olds and middle-aged people in St. Petersburg and Stockholm, respectively – who have different degrees of access to the Internet and use it to different extents and with different orientations. The findings are seen in light of other media use in the two cities and are also related to the individuals’ backgrounds, attitudes and general lifestyles. Quantitative data are interspersed with excerpts from the qualitative group discussions.

Article 3, *People’s Perceptions of Democracy and Welfare in Different Media Environments* (Peter Petrov & Cecilia von Feilitzen), analyses the young and middle-aged Stockholmers’ and St. Peterburgers’ perceptions of media and society: Attitudes towards the media system, trust in media and social institutions, opinions on democracy, apprehension of one’s possibility of influencing society, as well as political value orientations are subjected to multivariate analyses and supplemented with data from the qualitative group discussions and interviews with media experts. Social change and the economic situation, i.e., the degree of poverty-welfare in which the country and the individual are positioned, appear to be central factors for understanding the complex picture.

Article 4, *The Discourse of Publicity at Different Stages of the Consumer Society* (Anna Osipova & Peter Petrov), explores the consumer society that has emerged relatively recently in St. Petersburg and that has reached a much more mature stage in Stockholm. The authors try to elucidate the impact of advertising on contemporary society by comparing the attitudes towards advertising among different generations and media experts in the two cities, as well as interpreting their perceptions of themselves, gender differences, and mental health in relation to the consumer society. The article builds primarily on the qualitative group discussions and the interviews with media experts in the two cities.
interviews, but is also based on personal interviews with media experts and results from the quantitative surveys.

Article 5, *The Dynamics of the Influence of Russian Mass Media on Society and the Individual. In-depth Interviews with Media Experts in St. Petersburg* (Sergey G. Korkonosenko & Dmitry A. Ruschin), analyses, as the title indicates, the personal interviews with media experts in St. Petersburg. The article takes up the experts’ opinions on Russian media arranged under the following themes: main changes in the structure, regulation and content of the mass media; the role of mass media in the development of pluralism and democratic liberties; the role of mass media in socialization of the individual and in the formation of a national identity; development of social and personal communication resources; and the distinctive traits of the media situation in Russia and in St. Petersburg.

Article 6, *The Role of Media for Democracy. Coverage of Social Problems in the St. Petersburg Press* (Olessia Koltsova), presents a Russian study of media coverage of social problems. The goal of the research was to reveal and describe the discursive strategies used by the St. Petersburg print media in their coverage of socially important problems and to define whether such strategies may be considered democratic. The social problems chosen (together with the Swedish partners) were corruption, global warming and nationalism. The newspaper texts were selected and analysed using a complex of methods elaborated in a series of previous studies by the author and adapted to the goals of the present research.

Article 7, *Connection or Disconnection? Two Generations in Sweden Discuss Online Sociality* (Sofia Johansson), deals with the fact that as the Internet becomes further embedded in day-to-day routines, socializing online becomes increasingly popular. Among other functions, the Internet is used to keep in touch, meet new friends, flirt and find solace in social groups. With different forms of online sociality, we are seeing a transformation of the way many people socialize and relate to one another. The article attempts to shed light on this phenomenon by analysing, from a generation perspective, the qualitative group discussions with teenagers and middle-aged persons in Stockholm, where the Internet is widespread.

The project was initiated and headed by Cecilia von Feilitzen and Peter Petrov at Media and Communication Studies, Department for Culture and Communication, Södertörn University, Sweden, who have also had the overriding responsibility for the data collection. We wish to express our deep gratitude to The Foundation for Baltic and East European Studies, Sweden, who financially supported the project.
The Stockholm data collection rounds were conducted at Media and Communication Studies, Södertörn University. The St. Petersburg data collection rounds were mainly performed at/in collaboration with the Centre for Independent Social Research (CISR), St. Petersburg, and the Regional Press Institute (RPI), St. Petersburg.

We wish to express our warm gratitude to these organizations and especially to their directors, Anna Sharogradskaya (RPI) and Viktor Voronkov (CISR), who made the extensive empirical work possible.

The authors contributing to this anthology have participated in the data collection to different extents. We wish to thank them wholeheartedly as well as other persons who have contributed to the project. The main contributions have been:

Cecilia von Feilitzen and Peter Petrov designed the basic studies under points A-C above, including elaboration of the questionnaires and interview guides in consultation with the Russian partners in the corresponding sub-studies. Cecilia von Feilitzen also led the data collection rounds for the Swedish surveys and participated in all Swedish group discussions. She organized, as well, and participated in the personal interviews with the media experts in Stockholm. Further, she was in charge of and controlled the transcriptions of the Stockholm interview material. Peter Petrov led the work with quantitative data collection and the follow-up group discussions in St. Petersburg, all of which he participated in. Moreover, he was the head interviewer in all personal interviews with the media experts in St. Petersburg and in several such interviews in Stockholm.

Sofia Johansson, Media and Communication Studies, Södertörn University, led the group discussions with the Stockholm adolescents and adults, respectively, and – together with Caj Källmalm – conducted the quantitative data collection rounds in schools with the young people in Stockholm.

Caj Källmalm also contributed to the quantitative data collection involving the Stockholm adults.

Anna Osipova, Centre for Russian Language and Culture, St. Petersburg State University, led the group discussions with the St. Petersburg young people and adults, monitored the transcriptions of these group discussions and of the interviews with the media experts, as well as transcribed several of them herself.

Larisa Balashova, Centre for Independent Social Research, performed (together with Peter Petrov) the data collection in schools with the St. Petersburg adolescents, and organized the group discussions with them. Larisa Balashova also headed (together with Petrov) a pilot study with St. Petersburg adults.
Lubov Ejova, Centre for Independent Social Research, was formally responsible for conducting the quantitative data collection with the St. Petersburg adults and organizing the follow-up group discussions with them. Elena Bogdanova substituted her during a month.

Sergey Korkonosenko and Dmitry Ruschin, Faculty of Journalism, St. Petersburg State University, selected (in consultation with von Feilitzen and Petrov) the media experts in St. Petersburg, organized these interviews and participated in them (about half of the interviews each). Korkonosenko and Ruschin also carried out the mapping of the media situation in St. Petersburg and the content analysis of Russian media according to point D above.

Olessia Koltsova, Faculty of Sociology, State University Higher School of Economics, St. Petersburg Filial, performed the discourse analysis of social issues in the Russian press mentioned under point E above.

Apart from the above-mentioned persons, we would like to thank all other persons in both cities who participated in the data collection (e.g., with telephone reminders to the respondents, computer registering, transcriptions and translations of the data), mainly (in Sweden) Panteha Alinaghian, Tomas Andersson, Dirceu Cavalcanati Rigoni, Heléne Jonsson, Lisa Lewin, Agnes Mörée, Karin Rubenson, Mats Sigfridsson, Ingela Söderlind, Emma Söderlund, Elin Trygg, Malin Tunander and Robert Österlund, and (in St. Petersburg) Alexander Bagdasarov, Artyom Bazarov, Maria Boitsova, Elena Brusova, Inna Chernenko, Tatyana Egorova, Natalya Gostevskaya, Michail Povarov, Elena Rajskaya, Elizaveta Sapronova, Zoya Shilova, Tatiana Shmankevitch and Ekaterina Simonenko.

Special thanks also for their viewpoints on the questionnaire to Helene Carlbäck, History/Centre for Baltic and East European Studies, Södertörn University, and Natalia Plevako and Tamara Torstendahl Salytjeva, both at the Russian-Swedish Centre, Russian State University for the Humanities/RGGU, Moscow, and for tips on literature and viewpoints to Göran Bolin, Media and Communication Studies, Olle Findahl, World Internet Institute, and Gunnar Nygren, Journalism, Södertörn University. We also had a relevant and greatly appreciated discussion on the project with the late Jan Ekecrantz, Department of Journalism, Media and Communication, Stockholm University.

Most of all, we wish to express our thanks and appreciation to all persons who filled in the questionnaires, participated in the group discussions, and took part in the personal expert interviews.

Cecilia von Feilitzen Peter Petrov
Part I: Comparative Analyses
1. Some Comments on Media Typology, Media Preferences and Cultural Identity in Stockholm and St. Petersburg

*Cecilia von Feilitzen & Peter Petrov*

This article presents some background facts on the media situation in Stockholm and St. Petersburg and discusses generally some findings on the inhabitants’ attitudes towards music and media genres in relation to theories and issues that have been basic to the design of the comparative project “The Role of Media for Identity and Democracy” and to the following three articles in particular.

A key approach in our study has been to relate people’s media use and views on the media to other characteristics – attitudes towards a range of social issues (as regards politics, leisure, consumption, etc.), aesthetic taste and beliefs, and their background (gender, age, education, profession, etc.). On the basis of existing theoretical and empirical research, and through the comparative empirical studies in Stockholm and St. Petersburg, we seek answers to the following questions:

(1) What does the media situation look like in the two cities? In light of brief accounts of the media situation (ownership, organization and content), we primarily analyse people’s access to and use of media in different demographic and socio-economic groups in the two cities.

(2) What is the importance of local, national and global media for individuals’ perceptions of social processes, their cultural identity and experiences of democracy? How do these perceptions interact with people’s social background and lifestyles, that is, with their other values and activities of which media use and attitudes towards the media are an integral part?

One of our central assumptions is that – despite very dissimilar material conditions – the differences between the inhabitants of the two cities as regards the interplay between people’s media use and their experiences of the social world will be less marked between the St. Petersburg and Stockholm adolescents (who have grown up in media environments more similar across the two
countries than their parents have) than between the adults, who have grown up in different political systems and who have experienced the global changes of the late 20th century in radically different ways: Unlike Sweden, where adaptation of the national institutions to global changes after the 1980s has taken place continuously in a context of relative economic and political stability, Russia has undergone a radical change in its political system, followed by economic and social crises in which the media system, too, has radically changed (as regards access, ownership, content and structure of the audience), something that has had considerable impact on the life conditions of people living in Russia and their conception of social reality.

A brief account of the media situation in Sweden/Stockholm and Russia/St. Petersburg

This section outlines some overriding aspects of the media situation in the two cities. The description of the media situation in Sweden/Stockholm builds on research and statistics from sources other than our project, mainly The Nordic Media Market 2009 and Nordicom-Sveriges Mediebarometer 2008 and 2009 (Nordicom-Sweden’s Media Barometer 2008 and 2009), both published by The Nordic Centre for Media and Communication Research (NORDICOM). A third important source is Medieutveckling 2009 (Media Development 2009) released by the Swedish Radio and TV Authority.

The corresponding description of Russia/St. Petersburg is based on Korkonosenko’s and Ruschin’s previously mentioned mapping of the media situation there, as well as on writings by Vartanova and Degtereva supplemented by web statistics, primarily from TNS Gallup Media in Russia. (See references in the running text.)

In addition, we summarize a few of the statements made by the media experts interviewed in our project.

Sweden/Stockholm

Sweden is a relatively small country with a likewise small population – 9.3 million inhabitants in 2009. About 2 million live in the county of Stockholm (Greater Stockholm). Compared to the position of St. Petersburg in the Russian Federation, the media situation in Stockholm is not as different from the one in Sweden as a whole, although in most places there are, in addition to national media, local radio stations and local TV channels. The daily press is also local, but two popular “evening tabloids”, Aftonbladet (The Evening Paper) and Expressen (The Express), as well as a business daily, Dagens Industri (The Daily

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1 Statistiska Centralbyrån (Statistics Sweden) 2009.
Industry), are of a national character.\(^2\) Press published in the larger cities are also circulated in the regions to a relatively high degree. The Internet is widespread throughout the country.

The media policy in Sweden before the 1980s was often said to be “paternalistic”. However, this was valid for radio and television, which then only consisted of public service channels\(^3\) without advertising and financed by licence fees\(^4\) paid by listeners/viewers.\(^5\) The press, however, as well as film, recorded music, etc., were privately owned.

The media market in Sweden is quite different today, owing to the expansive technical media development and the increasing global or trans-national media output, which occurred hand in hand with a changed political climate and so-called deregulation from the mid-80s onwards. Public service media still exist (in general with the same overriding rules, although wordings have been changed and added), but they have competition from a large number of private, commercial radio stations and TV channels in the increasingly liberalized media landscape in Sweden. Cinema films, TV series and music are to a great extent supplied by the world’s largest media corporations.\(^6\) As hinted at, during the 1990s and 2000s, Internet use has also increased rapidly, which is why Sweden at present is one of the world’s most Internet-dense countries, entailing even more globalization of information and entertainment. In 2008, 84 per cent of the population had access to the Internet at home and 72 per cent had broadband connection.\(^7\) This, in turn, has led to an abundance of alternative platforms and techniques for newspapers, radio, television (web radio/TV, pod radio/TV, IP TV,\(^8\) the Internet via the mobile phone, etc.) and other media to deliver their contents, meaning, as well, that media use in the population is increasingly individualized. Furthermore, advertising has augmented considerably through


\(^{3}\) Besides being subjected to the general radio (and television) law, which, among other things, stated that the company’s sole right to decide which programmes should be transmitted should be exercised impartially and in a matter-of-fact manner and that an expansive freedom of expression and information should prevail, the public service media had an agreement with the State, saying, i.a., that the programmes, through quality, accessibility and diversity, should meet different needs and interests in the population, including other general rules (see, e.g., the annual report from the Swedish Radio 1977-78). Public service media were, and are still, also meant to be independent of economic, political and other outside interests. Furthermore, the programmes could (and can) be scrutinized afterwards by a special commission (The Radio Commission, nowadays the Swedish Broadcasting Commission), also on the initiative of listeners and viewers, to investigate whether the broadcast complied with the Radio and Television Act and the rules in the agreement granted by the Government.

\(^{4}\) Later TV fees.

\(^{5}\) There is one fee per household and independent of the number of apparatuses.

\(^{6}\) Sundin 2009b.

\(^{7}\) Nordicom-Sveriges Mediebarometer 2008 (2009).

\(^{8}\) Television via broadband.
all new TV channels and radio stations – and thereafter on the Internet.\textsuperscript{9} In addition, Sweden is adapting to the general EU rules (the Audiovisual Media Services Directive), which among other things involves a softening of advertising rules.\textsuperscript{10}

In the interviews with media experts in our project, the introductory question concerned what they considered to be the greatest changes in the Swedish media landscape during the past 20-25 years. The answers showed almost complete agreement: It is the Internet, the convergence of the media, the digitalization of production and distribution, the growth of interpersonal or so-called social media on the Internet, and the greatly increased number of radio and television channels financed by advertising, all of which mean more media competition. Another trend mentioned was that advertising has increased in the newspapers, as well, and nowadays, newspapers free-of-charge, wholly financed by advertisements, are on offer in the bigger cities (the main gratis paper being \textit{Metro}).

To a question concerning whether the multiplied media contents have led to greater manifoldness, the experts were divided in terms of their responses according to expected (political) lines: Representatives with roots in the working-class and social-democratic movements, as well as in public service media, answered negatively or hesitantly, while representatives of the newer commercial media replied in the affirmative and stressed freedom of choice for the audience, and that the audience gets what it wants.

The experts also pointed out details in their work situations that are dependent on these metamorphoses in the media environment. What should not be forgotten in this respect are the consequences for editorial journalism. The media are forced to reduce their expenses and to increasingly try to attract the audience on the Internet without fees, which is why publicism, according to several experts, has become low-status journalism. One expert called attention to the clear shift in power from publicists to economists and technicians.

Although a number of media companies are under foreign (non-Nordic) ownership, the Nordic-owned\textsuperscript{11} companies have a strong position in the region.\textsuperscript{12} The largest of the Nordic media companies is the Swedish based Bonnier AB.\textsuperscript{13} Nordic media markets have long experienced a successive concentration of ownership.\textsuperscript{14} This applies to the Swedish media market, as well, of which the biggest media actors have strong positions in several Nordic

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Sundin 2009a.
\item For instance, the general requirement that at least 20 minutes must pass between advertising spots is abolished for several programme types, see \textit{Medieutveckling 2009} (2009).
\item By Nordic countries are meant Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden.
\item Sundin 2009b.
\item Sundin 2009b.
\item Sundin 2009b.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
countries. Especially, the concentration of ownership within the Swedish press has pronouncedly increased.\footnote{Sundin 2009a.}

As for television in Sweden, it is, as is radio, controlled by the Fundamental Law on Freedom of Speech and by the Radio and Television Law.

The two traditional national public service TV channels, SVT1 and SVT2, as well as TV programmes produced by the educational company UR, do not only have keen competition from a large number of foreign channels via satellite and cable, but also from several new Swedish niche channels. In addition, there are slightly more than 50 regional and local channels.\footnote{The Nordic Media Market 2009 (2009).} Most TV channels transmit web TV in one way or the other, as well.\footnote{Even newspapers, radio stations and other companies that do not broadcast traditional television, transmit some kind of web TV.} The terrestrial TV net was digitalized during 2005-2007. Other ways of receiving television are by satellite, cable, and broadband.\footnote{In 2008, the proportions of the population 9-79 years of age who received television via different ways of distribution were: cable 43\% , satellite dish 30\%, terrestrial 32\%, broadband 7\%; see Nordicom-Sveriges Mediebarometer 2008 (2009).} With a combination of receivers, one can watch more than a hundred channels, often specialized on certain film genres, sports, etc.\footnote{Medieutveckling 2009 (2009).}

Of all the TV channels, in 2008 the “big five” stood for nearly two thirds (64\%) of the viewing time,\footnote{MMS 2009.} but it is worth underlining that the remaining 36 per cent representing all other channels is a figure that has increased over time.

The five most-watched TV channels are:

- the two traditional public service channels without advertising (SVT1, 21\% of the total viewing time, and SVT2, 8\% of the viewing time). About two thirds of the contents on these two channels are, according to Asp, produced in Sweden (including outsourced productions) and most imported programmes are from Western countries (e.g., about one tenth from the U.S.).\footnote{The coding is based partly on programme information from the TV channels, partly on programme listings in the newspapers; see Asp 2009.} The relation between informative and entertainment programming is more or less fifty-fifty.\footnote{However, there are more programmes from other countries in SVT’s channel for children, and more Swedish output in SVT’s news channel and UR, the educational company; see Asp 2009.} At present, SVT also has a “family” of niche channels.
- a national privately-owned channel with advertising, TV4 (19\% of the viewing time), launched in the beginning of the 1990s. According to Asp, about half of its output is Swedish produced and one third of the total programming originates from the U.S.\footnote{Asp 2009.} Entertainment programming out-

\footnote{15 Sundin 2009a.} \footnote{16 The Nordic Media Market 2009 (2009).} \footnote{17 Even newspapers, radio stations and other companies that do not broadcast traditional television, transmit some kind of web TV.} \footnote{18 In 2008, the proportions of the population 9-79 years of age who received television via different ways of distribution were: cable 43\% , satellite dish 30\%, terrestrial 32\%, broadband 7\%; see Nordicom-Sveriges Mediebarometer 2008 (2009).} \footnote{19 Medieutveckling 2009 (2009).} \footnote{20 MMS 2009.} \footnote{21 The coding is based partly on programme information from the TV channels, partly on programme listings in the newspapers; see Asp 2009.} \footnote{22 However, there are more programmes from other countries in SVT’s channel for children, and more Swedish output in SVT’s news channel and UR, the educational company; see Asp 2009.} \footnote{23 Asp 2009.}
weighs informative programming by three to one.\textsuperscript{24} TV4 has a “family” of niche channels, as well.

- two Swedish-speaking satellite channels with advertising, broadcasting from Great Britain (not subjected to Swedish law), TV3 (8% of the viewing time) and Kanal 5 (7% of the viewing time), mainly transmitting entertainment programmes from the U.S.\textsuperscript{25}

The young audience chooses the commercial channels to a greater extent than do elderly people, and there is a slight tendency among especially 15- to 24-year-olds towards using platforms for watching television other than via the ordinary TV set.\textsuperscript{26}

The principal actors on the television market are: the public service company SVT (Sveriges Television), Bonnier AB (Sweden, owning, i.a., TV4), MTG (Modern Times Group, Sweden) and ProSieben-Sat.1/SBS (Germany).\textsuperscript{27}

As for radio, the stations in Sweden at present have the following coverage:

- national radio – four channels in which the public service company Sveriges Radio (SR) (Swedish Radio) transmits its programmes, together with the public service educational company UR. These broadcasts are free from advertising.
- local radio – on the one hand, 28 regional stations belonging to the public service company SR without advertising and, on the other, 89 private local commercial stations\textsuperscript{28} financed by advertising, most often organized in networks covering large parts of the country. On the whole, the latter stations do not transmit at great deal of local material, but overwhelmingly “global” and Swedish music, often with different popular music profiles and targeting specific audience segments.
- (since 1979) between one and two hundred community (or neighbourhood) radio stations with a short broadcasting range, used by non-profit associations, and the like.

As mentioned, radio can also be listened to on the Web.

Overall, the public service radio channels are more often listened to (66% of the total listening time) than are the commercial private local radio stations (27% of the listening time),\textsuperscript{29} which, however, are much more popular than public service radio among young persons.

\textsuperscript{24} Asp 2009.
\textsuperscript{25} Asp 2009.
\textsuperscript{26} MMS 2008.
\textsuperscript{27} The Nordic Media Market 2009 (2009).
\textsuperscript{28} Medieutveckling 2009 (2009).
\textsuperscript{29} TNS-Sifo 2010a.
In the Stockholm area there are, besides national and neighbourhood radio, three regional public service radio stations and 12 private local radio stations.\textsuperscript{30}

The principal players on the Swedish radio market are: the public service company SR, the private company MTG (Modern Times Group) in Sweden, and ProSiebenSat.1 Group/SBS Broadcasting in Germany.\textsuperscript{31}

Internationally, Sweden is ranked near the top when it comes to newspaper reading,\textsuperscript{32} and subscriptions to morning papers are widespread. On the whole, the printed morning papers keep their positions, although more people today, especially younger people, read papers that are free-of charge (mainly Metro, which claims to have the largest newspaper circulation in Sweden).\textsuperscript{33} Circulation of “evening papers” or popular tabloids, however, has seen a drastic drop since the 1980s. On the other hand, more adolescents and young adults today (2008) read “evening tabloids” on the Internet than on paper.\textsuperscript{34}

Contrary to the politically desirable newspaper competition, several local morning papers have disappeared. The ideal was, and still is, competition in all regions. However, of the 70 newspaper regions, there are at present only some ten that still have a situation of competition (i.e., more than one newspaper). This also means that, during the past decades, the number of newspapers has been reduced.\textsuperscript{35}

In 2008, there were 169 unique newspaper titles in Sweden, of which 96 published more than 3 issues a week. About a quarter of all newspapers received some financial support from the State, the goal being to strengthen local competition.\textsuperscript{36}

At present, very few newspapers are owned by the working-class movement/social-democrats or left-wing parties/associations (2% of the total circulation). However, when social-democratic newspapers have been purchased by other owners, most of these newspapers have maintained the political tone of their leading articles. Even so, the absolute majority of the circulation emanates from right-wing or liberal newspapers.\textsuperscript{37} And although some newspapers declare themselves as “independent”, their leading articles are often still positioned politically.

In the greater Stockholm area, the biggest newspapers by readership (reach) in September-December 2009 were the following, in ranked order: Dagens Nyheter (The Daily News), Metro, Svenska Dagbladet (The Swedish Daily Paper), Aftonbladet and Expressen,\textsuperscript{38} papers that also belong to the biggest in the country.\textsuperscript{39}

\textsuperscript{30} TNS-Sifo 2010b.
\textsuperscript{31} The Nordic Media Market 2009 (2009).
\textsuperscript{32} www.dagspress.se 2010.
\textsuperscript{33} Metro Business 2010.
\textsuperscript{34} Nordicom-Sveriges Mediebarometer 2008 (2009).
\textsuperscript{35} Medieutveckling 2009 (2009).
\textsuperscript{36} Medieutveckling 2009 (2009).
\textsuperscript{37} Medieutveckling 2009 (2009).
\textsuperscript{38} Orvesto 2010.
\textsuperscript{39} The Nordic Media Market 2009 (2009).
The largest newspaper companies in 2007 were Bonnier AB (based in Sweden), Schibsted ASA (Norway) and Stampen AB (Sweden).\(^{40}\) These three owner groups own almost 60 per cent of the total newspaper circulation in Sweden.\(^{41}\)

To this may be added that, in 2007, there were 155 consumer magazines, of which the majority were monthlies/quarterlies and about 10 per cent weeklies. New interest titles are continuously being introduced and discontinued. The biggest magazine publishers in Sweden are Aller (based in Denmark) and Bonnier (Sweden).\(^{42}\)

According to *Nordicom-Sweden’s Media Barometer 2008*, the shares of the total media time that the population 9-79 years of age in Sweden spent on different media this year were 33 per cent on listening (mostly to the radio), 30 per cent on viewing (mostly television), 19 per cent on using the Internet, and 18 per cent on reading (somewhat more time on newspapers than on books and magazines, respectively).\(^{43}\)

In all likelihood due to the growth of the Internet, it seems that, during the past ten years (1998-2008), the audience has spent less time on certain media, among others, radio. However, the proportion (reach) who listen on an average day is still roughly the same. Moreover, the reported time spent on television and newspapers, on the whole, has been the same during the period mentioned.\(^{44}\)

On the other hand, we can see more significant changes within different age groups. Among older people, traditional TV viewing has increased during recent years, while traditional TV use has diminished somewhat among young men, probably due to their use of computers and the Internet.\(^{45}\)

**Russia/St. Petersburg**

Russia, or the Russian Federation, is the largest country in the world when it comes to territory (i.e., 38 times bigger than Sweden), and the media situation for its 141.9 million inhabitants (2009)\(^{46}\) (ca. 15 times more residents than in Sweden) is more varied in different regions and cities. With its population of ca. 4.7 millions inhabitants (including suburbs),\(^{47}\) St. Petersburg is also bigger than Stockholm.

Like in Sweden, the media landscape in Russia has seen radical alterations since the mid-80s, however much more marked by dramatic political, social and economic changes. In 1985, President Gorbachev proclaimed *glasnost* (more

\(^{41}\) *Medieutveckling* 2009 (2009).
\(^{43}\) The total time that the public devotes to mass media is the sum of the time spent on each medium. Thus, the total time does not take into account that two media may be used at the same time; see *Nordicom-Sveriges Mediebarometer* 2008 (2009).
\(^{44}\) Sundin 2009a.
\(^{45}\) MMS 2008.
\(^{47}\) Korkonosenko & Ruschin 2007.
openness for citizens to express their views) and the process of freedom of speech continued when the Soviet Union disintegrated in 1991. The transition to a market economy and privatization was complicated by a number of factors, not least economic and political, which also affected the media. A well-known fact is that business “oligarchs”, part of the new financial élite, came to annex and operate many media and other parts of the industry during the Yeltsin years (1991-1999), and with that strongly and one-sidedly supported different politicians and their own careers, also called the “media war”. The rapid rise of capitalism led to great economic divides in the population as well, which were reinforced by the stark economic crisis of the late 1990s, when many production sectors more or less collapsed and inflation ran wild. A large part of the population was made destitute. Since 2000, the state has been working to re-establish its control, particularly over the big TV channels in the process of building up the country.

When the St. Petersburg media experts interviewed in our study answered the introductory question regarding the greatest changes in the Russian media landscape during the past 20-25 years, many of them mentioned the huge development of television, from three to four channels during the Soviet era to the large number of channels today, state, private and a mixture of these – federal, regional, and foreign – transmitted via terrestrial channels, cable and satellite. Also emphasized was the large number of thematic channels (culture, children, sports, information, nature, etc.).

Similarly, the number of radio stations has increased from only a few via wire broadcasting to a large addition of FM stations (most of them music stations).

A few experts pointed out the fact that there are now independent and even partly oppositional media, such as certain newspapers and the radio station Echo of Moscow, owned by Gazprom. In addition, new types of newspapers, such as business papers and newspapers free-of-charge, have appeared. On the other hand, the circulation of newspapers has become tiny – there has been a sharp increase in the number of editions, but a sharp decrease in the number of readers.

The importance of the Internet is underlined by several experts, but not at all to such a great extent as by the Swedish media experts. The Internet and broadband are less spread in Russia, where Internet access was estimated to 27 per cent in March 2009. However, in Moscow and St. Petersburg, more than half of inhabitants aged 12+ used the Internet in 2008 at least once a month.

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48 E.g., Vartanova 2009.
49 Koltsova 2006.
50 Vartanova 2009.
51 Internet World Stats, March 2009.
One aspect of the Internet mentioned is that it entails a whirlwind of local, national and global information. Like in Sweden, several negative consequences for journalism were also emphasized (see Article 5).

In response to the question of whether all these media have led to pluralism of media contents, many more of the Russian than the Swedish media experts stressed that there are now many possibilities to choose, but from the worst instead of the best – there has been a reduction in quality and an abundance of superficial entertainment that can easily be sold and received. (Worth underlining is the fact that sensational journalism has developed much more rapidly in Russia than in Sweden.) Other examples receiving negative comments were American cartoons and films, and the number of celebrities instead of common people in the media output. The manifoldness of such media contents is not related to freedom of speech, one expert says.

According to Korkonosenko and Ruschin, the contemporary Russian media system enjoys a widely developed legal environment, which has been elaborated in accordance with Western-European standards. It combines the guarantee of freedoms and necessary restrictions under the conditions of freedom. However, Korkonosenko and Ruschin mean that some years ago the Russian media were freer, although it is difficult to judge precisely whether this resulted in a democratic or anarchistic way of reporting.

When it comes to plurality of ownership, there are great differences between the press, radio and television. According to official statistics in 2006, the state sector in the Russian broadcasting industry did not amount to more than 10 per cent. However, Korkonosenko and Ruschin say that, in reality, the state con-

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52 Yandex 2009.
54 The Constitution of the Russian Federation (1993) establishes freedom of speech and information in the following forms (Article 29): (1) Everybody is guaranteed freedom of thought and speech; (2) no one can be forced to express his opinion and convictions or to deny them; (3) every one has the right to freely search, receive, and produce information by any legal means.

The Constitution establishes “freedom of mass information” (compared with the narrow definition “freedom of mass media”). Censorship is prohibited. Press freedom is also stressed and developed by special media laws, first of all the Mass Media Act (1991, with consecutive supplements). At the same time, some strong bans are included in the Constitution as well as some special acts (for example, on propaganda and agitation that evoke social, national, religious and other sorts of hate, appeals to criminal actions, war propaganda, and so on, according to international legal standards and treatments).

Among the essential limitations, it is important to mention the anti-libel articles (the Criminal Code) as well as the protection of persons and organizations from defamation (the Civil Code). The information law rigidly restricts penetration into private life and the dissemination of personal data – see Korkonosenko & Ruschin 2007, Korkonosenko 2000, Arapova, Kuznetsova & Ledovskih 2007.
controls all main federal TV channels, such as Perviy Kanal (Channel One), RTR (Rossiya - Russia), and NTV (Independent Television). Also, there is administrative pressure on the private TV channels, as well as problems of transparency in their functioning. Regional channels often function as affiliates of the integral state broadcasting net, and Moscow financial groups support the most popular regional channels. Thus, as a whole, television is the most pro-government medium.\textsuperscript{56}

Furthermore, Korkonosenko and Ruschin state (like several of our interviewed media experts) that censorship exists in non-official forms, mostly of a political and administrative nature. As surveys of professional associations reveal, only 40 per cent of the media exist in real market conditions, while others receive subsidies of all kinds. However, some researchers suggest that only 15 per cent of the print media operate very close to a situation of market independence.\textsuperscript{57} The map of print media looks more pluralistic than that of the TV sector due to the myriad of small owners. But several private publishing houses hold strong positions in Moscow and the provinces. Most of them stand close to the government and are quite loyal to the ruling administration (Gazprom-media, Prof-Media of Interros, Intermedia group, etc.). The essential problems for independent journalism, Korkonosenko and Ruschin say, are due to the growth of media empires.\textsuperscript{58}

Vartanova and Smirnov write\textsuperscript{59} that, in the few years leading up to 2010, more than ten powerful media holdings operated in the country, the largest media proprietors being: Gazprom-Media, Prof-Media, The Russian Federation Broadcasting Company, and System of Mass Media. They often embrace different kinds of media and are also connected to non-media businesses.

Foreign capital – primarily in the print media and in advertising – has been expanding and regional media markets have developed.\textsuperscript{60} Advertising has been growing fast, as well, but in 2006-2008, the law “On advertising” appeared, among other things regulating the maximum acceptable advertising volume and setting it at 15 per cent.\textsuperscript{61}

Regarding \textit{television}, there are approximately 200 Russian channels (national and regional, terrestrial, via cable and satellite). All channels are allowed to advertise.\textsuperscript{62} Foreign “global” channels, such as CNN, Euronews, Discovery and MTV, are also accessible.

In April 2000, 60 per cent of the population had the opportunity to watch only four federal TV channels, and nearly 15 per cent did not have access to

\textsuperscript{56} Korkonosenko & Ruschin 2007, Ilchenko 2005.
\textsuperscript{57} Korkonosenko & Ruschin 2007, Pulia 2004.
\textsuperscript{58} Korkonosenko & Ruschin 2007.
\textsuperscript{59} Vartanova & Smirnov 2009.
\textsuperscript{60} Vartanova & Smirnov 2009.
\textsuperscript{61} Vartanova & Smirnov 2009.
\textsuperscript{62} Vartanova & Smirnov 2009.
television. The main obstacle was the poor condition of old equipment. However, according to government plans, by 2015 the analogue TV system will have been completely replaced by a digital one.\textsuperscript{63} In 2008, it appears that 3–4 per cent did not have access to television – at least in the bigger cities.\textsuperscript{64}

According to Radkevich at the analytical centre Video International in 2006, 60 per cent of inhabitants in the biggest Russian cities (St. Petersburg included) lived in multi-channel households, i.e., with more than fifteen TV channels.\textsuperscript{65} The corresponding figure in our own survey in St. Petersburg (the suburbs excluded) was still higher in autumn 2007 (more than 80%).

State support is given not only to the state-run Russian Federation Broadcasting Company, but also to Perviy Kanal and NTV. Because regional media cannot survive without state support, such support is provided by the local governments.\textsuperscript{66}

The most watched TV channels in Russia are the three state-controlled channels mentioned above (Perviy Kanal, Rossiya and NTV), together making up about half of the audience’s total viewing time. However, if we add the channels STS and TNT, the “big five” stand for two thirds of the viewing time.\textsuperscript{67}

According to audience ratings for St. Petersburg, the first places belong, like in the country as a whole, to the national companies RTR, Perviy Kanal and NTV with their local affiliates. After them, the largest regional channels follow, with 6–8 per cent of daily viewing shares: STS (based in Moscow) and Pjatyj Kanal (Channel 5, based in St. Petersburg), the last-mentioned channel after 2006 broadcasting over all Russia.\textsuperscript{68}

A content analysis of five TV channels (national NTV, national Perviy Kanal, national RTR, regional TRK “Peterburg”, later Channel 5, and regional STO, later TV100) made within our project by Ruschin\textsuperscript{69} and valid for ten separate days in 2006 showed that news was proportionally most prevalent on the national channels. Furthermore, 60 per cent of the content was entertainment/drama (ranging from 51 to 75% between the five channels). The category entertainment/drama consisted, in its turn, of ca. 30 per cent TV serials, ca. 20 per cent TV films and ca. 10 per cent editorial entertainment.

In the study, “production country” was registered for TV films and TV serials (i.e., about half of the total TV time) when such information was available in the programme listings. Slightly more than half of the time (of the TV films and serials) when “production country” was registered consisted of domestically produced programmes, while about one tenth of the time consisted

\textsuperscript{63} Korkonosenko & Ruschin 2007.
\textsuperscript{64} Public Opinion Foundation (FOM) 2008.
\textsuperscript{65} Радкевич (Radkevich) 2010.
\textsuperscript{66} Vartanova & Smirnov 2009.
\textsuperscript{67} Korkonosenko & Ruschin 2007, TNS Gallup Media 2006 and 2010.
\textsuperscript{68} Korkonosenko & Ruschin 2007.
\textsuperscript{69} Korkonosenko & Ruschin 2007.
of productions from European countries and nearly 30 per cent of productions from the U.S. TV films and TV serials from countries other than Russia, Europe and the U.S. were very few.

These findings can be related to another analysis conducted by Degtereva, comparing the content in 1986, 1994, and 2004 of two state-controlled TV channels (Perviy kanal and RTR) and two privately owned channels (Ren-TV and STS). This study shows that the state-controlled channels heavily increased their proportion of entertainment, especially fiction, during the period, while the two commercial TV channels had transmitted a great deal of fiction since their start.

The author draws the conclusion that two factors in particular have been active in promoting more entertainment on the Russian channels – globalization (of films and serials especially from the U.S., and also the import of different TV formats) as well as the influence of domestic politics: Since state control increased during the 2000s for the national TV channels, entertainment became both profitable and politically safe for the media.

Degtereva carried out a corresponding analysis of four Swedish TV channels – the public service channels SVT1 and SVT2 and two private commercial channels, TV4 and TV3 – showing that the public service channels in Sweden retained their diversity during the period (but lost audience). TV4 and TV3 transmitted more fiction than SVT1 and SVT2 did, but it was only TV3 that did so to the same extent as the four Russian channels.

When it comes to radio, over 96 per cent of the population in Russia have access to at least one radio station.

The radio stations most listened to in St. Petersburg in October-December 2009 were Dorozhnoye radio (Road radio), Europe +, Retro FM, Autoradio and Russkoye radio. A few years earlier, the federal Radio Rossiya was the channel most listened to. However, of the great many radio stations, no single channel or channels seem to totally dominate radio listening.

A comparison of characteristics of different age groups shows that the older age groups (50+) prefer more traditional stations, which have a long history of functioning via wire broadcasting (federal Radio Rossiya, federal Mayak – Lighthouse, regional Radio Petersburg). Younger people clearly prefer relatively new broadcasters, moreover those in the FM range (such as Dorozhnoye radio, Europe + and Love Radio). It is important to remark that foreign broadcasters, such as Radio Liberty and BBC, have lost their former influence in Russia, which characterized the late years of the Soviet period.

70 Degtereva 2007.
71 Degtereva 2007.
72 Korkonosenko & Ruschin 2007.
73 TNS Gallup Media 2009.
74 According to Korkonosenko & Ruschin 2007.
According to the Federal Agency on Press and Mass Communications, until the end of 2005, there were 50,621 print media (national, regional and local newspapers, journals, magazines) registered in the Russian Federation (compared to about 16,000 ten years earlier). However, only half of them were actually in operation.

Nevertheless, in 2006, the daily circulation of Russian newspapers reached 21.5 million copies, meaning less than 0.15 copy per capita in the country. That is an extremely small figure (and much smaller than in Sweden). The typical trend in the print market over the past ten years has been a larger share of retail sales accompanied by a heavy drop in subscriptions.

Of the national newspapers, the most popular are those that have regional editions, usually in the form of inserts: in 2006, Komsomolskaya Pravda (Komsomol Truth), Trud (Labour), Argumenty i fakty (Arguments and Facts), Moskovsky komsomolets. According to TNS Gallup Media, the most-read paper in 2008, Komsomolskaya Pravda, is also the most-visited newspaper site online.

Of the general informative daily publications, the most popular newspaper in St. Petersburg during 2005-2008 was, like in Russia as a whole, Komsomolskaya Pravda, followed by Sankt-Peterburgskiy vedomosti (Saint Petersburg News) and Rossiyiskaya gazeta (Russian Newspaper). According to Korkonosenko and Ruschin, however, circulation of the former large, serious St. Petersburg dailies focusing on social issues, for example, Sankt-Peterburgskiy vedomosti, Nevskoye vremya (Neva Time), Smena (Shift), and Vecherniy Peterburg (Petersburg at Evening), has become abnormally small. The regional versions of the largest federal newspapers enjoy similar or slightly higher circulation. On the other hand, newspapers that are free-of-charge, a relatively new type of press for Russia, have won public attention. The most successful of them, such as Extra-Balt, Center plus and Astok-press, have achieved high circulation, building their market strategy on low advertising prices. Periodical journals with special interest profiles are also often in demand (e.g., the weekly Panorama TV, the monthly Mebelniy salon).

It should be emphasized that, in the beginning of the new millennium, St. Petersburg ranked low among Russian territories in terms of the number of paper copies per one thousand inhabitants. A report from 2009 states that the total circulation of print titles in St. Petersburg and its outskirts was 2.5 copies.

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75 In the beginning of 2009, 51,725 print media were registered, according to the same source, the Federal Agency for Press and Mass Communications.
78 Komsomol was the youth division of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Komsomolet = member of Komsomol.
80 TNS Gallup Media 2009.
81 Gortis 2009.
1. SOME COMMENTS ON MEDIA TYPOLOGY

during a month for each citizen 16 years of age and older – a figure that seems to show even less reading than in Russia generally. Furthermore, local print titles make up 23 per cent of the whole turnover.83

In sum, the print market, not least in St. Petersburg, has become more diversified and many magazines are targeted to special groups. However, most newspapers and journals have a diminishing number of faithful readers. Even the free-of-charge press does not enjoy its former popularity. Only business newspapers, which are addressed to specific target groups, have kept their audience (Delovoy Peterburg – Business Petersburg, Kommersant – The Businessman). The decreasing role of printed media in people’s ordinary life could be seen as a world trend during the second part of 20th century. But in St. Petersburg, it accelerated after 1991.84

According to Reibman in 2008, the shares of total time devoted to the media in Russia were distributed in the following way within the population 12 years of age and older: 41 per cent to listening (mostly to the radio), 45 per cent to viewing (mostly television), 8 per cent to reading and 6 per cent to using the Internet.85 Compared to Sweden, the figures seem to show that TV viewing and radio listening make up relatively much more of the time spent on media in Russia than in Sweden, while Swedes devote proportionally more of their media time to reading (especially newspapers) and using the Internet. This is also confirmed by our own data collection in Stockholm and St. Petersburg, the results of which are presented in this anthology (see Article 2).

Media preferences in Stockholm and St. Petersburg in the light of some theoretical positions

Media and democracy in the age of globalization

Economic, political and cultural globalization has evolved over centuries. These processes, however, have intensified dramatically over the past two decades parallel to the emergence of digital media and other communication technologies. The fact that the media both are woven into an intricate interplay of economic, political and cultural processes of globalization and are key operators in these processes has been interpreted differently in different theories.

Traditionally, the mass media (press, radio, television, etc.) have mainly been national and regional/local, an essential factor in individual nations’ political and economic functions, thus contributing to a common cultural identity as a prerequisite for the existence of the nation-state. In recent decades, a series of

83 Association of Print Products Distributors 2009.
85 Райбман (Reibman) 2008.
centripetal tendencies in the world’s power structures, i.a., involving cultural hybridization (and glocalization) and increasing interdependence of different parts of the world economy, has become prominent in the academic discourse. These trends have accelerated after the 1980s in light of the progressive spread of more and more technologically sophisticated media, which enable rapid communication between individuals and groups of people, thus changing their perception of time and space, and of what is private and public. Radio, television and Internet penetration to broad social groups have in themselves contributed to the gradual change in society’s economic and political structures as well as in individuals’ beliefs and behaviour. The question, then, is whether the rapidly growing media supply leads to greater political and cultural pluralism, implying that more and more people improve their living conditions and possibilities to influence the social events, and thus, to greater democracy.

The explosive growth of the media has gone hand in hand with increasing media concentration, primarily associated with the expansion of the advertising industry (an important engine enabling trans-national companies to conquer new markets). The global media market is currently dominated by transnational conglomerates that own the major movie studios, television networks, a variety of satellite channels, most of the global music market, significant shares of the publishing houses and commercial journals, etc. McChesney, among many others, points out that advertisers’ interests have impact on media contents, i.a., by avoiding controversial topics in an effort to maximize the audience (or audience segments). This tendency also characterizes editorial contents, a development that is detrimental to the integrity of media messages.

Thus, several commentators have suggested that the growing trans-national concentration of ownership within the media field – implying increasing growth of mass production targeting increasingly larger audiences – leads to cultural homogenization and degradation of the democratic foundations of society. A recurring theme in the research has been the ideological meaning and function of the media messages, as the media content is supposed to – consciously or unconsciously – be influenced by the interests of the economic, political and cultural elite, thus underpinning reproduction of the social structure that urges audiences to comply with the status quo. Several media researchers have also pointed out that the advertising dominance in combination with increasing

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86 E.g., Meyrowitz 1985.
87 McChesney 2002.
88 Early critics in this regard were the Frankfurt School representatives Horkheimer and Adorno ([1944]1981), who argued that mass mediated popular culture is standardized and passively consumed (without being questioned and analysed), thus cementing the social hierarchy. In their view, the overall effect of the culture industry is anti-enlightenment, in which the technology becomes an inhibitor of consciousness and prevents the development of autonomous, independent individuals who can assess social events and make decisions – a precondition for a democratic society.
concentration of media ownership means that the growing number of media are more and more characterized by superficial uniformity of media contents in a similar light and entertaining form that also characterizes factual programming and news coverage. Given the monotonous, popular and digestible media products spread over various parts of the world, people are exposed to similar ideological repression.

Other researchers, however, have in various ways questioned the homogenizing potential of the media concerning people’s world views. Some postmodern theorists, for example, have argued that technological development has shaped the media so that all meaning has been evacuated from the media content – at least for the viewer zapping between different TV channels with a flow of rapidly changing, unrelated images neither referring to an “external” reality nor connoting any ideological stereotypes. People (who are increasingly using the virtual reality of the media) are thereby thought to be lost in the growing sea of information and targeted messages from the political and economic field, and are living in a state of stupefaction without any possibility to distinguish between reality and media constructions. In social terms, these trends involve stylistic and discursive disintegration without a prevailing norm, a fragmentation of “real” social relations and ongoing dissolution of people’s historical thinking (i.e., the ability to proactively understand history).

On the other hand, there are several research trends that question the homogenizing impact of the media as well as their systematic influence on the representations and actions of individuals. For instance, many researchers (also from the commercial sector) have sought to demonstrate that the media generally have a marginal impact, as different media users actively select media content in accordance with their individual interests and backgrounds in order to satisfy various social and psychological needs (cf. for instance, the “uses & gratification” model). Other researchers pointed out early on the importance of individuals’ concrete personal relations and group belongings to the degree of media influence, i.e., that personal influence outweighs media influence. And especially since the late 1970s, many critics representing the Cultural Studies and Reception traditions have challenged the ideas of the media’s ideological influence, pointing out that the role of the media in the reception process must be studied in the social context where the backgrounds of audiences, their experience and living conditions play an important role, which means, among

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89 E.g., Murdock & Golding 1997.
90 E.g., Herman & McChesney 1997.
91 The MTV music videos are a typical example in this connection.
94 E.g., Katz & Lazarsfeld 1955.
other things, that the same media message can be decoded and put into practice in a variety of ways.95

Meyrowitz’ theory96 represents still another view, arguing that the electronic media, especially with the emergence of television, has meant a radical change in people’s values and life styles, which in turn has profoundly changed the structures of society in a more and more democratic direction, towards equality between different groups. The idea is that electronic media affect traditional social hierarchies through the direction and pattern of the flow of relevant information that is becoming increasingly accessible to the population through television (and digital media). The media development, in his opinion, has altered the logic of the social order – by altering the way we send and receive information and also by restructuring the relationship between physical and social space. In our common sphere of action, it becomes difficult to distinguish hierarchical status, characterized by gender, age, social position, ethnicity, and so on. Aspects of group identity, socialization, and hierarchies that were previously dependent on physical locations and special experience have thus been changed by electronic (and digital) media, according to Meyrowitz.

With the Internet, questions of media and democracy have accelerated, not least among politicians and in the public debate. In this enormous flow of information streams and changing networks that constitute the Internet, all who have access can contribute and seemingly redirect the flow. However, until now, few researchers have been able to single out any signs of increased civic participation on the Internet. Boyd means that people primarily seek out like-minded individuals on the Net and, thus, do not gain access to the views of people who think otherwise. This also means that even if everyone can create and participate on the Net, the attention participants receive is not divided equally. At present, few get attention, and it appears that the flows of information move in such a way as to reinforce social divides.97 Bearing in mind the many social (communication) media on the Internet, it is likely that a great deal of Internet activity, at least among young people, instead functions as self-confirmation and, thus, to strengthen the identity.98

Media and cultural identity

The academic discourse on cultural identity has evolved in parallel with mainstream media research and the concept has been given a variety of meanings and explanations. As Kellner points out,99 the concept of identity in itself is a social construction, an arbitrary concept aimed at highlighting and drawing

95 E.g., Hall 1980.
96 Meyrowitz 1985.
97 boyd 2009.
98 boyd 2007.
attention to some analytical or classification tasks. For instance, one can distinguish between personal identity (comprising the unique combination of background and life experience of the individual) and social identity, embracing the process of identification with and the feeling of belonging to different groups (gender, class, ethnicity, a special group of friends, etc.), cultures, countries, global society, etc. (a process that also entails differentiating oneself from others).

The global, national and local media contribute in different ways to shaping identity. With the spread of global media and the (allegedly) weakened position of the nation state, many researchers and debaters have expressed concern that (national) identity is becoming more loosely anchored and may disappear. Morley and Robins\textsuperscript{100} also consider the dynamics of identity formation as a factor in the political and economic power struggle (e.g., the importance of creating an European identity in the context of strengthening the European Common Market).

Two aspects of the academic discourse on the concept of “identity” are of central importance for our project – aspects related to Bourdieu’s theory, as well as to some critics of the postmodern media culture, for instance, Kellner.

In Bourdieu’s theory of the social determinants of cultural tastes and lifestyles,\textsuperscript{101} social agents’ identity can be seen as a correlate to their economic and various kinds of symbolic capital that is revealed in their habitus (and lifestyles) and that defines the agents within the specific fields where they have investments and are struggling for some specific profits. Identity can be viewed as a fluid concept in time and space, depending on the different social fields in which the social agents become involved, and it should thus be related to these fields’ specific investments and established norms and rules.

In this connection, it is important to remember that Bourdieu’s theory postulates that every society is divided into social classes on the basis of social agents’ tastes (the generative principles of which are the agents’ habitus) and corresponding lifestyles and value systems. Taste is structured along the two central dimensions \textit{economic} and \textit{cultural} capital, which are correlated with different symbolic resources (corresponding to different tastes) to which low or high symbolic values are attributed in a given society and at a given point in time. People with similar tastes are situated close to each other in the social space and vice versa. Agents who have different attitudes towards legitimate symbolic values are situated far from each other in the theoretically constructed social space.

Bourdieu asserts that his model is universal, although the exchange values of the symbolic goods are dynamic and could be structured differently in different countries and periods. What is highly estimated in one country and at a certain

\textsuperscript{100} Morley & Robins 1995.

\textsuperscript{101} E.g., Bourdieu 1979, 1994.
point of time (i.e., associated with the legitimate culture of a society) could be ascribed a low value in another country or period.

It seems at first glance that Bourdieu’s theory conflicts with the thoughts of several critics of the postmodern media culture, who point out that the development of the media in the end of the 20th century (and in the early 2000s) implies access to a multitude of TV channels saturated with advertising and superficial entertainment promoting commercial messages. According to Bourdieu, social agents’ tastes and positions in society are largely determined by factors such as their social origin, education, profession, and the like. However, some post-modern thinkers mean that such factors, which have been constitutive for the more stable pre-modern and modern identities, are no longer decisive in the postmodern landscape.

The importance of media for human identity has been stressed by a number of media researchers (inspired by Hall among others), who have pointed out the complexity of the reception process and stressed agency over structure, i.e., that different groups use popular culture in a productive manner. In this context, it has been said that in the postmodern, fragmented society, it is not possible to have one stable identity as previously, but that the diverse media output facilitates the process of identity creation and the possibility to choose different identities. One example is Fornäs, who states, based on West German socialization theory and British subculture theory, that young people in late modernity are culturally “without ties”, something that increases their reflexivity, opportunities and prerequisites to create their own unique lifestyles.

However, following the research tradition of the Frankfurt School as well as Barthes’ semiology, Kellner stresses media’s ideological influence. He sought to compare the identity structure of different eras. Compared to earlier periods, in which identity was a function of the individual’s specific role in society and the system of myths that oriented people to find their place in the community, and thus in which identity was normally rooted in the individual’s occupation/profession and public function (cf. Bourdieu’s theory), the postmodern identity is said to be increasingly linked to and developed within leisure and consumption, where television and newer media play a key role in structuring the personality and thus shaping contemporary media users’ thinking and behaviour. An ever-increasing range of fiction, various hybrid forms of factual and fictional media content, as well as advertising, invite the receiver to identify with ephemeral and hedonistic lifestyles, suggesting that identity is not given but constructed, and that one can easily change identity, which is a question of choice of style and behaviour and not of moral qualities or social position. In this way, the identity is destabilized while media are integrating the individual

103 Fornäs 1995.
104 Kellner 1995.
into an increasingly globalized, market-oriented social order. Thus, while the media culture provides sources for the construction of identities and for empowerment, resistance and struggle, the power and dominance relations in media and society are also produced and reproduced in the processes of identity building.

Comments on some findings on the distribution and structure of media preferences in the two cities

As hinted at, the present project has been designed on the basis of our previous research. Since the beginning of the 1990s, we have carried out a series of comprehensive lifestyle studies indicating that Bourdieu’s model of social space is basically valid in Sweden\textsuperscript{105} – despite the fact that postmodern culture has gained more and more ground, the latest development of the consumer society being characterized by the rapid spread of global media imbued with advertisements and entertainment. In the comparative analyses in this anthology, we will, among other things, test our empirical data against both Bourdieu’s and Kellner’s lines of thought.

A central question related to Bourdieu’s and Kellner’s views is to what extent the increasingly consumer-oriented media industry is in any way related to people’s identity construction (i.e., their apprehension of themselves and others) in interplay with – or in opposition to – other social factors connected to people’s social background and life experience. The distribution (percentages) of answers to the questions in our quantitative surveys shows that the lifestyles of the respondents from the two cities differ in several respects, which (from Bourdieu’s perspective) indicates that the symbolic resources may work differently in St. Petersburg and Stockholm, even if this fact in itself does not overthrow Bourdieu’s theory according to which the market of the symbolic resources could be partly structured (related to each other) differently in the two cities. With this in view, we have carried out a number of multivariate analyses in each of the four samples in our quantitative surveys in an effort to unmask some common features of these structures as a basis for explanation of such lifestyle differences.

Tables 1:1-2 in the end of this article compare the correlation patterns within two groups of variables for the young respondents in each city – how willingly the respondents listen to a number of music genres and how important it is to them that the media treat different given issues – obtained in two parallel analyses. The variables included in the Tables are ordered in groups obtained by way of factor analyses defining some central dimensions (factors) that explain an essential part of people’s dispositions in the areas of interest, thus reflecting a few orientations in the value system of the analysed groups of respondents. Our idea has been to reduce the original number of variables to a few comprehensive

dimensions, which explain an essential proportion of respondents’ music and media preferences.

One central finding is that the music and media taste of the adolescents from Stockholm and St. Petersburg are structured in a very similar way. Repeated analyses with the adult respondents result in similar groupings (factors). In other words, the correlation patterns binding the symbolic values are quite similar in the two cities. These similarities in the structures of values suggest that the tastes in the two cities are subjected to the same social constraints independent of the differences in the distributions of separate music and media preferences and in the distributions of cultural and economic capital in the two cities.106

Corresponding analyses have been made for several other groups of variables treating political, aesthetic and consumer issues in the questionnaire. Some of them are briefly presented below in this article (see the groupings of variables within Figures 1:1-5) and some in the following three chapters.

The factors displayed in Tables 1:1-2 can be further reduced (and sorted) along two or three relatively independent central factors that explain a large share of the variations in people’s answers about/evaluations of the separate music genres (or concrete music pieces as was the case in our music study in 1995) and about media contents, thus defining some central tendencies in socially conditioned taste that could be related to Bourdieu’s and Kellner’s theories. The taste of a single individual could largely be considered to be a unique combination of her/his varying attitudes towards these three general styles.

In the case of music taste, we can speak of two central dimensions that (in conformity with our earlier studies) could be called “serious” and “popular” music. “Serious” music is strongly associated with classical (European) music (i.e., symphonies, operas, etc.) and correlates more or less positively with, among other things, church music, jazz, blues and folk music. The other central factor, “popular music”, is quite diverse and can with advantage be split into two sub-factors – “traditional” and “modern” popular music (for instance, old hits and dance band music, on the one hand, and the varying music styles spread by popular media channels and targeting young people, on the other).107

Further analyses clearly demonstrate that, by analogy with the music genres, the preferences for media contents (“How important is it for you that the media treat the following issues?”, “How willingly do you watch the following kinds of TV programmes?”) also can be divided into “serious” and “lighter” contents.

106 At the same time, these structures correspond to results from our earlier lifestyle studies focusing on music taste and attitudes towards the Internet and other media in Sweden.
107 In our music study in 1994-1995, the music genres as well as the central factors (dimensions) were also extracted by way of factor analyses, whereby the three central factors, “serious music”, “traditional popular music” and “modern popular music” proved to be stable, i.e., they were on the whole independent of the underlying concrete music examples, evaluated by the persons participating in the study. Thus, the factors seem to reflect three main orientations in the value system of the population in Sweden.
1. SOME COMMENTS ON MEDIA TYPOLOGY

(e.g., TV theatre, scientific programmes, factual programmes versus soap operas, cookery programmes, reports on celebrities, etc.), and that the corresponding genre groups, especially the “serious” ones, are correlated with each other, meaning that people who like “serious” music most often also have a positive attitude towards “serious” media contents. The correlation structures initially made on the basis of the adults’ answers proved to be valid also for the young people, especially concerning the correlation between the “serious” styles. Moreover, the analyses show that the “serious” genres and media contents are strongly correlated with such background variables as education, profession and (partly) income, indicating that Bourdieu’s model is valid in Stockholm and St. Petersburg, as it was in Sweden in the 1990s.

In such a way, our studies show that “serious” factors correlate with the hierarchical structure of society (in terms of economical and especially cultural capital) and are decisive for people’s attitudes towards not only music genres and other media contents, but also for people’s leisure activities.

For example, one explanation of the fact that highly educated people and high officials more often like “serious” music than other persons may be that the more advanced or complicated character of such genres requires training in order to understand the symbolism. Such an assumption may also explain the positive correlation between “serious music” and people’s interest in global political issues and the sciences, etc. However, another reason for the above-mentioned finding may be the socially conditioned unconscious will to confirm one’s social position and delimit oneself from other social groups or classes, in the way Bourdieu discusses.108

However, in our studies, preferences for “lighter” media contents are not anchored in the same way in social classes.

Figures 1:1-5 display not only the structure of music taste and media preferences, but also the distributions (percentages)109 of the answers in Stockholm and St. Petersburg to questions measuring attitudes towards a number of media contents. It is evident that there are several differences between the age groups and, not least, cities.

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109 However, as explained in the Appendix “Additional Description of Methods” we have chosen not to write out the exact percentage figures in the diagrams.
Figure 1:1. How willingly do you listen to the following music genres?
(by age and city, cumulative per cent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Teens SPb</th>
<th>Teens Sth</th>
<th>Adults SPb</th>
<th>Adults Sth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classical music (symphonies)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opera</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musicals, operettas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church music</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swedish/Russian folk music</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Songs and ballads</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jazz</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blues</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign folk music</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hip hop, rap</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R’n’B</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soul</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reggae</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Techno</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disco</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>House</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Spirituals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hard rock, metal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punk</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Rock</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pop</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schlagers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dance band</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World music</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

very willingly willingly

The vertical lines/marks represent every 25 per cent.
One hypothesis is that the growing consumer society, including the increasingly commercial media landscape that to a more or less great extent has replaced the traditional socializing institutions, is a circumstance at least partly explaining such differences in the results, not least in Stockholm, which implies (in accordance with the above-mentioned postmodern positions) that background variables such as people’s social origin, education and profession are becoming irrelevant in the process of identity construction. It is, on the other hand, obvi-
ous that the radical political and economic changes in Russia have influenced the symbolic system in several respects: Many values that have been at a premium during the Soviet era are denied by the new liberal ideology and vice versa. However, such values have a double life in the value system of the St. Petersburg inhabitants, especially the adolescents, who are divided between the new official ideology spread by the Russian postmodern media and the past ideology, an inseparable part of the life experience of their closest personal environment, which is often in obvious disaccord with the media messages.

Support for the postmodern positions in our studies is, thus, that there are no or weak (positive) correlations between people’s positions in society (education, practical vs. theoretical study programme, etc.) and their attitudes towards modern popular music styles, “lighter” media genres and corresponding lifestyles (for instance, choice of clothes) spread by a media industry that promotes consumption in a Baudrillarian sense\(^\text{110}\) (i.e., as manipulation of signs that has nothing in common with satisfaction of natural needs, see Article 4).

The question then is how these kinds of mediated popular culture affect people’s views on society and on themselves. The group discussions that followed up the quantitative surveys indicate that a large proportion of especially the Russian participants are (in accordance with the above-mentioned Baudrillardian position) deadened by the growing media buzz through which political and market forces are trying to affect their behaviours in major societal realms, and often deliberately seek to shield themselves from media messages. Many of these participants pointed out that they are aware of the ideological function of the mass media, but indicated that they are not affected by such pressures. However, several results from our quantitative and qualitative studies (discussed in the three following articles) suggest that the implicit political or market messages of popular culture in fact have an impact on the intended target groups, thus shaping perceptions of and beliefs about the social world and human nature, beliefs that support (or reinforce) the established power relations.

Thus, our studies support, on the one hand, the views of Kellner and postmodern thinkers who propose that identity construction in a developing consumer society and as regards popular culture is becoming more loosely tied to the individual’s traditional background and the social hierarchy in which s/he is positioned. At the same time, the consumer society apparently influences the individual’s view of her-/himself and of others. On the other hand, our studies show that there are, in accordance with Bourdieu’s theory, basic relations between cultural taste and preferences and societal structure when it comes to the socially “legitimate” culture and “serious” genres.

Against this background, it is important to point out that the proportion of respondents who devote themselves to “high” culture activities, such as going to

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\(^{110}\) Baudrillard 1986.
the theatre, opera, concerts, and museums, is greater in St. Petersburg than in Stockholm, a connection that could be explained by Soviet traditions, as well as by the fact that the output of this kind of entertainment seems to be greater in St. Petersburg than in Stockholm. It should also be mentioned that a considerably larger proportion of Russian respondents have marked that they like opera, symphonies and other kinds of socially “legitimate” or “serious” music genres.

The Stockholm respondents, on the other hand, have a more positive attitude towards many types of popular music and media contents than the St. Petersburg inhabitants have, something that seems to largely depend on the fact that the consumer society in Sweden is more advanced than that in Russia (see Article 4 for an in-depth discussion).\footnote{A study in 2002 comparing Estonian/Tartu University students and Swedish/Södertörn University students found, in a similar manner, that the Tartu students were more oriented than the Södertörn students were towards highbrow canonized culture regarding music (classical music, jazz) and literary genres (classical novels and poetry), while the Södertörn students adhered to a taste structure oriented towards the (mass-produced) youth culture. At the same time, the Tartu students had a generally broader taste pattern, also including popular culture, while the Södertörn students’ taste was more narrow, limited to mass-produced popular culture. See Bengtsson & Lundgren 2005.}

The respondents’ attitudes towards the concrete TV contents could be explained in the same terms (Figure 1:3). The statistical correlations show, for example, that a greater proportion of the Stockholm respondents than the St. Petersburg respondents like soap operas, drama and crime serials. From another point of view, one might say that the situations and problems described in these kinds of content lie closer to the Swedish than to the Russian way of life. However, such a hypothesis implies assumptions about the nature of the corresponding content available in both cities, something that has not been studied in our project.
Figure 1.3. How willingly do you watch the following TV programmes? (by age and city, cumulative per cent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme Type</th>
<th>Teens SPb</th>
<th>Teens Sth</th>
<th>Adults SPb</th>
<th>Adults Sth</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>TV theatre</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Art movies</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Cultural programmes</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Music programmes</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Fashion reports</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Current/political debate</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Factual programmes</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Documentaries</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Science programmes</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>News emissions</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Programmes about nature</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Programmes about technology</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Science fiction</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Horror films</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sport</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Quizzes</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Crime serials</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Thrillers</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Drama serials</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Action serials</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Comedy serials</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Shopping programs, TV shop</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Advertising in programmes</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Talk shows</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Children’s programmes</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Soap operas</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Reality TV, docu-soaps</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Cookery programmes</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*very willingly willingly*

The vertical lines/marks represent every 25 per cent.

It should be mentioned that many St. Petersburg participants in our group discussions complained that the new Russian TV productions of this kind (which during recent years have replaced earlier popular Latin American serials) are still quite unprofessional. It is also interesting to point out that U.S. produced movies and TV serials are considerably more popular among the respondents in Stockholm than in St. Petersburg, while the Russian teenagers and adults are more fond of their national production than are their Swedish counterparts. “People like more real situations, close to their life”, one informant comments. “Probably the contrast between the prevailing Hollywood TV fiction and reality is not so big in Sweden”, she continues.

As mentioned, people used to watch Latin American serials avidly when they were previously imported to Russia. It seems that such series corresponded better than North American serials do to people’s life conditions in Russia,
which newer Russian productions are trying to depict with differing degrees of success. The North American lifestyles, as represented in films and serials transmitted over the world, do not seem to have affected Russian audiences as much as the Swedish audiences – see also the preferences expressed in Figures 1:4-5.

Since the 1990s, the number of nationally produced TV series has also increased on Russian TV channels, while series from the U.S. have diminished. In light of the fact that the consumer society is still new and relatively undeveloped in St. Petersburg, it is interesting to emphasize the positive correlations in our studies between the respondents’ interest in soap operas, on the one hand, and a number of variables measuring different kinds of consumer values and behaviour, on the other.

The correlations turn when it comes to TV programmes dealing with music, science and technology, as well as art movies (by new or well-known directors) and TV theatre. These genres, which are primarily associated with the “legitimate” culture in society, seem to be much more in vogue among people in St. Petersburg than in Stockholm. One explanatory factor is that the status of the

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112 Degtereva 2007.
last-mentioned subjects was much stronger in the Soviet Union than in the West, where consumer-oriented media products have long competed with traditional culture. Naturally, consumer values change rapidly in times of transition. Such processes were often commented on by the participants in our group discussions – primarily by those in the elderly generation in St. Petersburg who belong to the cultural élite – who said that “the culture is dying”, “material values are prevailing”. These judgements were made from the perspective of the old value system transmitted, i.a., by the family, the educational system and other social institutions, values that continue to live and stand out as more prominent.

After perestroika\(^\text{113}\) and the collapse of the Soviet system, West European and American neo-liberal values have been largely promoted by dominant political and economic powers in Russia and have become part of a new ideology that permeates the Russian mass media of today. Personal material success, mainly embodied in having previously inaccessible objects as a car and the newest technology, has become an important dimension in many Russians’ consciousness. This could explain the greater interest in corresponding TV/media content (i.e., cars, new technology, and the like).

Another difference between the media preferences in the two cities concerns Stockholmers’ greater interest in media content that deals with a number of social/political questions such as “gender equality”, “development assistance policy”, “refugee and immigration policies”, “corruption” and “economic inequalities in society”. It appears that Swedes to a greater extent than the inhabitants of St. Petersburg consider it important that the mass media deal with these issues, which, on the other hand, seem to be more imminent in the Russian society of today.

Via television and other media, the present government in Russia is giving prominence to the country’s economic growth, emphasizing that Russia is doing well, while the majority of the population faces serious everyday problems. At the same time, the media output is saturated with sensational reports, tchernukha (seamy side), depicting the ugly parts of the reality without negative connotations. Many Russian people identify themselves with these negative stories and do not want to experience extra trouble by watching similar programmes. This could also explain why the Russian youths in our study more often than the youths in Sweden consider it important that media content consists of reports on music trends, the glamorous life of celebrities, etc., as an escape from the hard, everyday reality. Based on the results reported in Article 3, it is evident that a considerable proportion of the St. Petersburg (and probably the whole Russian) population, due to political and economic changes, has

\(^{113}\) Perestroika = restructuring, i.e., the political and economic reforms introduced by President Gorbachev in 1987.
become alienated from the political discourse, especially as defined in the Western consciousness.

On the whole, as in our previous research, factors associated with the traditional legitimate culture of society (e.g., great interest in classical music and others forms of “high” culture, in global political issues, etc.) correlate positively with background variables such as high education level, theoretical study programme and – in a broader sense – people’s place in the social hierarchy, which in its turn is related to their possibilities to influence social development and to their welfare (towards the end of the first decade of the 21st century, the place one has on the welfare scale is still very important in St. Petersburg and Russia). In this way, one can note that Bourdieu’s theory of coherence between social agents’ tastes and lifestyles, on the one side, and society’s power structure, on the other, is valid in 2006-2007 both in Stockholm and St. Petersburg – despite the ideological and economic transformations that have occurred, especially in Russia, during the past decades.

On the other hand, it seems that our results also partly confirm Kellner’s thesis on the role of the prevailing postmodern media culture for people’s identity construction. In the growing global media output promoting new products and services, the stereotypes provided by the popular culture direct the choices of consumers in different social circumstances, especially regarding people’s consumer behaviour, by providing identification stereotypes related to hedonistic lifestyles and fashion trends. And this kind of identification does not seem to significantly affect the social hierarchy, which, as mentioned, is instead largely correlated with social agents’ attitudes towards the legitimate or “serious” culture.
Table 1:1. How willingly do you listen to the following music genres? (structure matrices)

**Teens in Stockholm**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classical music</td>
<td>.843</td>
<td>-.036</td>
<td>.193</td>
<td>-.130</td>
<td>-.050</td>
<td>.012</td>
<td>-.383</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opera</td>
<td>.837</td>
<td>-.190</td>
<td>.240</td>
<td>.075</td>
<td>-.278</td>
<td>.084</td>
<td>-.241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musicals, operettas</td>
<td>.809</td>
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(continued)
### Teens in St. Petersburg

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**Extraction Method:** Principal Component Analysis

**Rotation Method:** Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization
Table 1: How important is it for you personally that the media deal with the following areas? (structure matrices)

**Teens in Stockholm**

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# 1. Some Comments on Media Typology

## Teens in St. Petersburg

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The homeless persons

1. The homeless persons
2. Terrorism
3. HIV/AIDS
4. Relations ethnic groups
5. Immigration issues
6. Development assistance
7. Alcohol/drug issues
8. Gender equality issues
9. Crime, accidents
10. Educational issues

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Fashion

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2. Beauty
3. About celebrities
4. Music

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Cars

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2. Technology, computers
3. Pornography
4. Sports
5. Entertainment

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2. National news
3. Local news
4. Culture

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Animals, nature

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2. Travels, tourism
3. Food, cooking
4. History, science
5. Environmental issues

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2. Interior decoration
3. Health service
4. Labour market issues
5. Relations and love

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Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis
Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization
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Statistiska Centralbyrån (Statistics Sweden) 2009, http://www.scb.se/Pages/TableAndChart____167885.aspx (retrieved 2009)


Sveriges Radio 1977-78 (annual report from the Swedish Broadcasting Corporation)


2. New Media and Social Divides.  
A Comparative Analysis of Stockholm and St. Petersburg

Cecilia von Feilitzen & Peter Petrov

The Internet has been at the heart of the social discourse during recent decades – and increasingly so in research. In the public debate, not least among politicians on a supranational level, many hopes have been expressed of improving societal, civil and personal life by bridging digital divides, i.e., hopes of better health, security, education, careers, of reducing inequalities between population groups, of increased democracy and participation among citizens – and with these improvements also economic growth in the world. There are also hopes of reducing poverty, resolving terrorism and achieving sustainable world markets.¹

More modified assertions about the media, the Internet and democracy also exist. For example, in 2009, the European Union announced the European Commission’s (EC) Recommendation on media literacy,² saying in the press release that “We must make sure everyone is media literate so nobody is left out. Citizens are being talked to all the time, but can they talk back? If they can use the media in a competent and creative way we would take a step towards a new generation of democratic participation.”³

As a matter of fact, the hopes expressed by politicians and in the public debate about eradicating the digital divides – i.e., that access to and use of the Internet will lead to equal improvement of societal, civil and personal life – have counterparts in early and later theoretical literature both on the media and on the postindustrial information society. In this large body of literature, many authors apply a consensus approach, meaning that the digital media – cf. Meyerrowitz below – and the information society – e.g., Bell,⁴ Martin,⁵ Stonier⁶ – bring

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² The European Commission 2009: the EC defines media literacy as “the ability to access, understand and critically evaluate different aspects of the media and media content and communicate in a variety of contexts. It relates to all media, including television and film, radio and recorded music, print media, the Internet and all other digital technologies”.  
³ The European Commission, press release on August 8, 2009.  
⁵ Martin 1978.  
⁶ Stonier 1983.
with them a new era of more harmonious lives and societies, where divides and conflicts of the past subside.

An issue for the present article is whether the Internet contributes to increased equality, democracy and civil participation. In this context, we will question the usefulness of the concept of digital divide, which often refers to the gap between those persons, groups and countries who have (physical and) regular access to digital information and communication technology (ICT), primarily the Internet, and those without such access (the “haves” and “have nots”), as well as to gaps related to skills in using digital information and in communicating digitally.

Within the now extensive Internet research, there are a multitude of empirical studies taking as their starting point the concept of “digital divides” or “digital gaps”, and showing which groups in society are lingering behind and which gaps have levelled out over time.7

Several other researchers – taking a more theoretical perspective, yet like politicians – have seen new possibilities in the developing digital media for political life in Western democracies. In such contexts, the growing amount of societal information that has become easily available to more and more people via the Internet is regarded as an important factor of enlightenment, at the same time as more and more discussion forums and blogs on the Net are expected to promote political activity.

One of the researchers who already in the 1980s perceived the capacity of the future media in this regard was Meyrowitz,8 who considered that digital media can bring about development of new forms of intelligence that, among other things, embrace the ability to reduce the amount of knowledge for a special situation until one masters it, something that becomes necessary and easier with the rapid access to all information signified by the Internet. New competences can evolve – above all the ability to see patterns and relations between different kinds of information.

In this perspective, the digital media can appear as a factor which automatically gives rise to several societal mechanisms that result in increased equality, a factor which tends to involve all people in a common sphere of action, where it becomes difficult to discern hierarchic societal status, and gender and age roles among people.9

Such a view is also interesting in view of certain other (among them, so-called postmodern) theories, which emphasize a view of the mass media as an important cultivating factor that to a great extent has replaced traditional socializing institutions such as family, school, and work. Unlike previous social systems in which social identity (and lifestyle) was largely a function of the individual’s

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7 E.g., Forskningsgruppen för Samhälls- och Informationsstudier (FSI) 2004.
8 Meyrowitz 1985.
social background and occupation, the “postmodern” identity is said to have become much more unstable and changeable.\(^{10}\)

Meyrowitz’ and others’ positive view of the developing digital media differs sharply from those of several critics of the massmedial “postmodern” society. Poster\(^ {11}\) maintains, among other things, that in the computer era (which differs in several respects from the periods of print and traditional electronic media) the databases of the digital media generate new patterns of dominance. And unlike Meyrowitz, Poster means that it is only technological determinists who believe that the databases can become decisive conditions for a really educated population – in the ICT society information is instead something that is carefully controlled by market forces, he says.

Several other authors have emphasized, for instance, that the new ICT, especially the Internet, is also at the centre of the on-going globalization, which according to certain critics\(^ {12}\) means that a greater and greater proportion of political and economic power is concentrated to a diminishing number of transnational companies, whose dominance in the media area leads, among other things, to cultural standardization and impoverishment of Western societies’ democratic potential.

Lyon\(^ {13}\) discusses the roots of the information society, among them military, commercial and government power, the dominant classes’ control over the economy and knowledge, and the fact that information is an economic factor in its own right with vested interests. Basic and concrete questions must therefore be posed concerning the labour market, education system, social relations, global divides, culture, leisure and consumption, etc., in order to understand that the arrival of the information society and the ICT certainly appears to be, but is not, a natural event.

In addition to the many studies on access to and amount of media/Internet use, and as a consequence the existence of digital divides, empirical research on the media and Internet has tried to discover whether there is a deliberate public sphere in Habermas’ sense of the word.\(^ {14}\) Such research, however, has been forced to modify this starting point. The Internet does not seem to automatically pique users’ political interest – but if we relax the criteria of reasoned deliberation among equals for a common good, we might accept the presence of multiple public spheres within the media and everyday life, which work more or less effectively and in which people show more or less “civic engagement”.\(^ {15}\) The

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\(^{10}\) E.g., Ziehe 1989.
\(^{11}\) Poster 1990.
\(^{12}\) E.g., Herman & McChesney 1997.
\(^{13}\) Lyon 1988.
\(^{15}\) Butsch 2007.
question is, though, whether these many public spheres or today’s “civic cultures” make a difference compared to the structures of past decades. One critic of using the concept “public sphere” is Fraser, who states, among other things, that it is wrong to assume that the media and the Internet can contribute to social equalizing, because inequalities continue to operate through cultural hierarchies of everyday life. This view has similarities to Bourdieu’s theory, which posits that social background and societal path is decisive for people’s tastes, values, leisure activities, etc., and calls into question the supposed importance of the Internet as a source of knowledge, political participation and social equalization by referring to the necessary conditions that must be fulfilled for social agents to engage in a specific “game”. In order to devote oneself to a specific activity (e.g., search for a certain kind of societal information on the Internet or participate in a political forum), one must be furnished with a corresponding habitus, a disposition meaning that one conceives of as relevant the social game a particular activity comprises.

Another critic of a “public sphere” in a Habermasian sense is Dutton, who says that this concept refers to the past and therefore is not able to capture the rise of an entirely new sphere of influence, such as the Internet constitutes. Dutton builds on Castells’ depiction of the Internet as a “space of flows” in contrast to a space of places and has introduced the concept of the Fifth Estate (referring to the press as the Fourth Estate), meaning a “network of networks” (one-to-many, one-to-one, many-to-one, many-to-many), that is, “the growing use of the Internet and related digital technologies is creating a space for networking individuals in ways that enable a new source of accountability in government, politics and other sectors”, something that “could challenge the influence of other more established bases of institutional authority” and “support the vitality of liberal democratic societies”.

However, at least in Sweden empirical research shows that although people mean that the Internet contributes to more accessible information, they are sceptical regarding the import of the Internet for democracy. And although the Internet has increased people’s contacts with others who share the same hobbies and interests, and with friends and colleagues, it has not, according to them, increased people’s political contacts – rather the reverse. On the other hand, the Internet has become an important platform for those already interested in politics.

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16 Dahlgren & Olsson 2007.
18 Fraser 1992.
20 Dutton 2009.
22 Findahl 2009.
Partly similar results come from a telephone survey in the U.S. on civic engagement, pointing to the fact that the Internet is not changing the socio-economic character of civic engagement (such as e-mailing a government official, signing an online petition or making a political contribution). Just as in offline politics, the well-off and well-educated are particularly likely to participate in online activities that mirror offline forms of engagement.

However, there are some hints that social media (i.e., social networking sites (SNS), blogs, and the like) may alter this pattern, the same report says, because the differences in socio-economic status (SES) are not as clear among the younger persons (18-34 years of age) who use these sites and blogs more often for, e.g., posting a political or civic comment than older people do. On the other hand, SES is more difficult to measure among the young, many of whom are still studying. Furthermore, we do not know what the real motives are for this civic engagement – for example, using SNS and blogs may also largely be a self-confirming activity. And the impact of these new tools also depends in large part on what happens as this younger cohort of “digital natives” who use the social media most gets older. “Are we witnessing a generational change or a life-cycle phenomenon that will change as these younger users age? Will the civic divide close, or will rapidly evolving technologies continue to leave behind those with lower levels of education and income?” Thus, the interpretation of the findings is still on the level of speculation.

In the present article, we have theoretically tried to relate the empirical wholes to some of the above-mentioned different perspectives. We discuss the importance of the Internet for individuals and society in light of empirical data from our research project, in which we compare the habits, lifestyles and attitudes of young and middle-aged people in St. Petersburg and Stockholm. The design of our studies is presented in “Foreword and Introduction” and in one of the Appendices.

As for the Internet, which is primarily in focus when discussing digital divides, it is less spread in Russia than in Sweden, which offers relatively low and mostly fixed costs due to broadband connection, strong competition between telecom operators, etc. In 2006, 80 per cent of the Swedish population aged 9-79 years said they had access to the Internet at home, in 2007 the figure had risen to 83 per cent and in 2008 to 85 per cent. Among young people (aged 15-24) in Sweden, home Internet access is even higher. In Russia as a whole, Internet access was estimated at 21 per cent in December 2007 and 27 per cent in March 2009, but this figure is higher in Moscow and St. Petersburg. A report based on figures from 2008 points out that Internet access at home was 25 per cent in the

24 Smith et al. 2009, p. 7
26 Internet World Stats 2009.
whole of Russia, 55 per cent in Moscow and 52 per cent in St. Petersburg, these figures having risen relatively little from two years before.27

Our own previous empirical data28 have given rise to the hypothesis that digital divides, at least on the level of population groups within society, must be understood not only in terms of access to and use of the Internet and other digital equipment, but much more in relation to, and as rooted in, economic, social and cultural determinants. When access to and use of the Internet have become more or less equal among population groups, it seems that they, among other things, use the Internet for entertainment and social communication to a similar extent, but that there still are great differences as regards use of such knowledge on the Internet that could be called “societal information” or that is associated with “legitimate” (economic, scientific, cultural, etc.) capital in society – in other words, the kind of knowledge that often is regarded as facilitating citizens’ active participation in public life. Such differences in the individually chosen fields of ICT application seem, in their turn, to be connected to the persons’ backgrounds and general lifestyles – that is, their social identity – and reveal other kinds of digital divides than access to and use of ICT.

In the four groups in our current quantitative data collections – 17-year-olds and middle-aged people in St. Petersburg and Stockholm, respectively – access to and use of the Internet appear in the following ranking order:

- 45- to 55-year-olds in St. Petersburg, of whom 51 per cent had Internet access at home at the time of the study. 12 per cent used the Internet at home nearly every day and 32 per cent at least once a month. Using the Internet at work was less common.
- 17-year-olds in St. Petersburg, of whom 74 per cent had Internet access at home, 38 per cent used the Internet at home nearly every day and 71 per cent at least once a month.
- 45- to 55-year-olds in Stockholm, of whom 92 per cent had access to the Internet at home. Thirty-five per cent used the Internet at home nearly every day and 82 per cent at least once a month. The figures are roughly the same for using the Internet at work.
- 17-year-olds in Stockholm, of whom 99 per cent had Internet access at home. 70 per cent used it at home nearly every day, while 98 per cent used the Internet at home at least several days a week.

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27 “Развитие интернета в регионах России” (“Development of the Internet in the Regions of Russia”) 2009.
Is it possible to draw any conclusions about digital divides based on a comparison of these four groups? The following quantitative data are interspersed with utterances in the qualitative group discussions.

Media use by age and city

Use of the Internet is included in a pattern of other media use. Taking these other media into consideration, we find partly different media habits in all four groups studied. For example, the medium most often used among the St. Petersburg teens is television, closely followed by radio. The adults in St. Petersburg use television most often of the four groups, and then radio – but compared to the young generation in their city, adults are heavier TV viewers and lighter radio listeners. Among the Stockholm teens, however, using the Internet for leisure is the most frequent activity, followed by TV viewing. And among the Stockholm adults, TV viewing and newspaper reading are the most common media habits (Figure 2:1).

Figure 2:1. How often do you use the following media? (by age and city, cumulative per cent)

The vertical lines/marks represent every 25 per cent.

Certain media habits are especially conditioned by age, both in the sense of lifecycle characteristics and of media generational patterns. The 17-year-olds use books for study/work and the Internet for leisure and study, respectively, more
often than the middle-aged people in their city do. As previous research and our group discussions point out, young people listen more than adults do to music, as well. The middle-aged, on their part, read newspapers, use the Internet for work, and watch television more often than the young persons do.

Computer and video games
As expected, the young persons also play video and computer games much more than middle-aged persons do. The young game players in both cities consist above all of males – and computer playing is typically connected with certain other interests, such as an interest in techniques of various kinds, with (perceived) computer skills, with playing games on the mobile phone, with playing games at friends’ homes, and with an interest in action, science fiction, sports and thrillers on television. Young game players also tend to be interested in media topics such as cars and pornography and to surf to corresponding places on the Internet. Furthermore, they more often than others in their age group tend to spend a long time on the Internet, to download films and computer programs from the Internet, to search for entertainment information there, as well as to play cards and bet money on football pools, lotto, horses, and the like. Not surprisingly, the music genres most preferred among these young computer game players are bitpop and in Stockholm also hard rock and metal.

In some of the group discussions explanations emerged as to why video and computer games are so popular. Some young men prefer one-player games, while others engage in multi-player games, sometimes online games with other players all over the world. The interviewees refer, among other things, to the interactivity of the games, that you in a way “are somebody else” and “can do what you want when more or less gearing the game, you see”. Compared to books and films, where it takes time to identify with the main character, the interviewees say that you “become” the role person in a game within a few minutes, and “you immediately forget yourself”. “It is a flight from reality” and the playing “gives you kicks”.

It is worth mentioning, however, that the young players are not lone wolves – they meet with friends and family as often as other 17-year-olds do. And we find no correlations between game playing and moods, such as often or seldom being glad, appreciated, depressed, anxiety-ridden, or stressed.

At the same time, playing these digital games is more popular among the inhabitants of St. Petersburg, both the young and the middle-aged ones, than among the Stockholmers. Because game playing is not connected to number of children in the household or household size, one speculation is that the more frequent playing in St. Petersburg may be associated with higher status in using these games, as computers and the Internet generally are newer phenomena for the Russian than for the Swedish population. On the other hand, according to the World Internet Institute, which compared online playing in several countries
(not Russia, however), such play is much more common in, e.g., the U.S. and England, and above all in several Asian countries, than in Sweden,\(^{29}\) which is why the more frequent playing in St. Petersburg compared to in Stockholm may be due to other factors.

The adult digital game players in our study often have similar interests as the young players with one important difference, which naturally affects the interest pattern: Unlike among the adolescents, playing among middle-aged persons in Stockholm has only a slight correlation with gender, and among the adult players in St. Petersburg, there is no gender correlation in the frequency and length of video and computer game playing at all. Furthermore, digital game playing is not related to education among the adults in both cities. But among the young people in the two cities, the frequency and time of playing have slight positive relations to attending a practical study programme.

Otherwise our analyses reveal that the St. Petersburg adults’ computer and video game playing is related to many ICT and entertainment variables, such as using the computer and Internet frequently, viewing films on video/DVD and the computer, finding the Internet important for entertainment and pleasure, and the notion that entertainment generally is an important area for the media to deal with. The picture is more or less similar among the Stockholm adults, but here some more pronounced “male interests” reappear, as well.

**Mobile phones**

Practically all persons in our surveys have access to and use mobile phones. However, there is a marked age pattern (Figure 2:2) in that the young generation in both cities more often than the middle-aged adults send and receive SMS and use the phone’s “extra functions” – listening to music, shooting pictures, sending/receiving pictures, using e-mail/the Internet, and changing settings on the phone. And of all four groups, the young Russians are the most diligent users of mobile phones, including almost all their services. Further ahead we will see that corresponding fields of application on the Internet also attract young people more than adults.

Gender differences in using mobile phones are not especially marked among the young people. However, the St. Petersburg and Stockholm girls use SMS more than the Russian and Swedish boys do, respectively. And the Russian boys play games with their phones more often than the Russian girls do, while the Swedish boys use their cell phone more often for e-mail/Internet than the Swedish girls do.

Among the adults in St. Petersburg, there are no gender differences as regards mobile phone use, as is the case also with using video and computer games, mentioned previously.

\(^{29}\) Findahl 2008.
However, a sub-group stands out – the use of mobile phones is in several respects male dominated among the middle-aged adults in Stockholm. The adult men there use the mobile phone and exploit several of its extra functions more often than the other persons studied do. One explanatory factor is the gender hierarchy on the Swedish labour market, where men’s mobile communication more often than women’s is partly or wholly paid for by the workplace. Men’s greater interest in technique also plays a role. In St. Petersburg, there are relatively few adults whose mobile phoning is subsidized by employers, even if it then, to a certain extent, also more often is a benefit to men.

**Figure 2:2. How often do you use the mobile to …**
(by age and city, cumulative per cent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teens SPb</th>
<th>Teens St</th>
<th>Adults SPb</th>
<th>Adults St</th>
<th>Function</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Listen to music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Take photos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Send, receive pictures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Play games</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Use e-mail, use the Internet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Change settings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Receive calls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Call others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Send, receive SMS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 9 times/day</td>
<td>4-8 times/day</td>
<td>1-3 times/day</td>
<td>One/a few times/week</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The vertical lines/marks represent every 25 per cent.

Use of mobile phones is hardly related to education. In the two Stockholm surveys, no such connections appear at all. In the St. Petersburg surveys, there are a few weak relations: adults with a higher education use SMS somewhat more than do adults with a lower education. And young people attending theoretical study programmes use the mobile phone for e-mail/Internet somewhat more often than do young people in practical study programmes.

Going further into our database, we see that the Russian adults who often make calls via the mobile phone are also inclined to use ICT in general more than other people do, as well as to use other forms of mediated personal communication (such as sending and receiving e-mails, chatting, instant messaging, and entering communities on the Internet). These middle-aged Russians are also

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30 Cf. also Bolin 2007.
more likely than the average person to search for a variety of information on the Internet (for instance, travel information, entertainment information, scientific information) and download music, computer programs and films. As for the rest, they have a lifestyle pattern that implies highly direct personal intercourse – going to the cinema, visiting restaurants/pubs, going to parties, etc. People who often make telephone calls via the mobile phone also tend to have a better household economy than the average person does.

In Sweden, mobile phone habits are, besides being related to more general ICT use, also connected to a stable family situation, having a high work position and a successful career, being a “good consumer” (i.e., being influenced by brands and advertising on the Internet, finding it important to follow fashion and trends as regards clothes and sports, etc.). This consumer pattern is even more marked among Swedish youths who are more focused on brands, etc., than among the adults. This conspicuous consumer behaviour is furthermore related to a positive attitude towards such TV programmes as soap operas, reality TV, fashion reports, MTV and other music channels, as well as to music genres such as hip-hop, R’n’B and other popular genres.

Newspapers
There are media habits characteristic of each city. Before going into the details of the Internet, we will make some basic comments on the use of newspapers and television. The most salient trends are that the persons in Stockholm use the Internet for leisure and work and read newspapers, respectively, much more often than do the persons in St. Petersburg, who watch comparatively more television.

Both media experts and participants in the group discussions in our project have commented upon the sharply decreasing frequency of newspaper reading in Russia after the Soviet era. In contrast, Sweden has kept its (internationally) high level of newspaper reading.

Figure 2:1 above demonstrates that, in St. Petersburg, slightly more than one tenth of the middle-aged persons read newspapers every day, compared to ca. 70 per cent of the middle-aged in Stockholm. Reading newspapers now and then is, thus, most common in St. Petersburg and most people do not subscribe to any newspaper, in contrast to during the Soviet era when it was standard to subscribe to one or several papers. In the Russian group discussions, the emerging picture was to buy a daily or weekly some time per week or to get a newspaper from a friend, family member or at the workplace now and then.

A series of reasons for not placing newspapers especially high up on the list of favourite media appeared in these Russian discussions: “it takes time” to read newspapers; “there’s such an inertia”; “sight problems”; it is not good to subscribe nowadays because “many letterboxes are broken by youths”; “it is a silent protest since the 70s (when it was compulsory to subscribe)”; “you get the infor-
mation (or more full information) on television” with its many channels instead. Some persons also mentioned radio or the Internet as alternatives to newspapers.

Another relatively frequent comment was that “it is expensive (to buy newspapers)”, something that one of our interviewed media experts waved aside:

The cost some people say… there was a crisis, etc. A mug of beer costs more than a newspaper […] Men will not abstain from a mug of beer, but buying a newspaper… ‘Oh, there is no money!’ It is a subterfuge.

However, quite a few persons in the St. Petersburg group discussions said that they do not read newspapers because they are critical of their sensational, “yellow” content.

Frankly speaking, all main newspapers […] what we can see is only a big female breast on the front page…. even in central newspapers… (I am) sick of it. (middle-aged man, low education, St. Petersburg)

Now we allegedly have democracy […] fake democracy… an immense choice. These newspapers which are imposed on me… I don’t want to read anymore… Komsomolka or anything else… other newspapers that are up to 70 per cent yellow press, in which I am not interested at all. I despise it and don’t read. (middle-aged woman, high education, St. Petersburg)

Of course, some persons are positive to a particular named paper (such as Izvestiya - News, Sankt-Peterburgskie vedomosti – St. Petersburg News, or Argumenty i fakty) generally or for some special reason.

In the group discussions with the young people in St. Petersburg, partly similar reasons for not reading newspapers were mentioned, for instance: all information is on the Internet; reporting on television is usually longer; laziness; they are yellow press. Some persons meant that newspapers are not trustworthy. Furthermore, many adolescents have seen through the papers and feel they are partial and contain biased information:

Newspapers and magazines in most cases work for someone. The information, which goes through them, serves someone’s interests. […] It is someone’s view, frequently not objective. (young man, theoretical gymnasium, St. Petersburg)

As is the case in many countries, the young generation reads newspapers less often than the adult generation does. In the group discussions with the Russian teenagers, there were also “youth-related reasons” for not reading papers: “the language in newspapers is very boring and there are just facts”; “it seems to me that newspapers are for older people”.

In the group discussions with the middle-aged Stockholmers, on the other hand, no special reasons for reading papers appeared – such a habit seemed to be
self-evident. Practically all 17-year-olds in Stockholm also read newspapers, although not as regularly as the adult Swedes. In the youth discussions in Stockholm, it turned out that some preferred traditional morning papers and were critical of both newspapers that are free of charge and the evening press. Even so, it is strange that not more people in Stockholm complained about fragmented stories and an overflow of pictures, sensational stories and advertisements in the press, which on the whole seems at least as yellow in Stockholm as in St. Petersburg. On the contrary, several 17-year-olds in Stockholm praised the gratis press (which is especially read by young people and people in housing areas with less resources):

But therefore I think that Metro is so ingenious. ‘Cause I can’t manage reading through DN (Dagens Nyheter, The Daily News, the biggest morning paper). I haven’t even time in the mornings to do it. So… Metro is terrific, they have, like everything. [...] I use to check the weather in DN. (girl, theoretical gymnasium, Stockholm)

... when you go to school... I travel so awfully far [...]. Eeh, then I think it’s important to read City, because it is good, I think, because then I get like a good picture of what’s happening. And then I’m very interested in sports, so I read very much the sports too. [...] It’s not that I sit reading everything, but still you get to know a little of everything. [...] And it’s an easy text, too, that makes me understand [...]. I notice that if I read DN in the morning, for instance, then there’s so, you know, extremely much of everything. So you sit like this and exert yourself as much as you can and so… I don’t… OK, I don’t get the context. (girl, practical gymnasium, Stockholm)

Television

Still another reason for the decrease in newspaper reading in St. Petersburg is the many new television channels that have been gaining ground, particularly after the disintegration of the Soviet Union. Our quantitative studies show that people in St. Petersburg on average have access to many more TV channels than the Stockholmers do and that, as mentioned, especially St. Petersburg adults watch considerably more television than Stockholmers of the same age do. A participant in the group discussions in St. Petersburg also underlines that even a poor family can have a television today.

Furthermore, as dealt with in Article 1, the genre of fiction increased substantially on the state-controlled channels (represented by Rossiya and Perviy Kanal in the study) since the 1990s, making up about half of the output.31

In the group discussions, there were, naturally, a host of individual attitudes towards television, the different TV channels and their programmes. What can be said in sum, however, is that the Russian adults most often chose television as

31 Degtereva 2007.
their favourite medium and among several of them the enthusiasm over television was great:

Television – it’s universal, i.e., it’s absolutely everything. We get all information via television and radio. (middle-aged woman, low education, St. Petersburg)

Television. It’s unambiguous. We have TV sets in all rooms [...] In general, everything is interesting. (middle-aged woman, low education, St. Petersburg)

Television is in the first place because when you come home, you immediately switch it on. And also in terms of news... if you are not satisfied with information on one news channel, you can switch to another one, to a satellite channel. This is why for me, I would not be able to live without television, though I’m not saying that... not saying that it’s so good but this is already [part] of life. (middle-aged woman, high education, St. Petersburg)

Among the Swedish adults, the opinions on television and its outlet were similarly varied and generally positive, but there were relatively more persons who were hesitant about television:

You see, I am a bit cynical and say that I feel that manifoldness became simplicity... I mean, in any case regarding the TV output, I think. I am sad, you see. But, no... [...] But it was said that we would get so unbelievably many more programmes since the output would be so much bigger with many more TV channels. And I feel that it’s precisely the other way around. [...] It’s so damn little... (middle-aged woman, high education, Stockholm)

... television, video and radio are what is gone for me. On the other hand, I use the Internet very much. There you can watch television, news, programmes, films, and so on. Now, streamed television [...] is also in progress. It will be quite interesting then. (middle-aged man, low education, Stockholm)

The TV channels most often watched by the average adult in St. Petersburg are, according to our survey results (where the following TV channels were included), the state-controlled channels Rossiya (Russia), Perviy Kanal (Channel One) and NTV. Fourth popular is the regional Pjatyj Kanal (Channel 5, St. Petersburg). Other channels watched relatively often but nevertheless rather now and then, or regularly by a minority of the city’s population, are Kultura (Culture, Russian channel), STS (Russian commercial entertainment channel), TNT (foreign “global” drama channel) and TV3 (Russian commercial entertainment channel). “Global” channels such as Discovery (science, history, etc.), TV1000 (film), Eurosport (sports), CNN/BBC/Euronews (news) and MTV (music) are alternatives used more seldom by the average adult or more intensively by smaller parts of the population. For example, highly educated people are more frequent users of CNN/BBC/Euronews.
This pattern is partly different among the Russian adolescents. The 17-year-olds in St. Petersburg most often use STS (Russian commercial entertainment channel), MTV ("global" music), TNT ("global" drama), Muz TV (New TV, Russian entertainment), and state-controlled Perviy kanal (Channel One, Russian). In other words, they are on the whole, and like young people over the world, more oriented towards entertainment channels and some “global” channels than the adults are.

In Sweden, the two traditional public service channels (SVT1 and SVT2, Swedish Television) have less fiction than the new hybrid public service channel TV4, which in its turn has less fiction than two Swedish-speaking private commercial channels, Kanal 5 and TV3, which transmit from Great Britain and predominantly offer fiction. These five TV channels are the most watched among the middle-aged Stockholmers, although the public service channels to a higher degree. Highly educated adults also tend to watch the traditional public service channels more than the average Swede does. The adults in Stockholm do not watch “global” or foreign channels more than adult St. Petersburgers do.

The teenagers in Stockholm are not as fond of the traditional public service channels as the adults are, but search mainly for entertainment in the Swedish-speaking private commercial channels and to a lesser extent – like the teenagers in St. Petersburg – in “global” music and film channels.

On a general level, then, the structure of choice of channels is similar in the two cities (see also Article 1). Middle-aged persons stick primarily to channels in their own language, and primarily to public service/state-controlled television, now and then interrupted by visits to other commercial and private channels. The adolescents are more likely to choose commercial, private and to some extent “global” channels.

It is, naturally, impossible to talk about plurality, manifoldness and impartiality in the TV outputs without conducting detailed content analyses. However, based on the general TV viewing pictures in the two cities, the choice of channels seems relatively similar. The number of TV options is also greater in St. Petersburg. The Stockholmers, on the other hand, use, as mentioned previously in this article, newspapers and the Internet more than the Russians do. A crucial question – not illuminated by our studies – is whether the content used in newspapers and on the Internet contributes to greater plurality and diversity of facts and opinions, or whether it rather falls into the society’s dominant discourse.

The Internet

The spread of the Internet might give rise to the assumption that increased access to and use of the Internet (as in Stockholm) is replacing use of television. However, even if a slight tendency towards decreased TV viewing has been
reported now and then in press articles for specifically male adolescents in countries with widespread access to the Internet (e.g., the U.S.), several researchers have simultaneously pointed out that the seemingly negative correlation between television viewing and Internet use in the whole population is due to the fact that more educated people, who are heavily overrepresented among the early providers and users of the Internet, watch television less than do persons with a lower education level, independent of their Internet use. This is the case also in our study, both among the St. Petersburg and Stockholm adults, i.e., high education prognosticates more Internet use and low education more TV viewing.

However, among the Russian adolescents this pattern is less clear and among the young people in Stockholm, there is even a weak positive correlation between TV viewing and Internet use, maybe a sign of so-called multitasking, that is, chatting and the like on the Internet, while at the same time doing homework, talking on the mobile phone, and having the TV set on, watching now and then “when something happens”, as one of the young interviewees put it.

Thus, adults with a higher education in St. Petersburg and Stockholm clearly use the Internet for work, study and leisure more often than do people with a lower education; the relations are very strong in the work context. Beside the fact that persons with a higher education in both St. Petersburg and Stockholm read more than do persons with a lower education in their city, Internet use (for leisure, study and work, respectively, regarding frequency as well as amount of time spent) is, taken together, the media habit that best distinguishes people with a high vs. low education (Figure 2:1b).³²

³² Household economy also correlates positively with Internet use, both for work/study and for leisure, among all four groups studied. However, the relationships with economy are mostly rather weak and partly spurious. Household economy tends to go together with higher education, especially among the Russian adults, and when correlations between Internet use and household economy are controlled for by education, the relations with economy diminish. Education is, thus, a much stronger explanatory factor.
In a similar vein, access to and use of the Internet among the 17-year-olds in St. Petersburg is clearly associated with attending a theoretical study programme. More “theoretical” pupils in the Russian city have a computer at home, and they use the Internet for work, study and leisure more often than “practical” pupils do.

This educational pattern levels out, however, when all four groups are taken into account. In Stockholm, there is no difference between the number of computers in the homes of pupils studying practical and theoretical programmes. In principle, all Stockholm adolescents also have access to the Internet at home and use it to the same degree. There is a difference, however, in that the pupils in theoretical classes tend to use the Internet for study more often than pupils in practical classes do. Using the Internet for leisure is, on the other hand, equally distributed – but the “practical” adolescents spend somewhat more time on such activities. In both cities, Internet use for leisure correlates positively with playing computer and video games and (to a lesser extent) with reading magazines and speaking on the mobile phone.

This is, thus, an interesting fact that points to the absence of digital divides in terms of access to and use of the Internet among young people in Stockholm – and
it might well be that the young generations in St. Petersburg will be in the same situation within a few years, when Internet access has spread and become cheaper.

Otherwise, our studies show that the overall patterns of media use (Figure 2:1) (obtained by factor analyses – see how the activities are grouped in the figures) are basically the same in the two cities.\textsuperscript{33} Internet use generally (independent of aim – for leisure, work or study) stands out as a factor of its own, especially if we consider both the amount of time and the frequencies of using the different media. (Frequent Internet users also stay with the medium for longer periods.)

PlACES, SKILLS, FUNCTIONS OF ICT

At the same time as the Stockholm inhabitants use computers and the Internet much more than the corresponding age groups in St. Petersburg do, the places for ICT use are characterized by age differences. Whereas young people use computers and the Internet mostly at home, adults use them at home and at work to a relatively similar extent (Figure 2:3).

\textit{Figure 2:3. How often do you use a computer...? (the upper part of the Figure) How often do you use the Internet... (the lower part of the Figure)? (by age and city, cumulative per cent)}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure23}
\caption{How often do you use a computer...? (the upper part of the Figure) How often do you use the Internet... (the lower part of the Figure)? (by age and city, cumulative per cent)}
\end{figure}

1-2 days/month 1-3 days/week 3-5 days/week 6-7 days/week

The vertical lines/marks represent every 25 per cent.

Among the adults, persons with a higher education in both cities tend to use computers and the Internet more often at all places than persons with a lower education do. The Russian young people attending a theoretical study programme also use computers and the Internet more at all places than do the “practical”

\textsuperscript{33} This means that persons who watch television a great deal also tend to use radio and weeklies/monthlies more than other people, while persons who often read books also are inclined to read newspapers more often than the rest of the population.
adolescents. Turning to the Swedish adolescents, however, there are no differences at all regarding places for ICT use depending on theoretical and practical study programme.

When it comes to perception of one’s computer skills, the differences due to both age and city are great. Young persons much more often than adults generally and in each city consider themselves to be in possession of technical knowledge and skills – in all aspects asked about – for handling computers and the Internet. And adult inhabitants in Stockholm say more often that they are skilled in this respect than do persons of the same age in St. Petersburg (Figure 2:4).

Figure 2:4. How good are your computer skills for managing the following things? (by age and city, cumulative per cent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teens SPb</th>
<th>Teens Sth</th>
<th>Adults SPb</th>
<th>Adults Sth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Configure a network of my own</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make home pages</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Download music, films, software</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remove viruses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Install software</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copy and change files</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make presentations (eg ppt)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Search info on the Internet</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Master without problem Manage reasonably

The vertical lines/marks represent every 25 per cent.

Not having computer skills seems to be one reason why many middle-aged adults still are not really integrated into or interested in the virtual space. Two such utterances from the group discussions are the following:

[…] well, Internet… I can’t use it myself but I often have to search for something for my work… this is with the help of my children, of course. (middle-aged women, high education, St. Petersburg)

Internet… yes, I have it at home but I don’t care about opening it. […] I have nothing against the apparatus per se… or maybe you would say the channel or so, but there’s so much fuss with… there are so many other bits and pieces that follow, if one doesn’t follow up every day, isn’t there? […] There’s a high threshold for using the Internet in some way, I feel. (middle-aged man, low education, Stockholm)

The adults in both cities with a higher education level also declare much more often than persons with a shorter education that they have computer skills.
Having computer skills is a pronounced male trait in all four groups (although weaker among the adults in St. Petersburg), which corresponds with men’s stronger interest in technique in general.

In our data, the Internet is recognized as being one of the major media for knowledge and information among the young people in both cities and among the adults in Stockholm. For the young Stockholmers, the Internet even turns out to be the most important source of knowledge and information, even surpassing personal sources (family, friends, fellow students). Books and television are rated higher as sources of knowledge and information in the other three groups, and also newspapers among the Swedish adults (Figure 2:5).

The young Swedes have also designated the Internet as the most important source (only surpassed by friends) when it comes to entertainment and pleasure. Among the young people in St. Petersburg, cinema, television, friends, the family and fellow students are instead regarded as better sources for entertainment and pleasure than the Internet. Regarding entertainment and pleasure, the adults in St. Petersburg prefer almost all other media and personal contacts to the Internet, and most popular in this regard are the family, friends, television, books and fellow workers. Even if the adults in Stockholm find the Internet more entertaining and pleasurable than the Russian adults do, the middle-aged Stockholmers nevertheless find several other media and personal contacts more amusing than the Internet, such as family, friends, television and books (Figure 2:5).
It appears that the adults with a higher education in both cities more often than those with a lower education find the Internet particularly important for knowledge and information, but also for entertainment and pleasure. A similar pattern is valid for the St. Petersburg teens attending a theoretical study programme; they are more disposed than the “practical” students to finding the Internet important for knowledge and information and, although slightly, for entertainment and pleasure. But among the Stockholm adolescents, such differences between “theoretical” and “practical” students have faded away with increased access to and use of the Internet.

Even among the Russian adults with a higher education, the proportions who find the Internet an important source of knowledge and information and for
entertainment and pleasure, respectively, are considerably smaller than the shares of less well-educated Stockholmers who have the same opinion (Figure 2:5b).

**Figure 2:5b. How important is the Internet to you when it comes to knowledge and information? ~ when it comes to entertainment and pleasure? (by education and city among adults, cumulative per cent)**

Comparing certain aspects of *socializing with other people*, all four groups say that direct contact is by far the most important mode of social intercourse, followed by the ordinary telephone and mobile phone. However, the young people in Stockholm more often than the other groups mention different social media on the Internet – chat and instant messaging, as well as communities (social networking sites) – as important for social intercourse (Figure 2:6).

**Figure 2:6. How important do you think the following means are to your social intercourse with other people? (by age and city, cumulative per cent)**

The vertical lines/marks represent every 25 per cent.
Among the Stockholm adults e-mail is appreciated especially among those with a high education level. The Russian adults with a higher education find e-mail less important than do Stockholmers with a lower education level (Figure 2:6b).

*Figure 2:6b. How important do you think e-mail is to your social intercourse with other people? (by education and city among adults, cumulative per cent)*

![Bar chart showing importance of e-mail among adults by education and city.](image)

Given the great focus on the Internet among Stockholm teens, it is not surprising to learn that they much more often than the other three groups mean that they depend on the Internet. However, the fact that more than half of them express this is remarkable (Figure 2:7).

*Figure 2:7. Do you find the Internet addictive on your part? (by age and city, per cent)*

![Bar chart showing Internet dependence among teens and adults by age and city.](image)

The vertical lines/marks represent every 25 per cent.

The relation between Internet dependence and education is insignificant in all four groups.

But what do the respondents really mean by being dependent on the Internet? Our data show that in all likelihood the great majority are not addicted in the sense of having withdrawal symptoms if they have no access to the Net (a range of criteria, defined by researchers in the addiction field, must be met before addiction is a fact). The persons in our four groups who say that they are Internet dependent are above all persons who use the Internet frequently and for long periods, not least in leisure time, and who exploit the Internet in a variety of ways – to serve practical, social, entertainment and information purposes. However, there are no clear relations with other variables in our database, indicating, for instance, that these persons are isolated or depressed, or something similar. Instead, they meet with their family and friends as often as other persons do,
they have no special divergent opinions or leisure activities and they generally
have the same emotional state as other persons, as least according to how we
have measured these phenomena in the quantitative surveys. There is one
exception however, namely that the Stockholm adolescents who say they are
Internet dependent slightly more often say they are anxiety-ridden ($r = 0.14^{34}$).
Also worth noting is that the respondents’ judgements of being Internet
dependent do not have any particular connection with the statement “People
devote too much time to the Internet” – a statement that the majority of the
respondents in all four groups agree with.

Because Internet dependence is mostly spread among the Stockholm teens,
these adolescents generally regard such dependence as something normal, at
least referring to the group discussions. They mostly admit that it is easy to ”get
stuck there”, as there is so much on the Internet – there is always something to
do, you can do everything on the Internet – or that it is ”habit-forming” and, in
sum, has become part of everyday life in a McLuhanian sense (that the media are
extensions of man).^{35} More genuine symptoms of addiction are, however,
expressed by a few who cannot refrain from playing computer games. A couple
of group participants also say that always being “up-to-date” has become a need
and a source of stress: Perhaps one feels that ”Now four billion people are sitting
connected and if I disconnect, what will I miss?”, ”You can miss out on whatever.
You may be the first person to learn about some worldwide news, or sort of
be the first to see the pictures of the weekend being blogged out.” Simultaneous-
ly, these two young men (studying social sciences, Stockholm) add that “often
when you sit on the Internet, nothing happens. You can press the inbox 220
times, before anything comes”. Other examples of similar more strongly felt
Internet dependence are the following:

…”for instance, I was without recorded music for a good while when I was abroad
and then I was on the point of going mad about that. I was without computer
games for about a month when my computer crashed. I still had the Internet and
so on, but still I was going crazy about it. Then I was without the Internet. I had
computer games but went crazy over (lack of) the Internet and then… It is like
one is disappearing a little, you see, it’s your life. (young man, natural sciences,
Stockholm)

The more you are there, the more social life you get, and the more you want to be
there. (young woman, fashion and design, Stockholm)

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^{34} Here as in the rest of the articles, we use Pearson’s product-moment correlation coefficient.
^{35} In a wider perspective, the media as human extensions have an influence on human beings’
way of being, perceiving, and behaving towards other people, and also structure everyday life
(and thereby society), see, e.g., McLuhan [1964]1967. A large body of research literature has
developed similar thoughts in relation to ICT, as the Internet and mobile phones can be used
at any time and place, serving to wipe out the borders between work and leisure, the public
and private spheres, day and night, etc., see, e.g., Turkle 1984 who relatively early talked about
the computer as part of the ego.
I believe that many use their sites, of the type Bilddagboken (The Picture Diary), as some sort of confirmation that ‘I have pals’ and that ‘my life is interesting’.
(young woman, fashion and design, Stockholm)

Well, when I sit by the computer and don’t use the Internet, then I feel... well the hardest thing that I get anxious about, it is that I feel lonely. You know, you sit in front of a computer kind of and then you feel lonely, see? Because if you’re online, then you know you’re not lonely. I’m not the only person sitting there, like... if you only... (Interrupted by another participant in the group: Online... you just feel secure knowing that they [other people] are there.) Yeah. It’s like having a heroin shot next to you, just push in the needle, like, whenever you want to.
(young man, theoretical college, Stockholm)

Another question in the qualitative group discussions – about what it would be like if the Internet disappeared – also points to the fact that Internet dependence for the majority is mostly something habit-forming rather than something truly addictive. It is true that certain adolescents have strong negative feelings about the hypothetical disappearance of the Internet: “everything would be shit”, “impossible”, “nothing can then be done”, “boring”. Still another person, a young woman in a practical study programme in Stockholm, says she would go mad, because she gets all her information, be it about clothes or the world, on the Internet.

However, many of the young people in Stockholm take a possible disappearance of the Internet more calmly and express mainly discontent with the fact that it would be impractical and time-consuming without the Net – when searching for information, buying clothes, communicating with friends, playing games, etc. There are also a couple of teenagers in Stockholm who explicitly state that they would prefer not having the Internet, as it would mean less stress, and they would probably do other things more often, such as moving around and talking face-to-face.

As shown, among the adult Stockholmers and the young and adult St. Petersburgers there are far fewer who consider themselves dependent on the Internet. The middle-aged Stockholmers, then, often refer to young people when it comes to the issue of Internet dependence. But some Swedish adults admit nevertheless that they feel stressed if they, for instance, cannot check their e-mail.

The opinions of the Russian participants in the group discussions are more divided. Here we find, for example, that young people frequently condemn their Internet dependent peers (condemnations that, thus, are on the whole valid for other persons than themselves). Internet dependent persons are often depicted as “possessed”, “sick”, “crazy”, “weak”, “depressive”, “shy” or “lonely” people. Many discussants mention as a negative “fact” that Internet dependent people replace real life with virtual life. Internet addicted people live outside society, have forgotten their natural needs and must instead become “normal” people. Similar comments are:
It’s a pity, as for me. Yes, it is. Because I think it’s like a disease, seriously. Because… looking at such people, they are unhealthy, seriously. They try to find any free minute to run home, sit down at a computer… sit down, yes, and get on the Internet in a hurry… here they sit with red eyes, all nervous, excited, they want more and more. (young woman, chemistry, St. Petersburg)

Maybe it’s a method of self-realization through the Internet… through a computer for people with mental deflection? Who cannot find themselves in real life, in society. (young man, electro-technical college, St. Petersburg)

Many people cannot fulfil their hopes and themselves, it seems to me, and therefore they fulfil themselves on the Internet. (young man, information technology, St. Petersburg)

Some Russian adults explain that people live on the Internet because it is easier; it is a way to avoid problems, duties and the necessity of doing something in real life. Other adults are concerned because they think the Internet has a negative impact on their children, and that people on the Internet communicate less in real life. Still other adults in St. Petersburg see some abnormality in the fact that young people are sitting on the Internet for long periods, but at the same time believe that one cannot escape this – it is the nature of our epoch.

Nowadays, it’s a speeded-up tempo, that is, they need everything faster, in a hurry. They need everything in this way. (middle-aged woman, low education, St. Petersburg)

Some women with a high education level, who see the Internet as something evil, consider that “we must fight” against the Internet by spending more time with our children, reading to them, and giving them opportunities to do different things, not just sit in front of a computer.

Others believe that Internet addiction is related to the fact that today’s parents spend all their time on making money – parents have no time to spend with their children, which is why the children, left to themselves, plunge into the Internet.

I think more about the youth because my daughter is growing. And I worry about her because they spend so much time on the Internet now. And all this… virtual communication… I even remember myself when I was young, at that time we went dancing, we went somewhere, we communicated somewhere with each other and now they have no place to go except for the Internet. (middle-aged women, low education, St. Petersburg)

A few adults in St. Petersburg take other societal perspectives:

Mass media – that’s a business. Moreover, it’s a very lucrative business. Therefore the financial resources are directed there. If there are financial resources, it means
there is rapid development. So people are searching for means to advance it. There is a dependence on these games, so they drive (the dissemination of) these games. They get engaged in it. They develop it purposefully. It is a (question of) social demand. [...] The supply is growing. (middle-aged man, high education, St. Petersburg)

I have a feeling that I don’t like talking either on the phone or by any other means: writing letters, sending SMS. When you meet a person, look into his eyes and you can get an idea of whom you’re dealing with… But the majority of young people… maybe it’s the reason for the enormous criminality… by the way, they prefer to make contact on the Internet, communicate with each (other). It’s safe, you’re at home, talking. But on the other hand, society disintegrates because of that… becomes like mechanisms and they can’t stick together later when they have to struggle for something, for their rights or for something else. [...] He sits and he can only send a message on the Internet. That’s it, that’s all the struggle. (middle-aged man, high education, St. Petersburg)

Another question in the group discussions was: “If one thinks about the fact that people use the Internet and mobile phones more and more, then their way of being together has also partly changed. What difference is there between communicating with other people directly and via media, do you think?”

The Stockholm youngsters delivered a succession of detailed advantages and disadvantages of communicating via the new media in different situations and with different persons. Even if some of these teens meant that face-to-face communication with people was preferable, and that it could be stressful to be perpetually able to reach others and be reached oneself (especially given that one has many extra Internet friends), most of the Swedish teenagers seem to regard “virtual communication” as practical and supplementary to real-life dialogue. A more detailed picture of the Swedish answers to this and similar questions in the group discussions, both with young people and adults, is presented in Article 7.

In St. Petersburg, it was much more common to underline the negative aspects of communication via the new media. “I think it’s wrong to sit between four walls in front of the screen, not to see daylight. Live communication is very important”, as a young man, studying design, put it. Quite a number of the young persons in St. Petersburg said that they prefer live communication where you can see the other person’s eyes, a communication that reveals facial expressions and emotions, which in turn means more sincerity and that you understand people better. Communication via the Internet was said to be more artificial and flat, involving a greater opportunity to deceive others. However, it was added that there are some practical benefits of the mobile phone, which makes you more flexible, and of the Internet, which allows you to communicate with people in other places.
Quite a number of the St. Petersburg adult participants in the group discussions stressed that direct personal communication was much more common when they were young.

ICT activities

If we consider the findings on “digital divides” so far, it is obvious that Internet divides are greatest among the adults in St. Petersburg – and in most respects rubbed out among the young people in Stockholm. Let us, however, also take a more detailed look at what people are doing with the computer and on the Internet.

As regards the 34 fields of ICT application asked about in the quantitative studies, generation differences are the most common (Figure 2:9). The young people use ICT more than the adults in their city for chatting/instant messaging, visiting communities, writing and reading blogs and posting pictures of themselves and others on the Internet. The same holds for downloading music, films, games and computer programs. Young people also more often than adults listen to the radio on the Internet, use the Net for eroticism, work with home pages, make telephone calls (e.g., via Skype), search for acquaintances/dates, process pictures, edit films, and search for study information. Thus, young people are largely using the Internet for social networking and for downloading and uploading materials, especially entertainment materials, something that also has been found in previous research.

The adults, on the other hand, use ICT more than the young people for text processing and compilation of tables – activities often connected to work. The adults also search for certain kinds of information, such as economic and financial information, more often than young people do.
2. NEW MEDIA & SOCIAL DIVIDES

Figure 2.9. How often do you use the Internet for the following things? (by age and city, cumulative per cent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teens SPb</th>
<th>Teens Sth</th>
<th>Adults SPb</th>
<th>Adults Sth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Download films</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Download software</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Download games</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Download music</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eroticism</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work with home pages</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone (via Skype or the like)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listen to the radio</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Search trade union information</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Search economic/financial info</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Submit income tax returns</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Search juridical information</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Search health information</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Search travel information</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services for acquaintances</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1-2 days/month 1-3 days/week 3-5 days/week 6-7 days/week

The vertical lines/marks represent every 25 per cent.

(continued)
Figure 2.9 (continued). How often do you use the Internet for the following things? (by age and city, cumulative per cent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Teens SPb</th>
<th>Teens Sth</th>
<th>Adults SPb</th>
<th>Adults Sth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Read blogs</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Write blogs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Post pictures of myself/others</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Enter communities</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Chat, instant messaging</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Send and receive e-mail</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compilation of tables</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programming</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Text processing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Picture processing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Editing film</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shop (auctions included)</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Search study information</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use Internet banking</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Read magazines</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Search political information</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Search scientific information</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read newspapers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Search entertainment info</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The vertical lines/marks represent every 25 per cent.

Given the fact that the Stockholmers have much greater access to the Internet (especially via broadband), and that they typically have a better household economy than the St. Petersburg respondents, it is no wonder that the young people and adults in Stockholm use the Internet more often than the corresponding age groups in St. Petersburg for e-mailing, reading net newspapers and magazines, searching for entertainment information, searching for travel information, shopping, using Internet banks, and programming. Inhabitants in St. Petersburg, on the other hand, seem to search more for juridical information on the Internet.
than the Stockholmers do, which may have to do with the host of new laws being enacted in the radically changed Russian society, and the sometimes uncertain applications of justice.

Besides generation and city differences, certain ICT activities are characterized by gender. However, as is the case for the St. Petersburg adults’ use of mobile phones and video and computer games, gender differences in computer and Internet use among these Russian 45- to 55-year-olds are conspicuous by their almost total absence. The Russian women and men use computer and Internet to the same extent for “work”, “study” and “leisure” and in different kinds of places. The same is nearly true of what the Russian women and men are doing on the Internet. And their attitudes to the Internet are remarkably similar. The few exceptions that exist after all are that the men more often than the women in St. Petersburg search for eroticism on the Net and that slightly more men than women are of the opinion that the Internet is “important for entertainment and pleasure”. Men are also somewhat more likely to talk about their superior computer skills.36

As regards the other three groups studied, young men in the Russian city and men of both generations in Stockholm tend to, for example, download music, films, games and computer programs more often than young and adult women do, use the Internet for eroticism more, and more often read newspapers and journals/magazines on the Net.37 There are few Internet activities that distinguish women. However, the young women in Stockholm tend more than young men in the same city to publish pictures on themselves and others on the Internet, and to write blogs.

While gender differences in computer and Internet issues are hardly visible among the middle-aged persons in St. Petersburg, the variation related to education is striking. It ought to be added that gender and education are independent of each other, that is, the Russian women and men are comparable as regards education levels, something that is also true of the Swedes in our studies.

Thus, the adults with a higher education in both cities do a range of things with the computer and on the Internet more often than do persons with a shorter education. Actually, of all the ICT activities studied, there are none that the middle-aged with a low education level tend to engage in more than persons

36 One hypothesis to be tested is that the lack of gender differences in this respect has its roots in the former Soviet structure.

37 In Stockholm, there are additional male-dominated ICT activities, such as listening to the radio on the Net, viewing films on the computer, cutting films, phoning, compiling tables on the computer, programming, using the computer for picture processing, entering communities, and becoming acquainted with new persons in the workplace. In sum, men are more inclined than women to use the technical opportunities that ICT offers. Besides technical interest and use of ICT’s technical opportunities, we find some information areas that are more associated with the adult men than the adult women in Stockholm, such as searching for economic and financial information, scientific information, and political information on the Internet.
with a higher education do. But there are activities that both groups engage in to a similar extent, such as making acquaintances/dating and downloading games and films.

**St. Petersburg adults**

Even if most fields of ICT application are more used among the highly educated than among the less well-educated adults in St. Petersburg, Figure 2:10 displays the strongest correlations between high education level and ICT activities for these Russians.

**Figure 2:10. St. Petersburg adults with lower (1) and higher (2) education and the most distinguishing ICT activities, performed at least once a week (%)**

![Bar chart showing ICT activities with education level](chart.png)

The ICT activities most strongly connected with higher education among the adults in St. Petersburg are, thus, partly a group consisting of “text processing”, “compilation of tables” and “sending and receiving e-mails” – activities that are largely connected to work. For the rest, the most distinguishing variables as regards education are “searching for scientific information”, “searching for political information” and “reading newspapers” on the Net.

Several of the correlations are very strong \((r = 0.40-0.50)\). There are only a few other aspects in the whole questionnaire that have similarly strong connections with higher education among these adults, namely the mother’s education, the father’s education and the view that “intellectuals” are a group that one personally “can say ‘we’ about”.

84
The six activities in Figure 2:10 group well together and are also clearly related to the great majority of the other ICT variables in the questionnaire. Apart from these, “searching for scientific information”, “searching for political information” and “reading newspapers” on the Net have positive connections with above all cultural capital, e.g., going to a restaurant, to the opera, ballet and theatre, to museums and exhibitions, to concerts with classical music, as well as appreciating abstract photographic motifs. A correlation with economic capital (better household economy) exists, but is only slight. Furthermore, particularly searching for political information and reading newspapers on the Internet implies little trust in the state-controlled media, and to some degree the same is valid for trust in the President, church and trade unions.

The overall picture of the St. Petersburg adults searching for scientific and/or political information and reading newspapers on the Internet is, thus, one of a cultural and intellectual elite. Using the computer and Internet for these (and many other) activities stands out as highly relevant to their professional and private life.

Stockholm adults

In a similar vein as for the Russian adults, Figure 2:11 displays the strongest correlations among the Stockholm middle-aged persons between education and what they are doing on the computer and the Internet:

*Figure 2:11. Stockholm adults with lower (1) and higher (2) education and the most distinguishing ICT activities, performed at least once a week (%)*

![Bar chart showing ICT activities performed by Stockholm adults with different education levels.](chart)

- Dark colour = 1-2 days/week,
- Medium colour = 3-5 days a week,
- Light colour = 6-7 days a week
Figure 2:11 (and the correlation coefficients on which it builds) gives distinct proofs that higher education among the adult Stockholmers – as among the same age group in St. Petersburg – is associated with work-connected “text processing”, “sending and receiving e-mails” and “compilation of tables”. In Stockholm, as in St. Petersburg, “searching for scientific information” and “for political information” are also markedly associated with higher education.

However, more aspects of ICT activities in Stockholm than in St. Petersburg are independent of education. A great many of these ICT uses are social in nature or related to entertainment, and involve using certain Internet services (such as a “submit income tax returns or the like”) and searching for certain kinds of information on the Internet (such as “travel information” and “health information”).

Going further into the database, we see that persons associated with different ICT directions have related dispositions offline. Just to mention a few examples: The Stockholm adults who relatively more often “search for scientific information” on the Internet are – besides having a higher education – inclined, among other things, to “read books for work/studies”, to find “history/science an important issue for the media to deal with”, to readily listen to classical music and to public service radio, as well as to go to museums and exhibitions. A similar situation applies to persons who are apt to “search for political information on the Internet”. These adults are – besides having a higher education – e.g., inclined to prefer “TV programmes on current debate/political discussions” and to claim that “they themselves can influence the societal development in Sweden”. In addition, their activities and values in society represent to a great extent “high culture” activities, as is the case also for persons often “searching for scientific information”.

Like in St. Petersburg, although in a partly different manner, among Stockholmers searching for scientific and/or political information on the Internet is intertwined with a cultural life style and with a relatively established societal position. There is, in sum, no doubt that both our adult surveys support findings from our earlier studies – showing that persons’ different social realities (activities, values, social identity and work positions outside the Internet) have significant bearings on their different orientations in the virtual space.

St. Petersburg teenagers
As mentioned, access to and use of ICT among the adolescents in St. Petersburg is still clearly associated with attending a theoretical study programme in school. Therefore a great number of positive correlations appear between attending such a programme, on the one hand, and different ICT activities and values, on the other.

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38 Petrov 2000, Petrov & von Feilitzen 2005
Figure 2:12 displays the strongest correlations between attending a theoretical study programme and the different ICT directions among the young people in St. Petersburg.

*Figure 2:12. Young people in St. Petersburg attending practical (1) and theoretical (2) study programmes and the most distinguishing ICT activities, performed at least once a week (%)*

It is remarkable that the strongest positive correlations among the Russian teenagers in several respects coincide with the correlations that distinguish adults with a higher education in St. Petersburg: “searching for scientific information”, “searching for study information”, “searching for political information”, “sending/receiving e-mails” and “reading newspapers”. Furthermore, the positive correlations above correspond to four of six positive correlations among Stockholm adults with a higher education.39

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39 “sending/receiving e-mails”, “searching for scientific information”, “searching for political information”, and “text processing”. 
A corresponding analysis, like that done on the adult samples, of the tendency among young people in St. Petersburg to search for scientific information on the Internet reveals a cultural lifestyle pattern, including, for instance, dispositions to view artistic films and cultural and scientific programmes, to listen to blues, classical music and jazz, to go to museums, exhibitions and the theatre, and to appreciate books. Several of these characteristics also go along with searching for political information that moreover is related to, e.g., interest in all kinds of news, especially international news, watching CNN/BBC/Euro-news, and the opinion that the economy, corruption, economic gaps in society, and aid to developing countries are important issues for the media to deal with.

Searching for scientific and/or political information is also connected to the parents’ high education level and to some extent to a better household economy than in the average family. As in the two adult surveys, the young people in St. Petersburg who are engaged in the mentioned Internet activities seem to belong to a group of persons who on average are relatively well-integrated into society, have culturally “legitimate” and in some measure economic capital, and are on their way up on the social ladder.

Stockholm teenagers

As mentioned, there is in principle no digital divide at all when it comes to access to computers, general use of ICT and perceived ICT skills among the young people in the Stockholm area, the group among the four studied that use the Internet most of all. However, pupils in theoretical classes tend to use the Internet “for studies” more often than pupils in practical classes do, but use the Internet “for leisure” somewhat less time than the “practical” pupils do.

As regards what the pupils are inclined to do with computers and on the Internet, it becomes apparent that most of these ICT orientations are independent of participation in a theoretical or a practical study programme. We see, just as for the Swedish adults, that the activities that are independent of type of study programme are mostly of a social and/or informative/practical character, or related to entertainment.

However, pupils in practical classes are more inclined than the “theoretical” students to play video/computer games, while young people in theoretical classes are more disposed (as are adults with a higher education) to use the computer for “text processing” and “compilation of tables”, to mention but a few examples. And the strongest positive correlations appear between attending a theoretical study programme and “searching for political information”, “scientific information” and “juridical information” on the Internet – see Figure 2:13, which ranks the most powerful correlations between attending a theoretical programme and the different ICT directions.
Figure 2.13. Young people in Stockholm attending practical (1) and theoretical (2) study programmes and the most distinguishing ICT activities, performed at least once a week (%)

- Dark colour = 1-2 days/week,
- Medium colour = 3-5 days a week,
- Light colour = 6-7 days a week

Compared to the young people attending a theoretical class in St. Petersburg, five of the strongest correlations among the Stockholm adolescents in the same kinds of schools coincide: “searching for political information”, “searching for scientific information”, “text processing”, “searching for study information”, and “reading newspapers”. Furthermore, the two ICT directions that appear on the list of the strongest correlations among all four groups in our surveys are “searching for scientific information” and “searching for political information”.

The Stockholm young people searching for scientific and/or political information on the Internet have corresponding interests in the social world. These students tend to prefer “watching science programmes on television”, as well as “programmes on current debate/political discussions”, “factual programmes” and “cultural programmes”. They also tend, more often than the other young Swedes do, to believe it is important to them that the media deal with a range of societal questions, among other things: history and science, environmental issues, foreign news, economic gaps in society, corruption, aid to other countries, and “the relation between different ethnic groups in Sweden”. These pupils also go to the theatre and to museums and exhibitions more often than the average student does, and listen more readily to classical music. Not surprising-
ly, searching for scientific and/or political information are also significantly related to the mother’s and father’s higher education and (slightly) to a better economic situation in the household. In sum, these pupils’ lifestyles and position or identity in the social space clearly influence their inclination to search the Internet for certain societal information that is relevant to them.

As for digital divides, they are, consequently, still there. They do not concern access to the Internet, skills for using it, or time devoted to it. Neither do they concern the subjectively experienced benefit of the Internet in general – there is no correlation between theoretical/practical class in Stockholm, on the one hand, and agreeing on the statement “Internet has nothing important and relevant to offer me”, on the other. But the digital divides are there because of different kinds of experienced benefit. For both “theoretical” and “practical” young people, the Internet has a manifold of social, entertainment, practical and informative functions, but “theoretical” pupils have a greater inclination to make use of the socially relevant information on the Internet that will help them attain higher positions in the social hierarchy in the near future. Because searching for such information is a meaningful engagement for them, they have the inclination to invest in such engagement both owing to their cultural capital and to the expected advantageous consequences. Although the pupils attending theoretical study programmes use the Internet for social, entertainment and practical purposes to the same degree as other young people do, they also reproduce important lines of activity patterns found among adults with a higher education.

The differences in fields of ICT application between young people in Stockholm and St. Petersburg attending theoretical and practical study programmes, respectively, are fewer than among higher and lower educated adults in the same city. It seems, thus, that digital differences depending on education, one of the most potent factors distinguishing Internet use, are levelling out in the younger generation. On the other hand, it is conspicuous that certain ICT activities persistently connect to high education/theoretical study programme in all four groups, namely “searching for scientific information” and “searching for political information” on the Internet. Given the related lifestyle patterns, implying a great deal of cultural capital (and a little economic capital), this means a position relatively high up in the societal hierarchy.

The concept of “digital divide” is, as a consequence, insufficient – it does not take social divides into account.

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40 See also Petrov 2000.
Attitudes towards ICT, civic engagement and societal media contents

As we have seen in Figures 2:9 to 13, only a minority of people regularly search for political information on the Internet, even if the proportion is somewhat greater among the teenagers in Stockholm, the group among the four studied who use the Internet most of all. However, what are our respondents’ viewpoints regarding the Internet as a platform for democracy and civic engagement?

In the quantitative studies, one question comprised eight statements expressing attitudes towards ICT, sorted by factor analyses into three dimensions (Figure 2:14). As for the first dimension, the inhabitants in St. Petersburg say more often than the Stockholmers do that “The new information technology with the Internet and mobile phones makes the world a better place”, while the respondents in Stockholm more often than those in St. Petersburg agree with the statement: “People who do not have access to the Internet are in a seriously disadvantageous position”. More young people than adults consider that “Ordinary people can influence what is happening in society by making their voices heard on the Internet”.

The second dimension consists of one statement, “The Internet has nothing important and relevant to offer me”, which is the least endorsed statement of all, although more of the adults in St. Petersburg agree with it. This is natural, as they use the Internet to a lesser extent than the others do.

The third dimension includes four statements of which the majority agree with two: “Children have access to a lot of unsuitable material on the Internet” and “People devote too much time to the Internet”. Sorted in this factor is also “It is disquieting that authorities and employers have increased opportunities for surveillance and control via the Internet”, which is most often affirmed by the middle-aged respondents in St. Petersburg. Relatively few believe, however, that “Information technology will lead to increased unemployment in society”.

The adults with a high education level more often have positive attitudes towards ICT than do adults with a low education level. Among the young people in both cities, there are hardly any differences in these ICT attitudes depending on theoretical/practical study orientation.

Especially relevant in the discussion on the Internet’s possible contribution to democracy and citizenship is the statement “Ordinary people can influence what is happening in society by making their voices heard on the Internet”. Even if the adolescents agree with this to a higher degree than the adults do, it appears from Figure 2:14 that a majority dissociate themselves from this assertion.

The ways for ordinary people to influence and try to change society were also dealt with in the group discussions. When it came to the Internet in this respect, opinions were divided. Some expressed the belief that the Internet implies a means to be better heard. A few middle-aged Swedish men said, for example,
that blogs “are democracy to 100 per cent, aren’t they?”, and that “blogging is a very potent channel when it comes to democracy, society, extension, and so on. (But) it is only in its infancy”. Other Stockholmers confirmed that everyone can express his/her opinions on the Net and, in principle, is allowed to say whatever s/he wants. Still others maintained, however, that it is very difficult to make one’s voice heard on a site, blog or forum in all the noise. “When everyone has a blog of their own, then reading them will be a hard work.” And one Swedish adult man expressed in this context strong concern about all the bullying and harassment, and the fact that it is possible to be truly mean and distort information as much as you like on the Internet.

Figure 2:14. Below are some statements on new information technology. How well do they agree with your personal opinions? (by age and city, cumulative per cent)

![Figure 2:14](image)

The vertical lines/marks represent every 25 per cent.

But even if one can be heard on the Internet, opinions about the Internet’s ability to eradicate social gaps and inequalities were more hesitant, especially among the Russian adults in the group interviews:

It has to be greatly developed to overcome social distinctions. I don’t understand how it’s possible to make it on the Internet? To express your opinion is certainly good. But… In general the Internet is freedom… you may express… you may not express what you think. You may receive information… may not to receive it. You can have fun. In other words, such freedom. You will not overcome social distinctions, certainly not. No, I consider… But there is a small possibility but not on the Internet. For example, on TV or… A lot has to be changed to overcome it, because we have big gaps in social distinction in our society. (middle-aged woman, high education, St. Petersburg)
How can I raise myself via the Internet? If I have nothing... no socks, boots, trousers, food, nothing. Well, I created my site and what is next? In a week I collapse by the computer? What is the meaning of cheating yourself? No sense.
(middle-aged man, low education, St. Petersburg)

When relating the attitude “Ordinary people can influence what is happening in society by making their voices heard on the Internet” to other variables in our quantitative studies, it turns out that intensive Internet users in Sweden (and especially Swedes using the Internet for leisure) more often than others agree with the statement. In a similar way, using the Internet a great deal for leisure also tallies with the opinion stated in another question that “The Internet is important for people’s ability to express their views” (a statement that on average was affirmed by about half of the young and adult respondents in both cities).

At the same time, however, high Internet use has no special relations (or only slight ones) to aspects that the respondents find are characteristic of democracy (see further Article 3), whether democracy has become worse or better in the country, how satisfied one is with the development of democracy in the country, whether equality between ethnic groups and men and women, respectively, has deteriorated or ameliorated in the country, to what extent the country lives up to the UN conventions on human and child rights, and whether there are important possibilities other than the Internet to influence societal issues.

Moreover, heavy Internet users, or persons agreeing with the statement “Ordinary people can influence what is happening in society by making their voices heard on the Internet”, do not stand out as especially interested in social issues at all.41 There are, for these persons, no or week negative correlations with interest in the social issues included in the questionnaire.

Several factor analyses of 36 preferences for media contents among the young and middle-aged people in the two cities show that media tastes are basically structured in the same way, on the one hand, among the young people and, on the other, among the adults. In the upper part of Table 2:1, a reduced model of such factor analyses is exhibited, effectuated with all the adult persons and only with variables for which there are no or small differences (no significant correlations) in the distribution of answers between the two cities.42 In relation to our discussion on Internet and democracy, we would like to call attention to the first two factors, grouping items of interest in media content dealing with social issues and with news, respectively.

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41 Measured by the question “How important is it for you personally that the media deal with the following issues?”.
42 The upper part of the table presents the correlations of the four factors with the separate variables. Variables are sorted along the factor with which they have the strongest correlation, thus explaining the meaning of this factor.
Table 2.1. Factor analyses of items included in the question “How important is it for you personally that the media deal with the following areas?” (extraction method: principal component analysis, adults in both cities)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>factor 1</td>
<td>890</td>
<td>-253</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>factor 2</td>
<td>869</td>
<td>-276</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>factor 3</td>
<td>851</td>
<td>-161</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>factor 4</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>-933</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>071</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The homeless persons’ situation
The relations between ethnic groups
HIV/AIDS
National news
Food, cooking
Home furnishing
Fashion
Cars
Technology, computers

Partial correlations between the extracted factors 1-4 above and the variables in the question “How important do you think the following methods are for people’s ability to express their views?” (controlled for gender)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appearance on the radio</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>-074</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone call in TV broadcast</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>-006</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>062</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMS to TV programme</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>-036</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appearance on TV broadcast</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>-133</td>
<td>084</td>
<td>073</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

General opinion polls
Letters to the press
The Internet
Being in a political party
Being in another organisation
Strikes
Demonstrations, protest meetings

(continued)

An alternative factor analysis in which we included the four topics grouped here gave the same solution, in which these four topics sorted along a separate factor (almost independent of the earlier four factors) with almost identical correlation pattern.
Partial correlations between the extracted factors 1-4 above and internet use (controlled for gender)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>.003</td>
<td>-.126</td>
<td>.038</td>
<td>.186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>.091</td>
<td>-.096</td>
<td>.030</td>
<td>.125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>-.020</td>
<td>-.125</td>
<td>.059</td>
<td>.119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>-.014</td>
<td>-.111</td>
<td>.054</td>
<td>.135</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Internet for work (how often)
- Internet for study (how often)
- Internet for leisure (how often)
- Internet for work (how long time)
- Internet for study (how long time)
- Internet for leisure (how long time)

Partial correlations between the extracted factors 1-4 above and education (controlled for gender)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>.011</td>
<td>-.085</td>
<td>-.005</td>
<td>.084</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>-.003</td>
<td>-.063</td>
<td>.030</td>
<td>.093</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>.009</td>
<td>-.053</td>
<td>.018</td>
<td>.089</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Respondent’s education
- Education of respondent’s mother
- Education of respondent’s father

As the extracted factors are variables in themselves, we can correlate them with any other survey variable. In the middle part of the Table, we see the correlations between the four extracted factors and the adults’ opinions on the possibilities of expressing opinions via different media and via direct political actions. Further down, the four extracted factors are correlated with Internet use. One can notice, among other things, that Factor 1 (grouping interest in media content dealing with different kind of social issues) correlates relatively strongly with the last two items “strikes” and “demonstrations, protest meetings”, but has no correlation with the various “Internet questions”. In other words, interest in social issues is independent of frequency and amount of Internet use (for work, study or leisure), as well as of the opinion that the Internet is an important platform for expressing opinions.

The last three lines show that interest in social issues does not correlate either with one’s own or one’s parents’ education. On the other hand, persons who believe that direct actions such as strikes, demonstrations, and the like, are important for expressing opinions are considerably more often interested in the above-mentioned kinds of social issues in the media.

The picture is similar among the young people in both Stockholm and St. Petersburg. Agreeing with the statement “Ordinary people can influence what is happening in society by making their voices heard on the Internet” or thinking that “The Internet is important for people’s ability to express their views” have no or slight correlations with, for example: Internet use; searching for societal information on the Internet; interest in societal questions in the media generally; opinions on whether the country’s development of democracy has been worse or

44 Other social issues, for instance “economic divides in society”, “labour market issues”, “gender equality issues” and “child care and family issues”, are also strongly correlated with the first factor.
better; and that one can influence societal development oneself. And there are no relations with the parents’ education and household economy. On the other hand, the views that “demonstrations, protest meetings”, “strikes”, “being in a political party” and “being in another organization” are “important for people’s ability to express their views” are clearly connected, especially among the Stockholm adolescents, to a range of societal issues that they think are important for the media to deal with.

In sum, in relation to the discussion on the importance of the Internet as a means for political participation and democratic discussion, it is essential to emphasize that access to and use of the Internet in general do not give evidence of people’s interest in societal issues (economic and other injustices, ethnic tensions, environmental issues, etc.). The findings show instead that interest in such societal issues is connected with considering other kinds of political actions than using the Internet as important means for people to express their opinions. The Internet and Internet use in general do not stand out as an important platform in this regard.

Concluding words

All in all, based on the surveys in St. Petersburg and Stockholm, we cannot draw the conclusion that access to ICT per se – and the possibilities to use its growing amount of information, to enter its communities and forums with like-minded persons, etc. – leads to the often-hoped-for increase in enlightenment and political engagement. ICT per se is not a factor that appears to counteract the social mechanisms that give rise to inequalities between different population groups. Even if ICT offers many new outlooks and activities, gives opportunities for its users to generate their own contents, and is a practical and rapid tool for many actions that formerly only belonged to the “real” world, the profits gained by using the Internet seem in the main to be dependent on more basic and very different needs and motives among its users, which is why the Internet primarily reinforces the different dispositions, values and activities that users bring to it.

The term “digital divide” is problematic in several respects. It often refers only to the technical access to, use of and skills in handling ICT, at the same time as more and more content in the convergent media landscape is becoming digitally transmitted (besides the Internet, computer games and mobile phones, this applies to music on CD, films on DVD, the digitalized television nets, as well as the fact that radio, newspapers, films, television programmes, etc., to an ever greater extent are available on the Internet). The notion of “digital divide(s)” therefore has become too woolly. More accurate would be to analyse which different contents people are receiving (and producing) and thereafter find out which platform(s) was used.
Obscurity also characterizes concepts such as “information haves and have-nots”, “information rich and information poor”, “information society” and “knowledge society”, as “information” and “knowledge” have different meanings for different individuals. Politicians, debaters and researchers must necessarily distinguish in detail between the many purports of these notions.

The main objection to concepts such as “digital divide(s)”, “information haves/have-nots”, etc., is, however, based on the findings of the surveys dealt with here. The surveys represent different generations and countries and can, in the case of the Swedish surveys, also be compared with previous studies. We see that when “digital divides” in terms of access, use and skills are bridged, as among the young Stockholmers, distinct “digital divides” remain or become clear that are related to people’s social identities and positions in society. Differences in people’s ICT orientations arise because of the individuals’ social divides – their social backgrounds, dispositions, tastes, values and the activities that guide their engagement in and expected advantages regarding ICT use. The spread and use of ICT turn out to be closely interwoven with the economic, social and cultural inequalities in society. The concept of “digital divide” – in terms of access, general use, and even “profit” in general – is, therefore, a reducing and ideological construction based on a technologically deterministic perspective that conceals existing power relations and the factors that cause digital divides to arise.

There are many thoughts about, hopes for and advantages of ICT that our questionnaires do not deal with, such as the possible consequences of the “new language” that a computerized world signifies and that might imply a new way of perceiving and relating oneself to the surrounding world. Neither do the surveys deal with the consequences for a range of restructurings of the societal field, not least within the economic sphere, where they manifest themselves in, among other things, rapid transfers of money, companies and labour, new ways of directing business and handling relations to clients, etc.

But what our surveys do show is that the new media do not contribute to restructuring society in such a radical way that social divides and hierarchies are levelling out and gradually disappearing, constituting identities of individuals in new ways in the virtual space, so that the “ICT society” would come to be composed of unique individuals who cannot be understood by means of, e.g., Bourdieu’s theory, that is, who are independent of social origins and positions.

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45 The International Telecommunication Union says that the real issue is not so much about access to digital technology but: “Digital Divide refers to the gap between those who benefit from digital technology and those who do not” 2007.
48 E.g., Meyrowitz 1985.
Our studies indicate instead that the virtual space can be structured in relation to the social space – that it is possible to apply Bourdieu’s theory and draw the conclusion that the societal order is built on the same fundamental mechanisms as it was before. ICT per se do not lead to more enlightenment, political participation and increased democracy, even if the digital media change the ways we carry out many social activities, give rise to a range of new practices, and entail that symbolic resources (and the different forms of capital) may partly change values on the symbolic market.

Many of the results on access to and use of ICT in the current research project also correspond to findings from our earlier analyses, which indicated that important differences in tastes and behaviours that are due to persons’ social backgrounds in the “real” world, are finding a hold in the virtual space as well. This seems to confirm Tichenor et al.’s hypothesis of differential growth in knowledge, i.e., that growing access to information in practice often leads to widened knowledge gaps between different social groups.

As mentioned previously, it has often been pointed out that people with a high education and income are more frequent and heavier users of the Internet – especially in the early stages of the spread of the new medium. This is also the case with our adult respondents, particularly in St. Petersburg. But among the young people, differences also exist depending on whether they attend a theoretical or practical study programme – even if many such educational differences have levelled out among young people in Stockholm. We have seen that, in many respects, there are no significant digital divides in basic terms among the Swedish adolescents. Still, however, there are distinctions in the fields of ICT application. Certain ICT activities persistently connect to high education/theoretical study programmes in all our four groups studied, namely “searching for scientific information” and “searching for political information” on the Internet.

In our in-depth interviews in the special study with media experts, we asked whether all people in St. Petersburg and Stockholm, respectively, are able to find the necessary information for becoming and remaining well-informed citizens. Practically all experts answered in the affirmative, even if many of them earlier in the interview had pointed out that important subjects, genres, etc., are lacking or are underrepresented in the output of the traditional media. According to these informants, such scarcities were compensated for by the Internet, where all kinds of alternative information were easily accessible for “those who so wish”, as well as various possibilities of communicating with other people and, thereby, also participating in public life.

50 Tichenor, Donohue & Olien 1970.
However, the respondents in our surveys, above all the adults, hold different views. A majority of adults especially dissociate themselves from the statement “Ordinary people can influence what is happening in society by making their voices heard on the Internet”. Further analyses show that interest in societal issues is connected with appreciating traditional kinds of political actions (such as demonstrations, protest meetings, strikes, etc.) and not with the view that the Internet is an important platform for changing society.

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3. People’s Perceptions of Democracy and Welfare in Different Media Environments

Peter Petrov & Cecilia von Feilitzen

In this article we focus on some opinions among the inhabitants in St. Petersburg and Stockholm on important social issues related to the political and economic changes during recent decades. We emphasize especially the opinions among the adult respondents who, above all in Russia, have experienced essential changes in their social environments during the last twenty years and whose attitudes are expected to diverge from the young people's. However, we also show in the figures and partly discuss corresponding results for the young respondents in both cities.

We start (in section I) presenting some common perspectives on media and democracy, not least concerning the changing situation in Russia as it appears in the academic discourse and among media experts in the two cities who we interviewed in our study. In the following pages (section II) we summarize findings from our quantitative surveys. After that (section III) some findings are presented more in detail. Finally (section IV), we discuss the results in the light of prevailing views on the Russian and the Swedish society.

I. Some perspectives of media and democracy in Russia and Sweden

The abundant literature since 2000 on Putin’s Russia has been characterized by a multiplicity of views, which can often be related to one or another political interest.

Some Russian and many Western critics maintain that after the end of the Yeltsin years (1991-1999), the democracy in Russia has been set aside in several essential respects, not least as regards freedom of expression, and that new forms of dictatorship and censorship – direct as well as indirect – have been consolidating. In the wake of these developments owners of critical media have been arrested and exiled, independent voices removed, journalists killed, while “remaining independent media not controlled directly by the Kremlin are cowered indirectly into soft, uncritical reporting”.

1 Ostrow et al. 2007, p. 3.
The prevailing majority of the Western researchers studying the Russian society and media system are also critical of the medial and democratic development in Russia during the past decade. The summary of the Western research by Salminen\(^2\) constitutes a good example in this respect.

Salminen emphasizes that there is a sense that a political-ideological theme dominates in Western literature on the Russian media.\(^3\) One basic assumption is that the Russian political system is not democratic, while the Russian media system, according to Becker, is neo-authoritarian.\(^4\) For Oates it seems that the Russian media are mainly used as tools for propaganda as in Soviet times.\(^5\) Other examples mentioned are Lipman & McFaul who maintain that the Russian State’s effort to control all major television stations is the most obvious manifestation of the shift from democracy to “managed democracy”;\(^6\) and Belin who means that as during the Soviet era, the current Russian media are used as a weapon to attack political enemies.\(^7\) Both Western and Russian scholars agree on the fact that Russia did not adopt the Western kind of democratic media system.\(^8\) Oates says that in such a context, the Russians, in reality, are being led by the (television) broadcasters.\(^9\)

The Russian reforms of the 1990s and the succeeding development during the first decade of the 21st century are seen in a different light in the leftist critique, condemning the need and adequacy of these reforms. Such critique, defending the Soviet project, points out that the economy was stable and growing until the end of the Soviet Union, after which the productivity of all sectors sharply fell or practically disappeared, at the same time as the living standard of the majority of the population was reduced to the poverty line. In such a situation the media are manipulating the consciousness of the majority in order to force them to comply with status quo.\(^10\)

On the other hand, many Russian analysts praise the Putin/Medvedev administrations, which are seen as a new phase of political reforms and strong mass parties. Pavlovski describes Putin’s rule as the first non-communist intellectual regime that prohibited disastrous politics and excluded the development of monstrous mutations of the social body. “Normalization” has become a benchmark of Medvedev’s administration, in the same way as “stability” was the point of reference during Putin’s presidency.\(^11\)

\(^2\) Salminen 2009.
\(^3\) Salminen 2009, p. 38.
\(^8\) Salminen 2009, p. 43.
\(^11\) Pavlovski 2009a, 2009b; see also Danilin 2009.
There are, although few, Western researchers who praise the achievements of the Putin administration. One example is Wallerstein who stresses that Putin has been charged with “being authoritarian, with attempting to recreate Russia’s imperial control over its neighbours, and with reviving Cold War obstructionism in the United Nations”. However:

We know that what one person calls authoritarian tendencies another often calls the restitution of order. This is a conflict of interpretation that is widespread, even in the North Atlantic countries. Nicholas Sarkozy has just recently profited from this double perspective.

On the whole, Wallerstein asserts that “a fair observer would have to say that Putin has done well as a geopolitical player”.

Views of the media system in Russia
A similar diversity of viewpoints is also characteristic of the situation in the media field as expressed by the Russian media experts participating in our interviews. Their viewpoints vary according to factors such as the position of the media (state or private company) within which the expert in question is engaged, the political orientation of the media company, the expert’s position in the hierarchical structure, as well as his/her age/experience.

Taking these factors into account, the assertions of Ostrow et al. (2007) mentioned above, describing the media situation in Russia in terms of censorship, can be discussed. Naturally, several of our respondents working at oppositional media (especially from the right wing) have a similar attitude as Ostrow et al. As one of our interviewed media experts says: “There are no independent mass media (in Russia) and there is also no, what I call, ‘boiler of public opinion’”. These critics also consider Western societies and media as models of democracy and freedom of expression.

Other media experts mention imperfections of the Russian political life and media. However, they explain such problems in terms of lack of democratic traditions, the Soviet heritage, the economic crisis and other factors.

Some interviewees say that the contemporary situation in Russia cannot be characterised as democratic, but point out that democracy is a complex concept. The Soviet society also had a range of democratic characteristics that are lacking today (the experts give several examples of previous equitable distribution in the Soviet Union).

Several other Russian experts – from the state controlled and also from several independent media – reject the hypothesis that there should be some

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15 Ostrow et al. 2007.
kind of political censorship in Russia. Naturally, there are several restrictions, which, however, they mean are characteristic also of Western media. One example is the following:

And the most important, representative democracy... [but it] does not always reflect the interests of people. Democracy is not PR and democracy is not money. Democracy is a real opportunity of the common people to influence the state policy. [...] I have not seen such a thing in any country. Democracy in the American variant, it is a defective one. In the Swedish (variant), they have self-regulated themselves, so to speak. They supervise themselves, though the laws give any opportunity.

Several persons are critical towards the attitude of the Western media and politicians, trying to force Russia to adopt Western values and lifestyles.

Some Russian media experts maintain that Russia is superior to the West, and especially to the USA, when it comes to freedom of expression as well as democracy in general:

That level of critical attitude towards the acting power, which we observe in the number of (press) editions and Internet sources in our country... I think that they wouldn't be allowed either in the USA or in Sweden.

Views of the media system in Sweden

In Sweden, the political development has been much more stable than in Russia during the recent decades, having been characterised by alternating right wing and social-democratic governmental alliances, which compared to the Russian situation have had less deviating policies from each other as regards their economic and political programs. Furthermore, the spectrum of views in the media literature has not been as polarized as, for instance, during the 1970s. In line with this, the views of our Swedish media experts are, on the whole, more consensus oriented and less diverging than those of their Russian counterparts.

The Swedish media, especially the mainstream press, often describe the political development in Russia in a negative light. In this context it should be pointed out that the great majority of the Swedish media experts declare that they know nothing of the media situation in Russia at all or only from the mainstream Swedish media. It is worth mentioning that many Russian media experts know more about the Swedish media situation.

The views of the Swedish experts of the media situation in their country differ from the Russian experts’ views in several other ways, not least when it comes to questions of censorship. Freedom of expression and democracy are by the Swedish experts regarded as two main characteristics of the Swedish society. However, there are a few exceptions, expressed mainly by the left-wing critics, who point out that censorship is exerted indirectly via the marketing mechanisms.
In the light of the works of several Western scholars considering advertising as one of the most powerful tools for limiting freedom of expression, it is interesting to note that most of the oppositional journalists and media executives among our Russian experts look upon advertising as a condition of attaining political independence and diversity of the media content. In general, the Swedish experts are more aware of the influence of advertising on the individuals and society than the Russian experts.

Another difference between the two groups of media experts is that most Russian experts (as well as ordinary people participating in our studies) point out that the decrease in the quality of newspaper content is one of the principal causes of the decrease in circulation and reading of papers in Russia. Often the press is called “yellow” or “gutter press”. Similar complaints are unusual among the Swedish respondents, an interesting observation when taking into consideration the fact that the Swedish newspapers are at least as “yellow” as those in St Petersburg.

This article will discuss the different perceptions of the concept of democracy in general from ordinary people’s points of view in Stockholm and St. Petersburg, respectively. Central factors that seem to explain several of these differences are the dynamics of social change, and especially the economic situation, i.e., the degree of poverty-welfare where the country and the individual are positioned.

II. Aspects of democracy, welfare and media

Our analyses of the quantitative surveys and group discussions among ordinary people reveal important differences between the generations (young people and middle-aged persons, respectively), between the cities and combined effects. Among other things, differences in the prevailing attitudes towards democracy and welfare appear between the cities, differences that to a large extent can be explained by the survey materials.

The social changes in Russia after 1990 have led to huge economic gaps, a “matter of course” often reiterated by (i.a.) the mass media. Russian as well as Swedish media have called attention to the fact that nowadays Moscow is No.2 in the world (after New York) regarding the number of dollar billionaires, while the income of the ordinary Russian citizen is quite low compared to that in the U.S. In this regard it is important to stress that the political and the economic elites in Russia are more fused than in Sweden and most Western countries. Furthermore, according to the daily newspaper Izvestiya\(^\text{16}\) Russia is No.1 in the world regarding the number of dollar-billionaires in the parliament (and according to one of our interviewees, a PR expert, almost all Duma representatives are at least millionaires). Another harsh theme in the Swedish media is the

\(^{16}\) Izvestiya 3 April 2008.
way in which the new social order in Russia (implying huge economic divides) has been brought about as a consequence of unfair – sometimes illegal – manipulations during and after the so-called privatization of the state property.\textsuperscript{17} Many Swedish media are also eager to condemn the present political situation in Russia as undemocratic (including manipulated elections, corruption, brutal actions against journalists, etc.).\textsuperscript{18}

The fact that the standard of living has been much higher in Sweden than in Russia after the disintegration of the Soviet Union is also evident from different Russian and Western research reports. As mentioned, Kara-Murza\textsuperscript{19} shows that the production of goods in Russia during the 1990s drastically diminished (or practically disappeared) within a great number of societal sectors. The increasing import in several areas did not compensate for this reduction, something which meant lower consumption of corresponding products. The social inequalities (measured by the GINI coefficient and the Sen-index) has also after 1995 been much bigger in Russia than in the Nordic countries.\textsuperscript{20}

However, in this article our starting-point is the views of ordinary people and their problems. From our studies it is clear that the elder generation in St. Petersburg deviates most from the three other groups studied (middle-aged persons in Stockholm, teens in St. Petersburg and teens in Stockholm): The adults in St. Petersburg state most often that their household economy is poor and it is this group that identifies itself least with successful and affluent people.\textsuperscript{21, 22} Moreover, these middle-aged persons in St. Petersburg emphasize “economic prosperity for all” as the most essential characteristic of a democratic society.\textsuperscript{23} A large proportion of the adults in St. Petersburg are also discontented with the

\textsuperscript{18} E.g., \textit{Dagens Nyheter} 28 October 2009.
\textsuperscript{19} Kara-Murza 2002.
\textsuperscript{20} Kivinen 2009.
\textsuperscript{21} We want to point out that the survey samples in Stockholm and St. Petersburg do not differ from each other when it comes, for instance, to education; the shares of the different education groups are almost exactly the same.
\textsuperscript{22} However, according to the opinion poll Russia Votes (accessible at the website of the research institute Levada, www.levada.ru/eng) the Russians are of the opinion that their economic/material situation has improved in recent years – in November 2000, 6% of the population said that their economic/material situation was good and 46% that it was bad – in March 2008, the corresponding figures were 19% and 26%, respectively (www.russia-votes.org/welfare/welfare_trends.php#078). It also seems as the attitude towards the own welfare in several respects has become more or somewhat more positive (different on different questions). However, 75% of the population meant in 2007 that they did not earn sufficiently from their ordinary work (of which 49% not totally and 26% definitely not) (ibid). Our data collections have also revealed corresponding trends.
\textsuperscript{23} This tallies with results from Russian opinion polls. In January 2008, the most frequent answers to the question about what is most important in order to be able to talk about democracy in Russia (the respondents were allowed to mark several response alternatives) were the following: 60% a high living standard; ca. 50% order, to obey laws; 45% equality before the law; and 44% political rights and civil liberties (www.russiavotes.org/national_issues/national_issues_politics.php).
on-going democratic processes in Russia. They consider, as well, more often than the other groups in our study that the economic gaps between different social strata are increasing.\textsuperscript{24} They say less often than the other groups that they have a possibility of influencing the social processes. They also disagree most with the statement that ordinary people can make their voices well heard in the media, which (according to a large proportion of these respondents) are controlled by a few powerful persons. Moreover, the respondents from this group most often claim that they are not satisfied with the way their life goes.

Another striking difference is that, in spite of the fact that a majority of the Russian respondents accentuate collective values (that the State should help the weaker, that people should defend common interests), almost two thirds of both the adolescents and the adults in St. Petersburg agree on the statement that the individual’s prosperity should wholly be dependent on how well she/he succeeds in taking care of him-/herself and his/her family. Only one quarter of our Stockholm inhabitants agree on this statement. In the Russian qualitative group interviews (hardly in the Swedish ones) several declarations exemplified this position, that every person is responsible for his/her situation in society.

In the following sections, there are several results illustrating people’s perceptions of democracy and welfare in the two cities. In most cases we have endeavored to further elucidate the results by studying the correlation patterns of each variable in the entire set of characteristics (habits, attitudes, values, socio-demographic background, in total approximately 550 variables in the questionnaire) included in the surveys. This procedure assumes that people’s characteristics are interrelated and, thus, could be understood by structuring them in a multi-dimensional space (cf. Bourdieu’s theory on tastes and lifestyles). As Bourdieu points out,\textsuperscript{25} the correlations can be quite complicated since the different characteristics (variables) often are intertwined, leading to analytical difficulties.

On the whole, our studies show that the St. Petersburg respondents, although most of them trust the president (Putin), have a more critical attitude than the Stockholmers to a large number of social institutions (such as the parliament, the health care and the police – to mention just a few), to the state of democracy in their country, as well as to the impartiality of the media and their capacity to contribute as autonomous actors to the democratic process in their country. An

\textsuperscript{24} There is also a hesitation shown towards the market economy among the Russian population – according to Russia Votes in March 2008, 39% of the respondents said that the reforms must continue but 21% stated that they should be discontinued; 40% couldn’t make up their mind. When asked what economic system should be best for Russia, 15% answered market economy, 24% planned economy and 47% a mixed economy. A mixed attitude also emerged towards the question if Russia should be like the West or the former political system, or if the country should go its own, new way – the last opinion turned out to be most popular (www.russiavotes.org).

\textsuperscript{25} Bourdieu 1979.
easy conclusion to draw of such results could be that the mainstream Western journalists are right when claiming that democratic norms are lacking in the Russian society. As mentioned earlier, however, the experience of the consistent, sometimes radical, political and social changes in Russia during the past 20-25 years has marked the adult inhabitants of St. Petersburg and can thus be assumed to constitute an explanatory factor in itself (as similar changes have not occurred in Sweden). Another basic explanatory factor is the difference in the tangible assets of the St. Petersburg inhabitants. It is interesting, however, that such a thesis, that economic wealth could influence people’s experiences and representations of democracy, was rejected by the large majority of our media experts (Russian as well as Swedish) who meant that economic welfare could hardly be considered as an important characteristic of a democracy.

For the moment, we prefer to refrain from drawing any far-reaching conclusions concerning the political and the social situation in either of the cities under consideration. However, the correlation analyses we have carried out suggest that the values that in a Western political tradition are associated with democracy, such as freedom of expression, are structured along a number of variables that in a Durkheimian interpretation\(^\text{26}\) would be recognized to indicate the agents’ integration into the prevailing social order, and into society in general.

Background variables such as good household economy and high education (partly correlating with each other\(^\text{27}\)) are among those that demonstrate the strongest correlations with values and activities that in the Western way of thinking characterize a democratic society. The analyses show that better household economy and higher education (characterizing agents with a higher position in the social field) also correlate with the respondents’ satisfaction with the way they live their lives, with their trust in the major political, economic and welfare institutions as well as with their trust in other people with whom they interact.

However, when interpreting the impact of education and household economy on other variables one should take into consideration that the correlation between these two background variables is not particularly strong (especially in Sweden). At the same time the proportion of well-to-do people is very low among the St. Petersburg respondents (as is obvious from Figure 3:9), whereas the level of education is very similar in the two cities. This circumstance implies that some characteristics/variables can display quite different correlations patterns (primarily among the St. Petersburg adults) with the two background variables in question.

One thesis that we pursue in this article is that democracy, freedom of expression and the like are relative ideas, the meaning of which depends on different social factors. The analyses of our materials show that even if we limit

\(^{26}\) Durkheim i.a. 1897.

\(^{27}\) The Pearson’s correlation coefficient between household economy and education varies between 0.13 (Swedish adults) and 0.23 (Russian adults).
ourselves to one city – Stockholm or St. Petersburg – we find varying representations of these ideas depending on the persons’ place within the social space expressed in terms of their cultural and, not least, economic resources.

As already mentioned, in the following sections we endeavour to shed light upon some central aspects of the state of democracy in St. Petersburg and Stockholm by structuring a variety of views of the some 1,600 respondents from two generations in these two cities. In the concluding section of the article we try to make sense of some prevailing political and academic representations of these concepts in light of the reported findings.

III. Some findings more in detail

The political establishment in the two cities

We will start with a specific question that addresses the respondents’ attitudes to the political system in Russia and Sweden, respectively, since these attitudes are a result of two decades of social development.

From Figure 3:1 it is evident that Moderaterna (the Conservatives – the blue bar in the Figure) was the largest party among the Stockholm respondents when our study was carried out in 2006-2007. Socialdemokraterna (the Social Democrats) came in second place (the purple bar), followed by Miljöpartiet (the Greens), a situation that reflects the relatively stable electorate support of these parties in the Stockholm region since 2006 and that in general has been much more stable in Sweden than in Russia. The Russian respondents’ low trust in the political system of their country is expressed, i.a., in the answers to the question “Which political party do you like best today?”, where the Russian respondents seem to be strongly polarized: almost one third of the St. Petersburg respondents have answered “no party suits me”, which, together with the “hesitant respondents”, constitutes half of all the St. Petersburg respondents. The corresponding figures for the Stockholm samples are considerably lower: less than 15 per cent consider that “no party suits me”; together with the “uncertain” respondents there is approximately one quarter of the Stockholmers who have not chosen a party. On the other pole, the Russian electorate’s preferences clearly are to Putin’s United Russia which stands out as the biggest party (more than one third of all respondents or approximately two thirds of the respondents that have mentioned a party).

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28 It should be stressed that the Conservatives are over-represented while the Social-Democrats are under-represented in Stockholm compared to Sweden as a whole. It should also be mentioned that more West-oriented Russian oppositional parties (such as Jabloko and the Alliance of the right-wing forces) are stronger in St. Petersburg and the big cities compared to the rest of Russia.
The Russian respondents’ considerable deprecation of the prevailing political party system can also be attributed to several social changes – political (associated with lawlessness in several social domains) as well as economical (that have led to material penuries). United Russia is, thus without doubt, the party with largest electoral support – bigger than the remaining parties put together. The relatively new party A Fair Russia (created in 2006), of many considered as a satellite to United Russia, held the second place among the adults. The xenophobic Liberal-Democratic party, was, however, number two among the teenagers (8%). It should be pointed out that the data collection with the adolescents in St. Petersburg was conducted in the Autumn 2006 and (mainly) in the Spring 2007, while the adult survey was carried out in the Fall 2007, something that could explain the low numbers of partisans of A Fair Russia among the adolescents.

Persons who have stated that “no party suits me” are especially interesting given that they constitute a large proportion of the Russian respondents – especially among the young – taking into account that such voters’ views are disregarded in the final official counting of votes.
3. People’s Perceptions of Democracy & Welfare

Characteristics of respondents who stated that “no party suits me” (compared with those who identified a specific political party)²⁹

An obvious difference between the followers of a particular political party and those who reject the established political system by stating that no party suits them, is that the former group have more confidence in the political parties generally, the parliament, the government and its ministers (including the Prime Minister/the President), as well as the City Councillor. The relationship is especially pronounced in the Russian sample ($r = 0.35-0.40$). Among the Swedish adult “partisans”, there are, as well, dispositions to trust welfare organiza-

²⁹ This description is based on correlation analysis, in which we have redefined the variable “Which party do you like best today?” in the following way: 1) persons who indicated any specific party, and 0) people who indicated that no party suits them. Uncertain respondents, and those who have not answered the question have been excluded from the analysis.
tions \((r \approx 0.20)\) such as the police, the school system, and the like. The “parti-
sans” in both cities believe more often that “Ordinary people can make their
voices well heard in the media”, and that democracy works in St. Petersburg and
Stockholm, respectively. The supporters of a specific party also believe relatively
more often that it is possible to make one’s voice heard (for instance, through
letters to the editor of a newspaper or via the Internet), and that one can
influence the state of things in the country.

Moreover, people who have chosen a political party tend to like different
kinds of popular culture (TV entertainment, musical hits, etc.) more than others.
Among the Swedish supporters of a concrete party there is also a weaker but
pronounced correlation with consumer behaviour, for example, to follow fashion
trends and to think that the supply of goods and services, as well as people’s
possibility to consume, has improved, etc.

Respondents who identify themselves as wealthy and as people in decision
making positions and (in Sweden) people with a better economic situation are
over-represented among those who adhere to a given political party.

The Russian respondents who reject the political structure are instead more
often people with higher education, a relationship which does not exist among
the Swedish respondents.

The fact that a larger share of the Russians than the Swedes seems indifferent
to political life can be accounted for by several reasons according to the
participants in our group discussions in St. Petersburg. For some individuals the
political field is serving only a limited part of society that takes advantage of the
power by illicit means:

> There are all too many people who have a good life… they steal, plunder. They
just don’t like to be disturbed by anybody. (young man, electro-technical college,
St. Petersburg)

> I don’t care about this (political) agreement. I care about a normal life. I care for
how I could afford something. (middle-aged man, low education, St. Petersburg)

A Russian woman with high education thinks that people do not believe in
parties and movements, since they have understood that they serve only the
goals of some leaders. “So I try to be as meek as a lamb”, she adds.

According to a student at a liberal arts college, young people do not want to
think about anything, they just want to have fun:

> Well, in fact I would like people to start thinking more. Now in Russia and in
general, in principle, there are many young people who don’t want to think about
anything, and there is even music which contains information, texts, which make
people depressed… And then people listen to dance music… well, as they say
now, sausage (slang for the house style music), because it doesn’t make people
think deeply.
3. People’s Perceptions of Democracy & Welfare

Trust in social institutions

The fact that the St. Petersburg respondents generally to a lesser extent than the Stockholmers choose the established political parties is also evident in Figure 3:2, from which it appears that few respondents in the two cities and age groups have marked any higher degree of trust in the political system in general (the political parties, the parliament, local authorities and trade unions, as well). However, the Swedish respondents have higher trust in their parliament, while a larger proportion of the Russians trust their government.

The results are important to take into account in relation to the Swedish media discourse on the pressure on the Russian media exerted by the Putin’s (and Medvedev’s) administrations, suggesting that people could be ideologically manipulated by the State. It is clear that a large percentage of the St. Petersburg’s population – particularly adults – feel they are outside the political system (and in many respects perhaps outside the society in general). Rather than classifying them as apolitical, one could say that the political system does not contain any alternatives for such people; the “liberal” and “democratic” parties of Western style politics (and the ‘Russian’ type of parties such as United Russia) are not real options for them. One possible explanation is that such political ideas and social structures have not grown organically in the country but has been enforced under a short period characterized by (mainly) selfish economic aspirations which often have proved to go against common people’s interests. As an additional consequence of such efforts, the ideological nature of ideas such as democracy and freedom of expression has been revealed as a false picture of reality subordinated to certain interests of the dominant strata. Our group interviews confirm this hypothesis.

A young man (at an electro-technical gymnasium, St. Petersburg) concludes that the young and adult people just do not believe that they can change anything, why they do not participate in the elections. “The candidate is already elected [in advance]”, as a girl studying fashion and design in St. Petersburg puts it. This is echoed by several other utterances:

- Everything is corrupted here, it is clear who votes and who wins. (young woman, law college, St. Petersburg)
- I know that I can’t change anything, even through elections. Who they want to appoint, will be appointed. (woman, high education, St. Petersburg)

Of course, as in Stockholm, there are several St. Petersburgers in the group discussions who believe that if people join together, they can achieve some results:
I think that an ordinary man cannot influence the society. Only when gathered together, let’s call it a group, a community, he can influence. (middle-aged woman, high education, St. Petersburg)

The distribution of responses regarding trust in social institutions among the Stockholm respondents suggests that similar views exist in Sweden, as well, albeit considerably less pronounced, which according to our hypothesis could be due to a higher living standard in general and a greater homogeneity in terms of people’s material resources.

Figure 3:2 presents the shares of the respondents in the four groups studied who trust different institutions. The grouping of the institutions in Figure 3:2 is based on the respondents’ answers to the various sub-questions which are structured by way of multivariate analysis. The groups of answers could conditionally be called ‘state institutions’, ‘welfare institutions’, ‘trans-national institutions’ and ‘media institutions’; the latter is also divided into private and governmental/public service media.

In general, it should be stressed that the structural pattern of trust obtained by way of factor analyses looks quite similar in the two cities and age groups (i.e., in all four samples). For example, trust in the medical service is strongly linked to confidence in other institutions sorted in the same group – the police, the legal courts, etc. Moreover, people’s trust in such welfare organizations is linked, naturally enough, to people’s experience of their society as being fair and as making progress in several important respects (labour market, purchasing power, human rights, combating corruption, etc.). The church, the armed forces and the Prime Minister/the President are located in a separate factor as these societal forces differ partially from the general pattern.

Of course, people’s expressed trust in social institutions, media, etc., cannot be considered as a measure of their actual behaviour or especially of the long-term influence of the institutions/media. There are, for instance, studies showing that many persons’ opinions and views are influenced by contents in yellow press, advertising and other popular media, although these persons state that they do not trust such media (contents).30

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30 See, e.g., Johansson 2008 and Article 4 in this anthology.
### Figure 3.2. How much trust do you have in the following institutions?  
(by age and city, cumulative per cent)

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<td>Private radio and TV channels</td>
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\(^{+}\) The state radio and TV in Russia, the public service radio and TV in Sweden

The vertical lines/marks represent every 25 per cent.

It should be noted that the correlation pattern (the inter-relatedness of people’s trust in the different institutions – especially within a cluster of social institutions as sorted in Figure 3:2) is much stronger among Russian than among Swedish adults. This means that the Russian answers are more polarized along a number of binary oppositions (while the Swedish answers are more consensus oriented) regarding attitudes towards welfare organizations such as medical service, etc. In Sweden the different “trust factors” are also more autonomous.

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31 The questions on trust are to a large extent inspired by the nationwide survey, National SOM, conducted by The SOM Institute, Sweden.
areas. For instance, the Stockholmers’ attitudes towards the media are more often independent of trust in political organizations, etc.

There are a number of differences between the two cities concerning the teenagers’ trust in the major institutions of society. According to Figure 3:2 it is also evident that several differences are especially salient among the adults. For instance, the adults in Stockholm have more confidence in the police, medical service, parliament and legal courts compared to the adults in St. Petersburg, among whom the church, the national defence and especially the President are more trusted than the corresponding Swedish institutions. The Russians’ relation to their President has been lively discussed by Swedish media. Below we try to shed some light on the issue based on our correlation patterns.

One central finding is that the Russians’ trust in the President is strongly bound up with the opinion that the country lives up to the UN Convention on Human Rights (and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child even though this relationship is less pronounced). There is also a somewhat positive correlation between trusting the President and trusting people in general (asked about in another question). People who trust the President are somewhat under-represented among people with high education, especially if the education of the respondent’s parents is taken into consideration, i.e., people with high education and high-educated parents tend to have lower confidence in the President than the rest of the middle-aged persons in St. Petersburg. N.B. The answers to the questions whether the own country lives up to the UN Conventions on Human Rights and on the Rights of the Child, respectively, indicate that a significantly higher proportion of the St. Petersburg residents (nearly 40% of the adolescents and approximately one third of the adults compared with about 25% of the Stockholm adolescents and approximately 10% of the Stockholm adults) do not know what the UN convention in question is about or have no opinion, a result that, in our analyses, is related to the relatively widespread indifference to political issues among the Russian respondents.

Concerning media use, the President’s supporters are under-represented among frequent Internet users (who, in their turn, seem to be politically more active and often are high-educated people with access to the new media where they search, i.a., political and scientific information).

On the contrary, the St. Petersburg respondents who trust Putin (which is somewhat more common among persons with low education) tend to watch television, especially the state-controlled Perviy Kanal (Channel One) and Rossiya (Russia), significantly more diligently than the rest of the respondents (the correlation is particularly marked in the adult sample, \( r = 0.25 \) Perviy Kanal, 0.22 Rossiya)\(^\text{32}\) – and as a consequence also a number of TV programmes, not

\(^{32}\) It is interesting to point out that listening to Echo Moskvy (Echo of Moscow), a radio station renowned as regime-critical by several oppositional media experts in our study, has no
least the news editions and talk shows but also Russian series, on these channels. Television is, as well, more often (than among people who do not trust the President) identified as an important source of knowledge and information. These results might be seen as a confirmation of the criticism about political manipulation by the media, primarily television, which has become the most important medium in Russia – to the extent that it is unequivocally proven that the situation in Russia differs significantly from other countries concerning control of television by political and other elites. One ought therefore to analyze at which point the media situation in Russia is significantly different from, and in which respects it resembles, the situation in, for instance, the U.S., Italy and Sweden.

Trust in the President correlates positively with people’s attitudes towards most of the other Russian institutions, not least the government\(^\text{33}\) and the parliament, as well as towards the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and the World Bank. Trusting the President is also strongly related to opinions that democracy functions in Russia in general \((r = 0.43)\) and in St. Petersburg \((r = 0.39)\).

The supporters of (the former) President Putin consider much more often than other respondents in St. Petersburg that the situation in Russia is getting better in most social domains – the governance (from foreign to security issues, \(r = 0.48\), the moral of the public sector \((r = 0.40)\), the possibility for the individual of expressing his/her opinions \((r = 0.38)\), the business conditions in the country, etc. This is one essential explanatory factor of Putin’s popularity – to the extent that there have been real ameliorations in these respects, which seems to be the case, since even Putin’s critics admit it.

Trust in Putin is even strongly correlated with the beliefs that the representation of reality in the newspapers and especially the TV news editions usually is true and correct and that ordinary people can make their voices well heard in the media.

Concerning interest in media content in general, it should be mentioned that people in St. Petersburg who trust their President more often than the average of our Russian respondents consider that it is important for them that the media deal with welfare issues (such as child care and family issues, terrorism and correlation with people’s attitude towards the President (one should take into consideration the fact that Echo Moskvy is owned by the state-controlled company Gazprom).

\(^{33}\) Pearson’s correlation coefficient \((r)\) is ca. 0.4. It should be mentioned that the corresponding correlation in Stockholm is much stronger (0.8) which means that the involved variables in Sweden (trust in the prime minister and in the government) are almost identical, in contrast to in Russia where the president is experienced as a more independent political factor. Another variable that correlates strongly with Stockholmers’ trust in their (in 2007 right-wing) prime minister (besides trust in the government and in the parliament) is the opinion that privatization and open market economy is good for Sweden. There are, on the other hand, faint negative correlations with the opinions that “economic prosperity for all” is an essential characteristic of a democratic society, that the state ought to help the weaker and less capable to live a life fit or human beings, as well as that the information technology leads to growing unemployment and/or increased possibilities of control.
defence issues, alcohol and drug abuse, gender equality) but also, and not least, with interest in furniture, food and cooking.

The church is another institution, which the young – and especially the middle-aged – respondents in St. Petersburg trust much more than the Stockholmers of the corresponding age groups. It might be that in difficult situations people believe more in God (as well as in UFOs and different kinds of charlatans), one of our St. Petersburg media expert explains. After the disintegration of the Soviet Union (and of the Communist system characterized by atheism), the Orthodox belief constitutes an important source of national identification and integration in society (the Orthodox Church is associated with words of honour such as “spiritual values”, “renaissance”, and “tradition”), the informant continues. It should be stressed that, although free, the Orthodox Church has become a close ally with the state, an important cog in the power machine. (Interestingly, our informant is, on the one hand, an anarchist and anti-fascist, adverse to Western ideology, and, on the other hand, an advocate of orthodox values.)

Several statements in the group discussions suggest that the Orthodox Church is perceived by many St. Petersburg participants as an essential part of their culture, and as a distinctive characteristic of the Russian nation. These respondents maintain that Christianity has strongly influenced the developments in Russia in general.

I like the culture in Russia… different museums, buildings… if visiting them, it’s very interesting to see how the Russian culture was developing. It’s very rich and… religion, it was paganism before the Baptism of Russia, if you consider it… it’s also interesting, and after the Baptism… how everything was […] developing. (young woman, studying chemistry, St. Petersburg)

In a similar manner, the relatively strong positive image of the armed forces in the representations of many Russian respondents depends, of course, to a great extent on the image of the army’s power disseminated by the mass media. “We possess the best engineering inventions: airplanes, helicopters…”, a young man says (studying information technology in St. Petersburg) referring to a TV broadcast on the army and military technology.

However, a large proportion of the young respondents express a negative attitude towards the state of things in the Post-Soviet army, as they know them from relatives and, of course, from the media. (It should be mentioned that military service is compulsory for Russian men.)

Our army now is in a bad condition… awful… and many people are misled. And when they come and… [when] a recruit joins the army, he faces awful conditions. He can simply fall ill and… (young woman, practical gymnasium, St. Petersburg)
The negative attitude, when it exists, towards the political parties and the parliament, is not seldom built on knowledge received from the media. Often the respondents mention the Duma deputees with reference to TV scenes (for instance, showing deputees sleeping or picking their noses during the parliamentary deliberations).

It seems to me, that in our Duma… a lot of superfluous people receive salaries for just sitting there, for sleeping in the Duma. It is even shown how they… (young woman, music school, St. Petersburg)

The state officials and executives (ministers) are also the embodiment of the evil in the perceptions of several Russian participants in the group discussions.

Zurabov in charge of social issues was in power for such a long time. People were writing to him, complaining, everything was in the media. Why could not he (Putin) remove him? (middle-aged man, low education, St. Petersburg)

Several young people take it for granted that being in power necessarily goes together with corruption.

If a common person decides to become an official … to the State Duma […] and if he is not a bribe taker and he does not want to take bribes, he just wants to work… well, he will be kept from working, be killed or … (young man, practical gymnasium, St. Petersburg)

All participants in the group discussions seem to be aware of the fact that bribes occur at several levels of the public affairs and in business, as well.

The state executives are often singled out as responsible for the desperate situation of common people. For instance, a middle-aged woman (low education, St. Petersburg) talks about the callousness of representatives of the municipal administration and the obstacles they put in her way, while she is trying to run her business:

You know, I would like to put it this way: Don’t give me anything, but don’t disturb my work. Well, we don’t expect any help from the state; we understand that we wouldn’t get anything from it. But, at least, do not impede my work. We’ve got enough!

Very often the respondents discuss the police in negative terms. A middle-aged man (with high education and parents with low education) asserts that it is dangerous to have contacts with the police:

They are horrible people. I am afraid to look at them, and to speak to them…
We are afraid of police outrage, frankly speaking... have you thought about it, when you visited some party and drank 150 grams... aren’t you afraid of taking the metro? (middle-aged man, high education and parents with low education, St. Petersburg)

A woman with low education relates with indignation a story from a TV broadcast where some homeless people in a hopeless situation approached the police and were palmed off. Several young people also tell stories about policemen’s illegal actions.

Media credibility
In the West there has been a great deal of media reports about the Russian media’s alleged lack of autonomy. Several researchers and journalists, particularly Western, but also some Russian scholars, journalists and other media experts, as well as common people interviewed in our studies, emphasize the view that (Russian) media are non-independent tools in the hands of political and economic forces that largely overlap. Figure 3:2 above shows that there are no major differences between the two cities concerning the share of the respondents who trust the media – with small variations: there are slightly higher proportions of the Stockholm respondents who trust the print media and the public service broadcast media,\textsuperscript{34} while the relationship is the reverse when it comes to private broadcast media, which are more trusted by the St. Petersburg residents than by the Stockholmers. It is also worth mentioning that the Russian respondents have greater confidence in opinion polls – a knowledge instrument that did not exist during the Soviet era and which by many Russians seem to be perceived as a positive (democratic) social instrument (for instance, as an important medium to express their views ($r = 0.48$) and as an opportunity for the individual to influence society ($r = 0.34$)). Trust in the polls is also connected with the view that newspapers give a true picture of the situation in society ($r = 0.35$). Moreover, the Russian respondents are more positive to phone-in TV shows than the Swedes are.

In Sweden, the opinion polls and market surveys have a much longer history and have often been criticized in the media and in academic research, as well. The public has also become \textit{blasé}, which in all likelihood explains the Stockholm respondents’ more negative attitude toward such studies.

In Figure 3:3 four statements concerning people’s experiences of the media credibility and their fair/unfair representation of different social strata are sorted by the multivariate analyses into two groups.

\textsuperscript{34} It could be mentioned that the pattern of people’s attitudes towards these media are different in the two cities, i.a., with respect to education; high-educated people in Stockholm are somewhat over-represented among those trusting Swedish public service media ($r = 0.13$) while high-educated people in St. Petersburg are much more sceptical to the state-controlled broadcast media ($r = -0.27$).
### Figure 3.3. To what extent do you agree with the following statements? (by age and city, per cent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Teens SPb</th>
<th>Teens Sth</th>
<th>Adults SPb</th>
<th>Adults Sth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The picture of reality conveyed through TV news is usually true and correct</strong></td>
<td><img src="image1" alt="Graph" /></td>
<td><img src="image2" alt="Graph" /></td>
<td><img src="image3" alt="Graph" /></td>
<td><img src="image4" alt="Graph" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>By reading newspapers I get a correct picture of the situation in society</strong></td>
<td><img src="image5" alt="Graph" /></td>
<td><img src="image6" alt="Graph" /></td>
<td><img src="image7" alt="Graph" /></td>
<td><img src="image8" alt="Graph" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ordinary people can make their voices well heard in the media</strong></td>
<td><img src="image9" alt="Graph" /></td>
<td><img src="image10" alt="Graph" /></td>
<td><img src="image11" alt="Graph" /></td>
<td><img src="image12" alt="Graph" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The media contents are controlled by few powerful persons</strong></td>
<td><img src="image13" alt="Graph" /></td>
<td><img src="image14" alt="Graph" /></td>
<td><img src="image15" alt="Graph" /></td>
<td><img src="image16" alt="Graph" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The vertical lines/marks represent every 25 per cent.

The first three statements are positively correlated with each other; this is especially true of the first two sentences \( (r = 0.60 \text{ in Sweden}) \). These three variables are, in their turn, negatively related to the last statement, that the media contents are controlled by few powerful persons, i.e., the more people are convinced that the media contents are controlled by the elite, the less people believe in the correctness of the media representations.

Considering the fact that many Russian and Swedish researchers, as well as journalists interviewed in our project, assert that Russian television is dependent on political forces and controlled directly by the presidential administration, it is worth noting that more than one quarter of the Russian adolescents compared with less than one fifth of the Swedish adolescents agree on the statement “The picture of reality conveyed through TV news is usually true and correct”. On the other hand, a somewhat greater number of Swedish adults believe that they by reading newspapers are given a correct picture of the situation in society. (We discuss in Article 2 the fact that a significantly larger share of the Stockholm respondents usually read newspapers as compared to the inhabitants in St. Petersburg. The differences are especially striking among the adults – less than 20 per cent of the St. Petersburg adults compared to almost 70 per cent of the Stockholmers of the same age usually read a daily paper every day.)

How could one interpret the results in Figure 3:3? Can it be concluded that, in this respect, the Russian state-controlled television is more neutral and objective than the Swedish public service television, while Swedish newspapers should be better than the Russian ones? Or could it be that a greater proportion of the Russians have been deluded by the televised ideological messages, while the Swedish respondents are more vigilant in this regard and can see the “truth” behind the TV representations? The following correlation patterns give us some guidance for understanding these results.
As regards the statement “The picture of reality conveyed through TV news is usually true and correct”, Figure 3:3 shows that there are no big differences between the adult answers in St. Petersburg and Stockholm. Among the adults in St. Petersburg who agree on this statement there are strong positive correlations with a whole range of variables, for example: the opinion that the democratic and economic development in Russia is improving; the view that Russia lives up to the UN Conventions of Human Rights and on the Rights of the Child; and trust in most social institutions, in the first place the state-controlled radio and TV channels and opinion polls but also in the national governmental institutions as well as in trans-national political and commercial organisations. People in both cities who trust the news programmes on television are also optimistic concerning several trends in the societal development in their country (namely, that “the individual’s possibility to express her/his opinions publicly” are improving, as well as the business conditions, the ethics of the public sector, etc.). The links in these respects are stronger in St. Petersburg where there is a pronounced correlation between people’s trust in TV news and their opinions of other societal trends and institutions – the educational system, the opportunities to consume, the international security, etc., are improving.

Regarding media use it should be emphasised that this statement (“The picture of reality conveyed through TV news is usually true and correct”) is agreed upon more often among diligent TV viewers in St. Petersburg who readily watch not only the news programmes, but also different kinds of (especially Russian) serials, music and other entertaining stuff. They also tend to consider television an important source of information and knowledge – unlike the highly educated respondents who more often dissociate themselves with the statement and mistrust the TV news, more often have access to computers and the Internet, and more often use the new media as a source of information and knowledge.

In addition, the same statement (“The picture of reality conveyed through TV news is usually true and correct”) is confirmed much more often by the supporters of the biggest political party, Putin’s United Russia, than by other people and less often by the cultural elite. Agreeing on the statement has no significant correlation with people’s economic situation.

The correlation pattern is more or less similar in Stockholm; however, there are no significant correlations between the statement and the respondents’ level of education. Unlike the St. Petersburg respondents, in the Stockholm sample the statement in question correlates positively not only with trust in the public service broadcast media \( r = 0.37 \) but also with reading newspapers \( r = 0.20 \). The view that TV news are true and correct has in Sweden no relationship with political party preferences.
As we have seen in Figures 3:2 and 3:3, the proportions of people who trust the public service/state-controlled television/radio and the daily papers, respectively, are quite similar in the two cities.

The general correlation patterns associated with the variable “Ordinary people can make their voices well heard in the media” are quite similar to the patterns for “The picture of reality conveyed through TV news is usually true and correct”, although somewhat weaker. In Stockholm there are no pronounced connections with the respondents’ media use (frequencies and amount); agreeing on the statement is, however, somewhat related to certain preferences for media contents, such as reports about celebrities and other entertainment material. The inhabitants of St. Petersburg more often dissociate themselves from this statement than the survey participants in Stockholm.

The fourth statement, “The media contents are controlled by a few, powerful persons”, is negatively related to variables reflecting people’s trust in social institutions, beliefs that democracy functions in Sweden/Russia, and that many social conditions are improving in the country (gender equality, economic divides, and the individual’s possibility of expressing his/her opinion). People who agree on this statement are also, more often than the rest of the respondents in both St. Petersburg and Stockholm, critical of several aspects of the new information technology.

When interpreting the results of both “Ordinary people can make their voices well heard in the media” and “The media contents are controlled by a few, powerful persons” it is necessary to bear in mind that St. Petersburg much more heavily than Stockholm is populated by people living in fragile economic and social circumstances. Given the polarization of the Russian society in these respects, it is again worth noting that the (quite critical) responses of the Russian middle-aged persons – more than 50 per cent agree on the statement “The media contents are controlled by a few, powerful persons” – differ from the answers of the Russian teenagers (although both age groups live in the same media environment and material circumstances) whose responses, on the other hand, are hardly different from their Swedish peers. The response distribution of the adult Stockholmers is more similar to the two youth groups. In all four groups the assertion “The media contents are controlled by a few, powerful persons” has an explicitly negative correlation with faith in the accuracy of the TV news.

However, as mentioned previously in the text, the correlation patterns show that agreement on the statement “Ordinary people can make their voices well heard in the media” in the two cities is related to the belief that “The picture of reality conveyed through the TV news is usually true and correct”.

35 The statement “Ordinary people can make their voices well heard in the media” is, besides the positively correlated variables that in Figure 3:3 are sorted in the same factor, quite strongly related to people’s trust in state institutions, state-controlled media and to their positive attitude towards several economic and political aspects in the societal development.
Questions about the media portrayal of ordinary people were also put in the qualitative group discussions. The middle-aged group participants in St. Petersburg are practically all of the opinion that ordinary people – workers, abandoned children, inhabitants in one’s own village in disrepair, low-paid persons – are not shown and heard in the media in contrast to celebrities, businessmen, “the top” and special “clans”. One reason is, according to an interviewee, the changed aim of the media, especially television; now it is audience ratings that count, why the audience’s real interests are not met.

Many say it is disgusting with so much about the celebrities’ glamorous lives (which is common content in the Swedish media, too):

[…] it should not be shown throughout the country how they (celebrities) are having fun, sit on golden toilets and talk that this is the country’s future when about 80 per cent of our young people do not even eat sausage every day. […] On the front pages of all our newspapers they must show not women with huge breasts and hips, but a dying face of an old woman who gave her life to the country, and now is absolutely forgotten in some flat, full of bedbugs. They should show a veteran with all his honours and underwear covered with his excrement in his room in the collective flat and […] next to him… a delegate’s photo in a luxurious car. They must show a child cut by a sadist in the entrance (of a house) – and just after it Xenia Sobchak with her perfect hips on the golden toilet. I think when this information is available people will wake up much sooner. […] But what I see now… a wonderful life of beau monde. I don’t want, I am fed up with it, I am angry at them. […] (middle-aged man, low education, St. Petersburg)

We see all these gutter-children dying there, we see all this. I think that the media have to bring this home to our deputies, that they must have huge screens with all these articles and pictures, so that they are shown them during their meeting when they sit and clean their noses… or sleep… and to show […] old men, how they are treated, so that they see all this… and to overfeed them with this information, so that they see it in their dreams. (middle-aged man, low education, St. Petersburg)

However, a couple of examples of programmes and columns are mentioned as different among the St. Petersburg interviewees:

[…] Bez kompleksov (Without complexes) […] I see that these celebrities do not participate there. There is no one like Yakubovich. She does not invite those who are okay having about 20 marriages and supporting all their children. Well, I see people that she invites, this horror… these women, homeless, abandoned… everyone talks about their lives in this programme. (middle-aged woman, high education, St. Petersburg)

I think that in Komsomolka there is such a section where you are stopped in the street. It is on television, I think, though I watch television only a little… people
are asked about their opinions, at least. I think that these thoughts... interviews are published truthfully. (middle-aged woman, high education, St. Petersburg)

Similar views appear in the group discussions in Stockholm. Viewpoints expressed are, among others, that the media are owned by big consortiums and offer contents that shall be sold, something that to a great extent leads to journalism that concentrates on celebrities and occupational pundits. Media seldom present ordinary people and if they do, it is in a manner that is misleading for that person. Those participants in the group discussion who know what really happened or what lies behind an article or programme consider the media representations most often fragmented and faulty. A couple of high educated men who themselves have been interviewed by the media, are disappointed at how misleadingly they were treated and when one of them wrote a correction, it was not accepted.

However, some Stockholmers point out that there are letters-to-the-editor columns and on the last but one page in the Stockholm City, for example, people can voice their opinions. One person also remarks that it is easier to have a contribution to the debate accepted in local newspapers. A woman mentions interesting programmes on ordinary people, for example, about a woman who had breast cancer and about people hit by the tsunami catastrophe.

In both cities, but especially in Stockholm, many also mention the Internet in these contexts but the opinions about how people’s voices are heard there are mixed – see also Article 2 regarding the subject of the Internet.

In sum, the analysis suggests, in accordance with our point of departure in discourse theory, that the media “objectivity” is a relative concept, and that it is impossible to say which TV channel – or other media – reflects the reality more “truthfully” than the others. It lies, on the other hand, not within the framework of the project to concretely determine the mechanisms by which truth effects are created. The correlation analyses, however, indicate that the level of acceptance of widespread perceptions such as “truth” interplays with people’s acceptance of the political system at large (trust in society’s institutions, and the like) and people’s relationship to the different media, particularly public service/state-controlled media and print media. “You aren’t able to be independent from politics”, a young man studying mathematics in St. Petersburg says, meaning, among other things, that independent media are an impossibility.

Perceptions of democracy

Figure 3:4 shows that definitely more persons in Stockholm than in St. Petersburg are satisfied with the way democracy functions in their own country and home town.
In a similar vein clearly more persons in Stockholm than in St. Petersburg are of the opinion that one’s own country “rather well” or “very well” lives up to the UN Convention on Human Rights (about 60% in Stockholm and about 10-20% in St. Petersburg) and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (somewhat lower percentages, but the same differences between the two cities). As mentioned, significant proportions, especially in St. Petersburg, do not know what is addressed in these conventions.

In the questionnaire there are several questions dealing with people’s apprehension of society’s characteristics, aiming at concretizing the answers to the question in Figure 3:4. In particular a multi-item question should be mentioned assessing the perception of the current trends (improvement/improvement) in a number of social domains (business, well-being, political stability, criminality, environment, etc.). Since the situation in the two societies (which is the point of reference for the respondents’ assessments of different developments) is quite different, it is difficult to compare the distribution of the answers. However, we can say that a majority of the St. Petersburg respondents have expressed negative views on the on-going developments in a number of social domains, such as corruption, the environment and the ethics and morality of the business sector. The Stockholm respondents are generally more neutral. In both cities, the areas that one usually thinks go towards the better are “the offer of goods and services”, “the individual’s possibility to consume” and “the individual’s possibility to express her/his opinions publicly”. In the fourth place in both cities comes “business conditions” – see examples of views of the societal development in Figure 3:5.
Figure 3:5. Do you find that the development in Russia/Sweden is changing for the better or worse in the following areas (examples): (by age and city, per cent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teens SPb</th>
<th>Teens Sth</th>
<th>Adults SPb</th>
<th>Adults Sth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corruption</td>
<td>The ethics and morality of industry</td>
<td>Criminality</td>
<td>The ethics of the public sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic divides</td>
<td>The environment</td>
<td>The offering of goods and services</td>
<td>The individual’s possibility to consume</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The individual’s possibility to express her/his opinions publicly</td>
<td>Business conditions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The vertical lines/marks represent every 25 per cent.

Another factor of crucial importance for the interpretation of the previous Figure 3:4 on how democracy functions in the country/city is how individual respondents characterize democracy. The issue is of importance, i.a., in the light of the negative media coverage of the Russian politics in the Swedish (and Western) media, and the reverse image and negative picture of the West in the dominant Russian media. Swedish media have, thus, pointed out that the idea of democracy partly has become disgraced during the vehement economic restructuring in 90s Russia, and has been even more disregarded in the decade since 2000. The following analyses also hint at the fact that democracy and related concepts are filled with nuances and have different significations depending on social circumstances.

We tried to nuance the issue of democracy by asking the respondents to choose three of the most distinctive characteristics of a democratic society from a list of seven given alternatives with possibility to complete the list with an additional open-ended alternative. Five response alternatives – see Figure 3:6 – were chosen to rather different degrees among the respondents.

Figure 3:6 includes, thus, expressions that the respondents used in order to describe their view of a democratic society. It is clear that there are huge differences between the inhabitants in the two cities as regards their opinion on the characteristic features of such a society. Approximately 50 per cent of the middle-aged St. Petersburgers associate in the first instance democracy with “freedom of expression” while almost all middle-aged Stockholmers (and the majority of both Stockholm and St. Petersburg adolescents) do so. Conversely, almost two thirds of the adult Russians have marked “economic prosperity for all” as an essential characteristic of democracy; in addition, “order” (and even “discipline” although more marginally) is more valued as a democratic virtue in Russia than in Sweden.
Figure 3.6. What is democracy, according to you? Please choose three of the following expressions that you find best describe a democratic society: (by age and city, per cent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teens SPb</th>
<th>Teens Sth</th>
<th>Adults SPb</th>
<th>Adults Sth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Freedom of expression</td>
<td>That everyone helps each other</td>
<td>Economic prosperity for all</td>
<td>Order</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discipline</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The vertical lines/marks represent every 25 per cent.

However, respondents with better economic conditions in Stockholm have designated “freedom of expression” as an essential feature of a democratic society more often than the rest of the Stockholm respondents. The minority who has dropped “freedom of expression” has significantly lower confidence in most social institutions, primarily the government, the Prime Minister and the political parties, but also newspapers and opinion polls. Furthermore, people who did not attach greater value to “freedom of expression” often dissociate themselves from liberal values and very often consider that the development in Sweden – and especially in Stockholm – is changing in a negative way in several democratic and economic respects: economic and social (in)equality, (un)employment, the individual’s possibilities of expressing her/his opinion, etc.

It could be mentioned that the minority of Swedish adults who have omitted “freedom of expression”, are also less than the average person interested in (domestic as well as foreign) news and rarely believe that ordinary people themselves can influence social events in one way or another (via the Internet or other media). The corresponding relationship is weaker in St. Petersburg. Here the “freedom of expression” has been chosen as democracy’s distinctive feature relatively more often among assiduous users of computer and the Internet – for their work as well as for leisure – especially those who more often use the entertainment services of the Internet. Internet use is, as well, strongly related to higher education in Russia. “Freedom of expression” is chosen somewhat more often among intellectuals and more seldom among immigrants. In Russia, the Internet in 2007 was still far from every man’s property and its use in itself functioned as a sort of indicator of success – or that the person in question knows and accepts the established code of distinction (in which the Internet is highly valued), that is, takes the game seriously, seeks to show integration into the code as a stake in the struggle to become integrated into the growing consumer society.

It should be pointed out that the choice of “freedom of expression” is opposed – in Stockholm as well as in St. Petersburg – to the choice of the fol-
lowing response alternatives: “economic prosperity for all”, “order” and “discipline”, statements relatively more usual among persons in a precarious material situation. In Stockholm the response alternative “economic prosperity for all” has been chosen more often among people who cast their vote to the left and share values such as “The state ought to help the weaker and less capable…”, and who mistrust the (right-wing at the time) government and the Prime Minister. Other results indicate that these people also more often have a poorer economic situation and feel anxious.

The correlation pattern in St. Petersburg is weaker and structured in a relatively different way. Persons who have chosen “economic prosperity for all” as an essential characteristic of a democratic society have more often marked that they trust the Russian government (and the national defence), and tend to identify themselves as Christians more often than the rest of the Russian respondents (and also like Christian music.) These persons tend to be people who, on the one hand, are poorer, have lower education and were hardly struck by the economic transformations during the 90s, and, on the other hand, support Putin’s line, which by the big media is depicted as “stability”.

The inclination to choose “order” has in both cities some positive correlation with the opinion that “the ethics of the public sector” is improving. In St. Petersburg choosing “order” is more frequent among respondents claiming that the current development implies better possibility of consumption (there is no corresponding relation in Stockholm). For the rest, there are no correlations with media use. “Order” has generally weaker correlation patterns, which means that we cannot describe satisfactorily its relations to the variables in the survey.

Among the Stockholm respondents, the choice of “order” is associated with liberal values. It is, thus, negatively correlated with a number of values implying that “people should stand up more often for common interests in society”, where “the state ought to help the weaker…”, a society in which it is important that the media deal with issues such as the situation of the homeless, HIV/AIDS, the relations between ethnic groups, gender (in)equality, economic divides and other social problems.

As mentioned, the question about the words respondents find best describe a democratic society, also had an open-ended option where the respondent in his/her own terms could indicate other properties that are essential for a democratic society. Approximately 8 per cent of the St. Petersburg and about 13 per cent of the Stockholm respondents supplemented their answers to the fixed response alternatives with this alternative option. The responses, however, are significantly diverse in that almost all the Swedish responses described “democracy” as a positive condition – free choice, equality, freedom, participation in decision-making, respect, etc. – while a large proportion of the Russian answers described “democracy” in negative terms – such as disorder, corruption,
lawlessness, dirt, humiliation of the Russians, destruction, marasmus, chaos, emptiness.

Possibility of influencing
There are big differences between the middle-aged persons in St. Petersburg and Stockholm when it comes to the perception if one can influence the societal development oneself. Whilst approximately one third of the Swedes are of the opinion that they at least partly can influence, the corresponding proportion in St. Petersburg is negligible. About two thirds of the Russian adults think instead that they cannot influence the development at all (compared to approximately one fifth of the adults in Stockholm) (Figure 3:7).

Figure 3:7. Do you think that you yourself can influence the social development in Russia/Sweden? (by age and city, per cent)

The few Russian adults who nevertheless answer in the affirmative are more often persons with higher education, who use the Internet more (in order to search for, among other things, juridical, political and other factual information), and who, in addition, most often regard themselves as successful, affluent people with liberal opinions, decision makers and people in responsible positions, intellectuals, etc. Furthermore, they tend to believe that the development in Russia is improving when it comes to, among other things, societal divides, the individual’s possibility of consuming, and ethics within industry. On the other hand, as hinted at earlier, the correlations with their trust in the State and other societal institutions are weaker than among other respondents in St. Petersburg.

The pattern is with certain displacements similar among the Stockholm respondents. Unlike in St. Petersburg, however, the Swedes who believe they can influence society themselves are also interested in news, societal programmes and similar newspaper content. They tend, as well, to be of the opinion that “Ordinary people can influence what is happening in society by making their voices heard on the Internet”, and that “The individual’s possibility to express her/his opinions publicly” has improved (two correlations that are weak or do not exist among the adults in St. Petersburg, depending on the fact that so few persons have answered in the affirmative).
As hinted at previously, there is a positive relation between the respondents’ economic prosperity and the opinion that one can influence societal development oneself.

Also in this respect the adult Russian respondents are the most deviating – and most sceptical – group. Especially noteworthy is the huge difference in relation to the Russian adolescents – in spite of the fact that both age groups of the population live in equal social conditions. Moreover, the young people in both cities have quite similar opinions – in spite of their different social conditions. The results presented in Figure 3:7 constitute, thus, an interesting point of departure for speculations on the factors that determine people’s attitude to political and social realities. The observations could be considered as another indirect support for the hypothesis that the adult St. Petersburgers’ scepticism depends on their multiple experiences of major social changes.

The answers in the qualitative group discussions confirm these findings. The Russian adult participants, both the low- and high-educated, of both sexes, do not see any possibilities of influencing the societal development as ordinary individuals. It is not possible via traditional media or the Internet either, they say. If conditions are ripe, strikes and rallies are hypothetically a possibility. However, it does not function, among other things since people in Russia are so unorganized (compared to in the West, where public opinion is paid more attention to), one person believes.

A boy at an IT college in St. Petersburg believes that the reason is rooted in the Russian society where the people are not united, not organized. In the West, it is different, according to a middle-aged man (low education, St. Petersburg):

> Just look at the Western countries... if you go there, there are thousands of people there... a crowd, but we do not [act]... we just sit. So what? Well, we have enough for bread [...] So well, to hell with them, why shall I go there...?

> I can say that something is solved in the West. They take social opinion into account. (middle-aged women, low education, St. Petersburg)

Another person says that it might be possible to influence if one knows someone in the top of the party. Still other persons think that for influencing society one requires time – but this is lacking because people are busy to earn money to survive:

> It's kind of a work. It is a certain work in a political or social organization. And if a person deals with this work, he has to deal with it. If I have to earn my living, I must have a normal work which is paid. I won’t have time for protest organizations. (middle-aged woman, high education, St. Petersburg)

Young people from a technical college in St. Petersburg give several examples where the protest failed to reach its goal. “People stand up, but cannot achieve
justice”, one of them says. “They just will disperse [the demonstration]”, another student explains motivating his unwillingness to take part in rallies and demonstrations.

And other declarations are, for example, the following:

You can [say] anything you want in the kitchen about anybody you want. But it’s useless to push something in real life. (middle-aged woman, low education, St. Petersburg)

I think that ordinary people can’t influence… even if to consider on a small, district scale. No matter how much we were struggling against Blin Donald’s construction so that they don’t cut out our park, Piskarev […]. We wrote so many leaflets, they were immediately removed. And […] this ‘Blin’ is being built, the park is being cut out. (woman, high education, St. Petersburg)

On the other hand a student of information technology, talking about the faults and the impossibility of changing anything in Russia (including through the media) concludes at the same time that “there is no perfect government. It seems to me that it is unrealistic, because there will always be frauds”. And a young woman at a law college asks: “But how is it possible to change the attitude in society, for example? The society is a system, which has been developing for years…”. Similar views are expressed by students at a mathematical college, who say that everything in modern society and not only in Russia is decided by money. Without money, it is impossible to take part in political life and exert any influence on society. And even if somebody succeeds to form a party, it has little chance of changing anything, especially if the party would struggle against rich people. It is important that this conclusion applies not only to Russia, one student in the group says. He takes as an example the failure of attempts by Greenpeace to deal with oil magnates.

… but it will never be changed because it is economically disadvantageous to [the involved] countries, so no one will support it.

However, it is worth highlighting that also in this respect, the belief in one’s possibility of influencing, the material conditions (conditioned by the past 20 years’ changes) play a decisive role. The personal economic situation is, thus, emphasized, especially among low-educated persons – if you do not have money for bread, why go out and strike or demonstrate and get wet there?, as one man puts it.

The Stockholmers in the group discussions are considerably more positive towards ordinary people’s possibilities of influencing the societal development. Two high-educated men give examples of having had influence themselves by starting an interest-free bank and by establishing a day-care centre by means of a private parental cooperation. However, this might be said to be more about free-
dom of action in business or of influencing one’s own financial or practical situation than of changing society.

Other Swedish participants point out ways to go if one really wants to exert an influence – to join or start a political party, to join another movement or association, to demonstrate, to collect lists of signatures, to try to start up a debate on the Internet, to write a letter to the press or to give tips to the newspapers via their special tips telephone numbers.

But many persons in the Swedish group discussions mean that there was more debate and action during the 1970s and 1980s and that everybody is more resigned and quiet today – instead saving money in stocks and shares has become much more important. One has the possibility to influence but few people take the chance. People are cowards.

They can (influence) if they activate themselves but I think that people are afraid of saying what they think, because then one must stand by what one has said and sometimes I believe that this is very tough for many persons. I mean, one can think wrong. And that is very dangerous. Then someone can discover that one does not think in the same way as he does. Then they might find that one is stupid and that means loosing face, you know. [...] One wants to show an image of being a successful person without having to stand on the barricades. (middle-aged woman, low education, Stockholm)

Yes, I think so (that ordinary people can have influence). Otherwise it is damn indolent by them not to do it. We who do not engage ourselves politically, we have ourselves to blame. We have the possibility, it’s not more difficult than that. No, I think we... we complain... it’s complaining too much without doing anything oneself. (Another participant: But what can one do oneself then?) But you can join a political party, can’t you? There is nobody who is in a political party any longer! Devote that energy that people have for complaining to joining a party instead. [...] Those who really engage themselves, all credit! We others shall damn not... We are allowed to have opinions and we shall vote. But no... such things irritate me... that we say ‘no, there is no possibility’. One certainly has a possibility! (middle-aged man, high education, Stockholm)

**Overall political orientation**

Figure 3:8 displays the respondents’ agreement on five general statements about the role of the State versus the individual’s private initiatives in society.
Figure 3:8. To what extent do you agree with the following statements? (by age and city, cumulative per cent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teens SPb</th>
<th>Teens Sth</th>
<th>Adults SPb</th>
<th>Adults Sth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>The state ought to help the weaker and less capable to live a life fit for human beings</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>I would like people to stand up more often for common interests in society</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>The individual’s prosperity should wholly depend on how well she is taking care of herself and her family</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Competition and struggling for life are more natural than mutual help and cooperation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Privatization and an open market economy are good for Sweden/Russia</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Wholly agree  Partly agree

The vertical lines/marks represent every 25 per cent.

These statements on general political orientation are in Figure 3:8 – as in previous bar charts – divided into groups by way of factor analyses, whereby the two extracted factors here are somewhat negatively correlated. The variables sorted in the same group correlate strongly with each other and show similar correlation patterns with the rest of the variables in the survey. However, such correlations are weaker or non-existent in the Russian samples. In Sweden, the five statements could be aligned along a left-right scale according to a Western political tradition. The blurred correlations between the statements in question among the inhabitants in St. Petersburg depend in all likelihood to a large extent on the different political system in Russia and partly on the fact that most people want to dissociate themselves from those leftist attitudes that are considered to be part of the compromised past. The fact that the young capitalist Russian state lacks resources and organisation to satisfactorily help people in trouble, also means that many people actually must manage the material situation on their own.

In Sweden, the first two statements are more closely related to social-democratic and other left-wing ideologies in Sweden. We give as an example a list in the note below of the strongest correlations (ordered by size) with the first statement, “The state ought to help...” among the Stockholm adults. The listed variables define, thus, to a large extent the place of this statement in the context of all other characteristics – habits, values, etc. – included in the survey.36

36 The state ought to help the weaker and less capable to a life fit for human beings

Correlates positively with:

- 0.5268 I would like that people more often defended common interests in society
- 0.3527 The situation of the homeless people (important in the media)
- 0.3031 Refugee and immigrant issues (important in the media)
- 0.2919 Aid to other countries (important in the media)
- 0.2875 HIV/Aids (important in the media)
- 0.2739 The trade unions (trust in) – (continued)
The second statement, “I would like people to stand up more often for common interests in society”, has in Sweden by and large a similar pattern as the first statement. As for media use and other attitudes, this statement is agreed upon more often by Stockholmers who adhere to (in society) “legitimate” aesthetic norms: they readily watch art films, TV theatre and other cultural programmes as well as debates on current political issues and news editions, and they listen to similar radio contents. These people, more often than the average person, consider that it is important for them that the media deal with social issues, such as economic divides, environmental problems, refugees, the situation of the homeless people, gender equality, and the like. Radio, daily newspapers and books are often mentioned as more important information sources among these people who also have stronger trust in the trade unions and in the public service media than the rest of the Swedish adult participants. There are no or weak relationships with the variables measuring the perceptions of the state of democracy in Sweden, although there is a weak negative relation to the opinion that the economic gaps between different population strata have improved. Unlike global protest movements (and partly United Nations) to which these people are positive, they to a greater extent than others consider that U.S.A and the multinational corporations have a negative impact on people’s living conditions. Stockholm respondents agreeing on the second statement are also more often concerned about the possibility that the Internet could be used by authorities and employers for supervision and control. Public actions such as demonstrations, protest meetings and strikes are considered important ways for expressing one’s opinions.

Correlates negatively with:
-0.3414 Economic gaps between different population groups (become better)
-0.2903 The unemployment (becomes better)
-0.2766 Privatization and open market economy is good for Sweden
-0.2520 The possibility for the individual of expressing his/her opinions publicly (becomes better)
-0.2149 The prime minister (trust in)
-0.2128 Multinational corporations (influence people’s living conditions)
-0.1873 USA (influences people’s living conditions)
As is apparent from Figure 3:8 more people in St. Petersburg than in Stockholm agree on these first two statements. One possible explanatory factor could be a partial heritage of the Communist ideology. Another factor is the growing economic divide in Russia after the fall of the Soviet Union with deterioration of the tangible assets for the majority of the Russian population as a consequence. In the group discussions several participants witnessed such a divide deepening during their own life.

The third politically orientated statement, “A human being’s prosperity ought to be wholly dependent on how well she succeeds in taking care of herself and her family”, has a well-known (predictable) right-wing correlation pattern in Sweden. At the same time, Sweden has a long tradition of a relatively well-functioning system of social insurance and care of different kinds, why it is also understandable that the statement is not felt as being topical to most of the Stockholmers. The much stronger endorsement of this third statement in St. Petersburg is more difficult to interpret, not least because of weaker correlation patterns. The strongest positive correlations here are with the opinions that Russia lives up to the UN Conventions on Human Rights and on the Rights of the Child, respectively. There is also a weak positive correlation with the amount of TV viewing and somewhat stronger with regarding TV as an important source of knowledge and information. When it comes to TV genres, there are some weak correlations in St. Petersburg with preferring news programmes, comedy serials, documentaries, etc. There is also a weak positive correlation with trust in the President.

In both cities there is a negative correlation between this third statement and the respondents’ attitudes to social actions (strikes, demonstrations, participation in political or other organisations, etc.) as a way of influencing the societal development. “People have different goals”, a student declares (mathematical college, St. Petersburg) thus explaining the impossibility to change things in society. “Even a revolution will lead to a change of power and nothing more.”

Revolution is stupid, it won’t change anything because other people will take their place. (young man, college of humanities, St. Petersburg)

There is no correlation in the two cities between agreeing on the third statement and the level of the respondents’ (or their parents’) education or with his/her household’s economic prosperity.

However, a central dimension in the Post-Soviet ideology is that Russia is a country of possibilities, which fosters the idea that everybody must solve his/her own problems (“the more you work, the more you get”, “if you fail, it’s your fault”) – a liberal interpretation of the Western (especially the American) life style spread, i.a., by the media, that has found a foothold in the Post-Soviet Russia. Such a view of life does not leave much space for concern of issues such
as gender equality, refugees’ misery, etc. The rapid economical and political changes seem to have pushed into the background values such as solidarity and collectivity (concepts that have been compromised by the Soviet ideology). Tired of the gender “equality” of the Soviet time, many Russian women are eager to express their alleged desire to become just “a normal” housewife.

The individualistic opinion that the majority of the inhabitants in St. Petersburg display with their answers to this statement depends, thus, without doubt on the prevailing political state of things since 1991. Several participants in our group discussions have pointed out that they cannot expect any help from governmental welfare institutions (after having been deceived by different ideologies – left-wing as well as right-wing). There are several testimonies about families (with several children) who got into disastrous situations without any chance to obtain a reasonable social support.

At the same time, an essential role in this context can be ascribed to the Soviet-ideological heritage, as well, which has been incorporated through, among other things, the social realistic art and literature. Famous examples are Nikolay Ostrovsky’s (1904-1936) novel *Kak zakalyalas stall* (How the Steel Was Tempered), which as his other autobiographic novels portrays how the Russian youth through the hard school of war matures into good citizens, and Boris Polevoy’s *Povest o nastoyashchem cheloveke* (A Story about a Real Man), in which a pilot with amputated feet after an accident during the Second World War gives proof of strong will, manage to come back to normal life and resume his profession. In spite of the materialistic Marxist ideology, the message of these books could be interpreted in the way that the individual is responsible for his/her fate and must him/herself overcome the hard obstacles.

There are several similar examples also in the contemporary Russian media operating in a new liberal environment, while a minority quickly and easily has become superrich in a questionable manner – a situation that must be legitimized by the media that are controlled by the new elites. Several talk shows on television, for example *Den rozhdeniya Bourzhouy* (The New Bourgeois’s Birth), constitute excellent examples of such a discourse, the philosophy of which could be summarized as: “Why are you complaining? You have to take care of yourself and your family. You are expecting help from the State or your comrades? In fact, the society has changed.” In such TV programmes there are often live examples of poor young people who have grown up in an orphanage, who have got many drawbacks and several times have fallen back to the bottom of society, but who at last have come up to the elite thanks to their indefatigable struggle.

Such “positive” ideology could likewise explain why the St. Petersburg teens (more than the teens in Stockholm) are rather positive to privatization and a free market economy (the fifth statement in Figure 3:8), at the same time as the majority of them according to the group discussions are convinced that most
rich people have acquired their wealth illicitly, a theme that also is treated in many popular movies and TV serials, for instance, *Brigada*.

In the Russian adult group discussions corresponding attitudes are expressed:

> A few times I watched programmes where they showed people who had no arm, leg and both. Young people who are involved in business now, I admire them. Just in my life, I was oppressed and concerned with diseases and a sick husband, a sick mother... it gives me energy, I understand, my God, [...]

(middle-aged woman, low education, St. Petersburg)

With such a perspective, the compassion for the deprived is limited among many of the inhabitants in St. Petersburg – in spite of the fact that the majority of the group participants mean that the State should take care of the deprived people:

> They (the homeless people) didn’t have enough desire [to work]. These homeless people who live at garbage dumps or these *gastarbeiter*... Go to the village, take these houses there – there are lots of them! Restore a house, a vegetable garden – plant whatever you want. Take the land, it’s free. Do whatever you want there. You can become a businessman there. They don’t need this, they are lazy.

(middle-aged woman, low education, St. Petersburg)

The fourth statement in Figure 3:8, “Competition and struggle for life is more natural than mutual help and co-operation”, is the least endorsed statement but the one of the five that is most male-dominated in both cities.37

Finally, the St. Petersburg respondents who consider that “Privatization and open market economy are good for Russia” have more often than the average person a positive attitude towards advertising in general, consider that they can influence the course of social events in Russia, and that Russia lives up to the UN Convention on Human Rights. There are many other interesting correlations in the materials and we mention, as previously, only a selection. These people (as well as their parents) have also more often higher education and better economy than other people. Unlike the majority of the St. Petersburg adults, more of the persons agreeing on the fifth statement associate democracy in the first place

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37 The correlations with this statement are generally weak among the adults in St. Petersburg. To mention but a few: In the Russian city it is related to preferring violent photo subjects – such as a wounded man, a butcher’s bench, a car accident and quarrelling tramps – and to appreciating music genres such as reggae and hard rock. “Lots of money, wealth” tend to be important for these persons who also use the Internet somewhat more than the average. The respondents agreeing on the statement are also somewhat disposed to say that they are influenced by brands in their clothing style, that the statement “the higher the price, the better the product” is right, and they “feel envious of others because of something they have purchased”. Among adults in Stockholm the correlations are stronger and somewhat different. These Stockholmers have often a neo-liberal attitude and a marked interest in business and new technology.
with “freedom of expression” and are often of the opinion that democracy functions well in St. Petersburg and in Russia. They tend to positively experience most aspects of the latest development of society studied in our survey, i.a., medical services, the individual’s possibility to consume, the ethics of trade and the industry, the struggle against corruption, diminishing the economic gaps, etc., and regard democratic and economic development and life in general in a positive way. Moreover, they tend to believe that they themselves can influence societal development. They also find it important for individuals to express their opinions through, for instance, participating in a political or other organisation, opinion polls, demonstrations/protest meetings, telephone calls to TV programmes, the Internet, etc. They readily watch new European films and use the Internet to a great extent.

Many correlations as regards this fifth statement in Figure 3:8 are the same among the Stockholm adults, however, perhaps stronger as regards trust in most institutions in society and in the multinational corporations, as well as faith in the Internet as a democratic platform. The Stockholmers agreeing on this statement clearly sympathize with right-wing parties. More often than the average person they associate democracy with “freedom of expression” and dissociate themselves from “economic prosperity for all” as a democratic trait, as well as from the statement “The state ought to help the weaker and less capable to a life fit for human beings”.

Here is, thus, a further example of the correlation pattern indicating that in Stockholm “freedom of expression” as a distinctive characteristic of democracy to a greater extent than among the average person is an opinion among affluent persons.

**Economic and personal situation**

People’s different economical household situation has repeatedly emerged in the above-discussed correlation patterns, and is, thus, in a high degree related to persons’ perception of democratic values, their attitudes towards different social institutions including their media use. In this section, we more closely focus on this economic and some other variables, which are essential indicators of people’s existential conditions.

Figure 3:9 shows that a considerably greater proportion of the Stockholm adults state that they have a better economic situation compared with the corresponding age group in St. Petersburg.

Interestingly, the 17-year-olds in St. Petersburg judge on average their household economy in a much brighter light than the 45-55-year-olds in their city. A similar but much weaker relationship appears among the Stockholm respondents.

Household economy is positively correlated with the frequency and amount of Internet use, especially at work, a partly spurious correlation due to the fact that people with higher education are over-represented among wealthy people,
especially in St. Petersburg. The Internet is also mentioned much more often as a source of knowledge and information among well-to-do persons, as newspapers are. Moreover, e-mail and mobile phones – and even direct contacts – are more often mentioned as important communication channels among richer people who even seem to have broader contact networks. (They also more often meet with their families.)

Figure 3:9. How would you like to describe your household’s economic situation? (by age and city, per cent)

![Graph showing economic situation by age and city]

I/we hardly manage, there is not enough money even for food
There is enough money for food, but buying clothes is a serious problem
There is enough money for food and clothes, but buying long-term consumer goods is a problem
I/we can without problem purchase long-term consumer goods, but cannot afford really expensive things
I/we can afford to purchase a sufficiently expensive house/flat, summer cottage and much else

The vertical lines/marks represent every 25 per cent.

TV viewing, on the other hand, is more popular among people with a more precarious economic situation. Less affluent people also tend to play computer games more frequently than the average person, and state a bigger interest in trends within the game area.

It is characteristic that Stockholmers’ trust in other people (see Figure 3:11 below) and in the major social institutions (such as government and parliament, public service TV and daily newspapers, legal courts, opinion polls, banks, transnational corporations) goes along with their economic prosperity. Household economy is also positively related to a number of opinions that the development of their countries is ameliorating, and with the belief that democracy functions and/or has improved during the latest decades – a trend evident in both cities. As noticed previously, among richer people democracy is more often associated with the concept of “freedom of expression” than among poorer people who instead more often mention “economic prosperity for all” and “discipline” as characteristics of a democratic society (the correlations are more marked in

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38 As an example it could be mentioned that richer people say more often that the latest societal development means improvements as regards the individual’s possibility of expressing his/her opinions, economic divides in society (more marked in Sweden), the medical service (more marked in Russia), and the individual’s possibilities to consume.
Stockholm). Likewise, affluent persons in both cities consider more often than non-affluent persons that their country lives up to the UN Conventions on Human Rights and on the Rights of the Child.

Moreover, economically successful people consider more frequently than poor people that membership in a political party or other organisation is important for expressing one’s opinion. They also agree more often than the poorer that privatization and open market economy is good for Sweden/Russia, that ordinary people can make their voices well heard in the media and – as we already pointed out – that they can influence the societal development.

Furthermore, well-to-do persons more often than the average person identify themselves with economically secure people, as well as with successful people, fellow workers/colleagues, and compatriots. At the opposite end of the scale, one finds more often persons who identify themselves with people who belong to another religion, and, naturally, with poor people experiencing hardships in life.

The fact that richer people are better integrated into the social order is evident also from their general lifestyle pattern (i.a., they visit more often restaurants, theatres, and the like), at the same time as their household economy has no relation with interest in fine arts (such as classical music, jazz, modern art), which in both cities are associated with possession of legitimate cultural capital (according to Bourdieu’s theories). They constitute, thus, what in Russia is called “new Russians” (the *nouveau riches*).

From Figure 3:10 it is also obvious that the adult respondents in Stockholm especially are satisfied much more often with the way their life is progressing than the inhabitants in St. Petersburg of the same age (who on average have a considerably lower household income).

This finding is hardly surprising given the correlation patterns of this variable showing that rich persons more often feel glad and appreciated and are more often satisfied with their lives than poorer people who, in their turn, surrender more often to depression and anxiety.

*Figure 3:10. On the whole, how satisfied are you with the life you live? (by age and city, per cent)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teens SPb</th>
<th>Teens Sth</th>
<th>Adults SPb</th>
<th>Adults Sth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very satisfied</td>
<td>Rather satisfied</td>
<td>Not very satisfied</td>
<td>Not at all satisfied</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The vertical lines/marks represent every 25 per cent.

Being satisfied with one’s life is also connected with the feeling of being able to influence society, with higher education and with a corresponding life-style
(going to the theatre, an interest in high culture, etc.). Satisfied people also have trust in political and welfare institutions. As for the rest, being satisfied with one’s life correlates with consumer-oriented questions, especially among the young respondents, an issue discussed in Article 4 on advertising.

Figure 3:11 shows that Stockholmers, especially the adults, also trust people in general more than the adult inhabitants in St. Petersburg do.\(^{39}\)

**Figure 3:11. In your opinion, to what extent is it possible to trust people in general? (by age and city, per cent)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Teens SPb</th>
<th>Teens Sth</th>
<th>Adults SPb</th>
<th>Adults Sth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One ought to be very careful about trusting people</td>
<td><img src="image1" alt="Graph" /></td>
<td><img src="image2" alt="Graph" /></td>
<td><img src="image3" alt="Graph" /></td>
<td><img src="image4" alt="Graph" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In general one ought to be careful about trusting people</td>
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<td><img src="image6" alt="Graph" /></td>
<td><img src="image7" alt="Graph" /></td>
<td><img src="image8" alt="Graph" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People are generally trustworthy</td>
<td><img src="image9" alt="Graph" /></td>
<td><img src="image10" alt="Graph" /></td>
<td><img src="image11" alt="Graph" /></td>
<td><img src="image12" alt="Graph" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One can totally trust most people</td>
<td><img src="image13" alt="Graph" /></td>
<td><img src="image14" alt="Graph" /></td>
<td><img src="image15" alt="Graph" /></td>
<td><img src="image16" alt="Graph" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The vertical lines/marks represent every 25 per cent.

According to our studies, there are, as well, big differences between Stockholm and St. Petersburg when it comes to attitudes towards work and leisure. While the inhabitants in Stockholm much more often stress that it is leisure that makes life worth living, not work, the inhabitants in St Petersburg, on the contrary, emphasize much more often that it is work that makes life worth living, not leisure. This fact is related not only to tangible assets but also to basic attitudes characteristic of consumer society which has a different history in the two cities. This (and a corresponding figure) is discussed more in detail in the Article 4.

**IV. Social reality, cultural traditions and media discourse**

To better understand the research findings – and not end up in the Western media’s dominant discourse with negative views of Russia as an undemocratic country and the corresponding Russian views of the West – one needs to take into account a number of factors: the alternate economic, social and other changes, which have occurred during a short time period in Russia and which, according to our findings, support the hypothesis that the adult Russians are

\(^{39}\) Other research also shows that individual and collective social capital (social resources that evolve in social networks and social structures characterized by mutual trust, i.e., trust in other people and in social institutions and associations, respectively) are positively related to better health both mentally and physically – and that such individual and collective social capital is more common in welfare states, such as Sweden and Denmark, than in most other (European) countries (Rostila 2008).
more sceptical to various forms of ideological beliefs than the adults in Sweden. It seems that the changes in Russia have instilled a kind of “natural” relativism, i.e., an understanding of the relativity of the “truths” of the dominant discourse that are spread by the media. The fact that the societal changes have meant that the majority of the Russian people have got a worse economic situation than during the Soviet era, even if somewhat better in the first decade of the 21st century than during the 1990s, has further contributed to this scepticism.

It is therefore essential to refrain from considering concepts like “democracy” and “freedom of expression” as given states of things that characterize certain societies (e.g., the Swedish), but that is alien to Russia in 2007. There are several results suggesting this. The fact that the Russian youth, who live in the same conditions as their parents, more resemble Swedish adolescents when it comes to experience of the possibilities to influence the development in their country, points in that direction. Other examples of similarity between the teenagers in the two cities are the feeling that democracy works in the own city/country, satisfaction with one’s life, etc. On the other hand, there are also many essential aspects of the own society of which the majority of the Swedish respondents are negative (see, for example, the upper part of Figure 3:5).

We should also take into account the fact that the dominant Swedish (and Western) discourse, on the one hand, and the Russian one, on the other, differs in several important respects in matters relating to issues of democracy, such as freedom of expression, and that the discourse – scientific, political, and the like – as manifested in academic studies as well as in the popular media is always related to power which is being exercised and simultaneously is characterized by its history and therefore has a certain in-built inertia.

Here it is useful to recall that Russia during a long period, stretching back at least to World War II and going on until the collapse of the USSR, has been a key political and military superpower, in relation to which Sweden (and the West) to a large extent has defined itself – militarily, economically and ideologically. The fact that Russia today is widely regarded as (at least) a military power also plays a role. The fact that the country has significant natural resources, as well, and has regained some of its political influence in much of the former Soviet Union are also important factors that give direction to the discursive truth effects, in which concepts of “democracy” and “freedom of expression” are important inputs or stakes, which circulate through the media and in one way or another also affect the “independent” academic discourse.

In conclusion we can say that the persons’ responses about their attitudes towards the major social phenomena very often are structured in similar patterns of relationship in St. Petersburg and Stockholm (i.e., they are structured

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40 According to Foucault (i.a., 1971), Bourdieu (1998) and other thinkers with relevance to our theoretical framework.
along the same main factors that give meaning to the central concepts that are
focused on in this article). At the same time, the answers to a series of questions
look different in the two cities (are differently distributed in terms of percent-
ages), because the majority of the respondents in St. Petersburg and Stockholm
are positioned in different social and economic circumstances, something which,
thus, conditions the answers. In some cases, the patterns of relationship appear
clearer among the Russian respondents depending on a larger polarization of the
population by socio-economic factors as well as on the above-mentioned
scepticism to the dominant discourse’s ideological function, a scepticism that
today seems to be more developed among the Russian adult respondents than
previously, that is, as a “gift” of the past 20 years of experience.

In other cases, the opposite trend exists: The correlation patterns emerge
much clearer among the Swedish respondents, for example, in the case of
consumer-oriented issues, where Sweden has a long history that has led to the
circumstance that (virtually) the entire population is well-integrated and
differentiated in accordance with the current sign system in a relatively develop-
ed consumer society. Such a development has just started in St. Petersburg,
where the prospective consumers are still not properly integrated into such a
code system, but strive to show in a conspicuous way the status-filled objects
that they have managed to acquire as a kind of deposit for connection to the
coveted Western consumption and its “prosperity”.

From the results reported in this article, it is evident that a considerable
proportion of the St. Petersburg (and probably the whole Russian) population
feels alienated from the political discourse, especially as defined in the Western
consciousness. Responses to questions on whether Russia adheres to the UN
Conventions of Human/Child Rights, where nearly half of St. Petersburg-
respondents did not know what the two conventions consist of, and on political
affiliation where many dissociate themselves from the party-political system
(find that no party suits them or are undecided about which party would best
represent their interests), speak for this.

It is important to stress that there are barely any St. Petersburg adult
respondents who believe they can influence society, while more than 25 per cent
of the Swedish respondents (and nearly one third of the adults) think they can
affect society in one way or another. The question is, however, whether such a
belief corresponds to real opportunities or behaviour. Statements from the group
discussions suggest that few really participate in such societal processes (besides
voting). Some people point out the opportunity to join political parties, demon-
strations, etc. But such opportunities are not comparable in the two cities, due to
the fact that the Russian society is much more divided economically, while the
Swedish society is more homogeneous and most Swedes have higher living
standards and are more consumption-oriented. This seems to have the conse-
quence that political actions such as demonstrations and the like in Sweden most
often are addressed to forces outside the country, those that are operating on an international or global level, against ongoing wars or dictatorships – that is, political circumstances that have attracted the attention by the media in a way that is usually adapted to the dominant power discourse.

There is reason to believe that the adult St. Petersburg respondents’ low belief in the possibility of influencing the society themselves also in this respect depends on deterioration of material circumstances as a result of the fact that the social system and political ideologies have changed repeatedly since the 1990s. Indirect but certain evidence of this is the answers from the young Russian respondents who – similar to their Swedish peers and even to the Swedish adults – to a greater extent than the Russian adults believe they can influence the societal development (but who can hardly be said to have greater opportunities in this respect than their middle-aged compatriots).

From the empirical materials presented in this article it is clear that the St. Petersburg respondents give expression to a state of things in several social domains, suggesting that the state of democracy in Russia is unsatisfactory compared to the situation in Sweden. Behind such a judgment, there are, however, some basic assumptions and social conditions that must be taken into consideration:

– Such a conclusion is made from the perspective of the established Western value system.
– The critical attitudes of the St. Petersburg respondents are, to a great extent, reactions to the information about power abuses spread by the dominant Russian media (which, however, are also accused of being partial, undemocratic, etc.)

– The fact that the St. Petersburg respondents to a significantly greater extent mark and comment on such abuses of power is due to a number of factors outside the ideological meaning of concepts such as “democracy”, “freedom of expressio”, and the like:

• The power abuses are much more obvious for the St. Petersburg participants because of the short history of a “democratic” society in Russia (compared to Sweden).
• The fact that the general standard of living is significantly lower in Russia than in the West implies that such abuses appear as much more harmful for the separate citizens than they do in Sweden.
• It must be stressed that similar evil practices are very common also in Sweden (and in the Western countries in general) where the media daily report about power abuses. The fact that the majority of such abuses in reality remain
unpunished is not experienced as important since they do not seem to threaten the prosperity of the ordinary citizens.

Several results presented in this article, not least the different attitudes between the St. Petersburg adults and adolescents, respectively – implying that the opinions of the St. Petersburg adolescents are much more similar to the Stockholm respondents (especially the young ones) – indicate that economic and social factors are essential for people’s views on “democracy”, “freedom of expression” and other concepts of central importance in the Western political, academic and media discourses.

The distributions of the answers to several questions (such as people’s trust in political, trans-national corporations, etc. and, not least, state-controlled/public service media) suggests that the situation in Sweden is not always much better (in some respects even worse) than in Russia – at least seen from the views of our respondents in Stockholm and St. Petersburg.

As shown, different aspects of media use, media preferences and attitudes towards the media are intertwined with aspects of democracy and welfare, something that is reflected in the correlation patterns in our studies. Still, some aspects need more in-depth investigation. For example, the positive attitude in St. Petersburg towards the statement, “A human being’s prosperity ought to be wholly dependent on how well she succeeds in taking care of herself and her family” would be a central subject for further analyses, principally of the media content. Prime questions to be further elucidated are: In what way has this (in Russia prevailing) representation been created? And which role do the media play in this context?

The fact that so many inhabitants in St. Petersburg in our studies agree on the above-mentioned opinion regarding individual responsibility could depend on several factors. It may express an experience that the State and the fellow-beings, in spite of promises and ideas, de facto have not taken care of everybody, which is why people have to manage their own way. The answers to the statement may, on the other hand, reflect an uncertain attitude towards the former Soviet Union with its collectivist ideology, which today is repudiated by many people. Our group interviews confirm that the above-discussed results partly depend on such factors. On the third hand, it may be an attitude that is heightened by the transition to market economy during the last decades with its emphasis on individualism and consumption in a more and more global media environment.

It is highly plausible that the media play an important role in creating such a representation, especially when it comes to young people who have less direct knowledge and experience of the issue. At the same time, the media discourses are constructions, formed and reproduced in different contexts, periods and at different places. This can, of course, also be said of Sweden; the description of economic divides in the Swedish media should equally be subjected to in-depth analyses.
Our interviews with media experts in St. Petersburg support our assumption that the dominant contents of the Russian media, being an essential bearer of the prevailing discourse in society, reflect – and largely contribute to the reproduction of – the power relations in the so-called total field (cf. Bourdieu’s theory), in which the social agents (institutions as well as individuals) are structured along some central dimensions (essentially different forms of economic and cultural capital).

This complex of problems has on a concrete level been dealt with by several other media researchers, among them Ilchenko41 who reflects on popular culture (popular Russian TV programmes, video/computer games that are more often played by both young people and adults in Russia than in Sweden). He maintains, in sum, that the paradigm of collectivism has been replaced by the philosophy of individualism (see, however, our earlier comments in this article on the Soviet social realistic art and literature). The psychological focus in the inter-human exchange that previously was represented by the catchphrase “The human being is for humans friend, comrade, brother” has been substituted by the principle “each one for him/herself”. Ilchenkosuggests that in public opinion the change has led to a confirmation of a new paradigm, that the human being must survive under conditions of economic, ideological and ethical freedom that have suddenly become reality in Russia. The patriotic, traditional paradigm “Sam pogibay a tovarischa vyroichay! (You may perish but save the comrade!)” has with that been given the reverse meaning, something that in turn has led to, i.a., alienation.42

References
Dagens Nyheter (DN) 28 October 2009. "Medvedev försvagar demokratin i Ryssland (Medvedev weakens the democracy in Russia)” (the section “Världen”)

41 Ilchenko 2008.
42 The structure of the video games and TV programmes provokes, thus, instinctively defensive reactions and abolition of previous common models for collective behaviour in the micro-social group. Our informants in the qualitative group interviews have commented upon TV programmes in similar terms.

Durkheim, Emile ([1897]1968 Självmordet (Le Suicide). Uppsala, Argos


Izvestiya (3 April 2008) Евгений Стрельцов (Eugene Streltsov): “Миллиард с мандатом Госдумы. Самые богатые депутаты и сенаторы мира живут в России (Billion with mandate of the State Duma. The richest deputies and senators in the world live in Russia)”, p. 1 ff.


Russiavotes, www.russiavotes.org


The SOM Institute, University of Gothenburg, Sweden, http://www.som.gu.se/english

4. The Discourse of Publicity at Different Stages of the Consumer Society

Anna Osipova & Peter Petrov

Among the number of noteworthy transformations that have affected public life in Russia during the past 20-30 years, one should undoubtedly consider the cardinal change that has occurred in mass media contents (see Articles 1 and 5). Advertising in different forms has also become an integral part of the media discourse.¹

Taking for granted that the media are one of the most powerful factors forming public consciousness, and considering the rapid development of the Russian advertising market, we will try to elucidate the impact of advertising on contemporary society by comparing the attitudes of different generations and media experts in St. Petersburg and Stockholm – two cities with different historical, political and economic conditions. Although the global media have high penetration in both cities and the advertising industry, with few exceptions, also dominates the local (national) media environments, there are significant differences in the development of the consumer society, which has recently started in St. Petersburg and which can be said to have reached a much more mature stage in Stockholm.

First, we will try to shed light on the place that advertising has in people's representations. More specifically, we will ask: What are the respondents' attitudes towards the fact that advertising exists in their society? Are there differences in the perception of publicity between the inhabitants of the two cities? What factors condition the similarities and differences?

Second, we will focus on the role of publicity in Russian and Swedish societies in terms of, among other things, people's perceptions of themselves, gender differences, and mental health in relation to the consumer society. In particular, we will try to estimate to what extent representatives of different generations in St. Petersburg, who have grown up in different social and media environments, are integrated into the system of consumption as defined by Baudrillard, i.e., not

¹ According to the PricewaterhouseCoopers index, until the economic world crisis of 2008, the advertising industry in Russia has remained one of the most rapidly growing in the world, along with the publicity markets in Brazil, China and India (PricewaterhouseCoopers 2007).
as regards satisfaction of natural needs, but as regards socially structured activities that differentiate individuals in terms of how they buy and display status symbols. The comparison with the Swedish representatives from the same age groups will hopefully shed light on the role of factors other than age (political, economic and cultural) in the impact of advertising on people’s social behaviour.

The object of the analysis consists of material from the project “The Role of the Media for Identity and Democracy”, collected from 2006 to 2008, primarily through group interviews with young people (approximately 17 years old) and adults (45-55 years old) of different socio-economic status in St. Petersburg and Stockholm, as well as through in-depth interviews with experts from the media sphere in the two cities. We will also use some statistical figures from the quantitative surveys with the same age groups.

It should be stressed that, within the limits of the project, the role of advertising in society is not connected to measurement of the efficiency of advertising in promoting various commodities on the market. In other words, it is important to separate the notion of influence of advertising from its use in marketing, which, however, as the interview material shows, is relevant to the majority of the respondents. The matter for us is instead to relate advertising to the concepts and positions developed in the works of some Western scholars, primarily Baudrillard, but also Barthes, Kellner, Schor and others, who have studied advertising in relation to the so-called consumer society, that is, a specific media culture dominated by different forms of publicity.

The majority of Western researchers take for granted that advertising exerts a considerable influence on society. Agreeing with O’Barr, U.S. scholar Barthel writes that advertising as a whole comprises a “privileged discourse”, which to a large extent shapes our society, makes up the content of our lives, and affirms the capitalist set of values and definition of what constitutes a good life.

The individual as consumer or the myth of individual needs

Acting as a material bearer of mythical messages, advertising plays a special role in the set of connotative signifiers, forming a latent ideological level of the discourse, as Barthes wrote some 50 years ago. He maintained that every ideology strives to be perceived not as one of several possible points of view on the world, but as the only possible representation (as it claims to represent the truth), i.e., as something “natural” and “self-evident”. Central to our analysis are the works of several scholars who, following Barthes, consider advertising a tool for the elaboration and distribution of contemporary mythologies. Or, as Kellner puts it:

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3 Barthes 1957.
4 Barthes 1957.
Like myths, ads frequently resolve social contradictions, provide models for identity and celebrate the existing social order.\(^5\)

The works of Baudrillard from the late 1960s and early 1970s\(^6\) are of special importance to the aims of our analysis. In *The System of Objects*, he shows that the freedom and sovereignty of the consumer are mere mystifications, as advertising operates in a special way, in that it becomes an object of consumption while at the same time controlling consumption. The need to resolve the contradiction between potentially infinite productivity and the necessity of selling products in the modern capitalist society imply that the buyer has been deprived of his/her decision-making authority. Henceforth, manufacturing possesses the right to control the consumers’ behaviour on the market, directing and modelling their needs by means of advertising.

According to this view, the system of needs is a product of the system of production, a fact that largely destroys the myth of the consumer’s individual choice or individual needs.\(^7\) It is significant that this, one of the main mechanisms of the consumer society described by Baudrillard, is not conceived of at all by the Russian respondents. Of all the participants in the group interviews, only one notices:

> It [advertising] matters a lot. They create needs, really, which you don’t have. There should be new products. But, of course, we would still manage, if we stopped making new things. (middle-aged man, low education, St. Petersburg)

Advertising is aimed at increasing demand in order to sell and at the same time disguises this process so as to create the opposite impression, Baudrillard says, referring to the economist Galbraith.\(^8\) Working by way of connotations, not participating in any way in the production and direct adoption of the objects, advertising is, nevertheless, an integral part of their system. Advertising imparts to the objects characteristics without which they would not be the same.

Through advertising, we consume the sense of the commodities;\(^9,10\) it is advertising that explains to us what we are really consuming. Advertising singles out a few among many similar objects and at the same time motivates the consumer by explaining why (s)he needs exactly this object. (“Sometimes you see an ad and you think: That’s exactly what I needed”, as one of the Swedish respond-

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7 Baudrillard 1970, p. 103.
8 Baudrillard 1968.
9 We consume the product through the product itself, but we consume its meaning through advertising (Baudrillard 1968, p. 181).
10 Baudrillard 1968.
According to Baudrillard, advertising creates an illusion of free will by allowing the consumer to choose among some insignificant details.

No object is proposed to the consumer as a single variety. We may not be granted the material means to buy it, but what our industrial society always offers us *a priori*, as a kind of collective grace and as the mark of a formal freedom, is choice. […] Indeed, we no longer even have the option of not choosing.” 11

In this way, Baudrillard explains the apparent paradox in which people blame advertising for its all-pervasiveness and obtrusiveness, but are nonetheless not willing to dispense with it. An interesting example in this respect is a survey among the inhabitants of Western Germany in the 1960s, in which 60 per cent of the (approximately 2,000) respondents felt there was too much advertising. However, when asked if they would prefer a great deal of advertising (Western style) or minimal and only socially useful advertising (as in the East), a majority chose the first option, meaning that the excess of advertising was not only a sign of wealth, but also of freedom. 12 As the following text shows, the Russian and Swedish data clearly confirm this trend.

An inevitable evil or a vital necessity? Russian respondents on advertising

In light of the above-described paradox, it is relevant to analyse the attitudes of the St. Petersburg participants (in the group interviews and among the media experts) towards the mere existence of advertising in today’s society. It should be pointed out that the Russian respondents – especially the adults – are generally more negative towards advertising than the Swedish respondents are, something that appears in the quantitative survey findings as well (see Figure 4:1 below).

Normally, the interview participants responded with indignation and deafening criticism to the question “Do you like advertising?”. However, the statements, demonstrating a sharply negative attitude towards advertising, gradually change or start to alternate with answers that recognize advertising as an self-evident element of everyday life.

It seems that the Russian participants have learned to make effective use of advertising breaks on television by switching over to another channel or doing other things such as making tea, frying eggs, shaving, washing up, etc., thereafter returning to the programme. Many respondents express their attitudes towards advertising in the following way: “We’ve got used to it”, “we don’t care”, “nothing we can do about it”, “it’s like life itself”, “we don’t notice it anymore”.

11 Baudrillard 1968, p. 141.
It is obvious that, perceiving advertising as a self-evident element of their life, the respondents do not question in any way its right to exist in contemporary society. “Advertising – it’s some kind of formality, since the products have to be advertised”, a boy from a mathematical school in St. Petersburg asserts. “No, advertising is a normal thing that has to exist”, a woman with a higher education remarks after her complaints that Russian TV commercials are not attractive from an aesthetic point of view and that the assortment of advertised goods is awfully uniform.

On the whole, it is fair to say that such an attitude towards advertising is also characteristic of those Russian respondents who criticize it furiously, to the extent that it is obvious that their critique is directed not towards advertising as a whole, but towards individual commercials or some of their features, whereby the negative respondents often put forward suggestions for improvement of the situation. For instance, complaining about the frequent repeating of the same TV spots, some respondents suggest cutting down their recurrence rate in order to solve the problem of importunity of advertising. Others suggest that it is necessary to create a separate publicity channel or to allocate specific hours to commercial announcements.13 Such views are, as a rule, characteristic mostly of adult Russian respondents who refer to the Western advertising practise – as they believe it to be – as a good example in this respect. One suggestion by a female teacher with a high education level is:

They should not all be in a heap. Baby food, pads, endless beers, cigarettes […]. If a health programme is on the air, you’re welcome to advertise toothpaste or something else… nobody minds. If it’s about animals, you’re welcome to advertise pet food… please, do promote some air-freshner, etc. All this must be systematized […] not the way it is now…

From a Western perspective, there is some naivety in this quotation, revealing an immature perception of the social functions of advertising in a Baudrillarian sense, an attitude characteristic of a significant part of the Russian intelligentsia and that could be explained by the short history of market economy in Russia, as well as by the remains of the Soviet mentality, which normatively considers that innovations are intended to serve the public interest.

In general, the respondents in Stockholm are more tolerant of advertising (a greater proportion are positive, and few are negative) than are the respondents in St. Petersburg. The tendency and the proportions are similar for both generations.

Correlation analyses show that, in all four samples, the general attitude towards advertising mainly concerns TV ads. It is hardly news, then, that a positive attitude towards advertising is correlated with active consumer be-

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13 Similar statements occur among the Swedish participants in the group interviews as well, although not so strongly expressed.
haviour – interest in following trends in different domains, primarily clothes fashion; interest in corresponding media contents in general; reliance on brands (“feeling more self-confident when using certain products, fashions and styles”) and greater trust in market forces (such as multi-national corporations). There are also correlations (although weaker) with an appreciation for some entertaining TV genres and lighter music styles. It is also worth mentioning that people who have a positive attitude towards advertising more often than other people admit that they are influenced by TV advertisements and are aware of brands when choosing clothes.

Figure 4:1. What is your general attitude towards advertising? (by age and city, per cent)

The vertical lines/marks represent every 25 per cent

Tolerance of advertising shows the strongest correlation with interest in media contents such as fashion and beauty and with respondents who say that the media influence their choice of clothes styles. Therefore we will examine more closely the correlation patterns of this variable for the four samples later on.

It is obvious that, for the majority of the St. Petersburg respondents, the desire to get rid of advertising as a whole is not at all typical; the matter is instead how to correct some of its negative features. Actually, almost all Russian and Swedish respondents who express their indifference or sharply negative attitude towards advertising reject all hypothetically possible situations in which it no longer exists.

In this respect, the most sophisticated answers are given by the young Russian participants in the group interviews. The young men talk most often about the unique advantage of advertising as “the engine of trade”. For instance, a boy from a mathematical school claims that the disappearance of advertising would lower the breakeven point of sales and economical development as a whole. A girl (studying chemistry) points out that businessmen will never dispense with advertising, as they aim at “tempting the buyer” by means of publicity. “The commodity market” relies on advertising, another girl (studying law) says.

Unlike the adults, some of the young Russian respondents have a positive attitude towards outdoor advertising. The basic argument is that advertising creates positive feelings; it is amusing. However, the answers substantiating the importance of advertising for them personally or for other consumers are more salient.
The participants in one of the groups of young Russian men (electrotechnical college) consider advertising to have a special value in itself, because they say it provides them with invaluable help in the process of commodity choice. According to Baudrillard, advertising in fact informs about exactly what we consume by transforming some of the series of similar cold, characterless objects into functional personified commodities, thus bringing to the fore our needs, which, however, have already been created by the consumer society.\textsuperscript{14}

“How can a commercial be liked?” one of the participants from the electrotechnical college cries out surprised, explaining at the same time the inconveniences of a life without advertising as follows: “You come into a shop; you look and you don’t even know what to choose”.

Another student from the same school chimes in, saying that advertising not only helps in choosing goods, but also serves as a guarantee of the manufacturer’s credibility:

\begin{quote}
You come into some grocery shop and there are drinks, which you don’t know at all. Only a name… a second name… a third name is written. You don’t know anything and then it’s very hard to choose. You don’t know what kind of item it is. […] They produce such a good… they are here today, gone tomorrow. The firm is closed. And [how do you know] which firm is serious, reliable?
\end{quote}

It is suggestive that no one among the Russian adults in the group interviews speaks about this advertising function. Moreover, some of the adults point out that they are guided by their own preferences, more often trusting the packaging than recollecting some specific advertisements. Sometimes, they intentionally ignore the recommendations of advertising:

\begin{quote}
I don’t need it. If I should need it, I would go and take what I need or get information from other sources… (middle-aged woman, low education)

I go to the shop, buy… mostly I read what is there in the description of the article… this product. I read what’s there… I trust that more… this information, which is printed. (another middle-aged woman, low education)
\end{quote}

However most of the Russian respondents, both youths and adults, defend the necessity of advertising, referring first of all to its importance as a source of information about new products for themselves or for other people. In fact, it is quite typical for the Russian respondents to exemplify using the interests of other people.

In such a manner, the Russian respondents confirm Baudrillard’s idea that advertising plays the role of an agent bringing to the fore the needs created by the system of production, when he writes: “In the act of personalized consump-

\textsuperscript{14} Baudrillard 1968.
tion, the subject, in his very insistence on being a subject, succeeds in mani-
ifesting himself only as an object of economic demand“.15

In contrast to the two preceding quotes from women with low education
levels, one could mention the statement of a woman with higher education, who
has worked with advertising professionally earlier in her career. Talking about
her dependence on the IKEA brand, she is aware of the huge importance of
advertising. “I don’t think about anything else [than the brand], I don’t compare
anything, I am already there. It’s the advertising that is maintaining it, yes, it’s
really made professionally, it’s of high quality, professional…” Her general con-
clusion concerning the function of advertising in contemporary society is
characteristic: “Remarkably enough, they divide everybody into these brands,
you know.”

Baudrillard’s idea that advertising is highly capable of telling us that we
consume through the objects16 is confirmed with particular clarity by the
answers of those young Russian participants who are afraid that they would be
especially deprived of a choice of goods and services if advertising disappeared.
(The respondents were asked to imagine a situation where all kinds of adverti-
sing did not exist – but not without the production and use of goods and services.)

One boy (electro-technological college) refers to items acquired thanks to
publicity and without which he would feel deprived. A disappearance of
advertising, a girl (chemistry) explains, would probably limit the opportunities
to buy things and make use of some services. Another girl from the same group
seems perplexed when she remarks that she cannot even imagine what life
without advertising would be like, as she has been used to it since childhood.
Later on, agreeing with her classmate, she points out that the disappearance of
publicity would limit her choice: “Maybe something new has appeared, but you
don’t know about it. Or something new that would interest you has appeared
and you don’t know about that either.” A girl from a musical pedagogical college
avows that, without advertising, people would know about fewer products and
have less choice. People “wouldn’t know what’s going on”, as another girl
(studying law) puts it.

Advertising and freedom: the experience of Swedish consumers

At first glance, the Stockholm participants in the group interviews seem to be
more critical of advertising because they more often express their irritation with
frequent repetitions, importunity and the excessive quantity of commercials
than the Russian respondents do. But unlike the Russians, among many Swedes,
especially young respondents, the criticism also arises from the awareness that
advertising is exerting a very strong influence over them. While expressing their

15 Baudrillard 1968, p. 152.
16 E.g., Baudrillard 1968.
negative attitude towards advertising, they speak about their internal, partly pain-
ful struggle against it, or against the undefined, plural “they” (the advertisers).

I just go and buy even if I get irritated – so they have won. (young man, practical
IT-profile)

In my opinion, they take away your freedom. I think that one should have the
right just to walk [out in the open] without having to see advertisements. (young
man, social sciences)

I get so angry at commercials. I try to calm down but I find it oppressive. It makes
me sick every time. I cheat myself, every time believing that it’s an interesting
film. (middle-aged man, low education)

Like their Russian counterparts, the Swedish participants talk about the need to
adapt to the irritating commercial breaks by switching channels, going over to
the computer for a while, going to the kitchen, to the toilet, etc. However, unlike
the Russians who in most cases have simply resigned themselves to accepting
advertising as an inevitable evil, some Swedes analyse the phenomenon of com-
cmercial breaks and reveal their negative consequences, in particular the
fragmentation of the on-going story as well as of the TV experience, which is
blurred with other household activities:

Advertising compels you to do something else – it has become part of the
consumption to do something while you’re watching [TV]. (middle-aged man, high education)

Zapping from one channel to another… you lose control over what you’re
watching. It becomes fragmented. (middle-aged man, low education)

You get all divided. (another man in the same group)

According to the interviews, several Stockholmers are ready to renounce
advertising in general. However, almost none of the Swedish participants in the
group interviews tells about her/his indifference to advertising, as is often the
case with the Russian respondents. For the Swedish respondents, advertising
(TV commercials, radio, newspaper or outdoor advertising) is almost always a
source of irritation. However, being very categorical while expressing their
negative attitude towards advertising, the Swedes are no less categorical when
answering the question of what it would be like to live without advertising. Beside
their opinions about using advertising breaks on television to do
something else, some Swedes talk in detail about the importance of outdoor
advertising (in the city and underground).

Outdoor advertising… posters… I often take the bus to school, so you can just sit
and watch. (young woman, journalism)
You don’t understand what it’s about until you arrive at the last underground station, where there’s a logotype and slogan. It’s very good that such advertising exists. You don’t have to stare at empty walls when travelling somewhere. It’s information. (another young woman from the same group)

We talked previously about London and things like that and New York’s all giant posters and things like that… It’s something smashing in itself. It belongs to the cityscape, doesn’t it? It doesn’t only have to be fine stone buildings. Advertising in itself is… it’s quite cool. It really is. (middle-aged man, high education)

These statements show that, for the Swedish participants, advertising is a natural part of the environment. For one of the girls (studying fashion and design), the presence of advertising in her surroundings is so self-evident that she confidently generalizes: “I do not believe that a society without advertising could be possible. I mean it seriously, see! There must have been advertising in the Middle Ages, as well. Some kind of stone that just [says] ‘Olle’s buns are good’ or something.” And two boys studying natural sciences tell about their experience of product placement in a computer game when a TV screen pops up in the corner with advertising on it:

E: I have nothing against this (type of product placement), you see. […] It’s really better than…

J: … Well, it should be a mobile phone or a monitor there, anyway, so why not put a logotype on it so they create, like, a more realistic picture of it?

The above-quoted statements confirm Baudrillard’s notion that, in the consumer society, advertising per se constitutes an object of consumption. It is significant that for one of the girls (studying journalism) advertising in the underground and on the streets cannot be replaced even by art, i.a., because “it wouldn’t be replaced often at all”. Another girl thinks that advertising stimulates the imagination:

Mmm, one also gets ideas from advertising, doesn’t one? Humour comes from it. […] You can even create a discussion with a person. ‘Well, have you seen that ad?’ You know, or if you run a thing from a commercial and then just like ‘Ha-ha’, kind of. And then you get somebody into the discussion, and the like. (young woman, fashion and design)

If the St. Petersburg inhabitants express their indifference to advertising relatively often or establish the necessity of advertising by emphasizing its utility for other people, the Stockholmers talk more often about the frustration they would feel over the disappearance of advertising. Many, both adolescents and adults, say it would be dull, empty, difficult – that a world without advertising would be fiction. Some use stronger expressions:
I think one really would go crazy. I mean… one is used to this publicity… (young man, practical IT-profile)

But advertising, like, I mean it’s actually everywhere, like. There are such small stickers in the tube… they’re everywhere. There’s advertising for different (political) parties, isn’t there? There’s advertising for associations for prevention of cruelty to animals and various other things. I mean, if all this should disappear, too… I mean… people would be kind of half brain-dead, not knowing anything about anything. That’s how I feel. (young woman, fashion and design)

Unlike the Russian respondents, the Swedish respondents defend fairly often and very persistently their personal right to be informed about new products (the latest mobile phones, hair care methods, clothes, etc.), “to be updated” as one boy (practical IT-profile) put it or, using Baudrillard’s words, the right “to new needs”.

If I think like this ‘I need some more volume in my hair’ and then there is a volume shampoo on TV, then, it’s obvious that I maybe would go and test it. (young woman, fashion & design)

Much more distinctly than their Russian counterparts, the Swedish respondents mark the importance of the functions of publicity to explain the sense of the consumed goods, to motivate the necessity of an arising need:

At the same time, you need anyway to get an idea of whether there is something. You may need something. If you don’t know via the advertising that a thing exists, then you can’t… you have been missing a gadget but you don’t know that it exists. (middle-aged man, high education)

Moreover, some Swedes, like the Germans mentioned by Baudrillard, are convinced that advertising is a characteristic of their immediate freedom to the extent that it gives opportunities to individualize their consumption, unlike the situation in the USSR where “the state decided what people should use” and where there was no need for marketing, as some respondents expressed it.

In sum, there are several differences in people’s perceptions in St. Petersburg and Stockholm concerning attitudes towards advertising, suggesting that the Swedish respondents are more integrated into the advertising discourse – especially in comparison with the Russian adults, a significant proportion of whom are not included in the consumer society in several respects.

However, the perception of advertising by the Russian respondents does not differ significantly – only by degree – from the corresponding attitudes of the Swedish respondents, who have long lived in a consumer society, insofar as publicity is perceived as a substantial, positive ingredient of the social environment of which people do not wish to be deprived. From a Marxist viewpoint (cf.,
for instance, the Frankfurt school), one could say that advertising works successfully as an ideological instrument, creating among the dominated classes ideological representations of the social world, which work against their own interests, coercing them to comply with the prevailing social order/power relations. As a matter of fact, the Marxist position is one of the starting points for Baudrillard’s critique of the consumer society as it appears in his early works discussed here, where consumption is defined as manipulation of signs aimed at strengthening the differences between the social strata, while advertising is considered a necessary instrument for integration of the individual into the system of consumption.

Object-signs and the system of differences – some theoretical positions

The concept of consumption in the Baudrillardian sense has nothing to do with satisfaction of natural needs. Consumption, he posits, is not a passive condition of absorption and assignment of commodities, nor is it a phenomenology and practice of wealth.\(^\text{17}\) It is instead “an active mode of relationship not only to objects, but also to society and to the world”\(^\text{18}\).

In order to become an object of consumption, the object must become a sign, i.e., to appear outside its functional domain, outside of the domain of its direct applicability, and instead become an expression of an additional value (to a greater or lesser extent), to serve as a sign of prestige, of status, of personification, i.e., differences in the broad sense of the word. In the system of consumption, acquisition of a thing does not imply satisfaction of the need for some specific object, possessing some functional advantage; it is instead the satisfaction of a need for distinction.

From such a transformation of the object, obtaining a systematic status of a sign, also follows a simultaneous change in human attitudes, which turn into attitudes of consumption, that is, the attitudes tend “to be consumed” in and through objects, which become their mandatory mediators and very soon also signs replacing them.

In particular, within the limits of the consumer society, the object becomes a marker of social status, constituting a universal system of symbols for social recognition, some kind of language or a conditional code of significance, on the basis of which communication within the group of individuals is put into practice.

In such a way, the objects, multiplying themselves as commodities, do not simply make our material life more acceptable; they also make more acceptable our mutual status in our relations to each other. In this sense, advertising serves

\(^{17}\) Baudrillard 1968, p. 200.

\(^{18}\) Baudrillard 1968, p. 119.
to actualise the object-sign as a criterion on the basis of which a person will be judged or identified.

Certainly, objects have always constituted a system of symbols for recognition, but only a parallel and auxiliary one in relation to other systems (gestures, rituals, ceremonies, language, a patrimonial origin or social class, the code of moral values, etc.). Baudrillard maintains that it is characteristic of our society that, in general, all other identification systems are more and more absorbed by the unique code of the object-signs. Naturally, this code acts with varying rigidity depending on the social environment and the level of economic development, but the social function of advertising is exactly that – to convert us to its religion.¹⁹

Thus, according to Baudrillard, the meaning of advertising is not just to induce the consumer to purchase and to enthral the person with objects; it is rather a morality, a system of ideological values and of communication, a structure of exchange that secures the ordering of signs and the person’s inclusion in the consumption as a system.²⁰

This specific characteristic of advertising discussed by Baudrillard – to refer to the object as a symbol of social recognition, a criterion on the basis of which the status of its owner is defined – is also characteristic of the works of other scholars. For example, U.S. scholars Toland Frith and Mueller write:

The more highly developed the market, the greater the proportion of goods and services devoted to filling social and esteem needs as opposed to physiological needs. American advertisements reveal this to be the case in the United States. Consider the many products promoted as status-enhancing goods²¹ – from automobiles, to clothing, to bottled water.²²

According to Barthel, another American scholar, the advertisements create shared meanings that determine which goods have high status, primarily based on how much they cost.²³ Many researchers, in particular Baudrillard and Schor, point out that the status of the object in the system of consumption is in many respects defined by its brand. The flourishing of the idea of branding has occurred during the second half of the 20th century and has been connected with the arrival of an abundance of similar goods on the market.²⁴ As Gregory remarks, a brand does not exist in the physical world – it is a mental construct.²⁵

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¹⁹ Baudrillard 1968, p. 194.
²⁰ Baudrillard 1970, p. 78.
²¹ Authors’ italics.
²² Toland Frith & Mueller 2003, p. 47.
Wood gives another definition, according to which a brand is the promise of the bundle of attributes that someone buys and that provide satisfaction. The attributes that make up a brand may be real or illusory, rational or emotional, tangible or invisible.²⁶ In his book, Building Strong Brands, Aaker suggests that the brand is a “mental box” and gives a definition of brand equity as “a set of assets (or liabilities) linked to a brand’s name and symbol that adds to (or subtracts from) the value provided by a product or service.”²⁷ Barthel gives an example in this respect, pointing out that people often ignore the odour in favour of a status trade mark.²⁸

Thus, transformed by the force of advertising into signs (or using Schor’s words “pure symbolic entities, detached from specific products and functional characteristics”²⁹), brands not only determine consumers’ behaviour when choosing goods and services, but also constitute the value system of the consumer society. Baudrillard says that “the truth of objects and products is their brand name”,³⁰ which, along with the cost, determines the status of a thing, transforms it into a token of distinction and an obvious criterion of the social differentiation of individuals.

New sources of identity

In light of Baudrillard’s ideas discussed in the previous section, it is worth mentioning U.S. scholar Schor, who observes that a large proportion of American children believe that their clothes and brands depict their personality and define their social status.³¹ Advertising not only postulates the objects as status signs, it offers identity and encourages people to identify with certain products, images and behaviours. The special role of advertising in the formation of the contemporary person’s identity is discussed in the works of Barthel and Kellner. In the opinion of these scholars, by providing models and ideals for personal identity formation, advertising and the mass media as a whole gradually eliminate the traditional socialization factors. Traditional durable criteria, such as family, religion, race and nation, out of which identities were constructed in the past, have become less significant in contemporary society, where people follow ephemeral fashion trends mediated by advertising and other forms of popular culture.³² In the post-modern media and consumer societies that, according to Kellner, emerged after World War II, identity has

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²⁶ Wood 2000.
²⁷ Aaker 1996.
²⁸ Barthel 1988, p. 95.
³² See, e.g., Barthel 1988, p. 4.
been increasingly associated with appearance, style and image. Concretizing the role of publicity in this process, Kellner remarks that “advertising provides a utopian image of a new, more attractive, more successful, more prestigious ‘you’ through purchase of certain goods.” Thus, due to advertising, representation of the possibilities of personal transformation and of acquiring a “new identity” through a change in appearance takes on an ideological dimension. “Advertising magically offers self-transformation and a new identity, associating changes in consumer behavior, fashion, and appearance with metamorphosis into a new person.” Or, as Barthel marks, advertisements promise a new form of transcendence, thus taking over the role previously played by religion and art.

Besides being about appearances, advertising centres particularly on gender. According to Baudrillard, at the level of modern advertising, there exists an inextricable segregation of two models, the masculine and the feminine, which secures the hierarchical survival of masculine superiority. The woman is engaged in self-satisfaction so that she can be better inserted into male competition as an object of rivalry, thus becoming just one of the object-signs chosen by the man (the machine, the woman, the scented water).

Many researchers claim that advertising is mainly directed to women. Also in this respect, Baudrillard is one of the first to talk about the expansion of the feminine model in all fields of consumption. Barthel supports this conclusion by affirming that “the growing fascination with appearances, encouraged by advertising, has led to a ‘feminization’ of culture. We are all put in the classic role of the female: manipulative, submissive, seeing ourselves as objects”.

The experts’ assessment: a difference in approach and analytical depth

Let us start by examining to what extent the ideas of the above-mentioned thinkers are relevant to the experts in the media field in St. Petersburg and Stockholm who have been interviewed in the project. It is significant that none of the Swedish experts reject the impact of advertising on people. Moreover, beside the obvious effect of advertising – to create or increase the demand for this or that product – the experts also discuss other more essential consequences of advertising in combination with the development of the mass media in general.

A public service TV planning manager in Stockholm agrees that, with an increasingly personified and fragmented media (not least due to advertising), people become more consumers than citizens. “Maybe, the privatizing idea sup-

37 Barthel 1988, p. 179.
ports, so to speak, or entails that people don’t need to come together anymore in a physical sense.” A journalist from a left-wing paper claims that advertising and the mass media as a whole have led to a change in public life, in particular to the “disappearance of popular movements” (folkrörelserna).

Several Swedish experts recognize as a fact the change in the nature of advertising and its role in today’s society. A number of experts talk about a reduction in traditional informative announcements in favour of so-called image ads and lifestyle or brand advertising, which constitute a strong influence to which primarily young people are exposed.

In the opinion of some experts, the central factor in this change is the decrease in people’s trust in traditional advertising. With the development of marketing research, more and more advanced and perfect methods arise, increasing the efficiency of advertising. According to one advertising producer, it is no longer possible to just “cram things down people’s throats” with publicity information; what matters, instead, is “getting people to engage themselves in becoming part of what is going on”.

With different degrees of concretization, many experts describe the mechanisms of branding or lifestyle publicity, which today, along with the media in general, play a predominant role in the formation of people’s identities. One director general of a commercial, mostly entertainment TV channel remarks that, besides the fact that publicity makes this or that brand popular, it also has an impact on the way in which people look at themselves. Not having branded clothing implies the feeling that “I’m not tough”.

One director of an advertising agency states that advertising has a strong impact on “how I should look, how I should dress, how I should talk, what kind of brand I should have on my jumper in order to make friends”. Thanks to celebrities, advertising creates “the ideals of outward beauty”. “The message of advertising is that people must be perfect, beautiful, thin, elegant.”

A similar opinion is expressed by the editor in chief of a left-wing paper. Arguing that the media have an essential role in the formation of identity, first of all among young people, the expert gives an example of a 14-year-old teenager from a working-class family in a provincial working-class town. Obviously, in the opinion of the expert, the teenager will prefer the identity models offered by television, such as Britney Spears, the heroes of the programme Idol (Pop Idol), and the like, to the models found in her real environment.

One radio station director, a marketing expert by education, explains the influence of advertising by exemplifying with his own children, primarily his daughter, who constructs her way of life mainly around consumption, copying lifestyle examples from certain celebrities. It is not so enjoyable to go out shopping with her, he says, because she needs the most expensive things. “For example, she must have a Chihuahua, which many celebrities carry in handbags.”
Taking his son as an example, another expert talks about what he thinks essentially constitutes the transformation of personality, as young people see it. A teenager searching for a new identity makes fundamental alterations in his appearance, changing the colour of his hair and earlier favourite brand clothes. Later in life, he will choose other lifestyles and brands in accordance with the publicity models associated with each respective age.

Some experts are convinced that advertising has a strong influence on people. An advertising producer, for instance, remarks that “it (advertising) is some kind of brainwashing, so to speak”. According to one left-wing journalist, advertising is moulding the lifestyles of people today, a significant part of which has become caring about one’s appearance, something that he finds “is the clearest example of how the negative influence of media has functioned… that one should be… look in a special way…”.

However, a number of Swedish experts are not so categorical in their estimations. The editor of a popular daily newspaper points out that, alongside the improvement of marketing techniques, there is also an increase in people’s “stability and cunning” in relation to advertising. One PR manager suggests that the impact of the lifestyle models spread by the media is marginal and that the social context plays a greater role than the media do. According to him, the American TV series *Sex and the City* can marginally influence some Swedes, just a little and in a superficial way, as different countries have different cultural models.38

As a whole, apart from the different estimations concerning the degree of impact of brand advertising (and of the media in general) on people’s identity, almost all of the Swedish media experts do not doubt the fact of such an influence.

At the same time, the majority of media experts in St. Petersburg unconditionally admit to the massive influence of mass media on the Russian society, although in a somewhat different way than the Swedish experts. Some oppositional journalists state that with the ever-increasing control exercised by the state, the media appear as an instrument for forming people’s political preferences, for political brainwashing. In the opinion of one journalist at a federal newspaper, in Russia the media have always been considered a political lever. At the same time, the director of a PR agency thinks “that the media influence everyday acts and lifestyles to a minimal extent”.

Very few of the Russian experts are concerned about the idea that advertising can exert a serious influence on contemporary Russian society. The possible influence of advertising is considered by the experts to be limited to the buyer’s response to its imperative, to its explicit or implicit appeal, namely, to buy the advertised commodity. A representative of one oppositional, left-wing news-

38 Here the expert provides an example as proof: “My grandson, 5 years old, stood there and wee-weed on a stone and he pulled down his trousers and stood there. And these American women… were taken aback. ‘Is he nude?’ […] Of course, he’s nude! There you have cultural patterns that are so totally different. So I believe… that everything lands in a social context.”
paper finds it pertinent to readdress the question of the influence of advertising
to marketing experts who, according to him, could give more exact answers con-
cerning the impact of advertising messages on people’s purchasing activity. In
the opinion of the deputy editor of an oppositional newspaper, advertising is like
an unavoidable evil, like noise from the street, to which people are indifferent.
The common people, in his opinion, are more influenced by real events than by
advertisements – moreover advertising is contradictory, the expert concludes.
However, he admits that advertising influences indirectly, “it remains some-
where and forms something, but not to the extent that it can change human
consciousness”.

Some of the experts are also eager to categorically exclude themselves from
the group of people who are the objects of such an influence, meaning that they
do not resort to ad recommendations when making purchases. In line with this,
the director of a local TV channel confidently claims that he is “not under
influence of commercials” because he does “not consciously buy goods that are
advertised”. The deputy editor of an oppositional right-wing newspaper remem-
bers that he “used advertisements only twice in his life” and was disappointed
both times. The claim that he is “not influenced by advertising” is grounded on
the fact that he is “not a housewife”.

There are also respondents who feel that the function of advertising is limited
to helping the consumer choose the right product. The director of an advertising
agency underlines: “When you approach a shelf where there are fifty bottles of
beer, you must have a certain reason for why you take this one and not that one.
And advertising exists only for this.”

Arguing about the marginal role of advertising in the life of the Russian
people, one journalist at an electronic resource popular in St. Petersburg refers
to the fact that the inhabitants of St. Petersburg would rather trust the advice of
each other than that of advertising. Besides, the journalist is certain that many
Russians believe it is better not to buy items that have been advertised – a
remnant from the Soviet planned economy, when limited advertisements often
meant promoting products that were difficult to sell and therefore perceived as
being of low quality. Also in the 1990s, when quality certificates were not
required before putting an ad in the media, there were many cases of advertising
of poor products.

The director of a PR agency claims that there is a tendency in the population
towards decreasing trust in commercial advertising in the media, in comparison
to when it first appeared in the 1990s. The anchorman of a documentary talk
show on St. Petersburg state television is also not inclined to exaggerate the role
of advertising for the audience, because “There is no advertising that can impose
anything on them without their own consent […] without their own free will.”

Excluding themselves from those influenced by advertising, or recognizing
the selectivity of its influence on them or other people, many Russian media
experts, thus, limit themselves to discussing just one of its functions – stimulating purchasing behaviour. It should be mentioned, however, that several experts demarcate certain population categories that unavoidably fall under the influence of advertising, such as children and the elderly, while adults “don’t run to buy blindly the articles they are offered”. The last statement is significant, given that the same expert in other contexts has been aware of the huge importance of media and advertisements for people’s lifestyles.

As mentioned, some experts are aware of other aspects of the influence of advertising. The most developed and consistent description of advertising as a way of transmitting a specific ideology comes from the youngest representative of the experts, the anchorman of the above-mentioned TV show on the state-controlled channel. This person’s statements are in line with Kellner’s opinion on the significant role of advertising for people’s world-view and for their identity formation. The respondent is critically concerned about the fact that many advertising companies try to explain for people what life is, what art is, what a good life is, or what true pleasure is. Many brands do not hesitate to ordain the whole lifestyle, which a person should aspire to.

Some Russian media experts, who also have academic experience, converge in their opinion that advertising shapes people’s preferences concerning appearance, behaviour and lifestyle as a whole, though mainly influencing youth. One of them gives an example in line with Kellner’s and Barthel’s ideas that, in contemporary society, the predominant role in shaping identity no longer belongs to the family, the social environment or people’s education or profession, but rather to the media and advertising in particular. “They sometimes fail to perceive themselves in accordance with real life”, he states with young people in mind. He exemplifies this with a girl who is impressed by a millionaire’s lifestyle depicted in a magazine and who believes that she is predisposed to richness, as well. The expert emphasizes that this girl “doesn’t see herself as a concrete person in concrete living conditions” as she is not bothered by the fact that “her family has a very tough life”. To her, this is “just a temporary phenomenon”.

The principal cause of the lack of such an influence of advertising on the Russian people’s lifestyle is, in the opinion of one expert, their low level of income in comparison with people living in the West. “[…] if a person has no money to, I don’t know… to go to the theatre, to afford children’s studying at the institute, but nowadays education is mostly paid for… has no money to travel abroad, how can he change his lifestyle?”

The editor of a state radio channel is of the same opinion, specifying that the absence of material opportunities does not allow Russians to imitate the life patterns shown in the commercials:

Concerning lifestyle, certainly, people don’t live surrounded by such interiors, like we see in commercials. People don’t eat the way they do in commercials. We
don’t even feed cats like in commercials. Though sometimes we buy it, naturally, what is shown [in ads].

The position of the director of an advertising agency is different, as he gives examples of “specific consumption”, which, according to him, is a manifestation of Russian mentality, a peculiarity related to advertising. “Of course it influences very significantly”, the expert says:

If you look at the consumption [pattern] of a Russian person, it’s very specific. Because people spend their last money on some latest phone model. They don’t use 90 per cent of its functions, but are happy to show that they have such a… Here people think about functionality less, and think very much about prestige.

Is there a specific kind of consumption, characteristic of Russia? And is a high-income level a necessary condition for integration into the system of consumption, for being under the influence of its values and ideological directives, which are transmitted by advertising? Answers to these questions are of importance to our analysis, as they concern, in one way or another, our initial theoretical positions.

A consumer society in Russia?
There is no doubt that the assertions of several Russian experts as well as of participants in the group interviews are that the majority of Russians cannot afford not only a significant proportion of the advertised goods – cars, houses, apartments, interiors – but also items in lower price categories. It is obvious that the target group of many advertised commodities is a rather small class of well-to-do people. However, it is not less obvious that the inaccessibility of such commodities to the overwhelming majority of Russian respondents does not free people from the desire to obtain such objects. In this case, it is possible to agree with Del Toro by asserting that the lower strata of society are perceived not simply as passive bystanders, but as potential consumers of these very same products.39

On the other hand, from the perspective of Baudrillard’s conceptual system, it is possible to consider that people who desire an inaccessible advertised object become involuntarily connected to the implicit message of the publicity discourse, constructing the object in question as an identification criterion, a sign of status and prestige. Thus, even when people do not buy the advertised goods, for whatever reasons, but recognize them as signs of distinction, people become unconsciously integrated into consumption as a system of communication and well-defined values.

39 Del Toro quoted in Toland Frith & Mueller 2003, p. 64.
In this connection, it is pertinent to mention those researchers who, when describing mechanisms of the impact of publicity, resort to the notions “lifestyle”, “life values”, and the like. For instance, Toland Frith and Mueller point out that, in some third-world countries, advertising of products mainly aimed at a small strata of affluent people often creates attitudes characteristic of Western lifestyles also among the less wealthy parts of the population.40 A significant example is given by Mattelart,41 who writes that Brazil, a country with a developed advertising industry and that leads the world as an exporter of oranges and orange juice, is also a leading country regarding consumption of Fanta.

One of the Russian experts, a TV show anchorman, speaking by and large in Baudrillardian terms, openly recognizes the significance of object-signs in determining the “social significance of people” in his contemporary society:

All these trinkets, all these watches... [...] cars... They are all turned into signs, by which persons in one group recognize other persons in the same group, and if you want to be received in this group then you should accept certain rules of the game. In other words [...] you can't call yourself a successful person in the eyes of the general masses if you don't wear an expensive watch. If you don't arrive at a meeting in an expensive car, they won’t accept you...

The fact that many Russians aspire to join in on the consumption of signs in a specific manner, which in our opinion is not at all typical of the Russian mentality, bears witness to the development of consumption as an ideological system in Russia. Not having the real means to lead a luxurious way of life, people buy as much as they can afford with their insignificant means, and sometimes on credit, so-called fragments of luxury: expensive mobile phones, the latest generation of high technology, expensive cosmetics, clothes and shoes, etc., guided by the aspiration to show high status. Such attitudes towards the purchased objects correspond fairly well to Baudrillard’s description: “The object of consumption is characterized by a kind of functional uselessness – what is consumed is precisely something other than the useful”42.

In this sense, it is interesting to depict the example given by one St. Petersburg scholar amazed by the inanity of some purchases, in particular expensive cars that people are eager to possess:

He arrives in his new-built car, parks it and then goes half a kilometre to his apartment. It’s the same in the morning. [...] So in reality it takes two hours to get to the destination by car instead of 40 minutes by public transport.

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40 Toland Frith & Mueller 2003, p. 64.
42 Baudrillard 1970, p. 112.
Another example, certifying the integration of people living in St. Petersburg into the system of consumption, is the status of the Swedish store IKEA, which still remains in the minds of many Russians as expensive and prestigious, offering stylish objects corresponding to “West-European standards”. Some Russians, without the means to buy real furniture, visit IKEA just to buy some new candles, plates, utensils, baskets and other “fine” things for everyday use. In this respect, the situation in Russia does not differ a great deal from that in the Philippines, where, according to Toland Frith and Mueller, the majority of the population lives below the poverty line. However,

money sorely needed for food, shelter and basic health is often squandered on tobacco, cosmetics, soft drinks and the latest fashion jeans. Although the targets of transnational corporation sales are the elite and middle classes, their advertising is ‘democratically’ heard via transistor radios, seen on billboards and to a lesser extent, on television.  

Non-functional consumption

It appears from the quantitative surveys that, to the Russians, especially the young ones, it is more important to follow fashion trends in all respects than it is to Swedes of the same age. The proportions of Russians who feel it is important to follow these trends is twice as high as the corresponding share of their Swedish counterparts.

There are substantial differences between the Russian and the Swedish respondents, adolescents as well as adults, concerning the importance (to the respondent) of following fashion and trends in all possible domains – clothes and accessories, books and music, computers and hobby articles.

The correlation patterns give some hints for understanding the driving forces behind this inclination. It appears that following fashion trends is a central mechanism for the individual’s integration into the social order.

Interests in new trends in the different domains are interrelated (i.e., people who follow the fashion in clothes and shoes are more often also interested in new trends in music, books, hobby articles, etc., than the average respondent is). However, the different interest domains can be conditionally divided into several more coherent groups, as in Figure 4:2. An interest in clothes and shoe fashion correlates strongly with new trends (among young men in both cities and young women in Stockholm the correlation between the different items is stronger, weakest with computer games and partly with books). There is a noteworthy tendency among men/boys whose interest in clothes and shoes correlates weakly with interest in computer games and books and relatively strongly with interior

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43 Toland Frith & Mueller 2003, p. 65.
furnishing. Among women, an interest in clothes and shoes is much more often coupled with an interest in books and computer games.

**Figure 4.2. How important is it to you to follow fashion and trends when it comes to… (by age and city, cumulative per cent)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teens SPb</th>
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<th>Adults SPb</th>
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<tbody>
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<td><img src="image.png" alt="Graph" /></td>
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The vertical lines/marks represent every 25 per cent.

Naturally enough, “clothes, shoes” go together with a corresponding interest in following trends concerning accessories and (to a somewhat lesser degree) interior fitting-up. There is also a strong correlation with an interest in music trends, especially among young people.

According to Baudrillard and several other scholars discussed earlier in the text, the aspiration to possess the latest novelties and to show them manifestly, thus marking social status, a testimony of the so-called conspicuous consumption, is characteristic of the consumer society at its earlier stages, which Russia has recently reached. Some of the young participants in St. Petersburg are conscious of the fact that, for many Russians, demonstrative consumption has raised to the level of a norm. A female student from the fashion and design college considers that one characteristic feature of the Russian people is “to show off”, “to show in some way that, you see, I have this thing that you don’t have”. According to a student from the musical college, many people buy cars because they wish to look rich. A middle-aged man with a higher education, an engineer, uses his son as an example of someone who “scarcely manages to pay” the car he bought on credit; moreover, the son spends a great deal of money on his appearance.

This is a rather new phenomenon in Russian society, where once upon a time the proverb “people welcome you based on your clothes but take farewell of you based on your intelligence” prevailed – a time when it was possible to make an impression on or even astonish people not through one’s appearance but
through “the originality of one’s ideas, the singularity of one’s inner world”, as one expert explained.

It is important to note that a critical attitude towards the demonstrative use of object-signs is found primarily among Russian adolescents, although such an attitude occurs less often than a belief in the necessity of having a fashionable, expensive or, as one of the female respondents says, “adequate” appearance. The logic of the majority of the young Russian respondents reflects the logic of image advertising – the more fashionably you are dressed, the better you look, the more successful you will be.

They show something on TV… so that it’s fashionable now… it’s talked about among the population. If you look the same, then you’ll have success, yes, success will follow you in any sphere. (young woman, chemistry)

I consider that the way we look is very important. Now in our world it is very important. No one would even talk to you if you’re dressed badly. (young woman, law)

None of the adult Russian participants in the group interviews shares the certitude of the teenagers, something that allows us to assume that the young people in St. Petersburg are more adapted to the consumer society, mediated by advertising, than the adults are. This assumption is in line with the statistical Figure 4:3, reflecting the importance of different factors potentially influencing people’s choice of clothes style.

Based on Figure 4:3, it appears that a significantly larger share of the Swedish respondents recognize that their choice of clothes style is influenced by advertising and other media content (the six items at the top of Figure 4:3) as well as by fashion trends, brands and friends (the next three items). Through their almost total denial of such an influence on them, the adult Russian respondents differ markedly from the other three groups of respondents. The Swedes seem to be more conscious also of the impact of other factors on their choice (for instance price, an interesting observation granted that Russian respondents have considerably lower buying power, something that is reflected, i.a., in the answers of our respondents to another survey question), although the differences are much smaller. The interview results show that, in general, the Russian respondents to a much lesser extent than the Swedish respondents say they are influenced by different kinds of advertising (when choosing clothes).44

44 Here we have to comment on what at first glance would be perceived as contradictions between Figures 4:2 and 4:3. The fact that a considerably larger proportion of the young Russian respondents are of the opinion that it is important to follow fashion trends (see Figure 2) shows that they are aware of the distinctive value of consumer goods (i.e., they are inside the discourse of publicity), and are eager to display such signs in a conspicuous manner, an attitude that characterizes the lower stages of the consumer society. The importance of showing off the acquired status symbols, especially characteristic of young people from St.
Figure 4.3. To what extent do you believe that you are influenced by the following factors in your choice of clothes style: (by age and city, cumulative per cent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teens SPb</th>
<th>Teens Sth</th>
<th>Adults SPb</th>
<th>Adults Sth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TV programs</td>
<td>Newspaper ads</td>
<td>TV ads</td>
<td>Internet ads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fashion magazines</td>
<td>Celebrities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The vertical lines/marks represent every 25 per cent.

However, it appears from Figure 4.3 that there is no great difference between young Russians and the Swedes in the sense that the influence of factors such as brands and fashion trends on their choice of clothes is approximately the same.

The question of brand influence is especially interesting to us. According to Figure 4.3, about half of the young Russians and adult Swedes have marked the importance of brands for purchase of clothes – among young Stockholmers, the corresponding figure is even greater – while only one fifth of the adult inhabitants of St. Petersburg consider the brand to be an important factor.

The interview material confirms the statistics. For example, unlike the adults, the young respondents in St. Petersburg talk often about how important brands are to them. There is no similar difference between the two Swedish generations: the adult and young Swedes equally often say that they prefer products of well-known trademarks. In this connection, it is essential to point out that the few adult Russians confirming the importance of brands only associate them with higher quality, while for the young people, the brand is primarily an indisputable sign of status, a signal of belonging to a higher class:

Well, people have already been divided into classes [...] (you see it) even in the clothes. If you don’t wear a brand, you are a less interesting person. (young woman, studying chemistry, St. Petersburg)

Petersburg, is so much greater given that Russian adolescents have much lower purchasing power and must be attentive in their choice in order to buy “the right” status objects, i.e., those that are in line with the latest fashion trends. The Swedish respondents’ greater spending power means, on the other hand, that they (much more often than the Russians) really can follow the imperatives of fashion (i.e., be influenced by advertising and other popular media content).
I think it’s the status […] By buying branded goods, people seek to join a stratum of society, to acquire status. (young man, humanistic college, design, St. Petersburg)

As mentioned, there are also many Swedish respondents, both adult and young, who appreciate branded objects for the “prestige” associated with them, confident that the brand “gives rise to status”.

Some people want to have, kind of, extra status. One feels much more self-confident then. (young woman, natural sciences)

I use to be in the U.S. quite a bit and have started buying a lot of Abercrombie & Fitch skirts. Yes, they are terrific… terrifically comfortable, super quality, and so on. […] recently, it was last week, one girl just [exclaimed] “Oh, Abercrombie & Fitch, it doesn’t still exist here, does it”? (middle-aged man, high education)

There are corresponding correlations between several variables in the statistical database. Respondents who consider that trademarks and brands influence their choice of clothes style say much more often than the average person that they feel confident when using fashionable articles, brands, and styles. The statistical analysis shows that there are also significant correlations between the importance of the price (while choosing clothes) and the respondent’s material assets (the more difficult the economic situation, the more price conscious the respondent tends to be). Correspondingly, price conscious respondents identify themselves to a lesser extent with successful people, bosses, and the like. The correlations are stronger in the Russian samples, where the economic divide is much more significant than among the Swedish respondents.

It should also be pointed out that many among the interviewed Russian adolescents, and among the Swedes, young people as well as adults, have a high degree of brand awareness. This is especially true of the young respondents from St. Petersburg. Even when sharply critical of people who wear brand clothes, these young people often name concrete trademarks, and, ultimately, recognize the value of the branded articles and consider them as something important, to which one should aspire. For instance, a girl studying chemistry says that contemporary girls’ interest in fashion and brands is an illness – but some minutes later confidently declares that “everybody would like to dress not there on the Troitsk market but to dress somewhere from Armani or Gucci”. “I don’t care what label I wear on my ass (grins) – Dolce & Gabbana or anything else”, one of the participants says. However, after a while he recognizes that he would change over to a more glamorous lifestyle, buying a car with a famous brand – if he could afford it:

45 The variables show strong correlations in both cities and age groups.
The more opportunities you have, the more needs you get. Well, maybe, I would pay attention (to brands) […] I would drive a Ferrari with a pretty girl. (young man, electro-technical college)

The Russian adults’ indifference to brands is confirmed by their lack of knowledge of concrete trademarks. During our discussions, only four persons mentioned names of concrete brands that they appreciated.

The absence of tangible assets is the reason adult respondents give for their “indifference” to brands and more expensive things. One middle-aged female respondent, while admiring the quality of the articles from the SELA shop by comparing them to the things on the open market, emphasizes that basically concrete brands have a significance for her only insofar as they please her children. She cannot afford such clothes for herself.

Many of the adult residents of St. Petersburg remark that branded clothes do not interest them, because they are simply too expensive for them. But they would be ready to buy clothes made by well-known trademarks if they had the means. It is significant, however, that so few of the adult respondents from St. Petersburg name concrete brands, as mentioned above:

If I would… let’s presume… if I could… if there was such an opportunity, I would, of course, go and buy some kind of… what did you say? A kind of branded… (middle-aged woman, low education)

However, it seems that the absence of material means is not the only explanation for the adults’ “indifference” to brands, for their low degree of “brand awareness”. For example, looking at Figure 4:3 it is clear that, unlike the Russian adults, as well as Swedes of both generations, the Russian teenagers, representing the most “unstable” group in a financial respect, are least anxious about price when choosing clothes and vice versa; the Swedish adults have most often noted that price matters.

The absence of material means, thus, does not determine people’s knowledge of trademarks, at least among the young respondents. Moreover, some respondents – conscious of their lack of finances – are certain that, in the future, as soon as they can earn enough, they will exclusively wear branded articles, and here they even mention concrete brands. A student from an IT college in St. Petersburg, who admits that at present he can at best afford to buy clothes at Ostin’s, aspires for an ideal situation in which he could afford to make purchases in the boutiques at the galleria and to become the owner of a very expensive jacket, a U3.

The explanation for the Russian adult respondents’ indifference to brands is more likely found in what one woman with a high education level called a “different way of thinking” and a different education. It is significant that the Russian adults, more often than the other groups, consider it important to follow
trends in literature, probably a legacy of the Soviet era when reading literature indicated high cultural status.

In this sense, advertising is one of the important factors forming young people’s representations of the social world, in particular as regards the values of object-signs and the impression that they could climb to a higher position in society by demonstrating their possession of high-status objects.

If you’re a snowboarder, the brand would become, sort of, very important to you. […] If you have a Burn jacket you feel different, like another person. […] You are getting higher. […] [Burn] is considered to be an expensive make. The quality is very good and those who have [Burn]… their status in this specific society… among snowboarders, is higher. (young man, mathematics)

The interviews show that such an understanding of the cause and effect relation is specific to many of the young respondents in St. Petersburg.

One difference between the young and adult Russian respondents is that very few young people admit that they buy cheap things, especially from the open market – even when they speak openly about their lack of financial means. More often, the young Russian participants in the group interviews express their unconcealed contempt for cheap things without brand labels, such as things from the open market stalls and things made in China or Turkey. For instance, one young respondent sincerely admits that if he had to choose between two objects with identical qualities – one with a label from a company of good reputation and the other an unknown Chinese firm – he would take the first “even if it were several times more expensive”.

On the other hand, many of the respondents from Stockholm, both adult and adolescent, say that they do not see anything shameful in sometimes buying clothes from H&M or in a second-hand shop. One of the Swedish participants also mentions the fine opportunities to buy inexpensive brand fakes in “third-world countries”.

As mentioned above, the quantitative surveys show that the price factor is essential to a significant proportion of the Swedish respondents of both generations (when choosing/purchasing clothes). This is confirmed by the interviews. The importance of the price factor to the inhabitants of Stockholm can be considered a sign of a more “modest” type of consumption, constituting another way of differentiating items, which is often not obvious to Russians who have become used to extravagant consumption. A low-educated Russian woman remembers Swedish visitors in St. Petersburg as being simply and appropriately, but modestly dressed. Another Russian female respondent, with a high education level who had visited Sweden, is astonished by the fact that Swedes who, in her opinion, can afford expensive fur coats, go around in jackets. It is also interesting to mention the comment made by a St. Petersburg girl (studying fashion and design), who compares the desire to wear clothes for show, a desire
specific to Russian people, to other priorities abroad: “They have work, a house, i.e., they basically [bring] everything to their home... for friends... It is as though other values, so to speak... And here, well, the clothes...”

However, it is obvious that the supposed modest consumption of the Stockholm inhabitants does not change the logic of consumption according to which, as Baudrillard puts it, the object is never consumed in its primary essence. It always appears in consumption as a sign of hierarchical status, assigning a person to a certain group or keeping her/him away from it.

If one feels that one should belong to [...] a certain income class, then one should have this black striped suit. And... if one is a woman, then one must have Dolce Gucci or whatever they now... [...] otherwise you're somewhat off, if you, like, what should belong to that grouping, see. (middle-aged man, low education, Stockholm)

In this sense, the unobtrusive style of dressing peculiar to the Swedish respondents nevertheless has little in common with the practical attitude of the adult Russians, who pay no attention to the trademarks as signs of social differentiation. It is significant that many of the Swedish respondents, when speaking about the relevance of price, refer to their deliberate choice between an article of a cheap or unknown trademark and an article of an expensive, well-known brand, which remains in their consciousness as a status marker.

Identification models

As mentioned, several experts on advertising as well as other media experts interviewed in the study point out the changing character of contemporary advertising. So-called informative advertising is increasingly leaving room for new types of publicity – brand, image or lifestyle advertising – which plays an important role in structuring contemporary identity, in line with the ideas of several scholars (i.a., Kellner and Barthel), who state that the images of the media culture are especially important in terms of the imports and values they communicate.46

The respondents’ answers support these ideas. For instance, some participants in the Russian group interviews claim that the purpose of advertising is to associate the possession of certain goods with images of leisure, affluence and high-level consumption, in particular stressed by Kellner.

A boy from an IT college remarks that there are no working people in advertisements; “there is basically an idle pastime”. A middle-aged man with a higher education sees a danger in such advertising, which in his view incites young people to believe that work is useless: “You just go around consuming,

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and you’ll get everything. But where is all this coming from?”, this respondent wonders rhetorically, underlining the lack of realism in the advertising messages.

The last statement is significant in light of the answers to a survey question targeting respondents’ attitudes towards work and leisure. Based on Figure 4:4, it appears that the great majority of Swedish respondents consider that leisure rather than work makes life worth living, while the reverse relation is true for the Russian respondents (see Figure 4:4).

Figure 4:4. How do you regard work (housework and school work) in relation to leisure and relaxation? (by age and city, per cent)

This result is entirely in line with Baudrillard’s ideas about the changing functions of work in consumer society, where leisure becomes a collective vocation that attains institutional character and an interiorized social norm subordinated to the collective ethic of maximizing the needs and their satisfactions a norm that reflects the principle of maximizing production. Thus in consumer society, leisure becomes a criterion for distinction, implying that social agents demonstrate their free time, which is perceived as richness. In a consumer society at its developed phase, the redundancy of free time implies the unfolding of an inverse process, in which work becomes a privileged place and a time for relaxation from leisure, which is characterized by inflicted consumption. In such a manner, work becomes a distinctive sign for the privileged strata of the population, that is, the work itself becomes consumed in a Baudrillarian sense (because an excess of work is a sign of prestige). It is, thus, significant that persons with high professional status (and correspondingly education) in Stockholm are clearly overrepresented in the minority of the adult Swedish respondents who consider that work makes life worth living.

Our basic hypothesis that consumer society in Russia is lagging behind Sweden (and Western Europe) is confirmed by repeated survey results over time

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47 Baudrillard 1970.
from FSI\textsuperscript{48} showing that the proportion of Swedes who said that leisure time was more important (in the sense making life meaningful) became larger than the proportion who believed that work was more important for the first time in the 1987 measurements. The difference has been substantially increasing since then, as is evident from Figure 4:5.

\textit{Figure 4:5. The development of the attitudes towards leisure versus work over time in Sweden (18- to 79-year-olds, per cent)}

![Graph showing the development of attitudes towards leisure versus work over time in Sweden](image)

Note, that persons who give the same value to leisure and work, respectively, are not presented in the figure. \textit{Source: Forskningsgruppen för Samhälls- och Informationsstudier (FSI). Reproduced with permission from FSI.}

Looking at our group interviews, it is clear that the adult respondents in St. Petersburg are, in fact, the most realistic group concerning their possibilities to follow the models of identification offered by advertising and other media products. For example, a woman with a high education level, speaking about the glamorous and luxury life of celebrities, is convinced that “it is sort of a different kind of life there [...] I have nothing in common with these circles. [...] The cobbler should stick to his last”, she affirms, comparing her position to the aspiration of her son, who wants to get into these circles by any means, in particular by trying to dress like the advertising models.

On the contrary, the answers of the young respondents in St. Petersburg suggest that they – unlike the adults – really are influenced by the lifestyles promoted by advertising. For example, they often share detailed descriptions of the plots of the commercials, which have piqued their imagination. A student at an IT college is, thus, depressed by the inaccessibility of Range Rover Sport cars, the possession of which is supposed to give the feeling “of having a ride along the southern coast of France, going back and forth there, meeting the ambassador, and then that person and that person and…” (young man, mathematical school). A girl (chemistry), expressing her admiration for ads promoting cosmetics, repeats the slogan of Ives Rocher: “every day a new charm”.

A boy from the mathematical school considers a lifestyle involving the need to live in a flat, get up early and go to work unattractive and unacceptable for him. Instead, he aspires to a life full of luxury attributes: a good house somewhere in France, an opportunity to dress beautifully, to smoke a cigar. This respondent realizes perfectly well that such a life is typical of the so-called high life. On the whole, however, he does not see any special difficulties in attaining such a life, “to live differently”, to belong “to those people”. For this purpose, it is enough to begin “acting differently, choosing clothes differently, even walking differently”; one must try to get acquainted with a person from the high life, “to wear such clothes in order to get closer to him… Maybe in the future you will become like him”.

Several girls also identify themselves with heroes and celebrities in advertising and glamorous TV programmes. For example, one girl (studying law) half-jokingly, half-seriously says that she is interested in what is going on in Hollywood and that she hopes to get there. Students with a musical pedagogical profile openly say that they watch programmes on the lives of celebrities, in their dreams putting themselves in their place. Admitting that they do not like Xenia Sobchak (presenter of popular talk shows and a celebrity), they nevertheless realize that at least once they would like “to test. Probably not to live perhaps, but simply to try… well, kind of test oneself” in her glamorous lifestyle.

This may also explain the fact that the Russian respondents, including the experts, very seldom admit any influence of lifestyle advertising on their identity. Thus, when answering the question about whether lifestyles depicted in advertising influence people to such a degree that it becomes part of their individuality, the young inhabitants of St. Petersburg prefer to give as examples their friends who, as a rule, are richer than them and are able to follow completely the recommendations of the TV commercials and glossy magazines. A girl with a musical pedagogical profile sometimes imagines herself being a celebrity and in another
context distances herself from her girl friends, depicting with laughter how they live in “a Cosmo or Jennifer style”.49

Significant in this respect is the surprise of the participants in two youth group interviews when they are asked whether there are other aspects of influence of advertising except for submission to its imperative to make purchases. “What other aspects could there be?” girls from two different groups (chemical school and juridical college) asked, seemingly perplexed. “What functions do commercials have? Apart from an informative one?” a student from a musical college cried out.

Very often, the adolescents in St. Petersburg emphasize their independence when it comes to choosing fashion and lifestyle. “This is childish. You must be yourself, not imitate anyone,” maintains a boy (mathematical profile), questioning the necessity of advertising in general, as it is possible simply to go to a shop when necessary and choose what you like, what suits you. A girl (law profile) who earlier said that it is nice to dress in branded clothes, later categorically declares that brands have no strong influence on her personally:

I know myself... I have my life, my style, so if I look at another person [...] I will not borrow anything. Of course, I will just say: 'Well, it could be this way, as well'. It doesn't mean that I'm starting tomorrow... yes, I will wake up and live this way...

According to a student from an IT college, brands do not influence your individuality, on the contrary “Your personality exerts an influence on the brands”, because “you choose the brand that fits you; a certain brand doesn’t choose you, because you are suited to it”.

As a whole, one could say that many of the young inhabitants of St. Petersburg, as well as some of the Russian media experts, deny the possible influence of brand advertising on their identity, because it seems that they do not understand the mechanism of such an influence. “I can’t actually find a link between commercials and lifestyle”, a girl (juridical profile) asserts. “I basically don’t really understand the idea – to live according to commercials”, a boy from the IT college declares. Many of the young respondents, and this is frequent also among the adults, believe that lifestyle advertising can only influence the so-called “golden youth”, “le beau monde”, the oligarchs, the TV people.

It is significant that several Russian experts, as well as the above-mentioned participants in the group interviews, reject the idea that advertising exerts an influence on people’s lifestyle. “Life style? What do you have in mind? Lifestyle, it is defined by economical factors, not by the content of TV programmes…”, the editorial writer of an oppositional federal newspaper exclaimed.

49 Cosmo refers to the popular magazine Cosmopolitan. Jennifer (Lopez) is a famous American star who has her own brand of clothes.
Some of the respondents recognize a possible influence of image advertising on their environment, but at the same time express sharp criticism. For instance, the boys from the IT college insist that they could not communicate with such people. Some girls (fashion and design and chemistry) call such people “crazy”, or “sick”.

It is somewhat paradoxical that, in most cases, the respondents who categorically exclude themselves from the group of people whose individuality could be under the strong influence of brands, or who claim that they do not see such people around them, emphasize during the interview how important concrete trademarks are to them.

Such an attitude indicates that the consumer society in Russia has not developed to the point where people are aware – as many of the Swedish respondents are – of the process of influence of brand advertising. For the Russians, as a rule, any possible influence of such advertising on the identity is limited only to the opportunity to buy the advertised items, which, however, are unacceptably expensive. For instance, a teacher at a food technology college, who on an earlier occasion mentioned that concrete brands are getting to be of greater and greater significance to her children, when asked whether the lifestyle mediated by advertising influences people to such a degree that it becomes part of their individuality, answers:

Well, I know only one family who is, so to speak, like a skyrocket. They have a mansion and each of them has a car and, of course, they live at the level where there is only one particular brand and no other.

One student (electro-technical college), who prefers trademarks like Adidas and Sprandi and at the same time denies the possible impact of brands on his personality, describes the mechanism of brand advertising influence as follows:

Well, if you buy only this brand... well, then probably. Well, for instance, you’ll buy some sports car and drive very fast. [...] it will have an influence on you, you’ll drive faster. Then you’ll buy some kind of cross-country vehicle, and in any case you’ll move off the road to test how it is.

This shows that even those Russians who are under the influence of brands do not analyse or even notice this influence, while many of the Swedes realize perfectly well that brand advertising is a special type of advertising that, according to one Stockholm adolescent, “has become a misleading wired hysteria” (young man from an IT college). Several Swedish respondents describe in detail how lifestyle marketing functions.

First they wanted to communicate, somehow, information about why this product is good, while today they want to communicate kind of a feeling, like. A
lifestyle, or… Coca Cola is a lifestyle, isn’t it […] it matters […] to mediate a lifestyle […] say, the publicity for this new Coca Cola Zero, it’s like this: ‘Now we shall have a manly soft drink’ […] Well, it’s evident that somebody will buy it in order to feel masculine and not only because they advertised how good it is, but because now you are a man! […] One is influenced almost by a feeling of… appealing exactly to the lifestyle now, instead of to product information. In other words, it doesn’t really matter why it’s good, instead, ‘you’re cool if you have it’. However, you’ll die of cancer in five years, but we don’t speak about that. (young man, practical IT profile)

I mean, the ad in itself... or how should I put it... the brand [advertisement]… the aesthetic profile itself and the image and such stuff and the feeling they create around a brand, like that… so one is influenced by it, probably more than one knows. […] It becomes easy to believe that it’s quite good, like, that it’s better than something else. (young man, social sciences)

Comprehension and experience of such dependence on brands sometimes take the form of attempts at personal opposition. For instance, one Swedish boy declares that he deliberately buys only cheap items (IT college). A girl (fashion and design) says that she rips off the labels from her clothes because she does not want to identify with them. A middle-aged man (low education) talks about one of his friends who essentially looks for clothes without labels.

In this respect, there is a difference between the middle-aged St. Petersburgers and Stockholmers concerning their attitude towards young people taking a great interest in brands. Some Russian adults consider it a normal age-related phenomenon; others talk about young people haughtily, referring to their immaturity (women with a high education), or quite contemptuously. “They have a monkey syndrome”, one man says with indignation (teacher at a practical college).

The middle-aged Swedes are more “perspicacious”, considering brand advertising to be a source of identity formation for young people. For example, one man says:

There is quite a difference between, […] see, our generation and those who still have not constructed their identity. Because, they can let themselves be lulled into the idea that Nike or whatever it’s called, that it’s sort of important… (middle-aged man, low education)

Well, they are more searching for an identity and belonging in different ways and […] advertising (says) ‘Put on these clothes or buy this, so you’ll be cool or you’ll get popular or you’ll become this or that’. (middle-aged man, high education)

As a whole it can be said that, in general, the Russians admit less often than the Swedes do to any influence of advertising on themselves; they believe instead that they do not depend on advertising in making their choice.
Beauty – the woman’s duty

Many researchers, i.a., Baudrillard, Barthel and Kellner, have pointed out that in most cases advertising addresses women, something that is reluctantly confirmed by the respondents, the men as well as the women, and the young people more than the adults. Answering the question of whether advertising has any influence on him concerning his ideals of beauty, a Russian middle-aged man (low education, teacher at a technical training college) categorically declares: “This question is more for women because it doesn’t concern men…” Some of the Russian young men (mathematical school) are convinced that the beauty models promoted by advertising concern only girls, who copy clothes and hair styles. According to these opinions, young men (and men in general) are not subject to the influence of advertising: “Concerning appearance, yes, boys are oriented towards convenience, in general, and girls towards beauty.” The so-called majority, glamour boys, are a rare exception, and it is natural, in the opinion of the respondents, that there are only a few of them. “This is common sense: a man must be a man.”

Similar opinions come primarily from the Russian boys from the humanistic college (design), who argue about the negative consequences of advertising that promotes beauty ideals. In these young men’s opinion, a discrepancy between a woman’s appearance and the advertised ideal results in the girl in question losing the attention of the opposite sex.

The Russian girls also confirm this opinion, according to which, in most cases, advertising is aimed at women. For example, one girl (law profile) is certain that advertising influences “a woman’s mentality”. However, it is significant that this respondent explains that the feminine desire to be (the most) beautiful is not a result of advertising that is over-saturated with feminine beauty models, or of stereotypes that are established in society, but “because it is the female mentality, the psychology of the woman, given to her by nature, certainly”.

Another girl (studying law) recognizes the self-evident necessity of investing not only a great deal of effort in making her appearance perfect, but also a great deal of money. So talking about the impeccable appearance of celebrities who advertise beauty products, she emotionally asserts that “It’s work there, it’s constant work, it’s a heap of money, it’s not any cream for 70 roubles, that is clear”.

Advertising postulates models of beauty, first of all female beauty, appealing to women who, in Baudrillard’s opinion, “are only called on to gratify themselves in order to better be able to enter as objects into the masculine competition”. The admiration of the advertised beauties expressed by the male respondents is significant in this respect.

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50 In Russian, slang for guys who prefer to be dressed in the latest fashions.
There are commercials where beautiful women walk... yes, I watch such commercials... I don't change channels (young man, information technology)

Like Charlize Theron... when she goes out, the door opens and she (her clothes) starts falling down... You can look at such women day and night, from morning till night. (middle-aged man, low education)

Here we may recall Barthel, who says that advertising in every possible way supports and develops the stereotype that the most essential characteristic of a real woman is her appearance, her visible identity, to be beautiful in accordance with the norms imposed by advertising.52 So, a real woman must achieve a beauty status if she is to exchange it for higher social status.53

In line with this, one Russian girl (studying chemistry) insists that resemblance to the advertised images is enough for success, first of all among the opposite sex: “So, if you look good... in the same way... then you will have some sort of success. It will follow you in some sphere, maybe among young people, maybe at work, in studies, something else...” Another girl (law profile) expresses her view on the importance of imitating the advertised models for one’s life advancement as follows: “It is natural when a girl aspires to an ideal. She feels more self-confident. It helps her take important actions, in general. [...] Advertising can somehow influence this a lot... cause something... what I want to resemble, what I will be.”

According to Barthel, the social success of the woman, as defined within the limits of the advertising discourse, in most cases coincides with the success of her male partner, while her feminine power is limited to her sexuality.54

Some of the Russian respondents are aware of the stereotypes of female appearance and behaviour imposed by advertising and sharply protest. For instance, the TV commercial Nuts, in which a tough and self-confident sex-bomb, a “stinker” in a miniskirt, is preferred to a modest girl in pigtails and glasses, provokes wrath among the girls from the fashion and design college.

In contemporary society, the traditional distribution of male and female models is not overcome; moreover, according to several researchers,55 it has been strengthened in many respects owing to advertising. This is especially visible in Russian society, where a significant regress in representations of the social roles of the man and the woman has taken place. Young women are all too often dreaming of a housewife destiny, of becoming the wives of well-to-do men, or in Barthel’s terminology “luxury objects”.

53 “For women”, Barthel writes, “beauty has traditionally been one route to achieving social status. By ‘ marrying up’, the beauty can wave good-bye to her humble origins and gain re-cognition, and security, among the betters” (Barthel 1988, p. 87).
54 Barthel 1988, cf. also Schor and Baudrillard.
55 E.g., Baudrillard, Schor and Barthel.
Through her shopping, fashion display, and evident leisure she performs what Thorstein Veblen called ‘vicarious consumption’ for her husband. It is obvious: he must be rich and/or powerful if he can afford her.56

A St. Petersburg woman (high education) with experience in the advertising field admits, accordingly, that she does not love the contemporary advertising that represents “men’s fruit, a men’s product” and demonstrates the male approach “to consumption, to the female image, to roles”. This respondent becomes indignant about two images, quite familiar in publicity: “the self-sufficient master and the expensive, silly woman, who is absolutely dependent on him”. “They dress her and place her, so to speak, in different positions, however they want […] young, beautiful and at that a complete nonentity […] an absolute fool.”

It is important to note that, unlike the Russian teenage girls, the middle-aged Russian women are not convinced that the advertised images are worth imitating. In such terms, many both low and high educated women deny any influence of advertising on them concerning beauty, referring to the fact that they were brought up in a different way: “We are at a different level… we were raised from childhood […] because such a view was formed.” “Each person has his own beauty ideal.”

Thus, even those Russian teenagers who recognize the influence of advertising concerning beauty issues consider it self-evident that such advertising primarily influences women. The analysis of the Swedish group interviews reveals the feeling that advertising imposes gender stereotypes concerning people’s general appearance. Such remarks come from respondents of all ages – men as well as women. It is especially striking that the Swedish boys, contrary to the Russian boys, are conscious that advertising influences them personally when it comes to their appearance.

You see, maybe, a ZTV guy standing there and interviewing some… [he has] terribly pretty clothes and, like this, the hairstyle… then you think ‘Wow, damn, how handsome he is’ even though you maybe don’t quite think so. But then you think, kind of ‘I would like to look like that’. (young man, practical IT-profile, Stockholm)

As a whole, this can just as well be regarded as a manifestation of a more developed consumer society within the limits of which, as Baudrillard points out, advertising along with the feminine and masculine models gradually establishes a third narcissistic model, linked to adolescence and youth, with “ambiguous” sexuality, a hermaphroditic one that, however, is “much closer to the feminine model of self-indulgence than the demanding masculine one”.57

56 Barthel 1988, p. 87.
57 Baudrillard 1970, p. 98.
Therefore, it is significant that in Stockholm the cult of thinness (“the obtrusiveness of the line”, as Baudrillard says) is discussed both among the boys and the men and among the girls and the women.

Who is it saying that one should be so bloody thin, and the like? Who decides this? In the past one should be as big as possible […] They showed that they had money. […] Why should you be so thin? You could be a little plump, what does it matter, actually? […] It’s the media that say this, isn’t it? […] Like, lose 7 kilos in a week! […] Like, fruit diets, sort of. Why can’t one have what one wants, like?

(young man, practical IT profile, Stockholm)

You ought to be slim, you ought to be pretty, you ought to be smart. Everything must work and you will, kind of, feel good. Well, I mean, there’s so much input from everywhere, I mean, how you ought to be, how you ought to live…(young man, social sciences, Stockholm)

In the Russian group interviews, the necessity of being thin is discussed by girls and boys as well, although as a genuine feminine problem – as one boy (mathematical profile) puts it laughing: “If there were some slimming preparation, maybe some fat girl would run quickly to buy it.” And a student from an electro-technical college, arguing about the influence of advertising as a medium for certain ideals of body appearance, involuntarily discerns two models – a male and a female one:

They advertise some men’s eau de cologne… one shows a pumped-up guy. And all men… somehow try to look like the guy from the commercial […] There are also females… there are also cosmetics… they have advertisements for slimming… But it’s too much. Excessive, probably.

Consumer involvement and mental health

Studying the impact of advertising as a whole on U.S. children, Schor makes use of the concept of “consumer involvement”, which is useful also for our purposes. She defines this concept through a quantity of concrete judgements, some of which are of central importance also to the present work. It is a question of the following statements: “I like watching commercials”, “Brand names matter to me”, “I like clothes with popular labels”, “Being cool is important to me”. Similar judgements are included in the quantitative surveys carried out within the Russian-Swedish project.

Using the concept of consumer culture, Schor says that the formation of specific patterns and norms of consumption mediated by advertising – the creation of a set of consumer attitudes, values and activities – on the whole have

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a very negative impact on contemporary Americans’ way of life. She mentions various types of pressure on Americans aspiring to satisfy constantly increasing norms of consumption, such as the cycle of work-and-spend, growing credit, increased length of the working day, etc.

However, Schor’s empirical research focuses on children. She sees a great danger in children’s exposure to advertising, as marketing and advertising are influential in transforming children into consumers. Using quantitative analyses, Schor concludes that a significant proportion of American children are trapped in a pattern of getting and spending, something that significantly undermines their well-being, causing a great deal of serious physical and mental problems. She maintains that high consumer involvement is often the basis for depression, anxiety, low self-esteem and psychosomatic illnesses.

It is, thus, topical to examine whether Schor’s conclusions concerning mental problems related to consumer behaviour are common among the participants from St. Petersburg and Stockholm.

As mentioned, our quantitative analysis is based on a large number of statements, which allows us to assess the degree of consumer involvement and integration into the system of consumption of different generations as conditioned by different social determinants. The results are in line with Baudrillard’s and Schor’s theories and with the above-quoted observations from the group interviews.

Central in this respect are the correlation patterns of the statistical variable corresponding to the question “How important is it to you to live up to your ideals concerning appearance in general (as regards body, clothes, etc.)?”. The results of the analyses indicate that “the ideal” in question is essentially determined by consumer factors. The variable correlates positively with the respondents’ inclination to follow fashion trends (especially concerning clothes, accessories and jewellery, but also in other consumption fields – sport articles, home electronics, music, hobby articles, etc.), and to be influenced by different factors (fashion trends, brands, TV programmes and advertising in different media – fashion magazines, as well as celebrities – for young people) in their choice of clothes. The correlations are significantly stronger in the Swedish response patterns, which is in line with our observations from the qualitative studies and, as mentioned, depends on the fact that the consumer culture is new in Russia (as well as on the lower material assets of the St. Petersburg inhabitants). There are further positive correlations with a number of statements

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60 Schor 2004, p. 16.
63 Among the Swedish respondents, there is a strong positive correlation also with "How people in the street dress" and "friends", as well as, although weaker, with "fit". Interestingly, there is hardly any significant influence from the family when it comes to choice of clothes style.
indicating a consumer orientation, included in the quantitative survey. Some examples are:

- “Feel self-confident when using certain products, fashion and styles” (somewhat more among adults, especially Swedes) – correlation coefficients among the Russian respondents are $r = 0.37$ (young) and 0.45 (adults). The corresponding figures for the Swedish samples are 0.41 and 0.35, respectively;
- “I feel need to get/have status products that other people have” (stronger among adults, especially Swedes);
- “I distinguish between persons depending on the things they have” (stronger among Swedish adolescents);
- “It happens that I feel envious of others because of something they have purchased” (the correlation being stronger among Swedes and adolescents, there is no significant correlation among adult Russians).

The last-mentioned correlation pattern is characteristic also of the statements “The products I buy become a part of my personality” (stronger among Swedish adolescents, no significant correlation among adult Russians); “It is worth paying extra for a well-known brand” as well as the respondents’ inclination to “Go in shops for fun” (very strong correlation among Swedish adolescents, no significant correlation among Russian adults).

The importance of living up to one’s appearance ideals is also correlated with the statement “Other people get interested in, notice the products I have bought” and “It is worth paying extra for a well-known brand”, especially strong correlations, 0.42 and 0.35, respectively, among the Swedes.

The statistical analyses show, thus, that the appearance ideals in question turn out to be imposed by the imperatives of the consumer discourse, which is supported by advertising. It is especially salient among women, as it appears from Table 4:1, where the correlation coefficients between gender and some consumer-oriented attitudes are displayed.
Table 4.1. Pearson’s correlation coefficient concerning gender and each of the following variables among Swedish respondents (Gender is quantified in the following way: man = 1, woman = 2. A positive correlation means that women possess to a larger extent than men the characteristic in question and vice versa.)

**Teens in Stockholm**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Correlation Coefficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.0000 Gender</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.5606 Fashion reports (watch willingly)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.4735 Devote yourself to beauty care</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.4233 Accessories, jewellery (important to follow fashion and trends)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.4024 Fashion (important in the media)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.3964 Go in shops for fun</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.3764 Beauty (important in the media)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.3755 Fashion magazines (get influenced in choice of clothes style)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.3710 Soap operas (watch willingly)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.3190 Stressed (feel often)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.2899 Celebrities who dress themselves prettily/smartly (know)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.2713 Full of anxiety (feel often)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Adults in Stockholm**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Correlation Coefficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.0000 Gender</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.5053 Devote yourself to beauty care</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.5010 Accessories, jewellery (important to follow fashion and trends)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.4195 Fashion (important in the media)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.4195 Fashion reports (watch willingly)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.3939 Beauty (important in the media)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.3569 Fashion magazines (get influenced in choice of clothes style)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.3457 Home furnishing (important in the media)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.3075 Clothes, shoes (important to follow fashion and trends)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.2996 Fashion trends (get influenced in choice of clothes style)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.2667 Other people become interested in, notice the products I have bought</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The importance of living up to one’s ideals is, thus, significantly more characteristic of women. Among young people, it is also correlated with negative feelings such as stress, anxiety and depression, a result that is in line with Schor’s findings.

**The consumer society as a society of violence**

The need to adhere to the appearance standards dictated by the media – including object-signs as well as bodily parameters, which, according to Baudrillard, have also become signs – is regarded by him as an indicator of the constraints and hidden violence to which people are subjected in the consumer society. Baudrillard characterizes the code of object-signs in Western societies as a “totalitarian code, for no one escapes it”:

> Escaping it in a private sense cannot prevent us from participating every day in its collective development. Not believing in it still means believing sufficiently in other people’s belief in it to adopt a sceptical stance. Even actions intended as resistance to it must be defined in terms of a society that conforms to it.64

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64 Baudrillard 1968, p. 194.
In line with this, the director of a successful PR agency in St. Petersburg says:

For me and for many of my friends, it is personally not important what car we drive, but I know that I’ll go to a client not in my wife’s [Russian] car but in my Volvo, because it will be better for me… for the business. It is not important to me, it is important to him (the client). I think so. Just in case.

It is, thus, necessary to have adequate branded objects in order to “appear in the world”, as a girl from a fashion and design college puts it.

In this sense, Baudrillard has a complex interpretation: Approved by the social community, the code of object-signs becomes a moral code, any infraction of which entails a corresponding feeling of guilt. In such a manner, one of the young Russian men (IT college) feels it is an obligation, his duty towards society, to purchase status clothes: “I dress well enough to suit my status […] and people cannot demand something more from me, granted my social position, my status. I fulfil the minimum quota… even more.” However, such an attitude is unfamiliar to the adult Russians. For instance, a middle-aged man with high education likens to a sickness his son’s dependence on brands and status objects, calling him “a slave of the image”.

On the other hand, we can single out some statements that bear witness to the envy some of the Russian teenagers feel when they see the status items of their schoolfellows, as long as they – or rather their parents – cannot afford to buy similar objects. For instance, one student (humanist college, design) reports that for some of his friends whose parents earn a comparatively large amount of money, it is very important to dress properly, “to buy trousers of a certain label”. At the same time as he expresses his contempt, and he remarks with indignation: “But why do people who have money have greater success with the opposite sex?” One girl (fashion and design), speaking about her more prosperous friend who did not appreciate her nice presents because they were not the right brands, feels insulted that her friend treats her so disrespectfully, seeing that she cannot buy things in expensive shops.

Based on the interview material, it is evident that the inaccessibility of the advertised lifestyle models is making the Russian respondents unhappy. As one boy (information technology) puts it, “In our country, in our city, few people can afford what is broadcast in commercials on TV. […] Working people are offended, they feel humiliated.” A middle-aged man (pedagogue with a high education) remarks that advertising commodities that cost 100,000 euro is equivalent to making fun of people. A girl (chemistry) believes that advertising and media are responsible for the growing number of suicides in Russia. Contemplating other people’s lives, “it damages your soul […] you get disappointed

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65 Baudrillard 1968, p. 194.
with your life, that you can’t help anything, that there are people who are better than you, who feel good and well”.

As mentioned earlier, the young Russians, mainly the boys, exclude themselves from the group who are influenced by advertising when discussing its negative aspects. Instead, they ascribe this kind of susceptibility to girls, their peers or people in general.

It is possible, for example, to instil in people an inferiority complex, and the opposite is also possible. Well, for instance, these glamor magazines, when a not so good-looking girl looks in the magazines and sees pretty girls, it would be interesting to know whether she feels better or worse. (young man, humanistic college, design)

I agree. Everybody checks this magazine and acts (correspondingly), those who maybe can, they try to comply, those who can’t get depressed. (another young man, humanistic college, design)

Speaking about their own aversion to the beauty ideals disseminated by advertising, many young respondents from St. Petersburg, especially girls, transition to condemning other people’s attitudes:

I have to be such a cool and self-confident sex bomb and if I’m not (a stinker) [...] then nobody cares about me, right? People start changing their personalities. (young woman, fashion and design)

People die because of diets [...] some girls lose their minds because of imaginary beauty ideals… skinny, in general… [...] It’s also the fault of commercials. Yes, I think so. Because there are a lot of such girls… I haven’t seen any full-bodied girls. (young woman, studying law)

Based on the responses of the young Swedes, it is evident that they are subjected to an even stronger environmental influence concerning their choice of clothes, i.e., the need to fit into this environment. The Figures from the quantitative surveys show that, in this respect, the influence of friends is stronger among Swedes than among Russians (see Figure 4:2). As Schor points out, such an influence often has a depressive effect on young people. “Children’s social worlds are increasingly constructed around consuming, as brands and products have come to determine who is ‘in’ or ‘out’, who is hot or not, who deserves to have friends, or social status.”

66 Schor 2004, p. 11.

Many statements from our young respondents indicate that Schor’s conclusion is valid in Sweden as well. Several young people from Stockholm feel it is a must to have the latest – branded clothes, mobile phones or other fashionable objects. Deviants may be punished:
Well, nowadays almost everybody has some kind of, like, similar camera mobiles, at least with a colour display. And then, those who have this 3310 […] they can easily be bullied, sort of. […] Although the main thing with a mobile is to be able to make a call with it, isn’t it? […] Then, all that with the camera, I mean… it’s just redundant… (young man, practical IT profile)

Well, one gets, like, dependent. […] One becomes kind of afraid of going over to something else… sort of, like that… to go to, like, cheap clothes shops. One wants rather to have, kind of, expensive clothes. It’s, like… it’s sort of status. (young man, practical IT profile)

There are no similar assertions among the Russian respondents. As we pointed out earlier, some of the young inhabitants of St. Petersburg relate to lifestyles that are very far from their real life and environment. For instance, several adult men and women with a low education level in St. Petersburg consider the need to possess branded clothes to be characteristic of people from “le beau monde” or of highly placed executives.

Most of the Swedish adolescents also feel some distress – not owing to the fact that they do not have or cannot buy brand objects, but because they have to decide: Should they spend money on them or not? Should they wear or not? And how can they become independent of the lifestyle models in advertising? Unlike their Russian peers, the Swedish teenagers often conceive of themselves as objects of the negative influence of advertising, clearly understanding that advertising imposes identity models on them. One example is a boy studying natural sciences who noticed that the clothing brands often show perfect human bodies as the ideal, the consequence being that many people develop negative self-esteem. “Yes, they give the impression that everybody must look like that, otherwise something’s wrong”, concurred one of his class-mates, pointing out that “an extremely small minority of mankind looks like that in reality, so it gives one a very strange feeling”. Or, as a Stockholm girl put it:

All fashion magazines and such papers… they’re not only about fashion but… Actually, I think they always influence you negatively. I always get sad after reading one. […] It’s just that they write like ‘You have to look this way!’ and ‘You ought to be this way next spring’ […] Well, I don’t want to live like that. Pooh, I want that, somehow, how I dress should come from me. Not from the papers. Moreover, they always have pictures on perfect girls and I feel… […] Well, I feel awfully inferior when I see all those perfect people, no matter if they’re retouched or not. (young woman, journalism)

The young Swedes are aware that the perfection of the models is a result of computer graphics, or “manipulation, untruth”, as a boy studying natural sciences put it. Concerning the models in advertisements, a boy studying social sciences
stressed that they are so perfect because the advertising reinforces the social norms of beauty.

However, despite this understanding, some of the Swedish adolescents admit that they cannot refrain from thinking of the effect of the glossy beauty:

There is a logical part of the brain… […] saying 'OK, this is a touched-up [photograph]. This person is not so perfect'. But then the feelings say something totally different, and that is that you’re disappointed that you don’t look like that, kind of. […] even if they are touched-up, it’s a picture that you, like, should be more or less like this. And it's this that is beautiful. And then if… […] because they look almost the same, actually, all of them. I can hardly see any difference. […] it’s such an awfully biased type of media, I think, because… all people are not heard, they don’t show all types of bodies, all clothes styles are not allowed there. (young woman, journalism, Stockholm)

Conclusion: Different stages of consumer involvement and symbolic violence

The above-quoted statements from the interviews and the results from the quantitative surveys show that the Swedish and Russian respondents are involved to different degrees and in different ways in the consumer society. The different generations have also learned the code of the consumer society (the material bearer of which is advertising) to different degrees and correspondingly express different attitudes towards its norms.

It appears that the Stockholm respondents, both the young and middle-aged, as well as the young people from St. Petersburg are much more integrated into the code of consumption than are the adults from St. Petersburg, a significant proportion of whom are burdened by the material needs that have become very salient after the economic reforms of the 1990s.

As Baudrillard points out, consumption should be defined not only as a system of symbolic exchange of signs but, strategically, as a mechanism for dominance.67

Advertising works as a propaganda instrument or, rather, as a bearer of a power discourse specific to the consumer society in which, as Baudrillard says, objects are bearers of an indexed cultural and social signification,68 that is, in which objects no longer “represent” the world, but the essence and the position of their owners.69 Thus, advertising turns out to be a hidden mechanism for integrating people into the consumer society by imposing on them a minimum of consumption – a standard package that, according to Baudrillard, is “the vital

67 Baudrillard 1972, p. 91.
68 Baudrillard 1972, p. 19.
69 Baudrillard 1972, p. 11.
minimum” in the consumer society, a minimum beyond which the individual is considered asocial, thus losing his/her social status.70

The freedom of the consumer is limited to choosing one of several similar objects imposed by the production system, a free choice delimited by the consumer’s financial means, which, in turn, correspond to her/his social status.

It is significant that the Russians – common people as well as media experts – basically consider advertising as an information tool that urges people to buy this or that product; they do not comprehend the above-mentioned central function of advertising – to integrate individuals into the consumer society by imposing on them “standard packages” of lifestyles through “personalized” choice of the advertised products. Other possible influences are considered to apply to other people and segments of the population, but not the respondent her-/himself. In this respect, the respondents from Stockholm are much more analytical, reflexive and self-critical.

Our analysis shows that the Stockholm respondents are well integrated in the consumer society in the above-described way, while the majority of the adults in St. Petersburg are still strangers to the code of advertising. However, the Russian adolescents seem to be well acquainted with this code as well, and are trying to behave appropriately within their limited economic means, that is, to acquire some accessible status objects and to conspicuously display them, a behaviour typical of earlier stages of the consumer society. In this respect, we can conclude that the consumer society exists in Russia, although at “lower” stages, probably as the situation was in the West around 1970 when Baudrillard wrote the works in focus here.

The fact that the Swedes more often than the Russians say that they are influenced by different factors, primarily mediated by advertising when choosing style of clothes, should be related to their media preferences. The correlation analyses show, for instance, that persons in Stockholm who acknowledge that they are influenced by TV advertising (and other media publicity) to a much stronger degree than the other respondents say that media contents such as reports about celebrities, beauty and fashion are important to them, that they readily watch reality TV, soap operas and comedy serials, that they listen more often to commercial radio stations, such as NRJ and RIX FM, and more often like music styles as R’n’B, schlagers, pop and the like.71

It is obvious that Russian society is characterized by several political and cultural particularities, which affect people’s attitudes towards consumption. The Communist past and the traditional negative view of the “American lifestyle” that were cultivated by the Soviet ideology are just some aspects to be mentioned in this context. However, despite the assertions of several Russian

70 Baudrillard 1972, p. 86.
71 The corresponding Pearson’s correlation coefficients vary between ca. 0.30 and 0.40.
media experts and the ordinary people participating in our study, the results suggest that there is no special “Russian way” in this respect, that in 2007 Russia was just going “the normal way” at the stage of conspicuous consumption. We have seen that a significant proportion of especially the young respondents from St. Petersburg, despite their low income level, are well acquainted with the code of advertising that, according to Baudrillard, is the necessary condition for inclusion into the system of consumption – a system that entails being under the influence of the values and ideological directives transmitted by advertising.

The results presented here show that many individuals, mainly Stockholmers, are aware of the biases of the (effects of) publicity that forces them just to consume (to constantly buy and display new objects to confirm their status). For many of them, this is a strenuous process associated with stress, anxiety and even depression, a process in which individual needs are disregarded.

Advertising has become an inseparable part of the public landscape. In contrast to all critical remarks against its obtrusiveness, the majority of our respondents – Swedes as well as Russians – can hardly imagine its disappearance; moreover, the majority of them do not even want to live in a world without advertising, and they depict such a world as dull and boring.

Many of the previously quoted statements indicate that the “ideals” of consumer society still belong to the dream world of many young Russians (who have not really experienced the uncomfortable sides of this dream world, which Baudrillard called a dearth society72), while (the counterparts of) their parents living in difficult material circumstances do not want to know about this world.

However, many hard-working adult Russians are often worried about brand furnishings, which they would like to have in the future when they buy a flat of their own, for which they probably are saving money while living under trying circumstances. In this future scenario, they will hopefully have more money for daily expenses as well, which will allow them to distinguish themselves with prestigious cosmetics, cars or other status objects.

On the other hand, the consumer society is becoming a reality for a growing number of Russians, who are marked by the same symptoms as those described by Schor and Baudrillard, for instance stress, anxiety and even depression: What objects are fashionable? Will the people around me accept them?

However, the attitudes towards work and leisure of the residents of the two cities, as displayed in Figure 4:4, suggest that the consumer culture in Russia is far from the stage at which leisure activities have shifted in function, from enjoying one’s free time, feeling satisfaction and functional relaxation to the mature phase where, according to Baudrillard, consumers make fruitless attempts to “relax” and “enjoy” their free time by imitating holiday celebrations, while essentially wasting this time in loneliness, like absurd mythical heroes such

72 Baudrillard 1970.
as Sisyphus and Tantalus. During this mature phase, people become increasingly unable to understand each other, who they are and what they actually want. And when they cannot do that, the advertising and PR managers will be there to help them.\textsuperscript{73}

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\textsuperscript{73} Baudrillard 1970.
Part II: Country-specific Outlooks
5. The Dynamics of the Influence of Russian Mass Media on Society and the Individual. In-depth Interviews with Media Experts

Sergey G. Korkonosenko & Dmitry A. Ruschin

The research programme “The Role of Media for Identity and Democracy” is intended to be a multidisciplinary project and to give us the opportunity to see contemporary media from different perspectives. As programme initiator, Södertörn University (Sweden) took into consideration both theoretical-conceptual and empirical components that complement, intensify and mutually verify each other. In particular, the media audience survey and in-depth interviews with representatives of different respondent categories are included in the empirical part of the project. In this way, the consumers’ and the target audiences’ attitudes towards mass media emerge (a glance from the outside). Another empirical component is analysis of the “objective” material, i.e., printed and audio-visual media publications. This pair of components needs to be supplemented with a glance from within, i.e., with the judgments of specialists who run the media or are in regular business collaboration with mass media. Given the logic of this complex research project, it also includes interviews with professional experts (see Forward and Introduction, as well as the Appendix: Additional Description of Methods).

The primary reason for interviewing media experts is to provide a balanced “play of forces”, as engineers say, i.e., equal intensity of subjective estimations from both sides of the “objective” material. However, interviewing experts also serves another purpose. By virtue of the participants’ profound knowledge of the subject under discussion and their professional skills in analysing, reasoning and comparing data, they do the work of self-reflection on behalf of the interviewing, the experts typically acknowledged that they did not often have to think about complicated questions regarding relationships between the media, journalists, society and the individual. They seldom needed to express their detailed thoughts on this subject, in particular in public. According to the authors’ observations, the overwhelming majority of answers were spontaneous, not the result of an explanation elaborated in advance. Consequently, it becomes obvious that the professional community does not pay any great attention to the
formulation and discussion of the problems of the socio-cultural existence of the mass media, which largely developed spontaneously during the interview. Moreover, at least to some extent, the research project stimulated self-reflection in the media environment, whereby our interviewees became engaged in this intellectual work, showing their sincere interest and enthusiasm.

As we have pointed out in our document “The Media Situation in St. Petersburg: Contemporary Organisation and Content”, the mass media in today’s Russia (and in St. Petersburg, in particular) are generally subject to the same tendencies, which are typical of international and European practices. On the one hand, the Russian media sphere is characterized by such signs of quality growth as establishing ramified systems of information legislation, a wide variety of channels and publication content, fast assimilation of new information technologies, individualization of information consumption, etc. Furthermore, market pressure on media practices leads to commercialization not only of the media organization, but also of the matter of their activity. Under these conditions, a humanistic, analytical approach to covering social life, attention to audience needs and other traditional features of Russian journalism are largely being lost. Moreover, the media’s dependence on the current political system and state machinery also has an additional influence on their value orientation and activities. The role of the printed media is decreasing in the public information exchange. However, television has increased its expansion in the public sphere and become the most popular and effective channel for exercising ideological, emotional and cultural influence. The Internet is also penetrating the communication environment with rapid strides, though Russia falls behind other European countries with regard to the intensity of Internet use. In contrast, mobile networks cover all strata of society, especially young people, and communication via mobile phones not only competes with mass media, but also supersedes face-to-face communication between people. In the last instance, Russian journalism shows a tendency to be losing the characteristics of national-cultural identity and mental life by becoming mainly a branch of business activity. In a similar vein, the directions and effects of journalism’s impact on the audience and society are redistributed.

The general ideas underlying the subproject are specified in a set of tasks that are closely connected to the working hypotheses of the study. The tasks, understood in connection with the hypotheses, include the following positions:

1. The data collection intended to answer the main questions postulated in the project “The Role of Media for Identity and Democracy”. The main questions were, briefly, the following: Does the growing media output contribute to pluralism, democracy and equality or to cultural standardization or frag-

1 Korkonosenko & Ruschin 2007.
mentation? Do the media contribute to reinforcement of the national cultural identity or to unstable, ephemeral lifestyles? Do the media reproduce the status quo or is their importance only marginal?

2. Identifying tendencies in the experts’ opinions and estimations. The authors assume that a number of principle issues will be found on which most of the experts agree. In this case, it will be possible to argue that we have, if not an objective state of affairs, at least, an opinion, commonly held in the professional environment.

3. Interpreting the correlation between experts’ opinions and their status, experience, age and other professional and personal characteristics. The hypothesis is that complete homogeneity of opinions is impossible in reality and is undesirable from a scientific point of view. The research will prove to be relevant if the results reveal that the varying opinions existing in reality are reflected. An additional hypothesis is that each expert’s opinions are influenced by the circumstances of the professional activity, working experience (a factor affecting one’s ability to see phenomena over social time), and the media channel characteristics through which media, society, etc., are observed.

4. Studying experts’ views on the prospects of developing the media situation in Russia and in St. Petersburg. It is assumed that the specialists will find general tendencies in the development of the global media sphere and will emphasize special features of Russian mass media in this context, as well as point out the specificities of the St. Petersburg media system.

According to the selection model agreed on with the Swedish research partners, a list of 16 experts was compiled. It included representatives from different kinds of mass media (printed, audio-visual, and virtual) and of different orientation (information, analytical, entertaining). Along with State mass media (for instance, the TV channel Rossiya – St. Petersburg, the radio station Radio Rossiya – St. Petersburg), private companies are represented (The First Media Company, the TV company Vremya (Time)). Some interview participants are staff members of media in radical opposition to the powers, that is, the newspapers Novaya gazeta (The New Newspaper) and Delo (Business). Two experts were researchers who combine scientific activity and practical work in the mass media.

In the analytical part of the article, the interview themes are presented in a different order than in the interview guide. This difference can be explained by the authors’ ambition to identify major problem areas, which are reflected in different sections of the text, and, accordingly, to find appropriate material in different parts of the recorded interviews. As is usually the case in deliberative discussions, the talk returns from time to time to topics raised earlier, and then these topics are seen in a new, additional light. In the last instance, it is more important for us to explain the phenomena studied and the accompanying prob-
lems than to demonstrate the formal adequacy of the answers to our questions. Therefore, the interview content is presented in the following thematic sections:

- Main changes in the structure, regulation and content of the mass media
- The role of mass media in the development of pluralism and democratic liberties
- The role of mass media in socialization of the individual and in the formation of a national identity
- Development of social and personal communication resources
- The distinctive traits of the media situation in Russia (against the background of the world) and in St. Petersburg (against the background of Russia)

The following parameters are searched for in the experts’ statements:

- Presence of the phenomenon (e.g., media influence on pluralism)
- Direction of the manifestation of the phenomenon (vectors, manifestation type)
- Intensity of the manifestation of the phenomenon
- Estimation of the social value and the consequences of the manifestation of the phenomenon (in relation to identity and democracy)
- The expert’s personal attitude towards the phenomenon, including the characteristic form of the statement
- Proximity/difference of estimations and factors influencing the difference, primarily the individual characteristics of the expert
- Conclusion regarding the phenomenon: presence, character and intensity of its manifestation, degree of coincidence of the estimations or the strength and nature of the differences.

The given order reflects the general logical scheme of the narration, but not the compositional one, which is softer and more flexible. Sergey G. Korkonosenko has written the thematic sections 1 and 2 as well as the introduction and summary; Dmitry A. Ruschin has written the thematic sections 3-5.

The media experts’ opinions

1. Changes in the structure, regulation and content of the mass media

The media experts’ opinions about changes in the structure, regulation and content of the mass media constitute the largest theme designated in the interview. The interviewees strived to make generalizations, estimating the general results over the past twenty years.
All experts noted the changes as a matter of fact. Moreover, as a rule it was emphasized that the changes were of a radical character and had essentially transformed the whole media sphere. The changes are enormous; we have lived through a whole epoch, as one of our interviewees said.

Anything else could hardly have been expected, as changes in the media sphere accompanied the profound breakdown of the entire socio-political system in Russia. Besides, all over the world, mass information practices have undergone a boom of development and modernization, which had to affect the Russian reality. It was also easy to anticipate that the experts would directly connect the abrupt changes in the socio-political context of media practices with the processes of democratization, and with the dynamics of State participation in social life, among which the experts mentioned privatization of the mass media as the most important basic structural change. More precisely speaking, the State has ceased to be a monopolist in the media sphere.

It is another matter that the experts have different ideas about the importance and the value of such changes. But this question deserves a special analysis, which we undertake below. In the abrupt change of the situation in the media sphere, several directions are seen clearly. Here we mention them not in the order of priority given by the experts, but neutrally in an enumerative list. First of all, there is the extraordinary progress that has been made the material base of the information exchange.

Several satellite channels, such as BBC, Euro News, Animal Planet, and Discovery, have become accessible in St. Petersburg, as has the rapidly expanding domestic telecasting (consisting of just three or four channels during the Soviet era), which currently includes a number of profiled channels, such as Kultura, Sport, the non-stop news channel Vesti, and a separate channel for children’s animated cartoons, etc. The FM radio (a new phenomenon in the post-Soviet period) comprises 25 channels only in St. Petersburg, while some observers consider that the Internet has become the main information source for many people (for reading newspapers, watching movies, etc.). In addition, a great number of printed magazines with various profiles have appeared (about cars, health, animals, and specific soap operas, such as *Sex & the City*, etc.).

These are just some indications of the organizational-technical transformation of the media sphere. It seems that, in this respect, Russia does not stand out significantly against the background of global tendencies.

However, the differences do not only consist of quantitative indicators, but also concern the interrelation between their growth and changes in the political-ideological climate in the country. This is the second direction of change mentioned by the experts, and it is characterized by, among other things, the independent and even partly oppositional mass media, a new phenomenon that followed the disintegration of the former media system. In the broadcasting sphere, the State controlled the distribution of financial, creative, technological
and personnel resources through the State TV and Radio Committee. According to one expert the new situation also means that the State today has almost no control over the print media.

The third direction is the commercialization of the media industry, where the State monopoly has primarily been replaced by the strong control of big business, which means, as one expert put it, that the media have to survive by earning money in all possible ways. Ninety per cent of the TV channels are now private or with very insignificant State shares, as another interviewee pointed out.

Finally, a number of experts see a special direction of changes in the juridical legitimation of information work and the creation of a corresponding normative base, implying the abolishment of censorship, on the one hand, and new legislation related to mass media, TV and radio production, licensing, and copyright and similar rights, on the other. There is also a new law on advertising, in which tougher requirements for outdoor advertising have been adopted, and separate kinds of advertising concerning narcotics and psychotropic substances, etc., have been adjusted, as one expert reported.

Thus, in light of the expert statements, changes in the media sphere appear to be an integrated phenomenon, connected with the most essential parts of mass media activities in the social world. Simply speaking, we are dealing with different media in a different country. This conclusion was so obvious to the media experts that some of them did not bother to provide a detailed description of the picture of changes at all, but at once focused on a qualitative evaluation of the results of the long period of reform.

The attitude towards these results differs sometimes depending on the public and the professional status of the expert, and also – we shall not ignore it – on the level of their intellectuality. However, we can also trace a general tendency. Irrespective of the position of the expert on this or that statement, we can designate an opposition along the line plurality of sources - variety. It is natural that plurality is perceived as positive in itself, as something that can serve the society and the individual, because it is considered to promote additional sources of knowledge, not least for children.

One opinion is that pluralism becomes a real fact to the extent that it is predetermined by the conditions of competition in a market economy, where the basic law of “Distinction or death!” automatically brings about diversity in the mass media.

Other experts refused to view as positive a simple increase in the quantity of media output if such an increase is not accompanied by increased diversity of the contents and stylistics. The diagnosis resulting from a “consultation” with these experts does not testify to the normal state of the “patient’s” health. The content of the printed output is defined by the word “yellowness” (meaning low quality), the same time as triviality is regarded as a characteristic feature of today’s television. Five or ten years ago, TV was much more interesting.
In certain statements, this general conclusion is developed into an analysis of the technology that produces content much as on an assembly line. These experts related the one-sidedness of the current TV output primarily to the prevalence on all TV channels of entertainment blocks (as a rule copies of licensed Western productions, not so original), which have the unconditional “property” of facilitating advertising. Politics and public problems are seldom the object of attention on Russian TV channels, or they are subjected to standardization and simplification. Only satellite and subscribed cable television appears as an exception.

Here it is pertinent to consider the image offered by the American professor Monroe Price, who studied the newest information reality in the global world and, in particular, in Russia: “Five hundred channels… could be similar to 500 smells of chewing-gum… they are capable to create an illusion of a choice or a real variety.”

The subsequent areas of emphasis are differentiated in line with the personal priorities of the experts. It seems that those experts who possess rich editorial experience are inclined to specify anomalies in the media economy. For example, one media expert reported that all current newspapers have private owners, which negatively affects media development in general and the printed media in particular, because newspapers are often used by owners to create public opinion about themselves and thereby promote their own political career. The owner and the press have not yet understood each other in full.

According to certain experts, the intervention of the owner, with his egoistic interests and incompetence in the business of journalism, results in a decrease in the professional level of the mass media and to one-sidedness in their content and form. In many cases, industry uses the mass media in their competitive struggle and for resolving specific economic problems, thereby keeping professionals from practicing good journalism and destroying the diversity of the genre, as one expert put it.

Some experts did not limit themselves to ascertaining the fact of standardization of media contents, but directed their critical view to the socio-cultural and political consequences of this metamorphosis. The total simplification of “all and everything” is characteristic of the modern media, and this leads to a general state of ignorance (of the population), which in a way is considered to be intentional, because “the more limited people’s views are, the easier it is to govern them”.

The last statement (as well as many other critical opinions) was made by a representative of a State company. The level of criticism found in the estimations does not correlate significantly with the different forms of media ownership. However, the political-ideological determinants of standardization were emphasized particularly by specialists who associate themselves with the oppositional

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press or who, at least, defend the primacy of professional values that seem to collide with political interests. The uniformity of the media is, thus, considered to be a result of a specific State policy, aimed at the elimination of oppositional editions. Such a view allows one to characterize the present situation as “leaving the principles of publication and returning to the principles of political propaganda, and partly even of political censorship of the mass media”. This authoritative policy, which was rather inconsequential during the Yeltsin era, has in this view reached its logical fulfilment during the rule of Putin, and is exercised with particular force as regards television, where nothing is possible that has not been coordinated 100 per cent with the President’s press service, as one expert reported.

We feel obliged to emphasize the great intensity with which such statements were made, as a sign of these experts’ dissatisfaction with the political monotony that, in their opinion, has been established. At the same time, we must mention the fairly wide divergence of opinions on similar questions, for example as demonstrated by estimations of the influence on the press that is exerted by regional authorities in St. Petersburg. Thus, according to one viewpoint, censorship in St. Petersburg has been flourishing since 2003. Other experts stressed that cases in which pressure has been put on mass media owners by regional authorities or situations of direct conflict, like the beating of journalists who worked for State TV during the suppression of the March of the Non-consents, should be considered as exceptions. According to some experts, the absence of direct conflicts depends on the fact that “the mass media understand up to what limits they can afford to quarrel with authorities”. According to others, however, the absence of conflict is a consequence of a “division of the media market” between the State-controlled sector and other media, within the limits of which criticism is allowed and only false information severely punished.

Direct references to the media experts’ personal positions have not been included in the text by accident. Most likely, the opinion of each expert on the administration’s information policy is defined in many respects by already established relations to the authorities – both their own personal relations and those of their editorial house. In this situation, it is difficult to count on objectivity. Thus, it is necessary to recognize that everyone has, as the saying goes, his own truth. However, it is also impossible to overlook the basic fact that real democracy should be built on an equitable interaction between all participants in civil life, and that in a social partnership there are neither privileged elites nor pariahs.

Russian journalists have special reasons for showing their discontentment with the pressure from authorities, analogies of which are not to be found in Western countries. Those professionals who have working experience in the mass media from the period of perestroika and earlier constantly compare the present situation with the former, and this comparison, as a rule, does not put the contemporary state of affairs in a favourable light. It is clear that the experts
critically judge the transformation of the functions of the press, which are typical for domestic journalism and, more broadly, the national culture. As regards cultural dimensions, the experts referred to a deeper history, not at all to the most recent decades. The experts are especially alarmed by the fact that the media, having adopted the overall objective to entertain, in many respects have lost their critical and educational functions.

Comparisons regarding cultural and political dimensions are made using even sharper contrasts, concerning the capability of print media to carry on a dialogue with the authorities and society. Here, the journalists called to mind recent times, especially the late 1980s-1990s, the so-called thaw period of the media, which developed particularly impetuously on Leningrad television. Having the right to broadcast all over the country, Leningrad television was at the same time free from the “dosing” to which Moscow television (which was close to the authorities) was subjected. “There was a tremendous euphoria when suddenly we understood that it was possible to learn about our life not in the kitchen, not whispering, but from a newspaper, from a TV channel”, i.e., freedom of information was a prominent feature of that period. The uniqueness of that time, according to one viewpoint, is that strong critique of the authorities was published in newspapers funded by the State.

The comparatively recent personal sensation of almost boundless freedom of speech and the great clout of the journalist have, naturally, generated a certain ideal of democracy, in the structure of which the press has played the role of an independent and extremely authoritative institute.

*The audience*

A special interview question concerned changes in the audience, primarily from the viewpoint of its preferences for using different information channels. All experts agreed that the formerly monolithic audience has been differentiated.

The audience has been divided. In the end of the 80s, the worker, the kolkhoz (collective farm, socialistic form of cooperation in agriculture) woman and the university teacher read one newspaper because their interests were similar. In reality, the society was not homogeneous. But whole life areas did not exist, to which the mass media are now devoted, for example, hobbies. Now the university teacher reads one newspaper (or magazine), the worker another, the farmer a third. This is a simple consequence of market development.

However, the reduced use of mass media, particularly printed media, is also pointed out as a statistical fact.

If earlier each family of three persons subscribed to at least 2-3 central newspapers, 2-3 regional ones, 2-3 and even 4 magazines, today a family subscribes to
one newspaper. And the newspaper has, as a rule, a general profile; besides, it must include the TV schedules.

Even the audiovisual media are experiencing a narrowing circle of consumers.

For example, the rating of the Leningrad programme *600 seconds* used to reach 80 per cent, all the country used to watch it, while now the news programme *Vesti* (Messages) on the channel Russia gets 8 per cent, and it is considered to be a big-big victory.

The differentiation process is seen as an objective phenomenon, directly correlated with the variety of offers in the mass information market. It is described in different ways that, nevertheless, are based in one way or another on the fact of audience stratification – not only on the basis of thematic interests, but also on the basis of prosperity and cultural development, as well as on mental characteristics.

For instance, the Internet holds the third place after television and radio, something that is connected with “expenses”. At the same time, the sharp decrease in newspaper subscriptions is explained by the fact that the print media “lag behind radio and TV, the following ranking of popularity of the media resources is suggested: by speed”, and also because they publish “long articles”; “there is simply no time” to read them. As a positive phenomenon, the distribution of free-of-charge newspapers is mentioned, because they satisfy “the needs of people with a low level of prosperity”.

Thus, the choice appears not to be so randomly individual as it might seem at first glance. The experts also specified the determinants of mass media choice: A significant role is played in this respect by the age factor. Young people are more active in using the Internet; the audience of newspapers and television “has grown old in this sense”. These kinds of media consumers – who do not use the Internet – belong to the “inert strata of the population”.

Close to the aforementioned is the view of one expert who felt that the media audience is divided into two categories. The first category is the so-called “doers” – representatives of the previous generation, who were formed by a mass media that did not “give opportunities of choice”. The expert contrasted these users, who have “not learned to choose and are used to living in accordance with a built-in scheme” and consequently to feeling “inadequate” in the contemporary media situation, to people who possess an “internal freedom” that allows them “to feel better in the new system”. In the latter group, we should certainly include the businessmen who have “gone over to the Internet”.

Let us consider the quoted utterances against a statistical background. According to the Federal Department Rossvajazokhrankultura, by January 1, 2008, almost 20,000 so-called electronic mass media (i.e., not printed) were
registered in Russia. Their share of the registered mass media during the past five years has grown approximately 1.5 times – from 14 per cent to 21 per cent. ³

Even if one does not fully agree with the experts’ appraisals of the situation, it is clear that we are dealing with a socio-cultural problem of vital importance. Actually, here the discussion concerns an on-going deep split in society: first regarding access to information resources, and second concerning the possibility to join the social sphere and to play in it an active role on an equal footing with other segments of the population.

Judging by the presented picture, segments of the younger population, businessmen and most educated citizens are included in a rather small circle of people upon whom fate has smiled. The rest – the majority of Russians – should be content with passive consumption of easily assimilated mass production, which leads to a general state of ignorance, as one expert pointed out. Among the interview participants, there are apologists for the given thesis. In our opinion, it is no coincidence that younger journalists, engaged in entertainment telecasting, are reasoning in this way. The character of one’s professional work implies a certain way of judging it. In this vein, one assertion is postulated, which states that all people are marked not only by the desire to learn about, but also to peek at, including by means of the mass media, the ordinary life of other normal individuals – and there is nothing shameful about this, according to this point of view. Especially attractive to the spectator is the ability to observe, “as through a keyhole”, the life of the “rich and famous”.

Meanwhile, the experts have already felt the negative consequences of the mass trivialization of people’s interests. The “dulling” influence of the mass media on the population is said to be visible even in the “news information”, which basically fails to presuppose the necessity of the receiver’s interpretation.

In this way, the experts place on those working in the media the responsibility for encouraging simple tastes and passive behaviour through media information, and even in the social environment. For some experts, it is clear that media owners are purposefully conducting an aggressive policy of taste formation. “They create an impression in the public, that it wants only what is shown on television and what is printed in the glossy magazines.” According to them, the situation is especially sad because most viewers, readers and listeners say that the media products are disgusting, but nevertheless consume such products. The essential point of these experts is that use of the infotainment format is convenient, not only as an easy way to win an audience, but also as a means to avoid discussion of “serious” problems, which would displease powerful bodies.

Most experts are worried about the qualitative dynamics of the audience and the ways in which the mass media keep track of them. They feel anxious about the fact that the media do not so much contribute to the development of the

audience’s self-consciousness, as they exploit, for their own gain, the basic and sometimes lowly instincts peculiar to humankind.

In this respect, their position is described in the conclusions of academic science, whose representatives make rather sharp statements: “Today one observes quite often a full absence of sense in the information work of the media.”

Economy and ownership

The experts direct special and extremely sharp attention to the dependence of media information production on the economy and the market. In essence, nobody challenges the categorical statement of one expert: “The business function has become primary and predetermines, thus, all the rest.”

However, economic problems in their pure form do not interest the interviewees a great deal; the conversation was inevitably built along the line market – independence of mass media – value orientations. This is most likely because, according to a widespread belief, the media business is not developing so successfully as to constitute an independent object of any great interest. “Such kinds of business as TV channels and radio are non-profitable in St. Petersburg.” And remarking that “in the country it is difficult to find even one mass medium that pays its way”, one expert emphasized that such a state of affairs does not only characterize the media sphere. “In our country, there is no satisfactory private property, not in the oil business, or in the field of small business, or in the mass media.” “Actually, if real market mechanisms were to be applied, many newspapers would simply die.”

Let us add some objective data: According to the Federal Department Rossvjazokhrankultura, the share of the media market in the country’s gross national product is only 1.4 per cent, that is, this branch is not at all crucial to society from an economic point of view. This certainly does not mean that there is no local commercial success or that financial resources are small in media business. A successful businessman in the media sphere is right in saying, on the basis of his personal experience:

If anything is growing in Russia, it is the advertising market. Concerning the volume of the TV advertising market, we came up from the twentieth place to the sixth in five years. That is, there is a lot of advertising money. So if someone has a desire to acquire full economic independence, it is not complicated to do so.

By the way, we should sufficiently correct this evaluation under conditions of global financial crisis, which disturbed national advertising market. But the quoted expert could not foresee actual situation in the moment of interview.

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4 Chevozerova 2007, p. 104.
The experts tried to bring to light the entangled system of relations, explaining that the mass media are owned by these or those market actors. This system is so opaque, however, that the experts differ in their assessments of the current pattern of ownership. On the one hand, some experts asserted that the share of State property in the St. Petersburg market is very small – 5-15 per cent. The figure increases up to 50 per cent, only if one considers the grants that the city administration gives as support to private media. Another expert concretized this opinion, specifying that State ownership is represented by the All-Russia State broadcasting company (VGTRK), with its divisions in all regions, as well as by Rossiyskaya gazeta and Parlamentskaya gazeta, and also some official newspapers on the municipal, regional and city level. The rest is private property, in one way or another.

According to another viewpoint, however, “nowadays, the State-owned mass media or mass media with State shares of participation represent the biggest block”. The authorities “needed to have a weapon”. So, the recent “nationalization” of many mass media, which once had real chances of becoming independent, has been connected with the process of strengthening “the verticality of power”. The economic forces have always been “subsidiary in the background of political factors”.

We shall refrain from attempts to resolve this dispute because, in the first place, it is based on different value criteria and, secondly, the participants (in the dispute) are more anxious about the mechanisms influencing the media than about the nominal belonging of this or that channel or edition (to private persons or to the State). Consequently, the experts regard the process of creating huge media holdings by the “President’s friends” as a way of “imposing a political will”. The fact that the State has started to spend more money on mass media than the private sector does, however, allow one expert to talk about the so-called “polito-commerical stage” in the development of Russian media (after a liberalization period that started during glasnost). “The mass media have remained commercial, but politicized”.6 One should speak “not about suffocation of the freedom of speech, but about the State purchasing a position in the mass media”. “Mass media speak positively about the situation in the country not because they are afraid, but because it is favourable for them.”

In this dictatorship of economic interlaced with political interests, the experts see a serious threat to the preservation of social, moral and professional values in the mass media. Thus, according to one expert, “information wars” have been one negative consequence of the division of the media market between the large owners. One vivid example is the pre-election campaign of 1999, “unprecedented in terms of impudence and rudeness”. The ownership structure,

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6 Here, we ought to take into consideration earlier statements in the text that “commercial” in this context means that a medium is privately owned and uses advertising, but not that it will pay its way.
another expert asserted, does not simply influence the media content, it is fundamental. There are very few owners who do not interfere with the editorial policy. The private channels have started to defend the interests of their shareholders, the owners. However, their interests do not always coincide with those of common ethics and morality. The market laws have come to the fore. They promote what sells well; unfortunately, what sells well is usually not products of great artistic value, but products for mass consumption.

In sum
In sum, the media experts agree that during the past decades there have been marked changes in the structure and character of Russian mass media activities. The changes in themselves are evaluated positively, as clear evidence of technical and social progress. However, the process of adopting the increasing opportunities offered by information activities is inconsistent and contradictory, according to a majority of the experts. First, this is expressed in terms of the zigzag character of the social movement towards a new quality of informational, political and cultural practice. Not without nostalgic feelings, the experts recollected the times of widespread freedom in the media sphere (during the first half of the 1990s) and observed, as a minimum, the ongoing curtailment of the scope of freedom. Second, they spoke about the low degree of exploitation of media resources in the interests of society and the individual, about social needs that are far from fully met in this respect. Third, the experts discussed with keen interest the declining professional and cultural level of the mass media, on the one hand, and the declining requirements of the mass audience, on the other.

During the interview, major factors of such dynamics of the media situation emerged, including the following:

- Service to State interests, disproportionately strongly expressed in the mass media in comparison with public interests
- Egoistical tendencies in media management on the part of their owners and a weak structure of the media business
- Politicization of the functioning and development of the media sphere
- Insufficiently responsible attitude of the media community regarding preservation of the democratic nature of journalism, observance of basic professional ethics, and development of national and cultural traditions.

The experts expressed these kinds of opinions with varying intensity, from categorical denial of positive tendencies to recognition of the existing state of things as (on the whole) normal and prosperous. Two characteristics of the experts are of crucial importance in this respect. The first of them is the political status of the expert (loyal, oppositional, neutral attitude to the regime), and the second is his/her experience, which facilitates comparisons with earlier periods,
including the Soviet era in which the older professional journalists possessed qualities deserving of preservation and inheritance. The experts’ other characteristics (such attributes as media channel type, thematic specialization, gender, basic education, etc.) do not have as strong a differentiating influence on their opinions.

2. The role of the mass media in the development of pluralism and democratic liberties

So as to be convincing in their answers to questions about the general situation in the media sphere, our interviewees mentioned a large number of issues, as though intimating a more detailed subsequent discussion. Among the issues requiring profound analysis is the question of freedom of speech and of the press in modern Russia. This question, in turn, is subdivided into several, relatively independent plots. We will present all of them in this section of the article, beginning with one urgent problem: To what degree is it possible to say that the freedoms in question really exist, i.e., that they are not just proclaimed?

Several media experts expressed themselves in a clearly positive or confirming manner. Moreover, in their words sounds a reaction to claims from the Western world, as well as from internal critics, that there is no freedom of speech in Russia. One expert, expressing categorical disagreement with such an opinion, gives St. Petersburg as an example: 400 print media are freely criticizing the authorities, and surely not because “the city administration pays them for this”. This is the opinion of an expert representing the official circles. However, the statements of other experts, who have no institutional relations with the authorities, do not differ significantly from the first opinion. The situation of freedom of speech in Russia is said to be the same as all over the world. According to one expert, this is exemplified by the fact that the President is not an object of criticism in Russia or in the U.S. The possibility to “permit oneself more” during the Yeltsin years was due to the weakness of the “political influence and physical conditions” of the former President.

In the West, it is also impossible to speak or write negatively about advertisers, and about the city authorities on which a medium depends. According to this point of view, the important advantage of the West consists of “certain democratic traditions”. However, “our population does not condemn the control, because it does not bother to look at the present television”, one expert asserted, referring to sociological surveys.

There are also special, partly paradoxical aspects of this parallel between Russia and the global community. It is characteristic that experts from the media business think in such a way, that is, they do not feel the press of obligations to official powers. In other words, we are dealing with a pure product of personal reflections.
Freedom of speech is a myth, according to some experts. The owner receives financial or political dividends on the basis of the position his media occupy. In Western countries, in the opinion of one expert, the mass media earn money, not bothering about political positions. The situation is the same in Russia, the only difference being that in this instance the State pays more than business does. The situation in Russia is problematical in that the State is accused of “infringement on freedom of speech” as soon as it imposes censorship upon certain information areas. This expert added: “Western countries consider that mass media are a sacred cow and when choosing between stability, a healthy robust country, and media liberty, they choose media liberty. Our society chooses non-liberty of the media but a healthy society.”

Based on a more rational understanding, one argument for the existence of liberties is the creation of legal guarantees and frameworks for mass information practice. According to one expert’s statement, everything is normal with freedom of speech in Russia, when it comes to the formal characteristics. No media have been closed by the authorities on political grounds (with the exception of separate cases in which broadcasting has been stopped temporarily in connection with illegal interpretations of terrorist actions in 2002 and 2005). A mass medium in Russia can be closed only on judicial order, which the same expert considered as a major legal achievement. According to this point of view, the impression that freedom of speech has been restrained is related to the quantitative increase in laws controlling journalists.

It is remarkable that, although specifying cases of infringement of the law by many media, the advocates of this position are even favourable to stronger State control.

Certainly, the formation of a strong normative basis for the mass media should be considered an achievement, putting Russia on the same level as the most developed democracies of the world. The manifest opponents of the ruling authority acknowledge this as well, though with reservations characteristic of them:

There is no political censorship such as that of Stalin’s or even Brezhnev’s time; however, there is obviously a strong influence on mass media exerted by “the State and by structures affiliated with the State, including commercial ones”.

Similar comments frankly expressed sceptical opinions about the reliability of the legal toolkit of democracy. Actually, the bearers of such opinions are convinced that guarantees of freedom exist only nominally, whereas reality develops under other laws.

In more detail, the experts revealed the correlation between the legal order and real restrictions on freedom of speech through the prism of journalists’ relations with media owners and executives. Here, we have an extension of the concept of freedom to the single individual’s possibility to express and defend his/her viewpoints in the media. In this context, the norms of the Constitution of the Russian Federation regarding freedom of speech, ideas and opinions would
seem to remain out of discussion: they are not mentioned in the dialogue, but experts agree with these positions and do not contradict them in their reflections.

Here, we necessarily return to the complex of interrelated economic, administrative and political interests about which we spoke earlier. The frequent recurrence of this motive in the experts’ reflections compels us to think that we are dealing with one of the basic characteristics of the modern Russian media system.

According to one position, the information policy of a given medium depends on the interests of the owner, primarily the owner’s economic interests. Therefore, one expert is amazed by the conviction of some editors that advertising can provide independence for newspapers, because he considers advertising to be censorship. The desire to earn more money through advertising brings with it the need to increase the audience, something that automatically involves simplification of the content, the expert explained.

Other experts spoke about self-censorship, i.e., the intuition the single journalist has about “the degree of acceptability”. The desire to write what you want will lead to problems with the editor, who in turn will collide with the editor-in-chief, and he/she in turn with someone higher up still. Restrictions on freedom of speech, thus, are seen not only as directly imposed by the owner, but also as “self-restriction” of managers on the “lowest” level, who are striving to avoid conflicts with top management.

We do not consider the word “self-censorship” to be an exact term, which is why we treat it as (professional and everyday) slang. Nevertheless, in this case, with its help the problem of consecutive restriction of personal freedom on a straight vertical line is designated – from the political “tops” down to the correspondent’s immediate superior. These restrictions should necessarily cripple the journalist’s professional and civil self-confidence, something mentioned also in the experts’ statements. To some experts, however, the situation does not appear so desperate at all – moreover, they consider the existing order of things to be normal. This is true of employees from private as well as State-controlled media. Obviously, their positions are grounded on the stability of their personal and professional existence.

For instance, one expert referred to his experience in a State company, affirming that freedom of speech exists within the limits of some kind of concept, while restrictions are everywhere. “The State pays us. So, naturally, we cannot be in opposition to the State.” Freedom of speech, according to the given position, consists of the journalist’s opportunity to choose a mass medium with another “orientation”.

Such an approach represents concisely the idea of the journalist as a hired worker freely exchanging his working capacity on the labour market. We have to admit that this is a rather widespread idea in the professional environment. It reflects to a lesser degree the ideas of personal autonomy and the journalist’s values with regard to ideology, creativity and morality. We shall add that,
according to other experts, it does not reflect quite adequately the actual situation in the media market and journalistic work. It is perfectly natural that consistently critical positions have been adopted by oppositional journalists.

The contemporary situation of freedom of speech is, in their opinion, comparable with the Soviet epoch, the only difference being that the role of samizdat (early underground self-editions opposed to the official broadcast and printed media) is presently being played by some newspapers. “They are not banned only because they influence to such a minimal degree, which suits the authorities.”

In other words, for ideological reasons, the only choice of some professionals is still low popularity and weak public influence. This argument against the possibility of an alternative choice should be acknowledged as significant, if there was no old tradition of considering journalism as a profession, in which personal-moral self-determination is always assumed despite material losses and other inconveniences. The last-mentioned thesis has been confirmed by a series of studies conducted by The Research Institute of Applied Ethics (Tyumen), devoted to the moral-ethical content of the journalistic profession. One investigation, involving the participation of a large circle of experts, has shown that “irrespective of divergences in their positions, journalists believe that it is both possible and necessary to consider […] such a component of their profession as its ontological basis – meaning a problem of moral choice (‘devotion to the profession’ or ‘life in the name of the profession’).” The organizers of the Tyumen research project agree with the given conclusion – moreover it is in complete accordance with their view that the moral-ethical dimension of the profession goes back to the ideas of Max Weber and other outstanding sociologists and philosophers of ethics. Some of the participants in the interviews also argued in a similar way, when they placed on themselves or on other journalists the responsibility for maintenance of an inner (intellectual) freedom (and the corresponding freedom of behaviour).

The error of the journalists has been that, after the period of glasnost euphoria, they could not assess the reader’s degree of trust in order to properly handle it, as one expert indicated. Another expert asserted that everything depends on the will of the editor-in-chief. However, boldness is dangerous, as it implies phone calls with threats and physical violence.

According to another viewpoint, the situation is the same now as during the Soviet era; everyone enjoys the degree of freedom to which she/he aspires in accordance with her/his inner conviction. In the same way as people earlier printed samizdat, many journalists now write what they consider to be essential. In this expert’s opinion, the only difference is that now “they show you what

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8 without publishing house, self-publishing, underground distribution of printed material (editor’s remark).
shouldn’t be done, afterwards you make your decision”. The question is whether you have courage enough to overcome this interdiction. Ascertaining the “damage of customs” in the journalistic environment, where “they pay money for lying, while for the truth they, on the contrary, take away money from you”, one expert was at the same time positive about the opportunity of improving the situation “in the conditions of the changing political climate”.

Thus, the problem of press freedom appears in a much more multi-valued shape, than as a simple pressure from powerful authorities and media owners. The structure of this freedom includes the counter-willingness of representatives of the media community to make compromises with external powers and to resist their initiatives on restriction of the autonomy of the press. Some forms of such interaction were mentioned during the interviews.

For instance, according to one expert’s testimony, the editors-in-chief of the leading Russian TV channels and newspapers periodically go to meetings with the Administration of the President in Kremlin. Another expert also mentioned the so-called stop-sheets, i.e., lists of people who should not be invited to appear on the air. One expert revealed another mechanism whereby special PR services staff develop a version of the text in which the event is represented with a certain “tonality”. This version is circulated to all editorial offices, and they may publish such articles and receive a certain amount of money in return. Commissions that are represented as media support or partnership from the large corporations, e.g., (State-owned) Gazprom, have begun to appear. It is obvious that in such articles “the criticism is extinguished” and they look like texts “from the propaganda department”. Some experts also mentioned cases in which journalists were beaten during the March of the Non-consents. Subsequent attempts by the Journalist Union to organize joint protest actions have been interrupted after a series of meetings between some leading journalists and the governor.

Similar compromises and private arrangements caused various reactions among the interviewed experts. On one end of the continuum, there is full recognition of the legitimacy of such practice, from a pragmatic point of view:

It is normal, when there are certain interests. It is possible to reach an agreement with a person that you will not write negatively about him, while he, in exchange, gives you information that you need. But this is a single agreement. Another time (if he were to commit an illegal action) the papers would write about him.

This is the opinion of a journalist engaged in an economically successful media project. On the other end of the continuum, there is condemnation of such an order of things as (basically) contrary to the idea of social partnership and public control of the power.
Thus, according to one expert, the existing system, which defers to the arbitrariness of the administration, makes media participation in the discussion of the situation impossible, as well as even minimal control of the actions of authorities.

*What is lacking in the media contents?*

The interlacing of various kinds of dependence—political, administrative and economic—finally leads to a situation in which the creative palette of the media channels loses its colours. Above, we have mainly presented critical expert opinions on pluralism in the Russian mass media. Here we can add that the standardization of professional manners, forms and methods is directly connected with the equalization of channels regarding their ideological dimension and their content.

The experts were, for example, indignant about the abundance of TV serials with the same set of actors, “wandering from serial to serial”. The interviewees considered that “real diversity” is impossible in the Russian media, which are presently characterized by simplification, primitiveness and platitude.

One serious obstacle to the development of variety in Russian television is, in the opinion of the specialists, also the infinite stream of loans, primarily for Western TV production, and then for “old Soviet formats”. The experts emphasized that the abundance of channels does not in any way guarantee variety in TV productions, because the outputs of the channels are so similar to each other.

On the opposite side of the theme of redundant uniformity is the question of deficiency: *What is lacking in the mass media?* Our interviewees understand this in a narrow sense (which elements in the content and the form of channels and publications are deficient), as well as more broadly (which qualities real journalism does not have at present).

One expert with working experience from a news programme spoke about the disappearance of the journalist’s personal position: If earlier programme presenters wrote the texts themselves, now they have turned to announcers reading others’ texts. It is obvious that, according to this expert, people especially trained to produce texts are constructing a certain political line. The expert told about the disappearance from the air of a series of serious programmes, such as the Saturday evening news on NTV, which has now been replaced by entertainment programmes. Analytical programmes are confined to one point of view, ignoring others. There are also no good entertainment programmes of a high quality, according to this specialist.

Alongside the reduction in in-depth analytical programmes of high quality and the increased quantity of entertainment, another serious shortcoming is the disappearance of working people from the media contents. “There are businessmen, actors, writers, politicians, but there are no ordinary people.” There are also fewer letters-to-the editors, according to this expert. And, for example, in
programmes about travels, there are no domestic materials anymore; instead they make use of *National Geographic* or similar sources.

The so-called regional mass media are, on the other hand, just in the initial stages of development.

Those are, so to speak, the technical claims of the mass media. To these comments should be added remarks concerning the intellectual and spiritual atmosphere that develops around and within the media sphere:

Most journalists are not only excluded from the process of discussion and decision-making on the city level, but they are also deprived of access to information about these decisions. The predominance of negative information in the media is also pointed out among the shortcomings, as well as the absence of mechanisms that can change such disproportions. Still another complaint concerns the inability of modern mass media to provide comfort, i.e., to impart to people a sense of social optimism.

Some experts emphasized the one-sidedness of the social and political problems elucidated in the media, as well as the insufficient information about these problems. Some interviewees also expressed alarm over the fact that broad strata of the population are excluded from the process of media production. “Very little of what television produces is initiated by the people.”

The list of remarks and wishes is large and varied, and reducing it would require considerable effort. But we would like to point out that the criticism is only to a lesser extent directed outside, against the authorities or other institutions. The experts were instead of the opinion that eliminating almost all problems lies within the competence of the editorial collectives. Hence, the radical question concerns the ability of these collectives to carry out such a work. In particular, what influence has the transformed media industry exerted on journalists? In some cases, the interviewees drew radical conclusions concerning the state of domestic journalism in the real political conditions.

Consequently, some experts categorically declared that today, in our country, there is no journalism in the real sense of the word, “the journalistic word has died”. The people working in the mass media basically carry out a propaganda function. They have renounced the right to speak in their own names, “having given it to the authority of political or financial groups”.

It can hardly be considered a coincidence that similar judgments are frequently repeated in the interview transcriptions. Here is, as a comparison, the opinion of the well-known political analyst Paul Voshchanov (for the sake of objectivity, we should point out that he is employed at the oppositional newspaper *Novaya gazeta*):

> What has become of the Russian journalist? Neither respect, nor money, nor life perspectives. For the past 10-15 years, the print media have probably lost their
best people, certainly the most skilled… The growing vacuum has been filled up by rollicking amateurs, good at just one thing – entertaining.9

There is reason to believe that domestic journalism, from the point of view of its staff structure, has lost a significant part of its potential to maintain the principles of democracy and freedom.

Changes in society

The experts did not react less painfully to questions concerning the deep changes in society related to the practice of mass media. During previous stages of the interview, the idea that the transformation of the media sphere is synchronized with overall political and social changes was not called into question. In this case, however, the experts concentrated their attention on still broader aspects of the theme, namely on the basic values of the country and its people. Here, the conversation shifted to the stream of strategic interests and priorities of the nation. It is possible that the choice of such a line of thinking was influenced to a certain extent by the international nature of the research project and by the presence of a foreign interviewer.

The dispersion of topics in the statements proved to be wide (something that could be foreseen considering the scope of the context of the discussion). One central place is occupied by the theme of the uniqueness and sovereignty of Russia as nation and state – in relation to the media problems. Some experts, earlier sharply critical of the official informational policy, here declared that they supported the official line of strengthening the foundations of the state and national sovereignty. In terms of their patriotic aspirations, these experts coincided with those who occupied loyal or neutral positions. It is interesting to note that, as we shall see later on, ideological disagreements are partly extinguished, too – for example, concerning the advantages of this or that political system.

“In conditions of globalization, the domestic mass media become especially important as tools for upholding Russian interests”, as one media expert said. On the other hand, this same interviewee pointed out that the mass media, in particular State television, are developed as an important mechanism of influence on citizens’ minds, promoting consolidation of the country.

A number of experts criticized the television of the post-perestroika epoch, which stopped disseminating a certain ideology among the masses. At the beginning of the new era, our media began publishing previously “forbidden” materials. Having exhausted these resources, and having not created anything new, the domestic media have come to a most terrible stage: They have started copying Western products. Supporting “reasonable national patriotism”, one of

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9 Voshchanov 2008.
the experts primarily attacked the “predominance” of foreign films and formats on television.

“Single exceptions such as the TV channel Kultura, the orthodox TV and radio stations, the especially odious national-
bolshevik editions” are not capable of changing the prevailing situation. The only productive way, in the opinion of this expert, would be the creation and promotion of “a well-reasoned national idea” as a consistent trend in the domestic media.10

This notion of a special Russian mind-set, in comparison with that of the West, takes different forms and appears in various interrelations, down to a decisive change in views on Russia’s historical destiny. But again, we cannot see any division of the experts’ statements based on their political orientation.

When Westerners try to judge freedom of speech in Russia according to survey data, they conclude that the Russian people do not trust the mass media. But Russians have never trusted the mass media. In general. Not during Putin, and not during Yeltsin. Here (in Russia) there is another level of critical thinking. And the educational level in the country has always been high. Only the proletariat and the lumpenproletarian strata of society have blindly trusted (the media). And any person with an education always reads between the lines. Therefore, when I answer the question [by saying] that I do not trust the mass media, this means that I do not trust (them) at all. In Brezhnev’s days, it was not a question of trusting or not trusting. Because there was no choice – [I mean] not of the mass media, but of ways of development. Besides, nobody objected. Who would say that socialism is bad? It was realized badly. I am a modern person, a businessman – I consider that socialism is good. The West is surprised when Russians say that it is better during Putin than during Yeltsin. These are different things – Brezhnev’s stability and Yeltsin’s danger to life. In this case, what is the choice? Certainly, Brezhnev’s stability is better. To the devil with freedom of speech! As long as they don’t shoot.

In the West, the intense intrigue in the political sphere is disappearing, and then this (media) space starts being filled with commerce and entertainment. From here, the inclination of society is to be entertained instead of to think. We have more than enough intrigues. We have an authority that steals social values, constantly deceives the society, and doesn’t enable people to freely engage in business, to vote freely. If this intrigue were to be sound-tracked, then people would not have the desire to be entertained. If society were given the chance of political self-determination, and the TV channels were given the opportunity to

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10 Our content analysis of four TV channels in St. Petersburg, carried out in the frameworks of the project “The Role of Media for Identity and Democracy” in 2007, disclosed similar proportions. Entertainment of different kinds and forms makes up 61% of the broadcasting time. Regarding films and series, the share of domestic productions is slightly more than half of the time, the European – a tenth, American – approximately 30%. According to another survey, comprising five federal and regional TV channels (in Moscow and St. Petersburg), films and serials make up 43% of the broadcasting time, entertainment programmes 18%. See Berdysheva 2008, p. 11.
display this political intrigue, such programmes, which today simply do not exist, would have much higher ratings. The wind is always the same all over the planet. But the nuances of distinctions are essential.

As a continuation of this conversation, it was claimed that appeals could bring back to the mass media the high cultural values of the nation that have accumulated during previous historical periods. Accordingly, there are reproaches to the mass media themselves, which have ignored these values and entered into an alliance with the most undeveloped part of the audience.

Let’s look at entertainment now compared to that in the 70s. At that time, for the work of one human soul, our mass media paid much more than now. In the 70s, 60s, even 50s, a gold fund of television and broadcasting was created, which we even use now. There, the best actors, magnificent musicians were engaged. The concerts that were recorded earlier on TV and radio, nobody would record them nowadays. Simply, there would not be enough money for it. And what do they refer to as entertainment? On television talk-shows, these countless ‘Houses’ (here referring to the much discussed reality series Dom dva, authors’ remark), ‘New Russian grannies’ (programmes of rag character, authors’ remark) and all the others.

Mean, rude, vulgar people are demanded in our time; they have not placed themselves there by force, but the audience has made them heroes. If one aim of a project is to make the population into dolts, then such heroes are an ideal variant for carrying out this project. They do it in a masterly way; they have a lot of admirers.

The American dream is to work hard. The Russian dream – not to do anything and to receive at once a heap of money. Soviet power killed this Russian desire, it said: ‘Work! Study!’ Then the State stopped saying this, and MTV appeared, because Russia is a market. So what will we have in ten years with this generation?

Let us note that similar complaints are far from catastrophic thinking, that is, the experts are not inclined to consider the present audience situation as an irreparable tragedy. Some experts stressed that the changed media contents saturated by advertising have not influenced their social environment. Instead people have become more critical and trust advertising less.

Obviously or latently, the idea that the population is still ready to pay attention to high quality production stands out; the media just have to address the richness of Russian cultural heritage. As always, the division into a passive public inclined to easy reading and mindless TV watching, and active people with high standards and requirements, will remain. The solution of the problem is entirely left to the choice of journalists – which cultural standards they consider to be of primary importance to themselves. As people used to say, “the mass media have the ball”.

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In sum

Summing up the discussion on the problems of freedom of speech, it is necessary to stress that the majority of interview participants treated this issue with concern. Only a few individual experts considered that a normal and necessary level of well-being has been established. As a rule, the experts made a distinction between the official (legislatively determined) order, on the one hand, and the real dependence of the mass media and the single journalist, on the other. This dependence appears as a complex phenomenon, in which political, administrative and economic pressure is intertwined with the determination to stand up for one’s convictions and the readiness to forgo business benefits. According to the experts, far from all media professionals are characterized by this quality, and this situation is directly connected with the quantitative and qualitative changes in the Russian press.

At the same time, the interviewees’ responses are marked by the aspiration to combine liberal ideals of freedom of speech and press with the preservation of the special national-cultural way of life that distinguishes Russia from the Western democracies. The need to strengthen the patriotic tendencies of the domestic media is clearly expressed. Our interviewees considered that it is necessary to put into practice a consistent governmental policy to this end, and here they expect to find mutual understanding with the population.

3. The role of mass media in socialization of the individual and the formation of a national identity

The topic mentioned in the headline above caused considerable interest and elicited different viewpoints among the media experts interviewed. The experts mentioned the necessity of mass media for the individual’s social activity and, at the same time, the decrease in such socially useful activity. For instance, an Internet manager pointed out the more important socializing function of the print media during the 80s, because the press was then a source of discussion in the family and among friends. There was a great interest in politics: people constantly discussed politics, walked around with transistor radios, and listened to the deputies’ speeches in the parliament, something that is difficult to imagine now. For example, the site on which the sessions of the St. Petersburg parliament are expounded has very few visitors, something that is primarily attributed to the lack of political interest among the majority of the population. Whereupon one expert – a media manager – expressed his peremptory judgment: “Yes, it seems to me that the mass media should serve as discussion platforms on which very different opinions are heard.”

Regarding the media’s influence on people’s perception of themselves from the viewpoint of their social and cultural belonging, one manager of the information service of a radio station were of the opinion that, in the process of
individual self-identification, both positive phenomena and losses are revealed. The definite advantage of television is that it promotes the idea of an active healthy lifestyle by advertising many athletic goods and energy drinks; it promotes an image of a socially healthy person, a physically healthy, beautiful person. Referring to the negative aspects of advertising, this expert mentioned the all too expensive symbols of a constructed life, which most Russians would never see except on television.

Many other experts also emphasized the influence of television, but they mainly stressed the negative aspects of its socializing function. The cultural aspect of the analysis levels out the ideological-political and other differences between the specialists regarding their critical attitude towards the media content and the effects of media activities. Television has taken over the role earlier played by the cinema as the basic megaphone for delegation or transformation of thoughts and ideas. Leaflets and posters distributed over a year would not render the effect that television has in just one month. Regrettably, television today is a more powerful factor than the schools, as one expert remarked. The low quality of media products, and the audiences’ readiness to consume them, was a subject that made another expert anxious, as in his opinion, television exerts the greatest possible corrupting influence. One expert stressed in particular the negative influence of American entertainment programmes, which change “norms of morals and manners”. Then, films containing violence, cruelty and sexual distortions constitute a major danger, not least for children. For instance, the broadcasting of the gangster serial *Brigada* (The Brigade) on the State-owned television was critically evaluated by one expert, who considered that several real crimes perpetrated by teenagers may well have been influenced by this serial.

The interview participants stressed the need to take into consideration the socio-demographical and psychological differences in the mechanisms underlying the media influence on the population. In the first place, the age factor is underlined – more specifically, the susceptibility of the young generation to the pressure of TV.

Considering as positive elements the facts that the printed media speak the language of young people and reflect their interests, the expert at the same time worried about the poor content of these media, which consist of a surplus of glitz and glamour. The expert ascertained that, regrettfully, newspapers are inaccessible to most retired persons due to economic factors. One expert pointed out the shortcomings of programmes devoted entirely towards young people, especially for those “who wish to develop, work and progress”. Another expert remarked with regret that young people’s susceptibility to TV productions has played a somewhat distressing role, because such productions (especially Western ones, such as the cartoon *Tom and Jerry* and the film *The Terminator*, etc.) have filled the vacuum, which appeared after the denial of the old ideology.
In their concerns, the experts do not differ from the conclusions and observations of media education specialists. The necessity of a solicitous attitude towards young people, who are not able to critically observe the mass communication flow, is being emphasized throughout the world. However, the experts also focused on other parameters of audience differentiation. In particular, they introduced divisions based on the degree of civic engagement of the population, which, in its turn, is conditioned by other factors. In this way, a much more complicated task than differentiating between young and adult media users arises.

One expert distinguished between two population strata: the 20-25 per cent that is called the active part of the population, and another part that is called the inert masses, people who, owing to their personal economy, lack the opportunity to go abroad and make direct contact with other cultures. It is exactly these people who are avid consumers of the media’s products and objects of influence. On the other hand, personal contacts and individual information gathering per se have a greater impact on the active part of the population, who subject the mediated data to more thorough analyses.

According to another expert, it is evident that people who do not have serious relations to business, politics and journalism and who are not engaged in such activities have very little interest in current affairs and factual TV programmes.

The specialists pointed to strong globalization effects on the relation between mass media and their audiences. This topic was raised in different contexts and at different stages of the interview. According to one expert, the availability of satellite channels (BBC, EuroNews, Discovery, children’s channels with animated cartoons) and the wide range of programmes are among the positive effects of globalization. It also has a positive impact on domestic television as regards design: the image quality, the interior of the studios, the clothes of the presenters, etc., have all improved. On the other hand, the expert is critical of the fact that television is dominated by reproductions of programmes that have long existed in the West and of the abundance of imported serials.

Another expert felt it was an important “achievement” that, with globalization, the Russian media must act in the face of international problems as well as take into consideration international assessments of what is taking place in Russia. One expert talked about a new generation of journalists who have grown up during the globalization epoch: All of them speak one or two (foreign) languages, they have already travelled half way around the world, and they have experience and know where, what and how things work.

The global character of informational relations intensifies the negative and culturally dangerous media manifestations, according to the experts. Because it is clear to them that the media far from always have a positive influence on the socialization of the population, they suggested that methods of neutralization of undesired effects should be considered.
In particular, parents have a great responsibility: It is necessary for them to keep an eye on what their children read, what Internet sites they visit, and from what channels they get information. Parents should restrict the use of negative contents including violence, drugs and the like; they should, instead, promote a healthy lifestyle and orientation. Another expert was particularly alarmed by “the abundance of empty, entertaining, sometimes simply mean programmes” on television and by their obviously negative effects on children who are beyond their parents’ control.

One expert mentioned as a negative phenomenon contemporary society’s orientation towards “quantity, instead of quality”.

Earlier, a single word expressed by someone, but done truly and truthfully, could be heard by many and did make an impression. A poem, an article could change something in society. Nowadays, however, just one article is not sufficient, large circulation wins. But this happens only because people here are losing their habit of thinking and getting increasingly used to what others have decided for them.

The media influence on political socialization is particularly emphasized. The negative aspects of this influence and fundamental methods of protection against the manipulation of mass consciousness are also in question here. Oppositional representatives speak particularly severely in this respect.

One expert was revolted by the manipulation of the electorate, the “brain-washing” taking place by means of the mass media during each pre-election campaign. Another expert analysed the negative influence on society exerted by mass media in which entertainment predominates, causing society to basically become de-socialized and people to become infantile, thus returning to some kind of primitive state. Entertainment presented as information has a destructive impact on society. At the same time, the expert expressed confidence in the possibility to change the situation. According to him, it would be enough simply to change the political and informational climate, so that people would quickly abandon the animal condition of belonging to a manipulated herd and return to being groups of people who reason as individuals and who are united by their common interests, as was the case during the perestroika era, when everyone generally had their own opinions.

Judging by the logic of the interview, the safety of the State is closely connected with political socialization. One expert – a media researcher – believed that from this perspective, the processes taking place in Russia are the same as those taking place across the globe. “The core of national culture is slowly becoming uncertain. People are becoming more and more cosmopolitan.” This is a normal phenomenon, according to the given standpoint, but it does not necessarily imply the loss of cultural uniqueness. The question of information safety is quite topical in Russia; this expert professed and was afraid that the situation in his country could become identical to that in Equatorial and East
Africa. “In Kenya, only one newspaper is published in the local language, in Swahili, in Uganda – only one newspaper. All the others are in English.”

In sum
Thus, we may conclude that the role of the mass media in individual socialization and formation of a national identity is a source of worry for the experts. Practically all of them acknowledged the enormous and contradictory influence of the media, the great role of globalization, the ease of accessing information on the Internet, and also the strong influence of Western programmes and formats on the development of Russian television and radio. Concern was expressed regarding the excess of entertainment programmes, violent and erotic scenes, lack of morality in many media, and the decline of interest in socio-political events and discussions. However, positive aspects were also highlighted, for instance, the propaganda promoting a healthy lifestyle. Many respondents were alarmed by the current situation, in which children and young people, who have insufficient life experience, are exposed to a great extent to negative media influences. The particular role and responsibility of television were recognized in this respect.

There are hardly any noticeable differences in the experts’ opinions as a function of their status, except for the assessments of political socialization. Interviewees from the oppositional side stressed the decrease in the civic potential of the media, which they claimed are trying to distract the population from conscious and independent political choice and to manipulate people’s consciousness. Other experts also expressed their clear dissatisfaction with the on-going de-socialization process being pursued by the media, indicating the weakening of national culture and traditions.

4. Development of social and personal communication resources
The experts’ attitude towards expansion of the technological and organizational horizons of the media sphere has two sides. They not only acknowledge such facts, but also consider them to be a benefit to society and the individual. However, the need to combine growth in quantity with essential qualitative changes was emphasized in this respect. The thesis about the dual effect of extensive changes was further developed in a special part of the interview devoted to information consumption. On the basis of their own experience of production and use of information, the experts clearly saw the volume and the diversity of information growth. Moreover, special attention was paid to the influence of foreign information sources on Russian media, including topics, content and format of the programmes.

According to one viewpoint, the Russian and St. Petersburg mass media have access to more information sources than before. The time when materials came
only via Russian news agencies has passed. Nowadays, on the Internet, any person with knowledge of languages is not limited by anything where the transfer of information is concerned. Thanks to the media, according to another expert, people get information in one way or another, including from the West, something that widens their horizons, acquaints them with the world, and allows them to see how people in other countries live. In any case, this has a positive influence on people. One expert remarked that after a period of passion for movies and serials from the West, and then for exclusively Russian serials, a certain balance has been established on television: “It is not important if the serial is Western or Russian, the main thing is the quality.” The expert was not inclined to exaggerate the role of satellite television programmes, as very few people watch them seriously, instead most simply boast about having the capability to watch them.

As we can see, not only the opposition between quantity and quality is found in the quoted opinions, but also the opposition between an initial passion for unusual material and intelligent choice of the best of what is offered, regardless of the “birth place” of the information product. This way of thinking is considered to be very significant, because it testifies to a real, not a formal, increase in communication services to the social and individual life.

The further reasoning is included in this problematic context. The fact of an increase in communication resources is taken as an axiom and requires no further explanations. Experts preferred to designate the obstacles to the fullest use of resources. These obstacles can be divided into several groups. The first is the distorted mechanism of the printed media’s social functioning, media that both enjoy a powerful influence (on the population) and have no real power (in relation to the authorities). The voices of private and State media representatives interflow here.

From the viewpoint of deceiving and fooling the population, media power is total. But in Russia it is not like in the West. Here it is impossible, having chosen any politician as a target, to compel him to resign. People said that our former Minister of Health was a thief and a bribe taker, but he didn’t resign during a long period. Well, in the West, a similar scandal would quickly have led to his dismissal. Everybody criticized minister Zurabov, but he stayed, like a crow-bar in asphalt, unmoveable, until the government decided it was enough. About what role, what influence of the mass media can we speak here?

The politically non-trustworthy and controlled journalism is considered to contribute not to expansion, but to a narrowing of the field of communication content. It has complicated and multidirectional consequences for citizens’ information behaviour.

According to one viewpoint, a process of moving away from freedom and openness is visible in the sphere of socio-political media contents, a process that
5. The Dynamics of the Influence of Russian Mass Media

started some eight years ago, and that is inherent in the policy of the present administration in the Kremlin. The mass media increasingly carry “one-sided” information, which is reminiscent of the Soviet era. In the opinion of another expert, the audience should be divided into two groups – those who critically analyse the information stream, and those “who perceive everything as a normal phenomenon, who have already ceased to feel that they are being deceived”. The expert was certain that the share of these people will decrease. According to this person, retired people should not be placed in the second group, as they often have quite non-conformist attitudes – communist as well as democratic. There are more conformists among people who manage to realize their goals, somehow to provide for their families. “They don’t care about politics, they run to and fro, earning money. It seems to them that, in any event, tomorrow will be better than today. And basically they are ready to say let it be that way! There are plenty of people like this, especially in large cities.”

The issue of political determination of Russian media was repeatedly raised in connection with the previous interview questions. In addition, we will just mention that not all journalists felt it was impossible for the print media to fulfil their social functions in the current situation. One expert felt that regulation of the mass media by the State could not be avoided, but at the same time, using the present media laws, it is possible to work as in the West, i.e., freely.

Even more peremptory statements emerged about the official status of the media. Some experts hoped that state censorship would be introduced.

This means an intensification of control in the moral-ethic sphere, given the spread of pornography and violence. We wish to emphasize that the last two opinions were expressed by specialists who are independent of the State. Actually, they talked about an additional obstacle to high-level use of communication resources – the mass media’s insufficient search activities and the facilitation of this task.

The channels are becoming more and more uninteresting, no matter how many new channels start, they will always be identical. We have a lot of channels, but all of them are identical in their primitiveness.

They have simply started to copy and steal ideas, to do here the same that brings success in the West. Some channels have simply bought the rights to manufacture similar products. Entertainment television occupies the leading positions. Huge ratings for such telecasts, huge circulations of such printed editions.

One expert gave a concrete example of the dead-end development of entertainment media that dwell on violence in an attempt to keep the audience’s attention. He recollected a difficulty of one Russian producer, Alexander Kapitsa, who created Ulitsy Razbetykh Fonarey (The Streets of the Broken Lanterns) and other “cop” serials, which were very popular in the 90s: “I have a
problem – I cannot think up new ways of murdering. There are only 26 ways to take a life. That’s all. I cannot think up others, and I need to connect each episode with a concrete corpse.”

Referring to a particular case, one expert revealed a common tendency. Nowadays, there is an on-going “creative” search for new subjects connected with murders and an infusion of horror on TV screens and on the pages of periodicals. For instance, there are interviews with maniacal murderers, stories about cannibals, etc. This is one of the problems faced by the modern entertainment media and even periodicals striving to look more respectable. However, in reality, the ways of communicating through such media are becoming ever narrower. The media staff can also be included among the communication resources that are used more or less effectively. It is obvious that labour resources are special, and they should not be put mechanically on a par with material-technical resources. But the staff are also a subject for rational and socially valuable utilization. Experts who have experience as editors understand this particularly well.

For instance, one expert felt that the situation will improve as the advertising market develops, the media material resources strengthen, and the competition grows. Strengthening the material resources implies perfecting the quality of printed and broadcast media, in particular by increasing the remuneration for journalistic labour. Low salaries compel journalists to work for several channels and to produce “grey” advertising or on-order materials. If the journalistic salaries in Russia were as high as in Sweden, “at least three thousand dollars, the editor would have reason to demand work of a high quality”.

One manifestation of such a financial situation is the reduced demand for staff members’ intellectual potential. Consequently, their ability to comprehend and interpret events of real life is decreasing. In the opinion of one expert, journalists “are very much lacking in education, a general level of education first of all”.

This regime of savings, which affects how labour resources are used, also relates to methods of working with information resources. The sphere of sources is getting smaller, which means that the world is presented to people in a truncated form.

According to one expert, it is no secret that many newspapers, especially small ones, no longer subscribe to information from the news agencies, but instead use information from the Internet.

In ITAR-TASS they resent: After putting up a message on the news tape, in ten minutes all news sites in the city repeated it. Even large newspapers that subscribe to information from such agencies as ITAR-TASS, Interfax, Rosbalt, even they are strongly influenced by the Internet.
The last statement partly touches upon an immensely difficult issue that is worrying researchers in humanitarian disciplines all over the world. In the interview guide it was expressed using the following question: “With many media, people increasingly experience life second-hand. Do such mediated experiences become an extra resource in addition to the direct experiences of one’s own – or do they instead replace one’s own experiences and activities?”

Answering this required summoning up a large volume of facts from the expert’s personal life and from observations of the behaviour of fellow citizens. Correspondingly, each expert had his own, original associations. As an example, one famous TV journalist, and mother of four children, referred mainly to her family. According to her, an individual’s activities and the family are the main factors determining the role the mass media play in the individual’s experience of life. For her children, the media will be supplementary in that process, because she gives her children more attention, e.g., keeps them away from the TV set by offering other kinds of activities: walking, talking, visiting theatres, zoos, etc.

Other, basically socio-psychological observations are made by a female staff member of an Internet medium. She claimed that, in Russia, information received by way of personal communication is more important than information from the media. “One will be more likely trust a flatmate or a friend than what somebody writes to him in a virtual forum. A concrete, living personality but not what is written in the mass media. We’ve got used to sticking together and to trusting what people say, to orienting ourselves by listening to rumours.” It often happens that even after repeated refutation of rumours by the media, for example, about some housebreaking, “all the same people will repeat their version”.

One young TV star offered a special view on the problem. Her opinion is rather typical of how Russian youth think, which is largely determined by active use of Net resources. According to her, almost everybody nowadays is on the Internet: at home or at an Internet café. She admires the super-popular site vkontakte.ru (In touch), which, to her knowledge, already has about three million visitors (more than nine millions users – authors’ remark). “It is very interesting that you have so many friends who live in New York, Moscow, Copenhagen and Australia, and you are sitting all together, uploading photos. You don’t need to meet […], that is, all life happens on the Internet. There you can meet both your schoolmates and your teachers. Our young people now live like Americans in MySpace.”

Comparison of some statements allows us to conclude that the real communication has not moved to the periphery of the relations between people, but such a perspective does exist, particularly regarding the younger generation. For them, the borders separating the immediate life experience and virtual contacts with the world are being washed out.
Public access to media resources

A separate and practically important aspect of media resource use concerns the population’s access to these resources. To what extent are they open? Are there any privileged or deprived strata? This question is twofold, as it involves equality of information retrieval and equal opportunities for expression of one’s own interests and opinions.

Access to resources is essentially a realization of the information rights acknowledged as basic human values both internationally and in Russia. In the latest tradition, it is designated as “The right to know”. On this issue, the experts’ opinions are quite different. There is an optimistic position based on the idea of a person’s active behaviour under conditions of an abundance of media resources from which to choose. This position is defended by public power representatives and specialists who above all value the free self-determination of the consumer and who refer to the market success of their media.

“Those who are interested, find everything. We have many different media. It is another matter that there are more inert groups, who are just uninterested.” Or as another expert put it: “If citizens are not lazy they can find any information.” Besides, there is the possibility “to request” information from the mass media and receive it more quickly than from authorities. For another expert, receiving a certain type of information is only a question of choice. “There are, really, different social groups, which generally don’t cross each other in the mass media environment.” As an example, the expert takes his daughter, who does not listen to his (the expert’s) favourite radio stations. Likewise, there are people who never watch serious TV channels.

The following example illustrates the thesis of free choice. On March 19, 2008, the radio station Echo Moskvy (Echo of Moscow) carried out an inquiry. Listeners were asked the following question: “Do you get information from the free zone or from mass media under control?” The results, based on a web survey conducted via the radio station’s website, are: from the free zone 90.2 per cent, from controlled media 4.3 per cent, and “don’t know” 5.5 per cent. The results of a phone inquiry are as follows: from the free zone 63.3 per cent, from controlled media 36.7 per cent.11 Thus, the majority of active listeners reported their ability to freely choose information. Of course, the question was not formulated carefully enough. What is meant by “the free zone” and “controlled” media? During Soviet times, a rather objective picture of reality was formed by comparing national mass media with foreign “voices”. Nowadays there are more opportunities.

There is a specific information space into which various mass media deliver their own products. With few exceptions, there are at present practically no “independent” mass media. The only difference is the way in which a given

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medium positions itself. Therefore, we may conclude that the audience flatters itself with the illusion of freely choosing among “free” sources, while in reality they use the standard assortment of offers.

Some experts tried to treat realistically and on a case-by-case basis the question: “Do representatives of different groups find sufficient information to allow them to remain informed citizens?” One expert talked about the shortage of information in both national and regional media and the necessity of using global TV networks and the Internet. Another expert believed that people “could know everything if they have the will”. So groups of active citizens are said to contrast with unorganized social groups who “simply do not know about the oppositional media”, such as the newspapers Novaya Gazeta (The New Newspaper) and Delo (Business) in which it is possible to read something alternative to the mainstream. On the other hand, one expert spoke with regret about whole regions of the country, which do not have access even to ordinary television, radio and newspapers.

In this regard, we should remind ourselves of the stratification of the population concerning Internet access, an issue discussed at previous interview stages. Realization of the right to know is not only determined by psychological factors, but also by a whole range of social, material and organizational conditions. There would appear to be no grounds for the claim that the citizens enjoy a complete public access to information.

Likewise, there is no homogeneity regarding the way in which the experts assessed the representation of social groups in media contents. Practically all of them mentioned the presence of disproportions. However, they characterized the inequality in different ways – when explaining reasons as well as when determining the criteria for keeping silent about some strata. In certain cases, the significance of a citizen’s personal activity is emphasized, as well as the value of this or that opinion for society.

“As soon as a person really has something to say, she/he will find a way to be heard. It can be on the Internet, it can be in Zhivoy jurnal (Live Journal), it is possible to create your own media. Therefore it seems to me, that the whole spectrum of opinions is reflected now.” “Those who want, are all presented”, another expert said. One must simply make the correct choice of a particular periodical or TV channel, because a given channel will not reflect the position of only one political wing every day.

However, the majority of experts also do not agree with the perception that the whole opinion spectrum is reflected, or that the media take into consideration the public interest in this or that social stratum or group. Critical estimations are found in the experts’ answers to the question about categories of citizens who are not sufficiently represented in the media contents. Some remarks refer to political reasons for this disproportion. It is true that the ruling party, Edinaya Rossia (United Russia). has the possibility to spread its messages;
the same is not true for the other parties. The dominant media reflect the views of the authorities and opinions of people who do not contradict the interests of powerful persons, while dissidents are excluded, as well as opinions that contradict or are not in line with the ruling elite. The political opposition is, thus, highly underrepresented.

By means of political criteria, the border of silence is drawn quite distinctly. Let us consider the fact that the experts did stand up for equality, instead of contending that the voices of the opposition are completely inaudible. In a sense, we could say that they are guided by the dialectic law of transition from quantity to quality.

Regarding demographic attributes, the experts list many examples of infringement of rights: The opinions of pensioners, housewives, school children and students are poorly represented. However, according to one expert, it is important to consider precisely their opinions, because television is focused on these groups. Another expert claimed that the low representation of pensioners is related to the media's orientation towards people of working age. Handicapped persons are also not very well represented, in spite of the fact that there are a few periodicals and TV programmes focused on them.

According to another opinion, “voices of socially deprived people” are seldom heard, except when it is necessary to tell “heart-breaking stories about vagabonds, cannibals, vampires and maniacs”. Young people are represented in a very inaccurate way, and they are not given the opportunity to express their own real opinions in the media. Likewise, it was obvious to this expert, that the urban population is represented in the media much more than are the country’s rural inhabitants.

On the basis of what the experts have said, one gets the impression that the mass media poorly reflect the lives and interests of the largest social groups. On the other hand, the experts have mentioned the information privileges of which certain persons and categories take advantage, such as politicians, representatives of the legislative and executive authorities, a specific part of the cultural elite, sportsmen, and not least persons from entertainment television who utter their opinions about everything, as well as other representatives of the glamorous bohemian part of the society, whose opinions are widely spread in the media.

The experts’ judgments of privileged circles coincided. It is obvious that the named actors constitute a rather narrow circle of public figures entrusted not just to express the public opinion, but also to form it. In addition to the picture presented above, we shall clarify which professional groups lack the possibility to be heard, even though, according to the experts, these groups deserve to be heard.

Businessmen are very seldom represented, because their appearance could be interpreted as subliminal advertising. According to one expert, the middle class is not represented at all, nor the technical personnel of industry, engineers, and other highly skilled workers.
It is possible that a content analysis of the Russian mass media would help to expand and add detail to this list. However, we can already see that the socio-professional groups, upon whose work our national wealth has largely been built, remain outside the framework of public attention. However, they should logically play central roles in public life, and their communicative space should be broadened in the first place. Observing the opposite proportions, we should draw the conclusion that the media promote appropriation of the public sphere by the so-called elite, thereby deviating from the principles of democracy. By elite in this case we mean the most powerful and influential groups and persons who jumped to the top by virtue of career success or simply through luck, but not owing to any real public merits.

In sum
Thus, the issue of development of the communication resources of society and the individual has given rise to contradictory judgements among the experts interviewed. The expansion of channels for distribution of information and access to international sources of information, primarily due to ease of access and an increase in the number of Internet users, was often mentioned. However, in the opinion of many experts, this expansion of channels has not been accompanied by any real increase in communicative richness for the individual or society. At least, quantitative growth does not result in adequate qualitative changes. The reasons for the low operating ratio of communicative resources lay in external domains, outside the media (mainly in the spheres of politics and economy), as well as in the field of preparation of media contents that meet the needs of society and the individual. The experts connected with the power structures or who represent the entertainment media typically judged the current situation as positive. It is likely that the present conditions in the area of communications serve the purposes of political-administrative management and successful business in the mass cultural sphere.

5. Specificity of the media situation in Russia and in St. Petersburg
The aim of the present international research project is to compare the media situation in Russia with the state of affairs in the world and other countries, in particular Sweden. As it turned out, the idea of “comparing Russian and Western media” caused a lively interest among the experts. Some of them did not find any essential difference in particular regarding the structure of the media branch. The diversity of the media contents (yellow papers, “informative” papers, etc.) is considered to be very similar in Russia and in Sweden. “The audience is becoming fragmented, that is, everyone finds his niche – this newspaper, that TV-channel, that radio station which he trusts”, as one expert put it.
“The only difference is that in Russia the State pays more than the private sector does”, another expert added.

The interview participants repeatedly emphasized the strong influence of global tendencies and the foreign experience on Russian domestic mass media. In this convergence there are undoubted pluses, but on the whole, the Russian specialists did not unconditionally welcome the pressure from foreign culture.

For instance, one expert considered that there is an “enormous foreign influence”, implying that “all commercial musical radio stations in St. Petersburg are copies of European models”. Another expert worried that Russian journalism, adopting much from abroad, has forgotten the Russian genre or school, in which “a specific form was given to each material”. Rejection of traditions leads to general simplification: “Now we are more and more going over to three American genres: news, not-news and others”, he said.

Some experts remarked that essential distinctions are still kept as before. They felt that attempts to unify styles and creative methods in journalism were unproductive and stressed the peculiarities of the national culture and the mentality of the population. Sometimes comparisons with the West were made in a figurative and categorical form:

A comparison of the situation in Russia and in the West is like comparing a dolphin and a shark. They are alike in the form, but they are essentially different creatures. Dolphins are mammals while the shark is an archaic fish, and they have absolutely different processes, although they swim similarly.

The basic difference of our media is that we are not as primitive as the Americans. American television is more primitive, it is for idiots.

At the same time, professional work methods established in the Western printed media are not rejected as absolutely unacceptable. The experts admitted that some elements of the foreign experience could be used in Russia to improve the qualitative level of the media.

One expert believed it was necessary to borrow principles of the Western media, first of all American principles, such as “news and comments”, when news is printed on one page and opinions on another. The expert was certain that the weakness of Russian media depends on their publicist character (Russian professional term, not adequately described below – authors’ remark), “when the opinion of the author often plays a very big, sometimes decisive role […] because often it is simply difficult for the reader to separate information from interpretation”. Another expert was certain that, in America, the media make better use of facts than in Russia. “Our [journalists] do not check and re-check the facts, therefore there are a lot of mistakes. In this respect, the situation is worse than it was earlier.” According to a third point of view, Russian journalism should develop democratic traditions, characteristic of the Western
media, and raise the level of professionalism, especially in the printed sphere. “There are many, many journalists who don’t care about what they write. That is, they are absolutely not up on anything they write about.”

Representatives of the oppositional printed media regarded very positively the establishment of foreign media or foreign capital in the Russian media market, because this introduces the necessary competition. But in their opinion, this is prevented by the executive power and Russian legislators. The State Duma has many times discussed the possibility of complete prohibition of foreign capital in the Russian media. As a result, there are no foreign TV channels established in the country (there is only purchased production), while the few foreign radio stations working in Russia experience severe difficulties, in particular Radio Liberty, as one of our interviewees pointed out.

It could be concluded that comparing the mass media in Russia and abroad, as well as thinking about any other problematic theme, caused our interviewees to form a multidimensional comprehension of the facts. They enter into indirect polemics with each other, and this, in our opinion, helps seeing the reality in a deeper and more dynamic intellectual interpretation.

The media situation in St. Petersburg

Another experience of the comparative analysis is also marked by polemics. A special aim of the research project was to characterize the specificity of the media situation in St. Petersburg in light of that in Russia. However, almost all experts noted the centralization and monopolization of the mass media as a predominant characteristic of media life in the region. They recalled at once the Baltic Media Group. The assets of this holding company, created in 2005, included large regional media organizations: the newspapers Smena (Shift/Successors), Nevskoye vremya (Neva Time), Vecherneye vremya (Evening Time), the broadcasting channels Radio Baltica (Radio Baltic), Radio Zenith, 100TV (75 % of the shares), Piatij kanal (Channel 5) (18 %), the agency of advertising technologies Baltica (Baltic), and the Baltic News Agency. Oleg Rudnov, president of the holding company since June 2007, also became chairman of the board of directors of Komsomolskaya Pravda (Komsomol Truth). The experts’ assessments of the growth in monopolization differed, as one would expect, ranging from recognizing the naturalness and inevitability of this process to criticizing its invisible political side. Because of the high production and distribution costs, every more or less well-established newspaper or TV channel is owned (or supported) by some large corporation or, at least, a large firm, reported one expert.

On the other hand, during recent years a mechanism has been established by which the State – or structures related to the State – gains control of the mass media by buying shares in them, an on-going trend not least relevant for St. Petersburg, according to one expert. “It is not a secret for anybody that the
media are a mechanism that allows the present authority to do what it considers necessary.”

The centralization of capital and property in the media sphere is characteristic of the whole of Russia, and St. Petersburg differs in this respect only by the regional names of the new monopolists. However, the experts did pay attention to the special position of the region in comparison with the capital and other territories of the country.

One expert expressed regret over the fact that the concentration of all significant mass media to Moscow essentially reduces “the role of the local St. Petersburg media”. In St. Petersburg, there is no newspaper telling us “what is going on in the country and in the world, but with a focus on what is happening in St. Petersburg, a newspaper that would be published in St. Petersburg and for St. Petersburg”.

Regarding the audio-visual regional media, another expert pointed out that in St. Petersburg there is only one satisfactory local channel (in terms of the share of TV production) that telecasts over the city and the Leningrad region (Leningradskaya oblast – a separate region of the Russian Federation situated around St. Petersburg). That is TV100. Another channel located in St. Petersburg, Piatyi kanal (Channel 5), telecasts nation-wide and only devotes a few hours a day to St. Petersburg. NTV, a national channel with local news, sends five such programmes a day, in sum about one hour a day.

A third opinion is that the mass media play a totally different role in other regions of Russia, where “local and town newspapers most often are the unique source of information used in small towns, in local centres, in villages”.

According to a fourth point of view, media diversity is a special feature of St. Petersburg, distinguishing it from other comparatively small Russian regions.

However, many experts pointed to the difference between St. Petersburg and Moscow, emphasizing that St. Petersburg loses a great deal in market-economic as well as in professional-creative aspects.

What is democracy?
The experts’ answers to the complicated question about democracy were very interesting. Interpretations of this integrating concept either unite Russia with the West or place it outside global tendencies. The experts spoke glibly about it and with many superfluous details. We extracted the essence of their views to the extent we could.

When answering, some experts used well-known aphorisms and even jokes and anecdotes. In their general declarations, the interviewees, as a rule, repeated widely known definitions and descriptions of democracy.

In more concrete judgments, a multidimensional understanding of this exceptionally complicated concept was reflected, while the concept does not have an unequivocal interpretation, based either in research works or in daily
speech practice. In particular, some characteristics of the democratic society were mentioned that could be referred to its purely political dimension.

Other participants in the interview preferred to assess the democratic character of a system from the point of view of freedom of individual behaviour, protection of the individual, and interrelations between people in society. According to one expert, democracy is the opportunity to go abroad freely. According to another, it is the duty of the state to protect the rights and interests of the citizen if any injustice, “which may occur to me […] outside my state, should cause a diplomatic scandal”. According to a third viewpoint, democracy is when “the state deals with prisons, hospitals, roads, social security, but doesn’t poke its nose into other spheres”. One expert defined democracy as the opposite of totalitarianism. In that case, joint decision-making regarding directions for development – what is good, what is bad – constitutes the key difference between democracy and totalitarianism.

Naturally, we do not intend to contest any of the offered interpretations. We consider as significant the fact that, while reflecting, the experts deviated from the initial schematization of their answers as well as from their straightforward language. They endeavoured to interpret democracy as a living substance, which determines the content, spirit and sense of all processes and relations in Russian society. It is especially interesting that, to the experts, reasoning on democracy implied mentioning freedom of speech and information, in one sense or another.

According to many experts, democracy means the existence of independent institutes of authority; independent judicial authority and especially independent mass media; the possibility to express opinions, without fear of repression by society or authorities; equal conditions for development and realization of one’s ideas; and the possibility to speak and be heard.

The majority of the interviewed experts assessed critically the state of democracy in Russia. They felt that democracy has still not been established in Russia, but that transitory processes are under way. One expert proclaimed the following idea:

If we want to speak about democracy in today’s Russia, what we need first of all are: independent elections, representation of citizens in government, freedom of the press, and independent institutes of authority.

The interview participants frequently blamed the actions of the authorities, sometimes using the term “police state”. However, criticism of the political opposition was sometimes heard as well: “The democracy about which our opposition talks is a dictatorship of democrats.”

As expected, the broad subject of discussion resulted in multidimensional opinions. Because the majority of the experts did not belong to the academic scientific society, they attempted to put the issue into the actual context and
express their political opinions. In the same way, the systems in Russia and in the West are compared. Some experts subjected the Western countries to critique, considering that Russia should develop its own model of social system: “Americans consider that they have the best democracy in the world. Here is a vivid example – Iraq. They have deposed the tyrant, babbling about him having a weapon of mass destruction.” In several interviews, an idea emerges that is very popular in Russia today, which is that “Russia has its own democracy. Russia has its own understanding, starting from the expedience for each person.”

Nevertheless, others view the situation of democracy in the West as more optimistic, also with respect to the media. Several groups of experts felt that, in the West, the mass media are a space, which has been built according to the democratic political model. That is, there, the fourth estate can itself initiate scandals and political processes and be a participant with equal rights in all this; it is an intermediary between the authorities and society. According to these experts, in Russia, the degree of isolation of the authorities from the society is approaching the absolute. In the West it is much less so. There, in case of general discontent with a sitting government, it is at least possible to replace it with another one, including by means of the media. “Though I do not idealize the West”, one of the experts continued.

The economic foundations of democracy and their connection with the wealth of society were especially discussed during the interview. The experts were divided in their opinions. The majority recognized that prosperity influences the level of democracy. According to many experts, living standards and well-being are important components of society. A person with a higher income and with the opportunity to use different sources of information is more likely to think about the larger world in which she or he lives. The experts believed that in a democratic society, the middle class plays a very big role.

However, some interviewees do not see any connection between democracy and the welfare of society. At least, they did not consider this connection essential: “Democracy in a poor country can be the same as in a rich country. Your rights, whether you are poor or rich, will be protected.” One of these experts used the United Arab Emirates as an example of a country that has rich inhabitants, but is not a democratic state. According to another opinion, Russia had more democracy some 10-15 years ago. At that time, the country was not richer, but poorer.

In these statements, there is a latent polemics with adherents to economic theories that consider the market to be the main instrument for optimization of public life and social self-regulation. According to such views, first a full-fledged market should be formed in a country and only then should a transition to creating a normal political and moral atmosphere be undertaken. Such recommendations can also be heard concerning the development of Russian mass media. For example, the Italian professor Paolo Manchini believes that, in Rus-
sia, there is no tradition of journalistic professionalism, and that such a tradition can develop only in conditions of a media market, which does not exist in Russia either.12

In sum

In sum, the experts tried to consider, in great detail, the specificity of the media situation in Russia in light of other countries and in St. Petersburg in light of Russia, as well as the essence of democracy. It is possible to conclude that these questions seriously concern them. Some experts concentrated their attention on the originality of the domestic version of journalism (as well as of Russian democracy), whereas others welcomed effacement of the distinctions between Russia and the West. These disputes are probably accompanied by the construction of various media models, some of which will more closely resemble Western models, while others will gravitate towards the local traditions. Judging the specificity of the media situation in St. Petersburg, the experts were inclined to consider that it looks more like a “capital” centre in light of other regions of the country, but visibly loses to Moscow, where the basic resources of federal importance are accumulating. Some experts recognized the relative weakness of the St. Petersburg mass media in economic and creative terms, a weakness caused by the low grade of professionalism within journalism, which is regarded as a serious problem.

Final conclusions

Our final conclusions based on the media expert interviews are divided into two categories. First, the experts left at our disposal materials describing, from their viewpoint, the media situation in modern Russia and the role of media in the development of democracy and cultural values. Second, the behaviour of the experts and their attitude towards the questions raised also deserve methodological and analytical attention.

The media situation in Russia seen through the experts’ eyes

The experts generally agreed that the interaction of mass media with society has changed in its intrinsic features during the past decades. The media system has become not only more diverse in the quantitative and technological dimensions, but has also offered more opportunities for realization of social and mental freedom, for discovering one’s personal potential, and for intensification of the information exchange. The media professionals considered the development of private initiative – both in the media business and in the search for necessary information – to be a positive tendency. These changes are mainly correlated

with socio-political processes, which have led to radical changes in the social structure. The experts regularly called attention to the position of the print media in the Soviet Union and during the time of *perestroika* in the beginning of the 1990s.

At the same time, a focus on ambiguity and contradictions of already accomplished changes and on-going processes is characteristic of the experts’ statements. They observed disequilibria between the quantitative increase in media resources (the extensive part of the progress) and the extent of the media’s influence on strengthening democracy and on the progress of the cultural-value system (the intensive part). In this respect, the reflections of the interviewed media representatives basically coincide with the general conclusions drawn in our article “Media Situation in St. Petersburg: Contemporary organisation and content” for the international research project.\(^{13}\)

Among the factors hindering more thorough exploitation of the increased potential of the mass media, the following are mentioned: 1) the pressure of political interests and their bearers (first of all the State institutions) on the media sphere, 2) the total commercialization (economization) of the media sphere, 3) the decrease in the level of cultural standards in society, particularly in the bulk of the population, 4) the deformation of the professional culture and moral and ethical principles of the journalistic community, and 5) the uncritical attitude towards some negative global tendencies and the practices of the foreign media. If we draw a parallel between the fundamental socio-political conceptions, we see here a reflection of Max Weber’s ideas about the three types of social systems: state-controlled, market-driven and cooperative. In the observed situation, the features of the first two types are visible – the influences of the State and of big business on the media sphere predominate, whereas the civil society proves to be a much less significant factor.

Essential changes in the characteristics of the audience are described. In this respect we should mention, first, the experts’ sharp differentiation of the audience according to social-demographic characteristics and preferences, second, the aspiration of part of the public for autonomy regarding the impact of the mass media, which in the extreme means encapsulation in a personal information space, and, third, the exposure of certain segments of the audience to political and ideological pressure from some mass media (basically the older generations) and to the harm caused by low intellectual and aesthetic standards (basically the younger generations). From the perspective of media contacts with the population, the participants were concerned with the limited interest of the media community in finding out and satisfying the demands of the population, leading to real isolation from each other in the value and information exchange.

\(^{13}\) See note 1.
At the same time, the experts kept their belief in the ability of the audience to develop, reproduce and multiply the cultural-value capital of the media sphere, as well as in the strengthening of the national identity of the mass media and their practices. Several interview participants emphasized the difference between Russia and the West in cultural and mental respects and associated this differentiation with the prospects of qualitative progress in the media branch. At the same time, attitudes towards the world and foreign mass media were not, on the whole, permeated by antagonism and nationalism, but rather by professional interest and curiosity.

**The experts’ positions and behaviours**

The specificity of the experts’ intellectual work in the context of the in-depth interviews consisted of the fact that they were not prepared in advance with reflections on and generalizations of the themes brought up by the interview guide. Thus, the experts had to react spontaneously to the questions, which required serious investigation and comparison of a significant number of facts. This circumstance should explain the fragmentariness of the opinions, as well as the logical inconsistencies in the statements of different views, which is a common characteristic of improvised speech. However, the positions of every expert were expressed in a sufficient measure, fully and completely.

Among the participants in the interviews were professionals inclined to systematic and structured understanding of the role of media in the development of democracy and the value-system. Their statements deserve special study as examples of practicing journalists’ ability to switch over to activity of research character. In the same way, one should perceive the prognostic attempts of our interviewees regarding the development prospects of the media sphere in connection with the possible dynamics of the political and socio-cultural relations in the country.

We take into consideration the fact that each of the experts’ statements is subjective in nature and, consequently, cannot be regarded as an exact reflection of the real situation. Repeatedly, there were different approaches to the same real phenomena, which, accordingly, were given various interpretations. Among the factors strongly influencing the experts, their positions and experience of professional and civil activity stand out in particular. The experts with longer working experience in journalism endeavoured to evaluate the present state of affairs in a historical retrospective. They more often captured the points of development in the practice of the media, identified contradictions and their sources, and had balanced attitudes towards the achievements and traditions of former decades. This concerns the professionals of all represented age groups, as some of the young journalists had started their journalistic life very early. Another factor of individual distinction is personal success in journalism and in the media business. As a rule, experts who had succeeded in their career made
statements about the present situation that were more characterized by loyalty, whereas career failures led to sharper and more critical statements. Finally, their personal position has been influenced by the experts’ affiliation/distance to the authorities and the State-controlled media. Representatives of the oppositional media sharply rejected the statement that there is freedom of speech in Russia and that the media exert a positive influence on the consciousness and behaviour of the population. They sought solutions to the existing conflicts and contradictions almost exclusively in a change in Russia’s political regime.

Notwithstanding the subjectivity of the individual statements, one can try to reveal some salient features in the experts’ representations of the qualitative characteristics of Russian journalism as a socio-cultural phenomenon. To this end, the authors of the article have calculated the rate of use of some keywords, including single-root words, in the experts’ statements (the wordings of the questions were not considered).

Without exaggerating the significance of this separate exercise, there is ground for drawing some conclusions. So, contrary to our expectations, the concepts of “national”, “culture” and “market” are relatively seldom mentioned. More popular concepts are instead “democracy”, “liberty(-ies)” and, especially, “human”. In our opinion, this may mean that the experts mainly perceived the mass media as humanitarian environment, not as domains of formalized and strictly regulated social relations. The tradition of “humanization” of journalism is deeply rooted in the history and practice of Russian press, with all the merits and shortcomings of such a system of coordinates.

Returning to the objectives and the hypotheses of the study, the following conclusions may be drawn:

1. The in-depth expert interviews have resulted in valuable materials for answering the central questions of the research programme “The Role of Media for Identity and Democracy” (pluralism/standardization, national identity/ephemeral lifestyle, and influence/marginality with reference to the Russian mass media).

2. A number of issues of principle importance have appeared, on which the positions of the majority of experts coincide. This concerns, first of all, the characterization of the general dynamics of the media sphere in organizational and mental-cultural dimensions, revealing major factors that influence the mutual relations of the media, society and individual, and that determine the degree of use of media resources. We are most likely dealing with opinions that are more or less generally accepted in the professional community.

3. Correlations between the experts’ opinions and their status, experience, age, and political positions and some other characteristics have appeared. Accordingly, full homogeneity of opinions is not seen with regard to the
majority of the discussed themes. The variety of opinions reflects the real plurality of positions existing in the professional community.

4. Experts have found general tendencies in the development of the global media sphere; they have emphasized the special features of the Russian media in this context, and have also noted the specificity of the media system in St. Petersburg. Thereby, the impact of national-cultural and regional factors on the role of media in the development of democracy and identity could be elucidated.

Thus, the present study has given us a deeper insight into the overriding issues of the research project. At the same time, the rich empirical material has been used only partly in this article. It could be used repeatedly in the future to consider issues of a private and general nature, relevant to the functioning and development of the mass media in Russian society.

References


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Olessia Koltsova

The research presented here is part of a joint Swedish-Russian study of media coverage of social problems. The work was done in the context of the broader project on the role of media for identity and democracy. The goal of the Russian part of the study is to reveal and describe the discursive strategies used by the St. Petersburg print media in their coverage of socially important problems and to define whether such strategies may be considered democratic.

Approach

The research uses a version of the classical/participationalist concept of democracy, as opposed to the revisionist/institutional concept (this traditional opposition is found in the work of many political scientists, see e.g. Schumpeter 1952). Thus, here, democracy is understood not as a specific institutional design, but as the ability of all citizens to take part in making the most important decisions concerning the development of their society. The democratizing activity of the media, then, is defined as providing a forum in which these decisions may be discussed by all interested parties, as well as promoting identities among the audience that place great value on access to such discussions and to decision-making. In relation to media coverage of social problems, it is particularly important that different social groups be given the opportunity to express their definitions of these problems and opinions as to possible solutions.

Thus the notion of social problems is defined here within a theoretical approach known as “contextual” constructivism (Best 2003). Unlike radical constructivism (e.g., Spector & Kistuse), which postulates that social problems are no more than public claims or labels defining some situations as problematic, contextual constructivism acknowledges some connection between claims (manifested, e.g., through the media) and objective conditions. Thus, for example, though corruption in the St. Petersburg press had not been widely covered as a severe social problem before President Putin publicly constructed it as a problem (claim), he did so exactly against the background of the rapidly growing statistics on corruption (condition). Such conditions, or more broadly social
factors, serve as causes of the rise and fall of social problems’ very “existence” in the public domain, first of all in the media (for a description of such factors, see Hilgartner & Bosk 1988; to examine an application of such an approach to the Russian media, see Yasaveyev 2004).

One of the central difficulties of a constructivist definition of social problems as claims is the question of who must make these claims and how widely they must be made for them to be defined as social problems. Situations may be defined as problematic by dominant or marginal social groups or even individuals, either in the public domain or outside it. Fairclough, focusing on what he finds to be problems for those labelled as “losers” in a given social order, however, notes that “what is problematic and calls for change is an inherently contested and controversial matter” (Fairclough 2001: 125). Therefore, in the present study, it was decided that scholars would first tackle several social phenomena supposedly seen as social problems in the media of one or both of the studied countries, and then the representation of these problems in media would be studied. Thus, problems as objective conditions were not studied per se and were not compared with their coverage, but the dynamics and features of media texts were explained partly by events observed in the “world out there”.

The first problem to be chosen was corruption, which is supposedly important to Russia but less to Sweden. The second issue was global warming (GW), which is thought to be important to Sweden but less to Russia. The third and most complicated was the problem of nationalism, supposedly important to both countries but in different ways. After the topics were chosen, the texts were selected and analysed using a complex of methods elaborated in a series of previous studies and adjusted to the goals of the present research.

Methodology

The methodology used is based, albeit very generally, on the Russian formalist school of text analysis – that is, it is presupposed that any text contains certain structural elements (such as actors and their actions, or conditions and results of the described event, or binary oppositions, or time and space categories, etc.) and that those elements may be revealed, separated from their concrete manifestations and typified. But what makes the study sociological is the presupposition that critical analysis of texts, with reference to their broader social context, may lead to meaningful conclusions concerning the media “life” of social problems. (First of all, revealing what images and discourses are predominant, and whose voices are represented, allows us to assess how “democratic” the studied texts are from a participationalist perspective.) Therefore an important feature of the methodology used here is that it overcomes the quantitative vs. qualitative dichotomy by integrating both approaches in two stages.
6. THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA FOR DEMOCRACY

Data collection, selection and primary analysis

The first stage, which is predominantly, but not exclusively quantitative, relies heavily on the work with the media and information database *Integrum* (www.integrum.ru). Among other sources, it contains hundreds of Russian and Former Soviet Union periodicals and millions of articles, and it enables sophisticated automatic searches and chart making. *Integrum* was chosen as the source of empirical data because it is one of the leading Russian databases of this kind. The period of study was defined as the year immediately preceding data collection: March 1 2006 – March 1 2007. Before working with the database, three sets of Russian keywords corresponding to the three chosen social problems were agreed upon with the Swedish researchers.¹

Selection of newspapers

The selection of newspapers was primarily based on the average issue readership (AIR) of newspapers.² Second, newspaper formats and political orientation were taken into consideration. Third, mentionings of all three topics in absolute numbers were studied, and then weighted by the frequency of issues of all newspapers. Twenty-one newspapers appeared to contain at least some mentionings, and the further choice was made among those newspapers. It was discovered that the market leaders almost ignored the studied topics, while some of the papers with a lower readership (especially business press targeting a very narrow audience) were sometimes very active in covering the selected problems. The sample included both types of editions. Two leaders, *Metro* and *Komsomolskaya Pravda* (The Truth of Communist Young League) (*KP*), were included in the sample (see Table 6:1). Both are local off-springs of national newspapers. *Metro* is a new (i.e., Post-Soviet) multicoloured paper dominated by advertisements, and the leader in its sector (with AIR exceeding that of the “normal” editions by several times). *KP* is a transmutation of one of the popular Soviet official editions, the leader in the “yellow press” sector, although yielding to several “ad” sector editions.

¹ For the problem of global warming they were: “global warming” OR “climate change” OR “climate warming”. For the problem of corruption they were: corruption [noun] OR corruption [adj] OR corrupt OR bribe OR bribery OR mzda [bribe] OR mzda-taking [bribery] OR corruptionist OR bribe-giver OR bribe-taker. For the most complicated problem of nationalism, the set included three related notions and their derivatives: nationalism OR nationalist [adj] OR nationalist [noun] OR racism OR racist [adj] OR racist [noun] OR xenophobia.

² The data were taken from two large readership surveys: one by a leading local marketing company Comcon SPb (see Comcon) and a briefer quarterly National Readership Survey by the leading national media research company TNS (see TNS).
Table 6.1. Mentionings of the three problems in selected newspapers in the studied period, absolute numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Newspaper taken into sample</th>
<th>Number of articles mentioning topics</th>
<th>Corruption</th>
<th>Nationalism</th>
<th>Global warming</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Delovoy Peterburg, weekly</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>167</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Komsomolskaya Pravda, weekly</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>33</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Metro, weekly</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>43</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nevskoye vremya, daily</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>285</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Novy Peterburg, weekly</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>144</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sankt-Peterburgskiye vedomosti, daily</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>302</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>974</td>
<td>497</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Then three leaders in absolute mentionings of the three topics taken together were revealed and included in the sample, and these newspapers also ranked high in weighted mentionings: first, **Sankt-Peterburgskiye vedomosti** (St. Petersburg News) (highest AIR among local non-yellow press, oldest Russian newspaper and official mouthpiece of the local authorities). Second, **Nevskoye vremya** (Neva Time) – once a leading newspaper among those that emerged during *perestroika*, although by the time of the study also fully controlled by the authorities and with a rapidly declining AIR. Third, **Delovoy Peterburg** (Business Petersburg), a leader among business newspapers, although with a modest absolute AIR; this paper had been started with Swedish capital and had a reputation of being relatively autonomous.

The sixth newspaper to be selected was a special case of **Novy Peterburg** (New Petersburg) (one of the leaders in the weighted mentionings, low AIR). It is important to understand that there are no truly oppositional newspapers in Russia apart from some that are very marginal and radical papers, and **Novy Peterburg** was exactly one of these. Its editorial board positioned the paper as “radically oppositional” and “national-patriotic”, which meant that it fiercely criticized the government from nationalistic positions and on behalf of an impoverished nation that is being robbed by its authorities. The language it used was very dubious, vulnerable legally and criticized by human rights (HR) activists. In November 2007, the newspaper was suspended and its main columnist Nikolay Androuschenko, the author of the most critical articles, was arrested, and this time the HR activists stood up for him. Although this happened after the studied period, the circumstances are very important to the present study.

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3 December 2007 was the time of the parliamentary elections, which were to be followed by the presidential elections in March 2008, when Vladimir Putin was to quit his presidential post. Nikolay Androuschenko was released shortly after president Medvedev’s inauguration, although by the time the present article was written, Androuschenko was still on trial. Shortly
6. THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA FOR DEMOCRACY

After the six papers were selected, the distribution of the articles with the keywords was analysed: the distribution was uneven over the course of the study period and demonstrated peaks and falls. A closer qualitative analysis of article headings and citations (provided by the database as the intermediate result) showed that those fluctuations were meaningful, and thus the peaks became the basis for the selection of small samples for more detailed analysis (second stage). This assumption of a relationship between frequency of content and meaning is the main feature of classical content analysis (see, e.g., Titscher 2000), however, the procedure of establishing such a relationship is essentially qualitative and, moreover, relies on the author’s embeddedness in the social context (knowledge of “objective conditions”). Three separate samples of 51-60 articles were constructed for the three social problems, and three separate code lists were made.

In the second stage, the selected articles were read, coded and analysed. Some variables in the code lists were quantifiable in principle, but because of the small sample sizes, extensive statistical analysis was not used. Instead, many “variables” were filled with longer citations, and thus the filled code lists served more as a tool for ordering and visualizing the data than as a basis for mathematical analysis. That is, instead of writing categories on the margins of a text as “softer” discourse analysts would do, the citations were inserted into the columns of the corresponding categories. Code lists were made after reading small samples of articles, and the analysis was not limited to the tables.

**Discourse analysis**

Construction of a set of such categories – i.e., the structural elements of texts to be revealed – was the central part of the methodology. Russian formalists elaborated their categories because they were interested in narratives, and mostly not those of modern media. Many media scholars (e.g., Van Dijk 1988) have a similar event-oriented focus. Actors, actions, place and time are also at the centre of Bell’s analysis of news stories (Bell 1998). Categories of actors, their actions and speech have proven to be highly relevant to the present study, before the first elections of this cycle, on November 22, 2007 Novy Peterburg was given an official warning for Androushchenko’s article “Why we should go to the Dissidents’ March on November 25” (the Dissidents’ March was the main action of nearly all oppositional parties and movements protesting against unfair and manipulated elections). Androushchenko’s article was seen to have elements of extremism. By law, after two such warnings, an edition may be closed down by the courts. Indeed, a week later the newspaper got another warning for an article published half a year before that, and was suspended by the district court. On November 23, the editorial hard disks were confiscated and Nikolay Androushchenko was arrested. He was accused of two crimes: (1) libelling an official (this primarily concerned the head of the City Housing Committee Unis Lukmanov, whom Androushchenko had accused of many sins, including corruption) and (2) putting pressure on the court through a series of his articles about the murder of a Congolese student. Both are the topics of the present study – topics on which Nikolay Androushchenko was working throughout the studied period – and they will be considered further below.
because it is through them that we can see which groups engage in what discourses and which of them are predominant.

However, newspaper articles are not necessarily narrative. Traditional Soviet theory of media genres divides them to “informational” articles, which include news as the main narrative genre and other descriptive texts, and “publicist” or “analytical” genres. Journalism students are taught that while news is centred around an event, analytical articles are centred around a problem. Despite the intensive hybridization of genres during the post-Soviet epoch, a rough version of this distinction has survived. I have shown elsewhere (Koltsova 2007) that the more a media text focuses on a problem, the less narrative the text is, i.e., the element van Dijk called the “main event” may be completely absent. Further, schemata such as that of van Dijk (1988: 55), which contain such elements as headline, lead, episodes, comments and the like, tell us a great deal about news as a type of discourse, but say little about the object of interest here – the social problem.

Fairclough (2001) has offered a problem-centred approach to discourse analysis, but his goals go far beyond text and discourse analysis, extending to a general critical analysis of the broader social context. Here I shall restrict myself to analysis of discourse, with only some references to social context. A social problem may itself be seen as a discursive construction or schema, consisting of a set of typical elements that may “live” in different types of discourse, including everyday conversation or internal government reports. My study on the representation of the homeless and homelessness, referred to above, suggests the following elements: description of problem development and/or state of affairs, problem causes, consequences, suggested or already applied methods of struggle, and forecasts. Some or all of these elements may reveal themselves through descriptions of events, actors’ actions or speech. All of them were implemented in the code lists for the present study; additionally, code lists contained parameters unique to each problem.\footnote{For corruption it was important to identify its type: everyday or business, and level of enforcement by the bribe-taker, both parameters according to a classification based on Georgy Satarov’s INDEM research foundation studies of corruption in Russia (INDEM 1997-2006). Bribe size, if mentioned, was also coded. For nationalism, it was important to count mentions of the three related problems (nationalism, racism and xenophobia) in each text to judge their relative weight. Given the social context in St. Petersburg (a series of murders of foreigners and migrants, especially students, that resounded in the papers), it was important to see whether each text contained mentionings of conflict/assault and what parties were involved. For global warming, it was important to see whether this phenomenon was regarded as a problem at all, because unlike the other two phenomena, global warming is often questioned not only as to whether it is an undesirable phenomenon, but as to whether it really exists. The results of the research are presented below.}
General tendencies

Relative importance of social problems
The size of the samples for qualitative analysis did not allow in-depth comparisons between editions, however, some general trends were revealed. A focus on corruption correlated strongly with a focus on nationalism among 21 newspapers and, unsurprisingly, this depended on their format. Coverage of global warming was so limited that it was virtually impossible to see any trends in distribution among the newspapers, and although an analysis of articles on this topic was carried out, its results are modest and are not addressed here in detail. Low interest to global warming is most probably explained by the fact that, in people's minds, global warming is a problem of a smaller scale than the other two; it is rather a specific kind of environmental problem and is covered as much as other specific ecological (or specific nationalistic, corruption) problems/cases are. For instance, in St. Petersburg, global warming gets as much attention as water pollution and the murder of the Tajik girl (see further on). Ecology as a more general concept is covered at the level of corruption and more than nationalism. The dominance of corruption over nationalism may be explained by the distribution of power between the social groups affected by these two problems. While nationalism affects only a minority, corruption is a widespread phenomenon affecting the entire adult population, but especially business people, who have more opportunities to voice their viewpoint than do ethnic minorities. Furthermore, corruption is an officially acknowledged problem, while the existence of nationalism is often denied by the authorities.

Differences between newspapers
Despite prevailing opinions (both inside and outside the country) about the severe political censorship in Russia, vivid discussion with a wide spectrum of viewpoints was discovered when concrete cases were covered by media. It is true that censorship does exist for certain issues: Except in the case of Novy Peterburg, no criticism of president Putin was found – on the contrary, when criticism of state policy was expressed, it was often specially stressed that the president had outlined right directions which, unfortunately, were not followed. Similarly, St. Petersburg governor Valentina Matvienko was criticized only indirectly, through her policies. Reproaches were most often addressed to “authorities” and similar anonymous forces. However, concrete laws, bills, policies, and reactions to events were often covered differently – supported or criticized from different angles. And here some important differences between newspapers were found, which I will outline below and show in detail later in the article. Sankt-Peterburgskie vedomosti (SPV), as the official newspaper, nearly always expressed the viewpoint of the local authorities; when their position was contradictory, as in attitudes towards nationalism, the newspaper reproduced
those contradictions. The SPV sample of articles contained hard news stories on official events such as statements of official persons, press-conferences and governmental gatherings. Nevskoye vremya was close to SPV, though somewhat less restrained while Delovoy Peterburg (DP), as a business edition, demonstrated the most consistent, well-reasoned and reserved criticism. It also gave the floor to the widest range of social actors, including many direct quotes, often without commentary. DP’s most obvious difference from SPV was in the question of nationalism. Yellow Komsomolskaya Pravda (KP) covered all topics to such a limited degree that no trends could be detected; even the ad-oriented Metro had more substantial and reasonably critical articles than KP did.

Finally, Novy Peterburg differed from all the others dramatically. It paid little attention to topics widely covered by others – such as the frequently discussed murders of foreigners or corruption stories that resounded in the media. Instead, it offered radical and overwhelming criticism of the “predatory” and “venal” Russian state at all its levels, including person criticism of President Putin, using “corruptionist” as a swear-word and holding the position of Russian orthodox nationalism. Thus, covering the death of Slobodan Milosevic, former Yugoslav leader tried by the Hague Tribunal, Nikolay Androuschenko called him a “great Slavic citizen” blaming his death on the “Eurobandits from the Hague and traitors of brothers-Serbs – Ukraine and Russia”, or, more precisely the Russian “corrupt state”. Most articles in this newspaper were much more emotional than those found in others; however, some of them, such as Androuschenko’s investigation of Viking bank, contained more detailed arguments and evidence supporting the author’s criticism than in any other newspaper.

Corruption

Dynamics of coverage
An initial hypothesis was that President Putin’s annual speech to the Federal Parliament on April 26, 2006, where he claimed that corruption was one of Russia’s most critical problems, would produce a peak, which would be followed by a calmer but more long-term increase in coverage of this problem. However, the peak it resulted in was modest and short, and after it the coverage remained stable for about two months, until late June/early July. Since late June, however, the average number of articles on corruption did increase and was higher than before the speech throughout the entire studied period, even if peaks are excluded. What happened in late June/early July? There were a number of events: the peak started with the appointment of the new General Prosecutor on June 23 and ended with (a) Putin’s annual responses to people’s on-line questions, where questions on corruption were most numerous (July 6); and (b) ratification of the International Convention on Criminal Responsibility for
Corruption by the lower chamber of the Russian Parliament (July 8). The middle between the two events was mostly filled with articles on authorities’ strategies concerning the “struggle against corruption” and with overviews of corruption in Russia, including sociological studies.

Another unexpected peak was found in December. It was initially thought to be connected to coverage of the annual results, where Putin’s corruption agenda would be touched upon again. However, it turned out to be equally (a) an echo of a mid-November corruption scandal in the Federal Fund for Obligatory Medical Insurance then covered mostly in the national press, but reflected on later in the St. Petersburg press in a “localized” manner, and (b) a reaction to the International Day of the Struggle against corruption (December 9). The middle between these two events was mostly filled with cases of everyday and business corruption, primarily at the local level.

There was also a smaller and shorter peak in February 2007 connected to two formal events: Putin’s decree on the commission on the fight against corruption and adoption of the St. Petersburg law on the struggle against corruption, but because a larger summer peak is also connected to formal events, it was decided to exclude the February peak. The calm period was chosen deliberately to represent the medium-level coverage period prior to Putin’s speech to the Parliament.

**Typology**

Articles on corruption are too numerous and too varied to be classified on a basis of a small sample of 60 items. However, some regularities can be found. Unlike articles on global warming, these texts seldom talked of corruption as such, but more often considered it in connection with an event and even more often – touched upon it partly in connection with another problem. For instance, when talking about new rules of registration of ownership rights for land, a journalist would speculate whether such rules might lead to the growth of corruption. The prevalence of such articles shows the pervasiveness of corruption, which is present as a background topic in nearly any discussion of the government and its policies.

**Policies and measures used to fight corruption**

Policies were the major type of measures in the struggle against corruption that were widely mentioned in the articles. It is interesting that journalists talked about causes, consequences and forecasts much more seldom than about the measures used to combat corruption. Among the causes mentioned, authors or other actors usually named bad laws, the superfluity of regulations that turned into bureaucratic barriers or, on the contrary, the absence of clear regulations, which caused state officials to make arbitrary decisions; also mentioned were people’s bad morals and the evil nature of the current regime. The consequences
addressed in the articles fall into two groups: the immediate consequences of concrete corruption acts and the general consequences for society. The latter include the subversion of initially good policies, the growth of risks and costs for businesses, especially small businesses, and the consequent decrease in business activity, the decrease in the country’s investment appeal, the decrease in the government’s accountability, the increased threats to democracy and human rights, and the general “devastation of the country”. Forecasts mostly concerned development of concrete corruption cases and situations.

Measures to combat corruption fell into two radically different types, which produced two types of discourses on the problem of corruption. Despite the variety of texts on corruption, these two discourses could be clearly traced in the sample. The first type talked of concrete measures taken in a specific situation, most often concerning the arrest, trial or conviction of an official corruption suspect. This was mostly accomplished in the format of criminal news. The second and the most interesting type was the discussion of governmental anti-corruption policies. Most anti-corruption measures offered or introduced were legislative, e.g., ratification of the European Convention on Criminal Responsibility for Corruption and the introduction of laws on the confiscation of property gained through bribery, the responsibility of judicial persons for bribery-giving, the proportionality of the penalty to the magnitude of corruption gains, the limit on the monetary value of presents given to officials, etc. Given the dominance of legal issues among the causes, one may establish a correspondence between the causes of and measures used to combat corruption, which is not a necessary feature of the coverage of social problems. Other measures may be conventionally divided into “orthodox” (creation of various state bodies, audits by Procuracy and even “something like China-style death penalties for corruptionists”, Sankt-Peterburgskije vedomosti 03.07.2006) and “liberal” (withdrawal of the State from business, development of self-defence measures by the business community, mobilization of citizens and their legal resources), with a continuum between the two poles.

Differences between newspapers
This discourse merges into that on other policies, which often assessed whether those policies (could) lead to a reduction in or growth of corruption in the relevant sphere. And here newspapers visibly varied in their level of criticism. The official Sankt-Peterburgskije vedomosti scantly or apologetically reported on official events or statements, Nevskoye vremya (NV) offered similar articles, but also contained criminal news on corruption, items on corruption-oriented research, and some criticism. Although this criticism was modest and rare, NV gave its readership more information on the current state of the problem. Delovoy Peterburg (DP) was still somewhat farther from officialdom. It avoided official texts and supplied the reader with detailed descriptions; when it did not
challenge governmental policies, it talked of the difficulties such policies would meet; when it did challenge governmental policies, it criticized the government in a well-reasoned, albeit mild and cautious style. It also considered many concrete corruption situations that went beyond the genre of criminal news. In general, DP gave the floor to the widest range of actors, including Russian and foreign research bodies on corruption and businessmen who were asked to tell about their experiences with state officials.

Novy Peterburg (NP) never talked about anti-corruption measures, but criticized governmental policies as being corrupt. Its ambiguous style combined strong evidence with an abundance of emotional accusations that finally made the newspaper an easy target for authorities. For instance, it could easily claim that “frauds and cheats from the city government and the Housing Committee” were not going to compensate people for unrendered service, that the governor promoted the “criminal mechanisms of housing policy” and that such a form of stealing (through unrendered service) had become the norm. Articles in NP were full of exclamation points, vulgarisms (“why the hell”, etc.) and entire words spelled in capital letters.

Corruption cases and types of corruption
Thus far, we have been talking about discourse mainly centred on measures, including policies, but another important type of talk about corruption, partially overlapping with the former, concerns concrete corruption cases. It includes the already mentioned criminal news and descriptions of corruption-related situations, many of which had no successful resolution. In such cases, the people involved were often unnamed because their guilt could not be proved. Situations when someone was arrested, if they did not constitute criminal news, were usually presented as examples of the successful struggle against corruption in interviews with officials. Apart from such situations, one success story was described by Sankt-Peterburgskie vedomosti. It told how inhabitants of an apartment block near a park that had been given away for construction of a new house won the case in court and saved the garden. The only genuine journalistic investigation was the article by Nikolay Androuschenko, but it investigated the criminal activities of the Viking bank; the authorities were only generally accused of conscious deceleration of the criminal proceedings and of corruption. Androuschenko’s long debate with authorities concerning this case is thought to have been one of the reasons for his arrest.

The corruption situations mentioned in the selected articles may be easily classified into several types according to several criteria. First, following Satarov’s classification (INDEM 1997–2006), they may be divided into everyday corruption situations faced by common citizens and business corruption, where extortion of resources from entrepreneurs takes place (the latter being harder to avoid). Initially, it was thought that the authorities would try to play down the
scale of corruption as a social problem, and that therefore primarily everyday corruption would be mentioned. Surprisingly, the newspapers paid equal attention to everyday and business corruption, respectively. Moreover, when cases mentioned in articles were classified by the degree of enforcement exercised by officials, it turned out that the newspapers predominantly talked about the most severe kind of corruption, which is more like extortion than bribery.

Bribe size is also often mentioned in articles (from 2 to 300 thousand U.S. dollars) and depends on the level of corruption. The minimal mentioned bribe had occurred at the district level, the maximal at the federal level. Not unexpectedly, the St. Petersburg press paid the most attention to local situations. The most resonant corruption scandal in the Fund of Obligatory Medical Insurance, which was top national TV news in November 2006, hardly found its way to the local press. Indeed, an analysis of the ratio of its mentionings in national, St. Petersburg and other local press indicated that this was a predominantly national event in the printed press, too.

In general, the detailed character of the discussion, the variety of measures taken and described and other features of the discourse on corruption suggested that this problem had been and was going to be greatly reflected on in society. The consensus about the undesirable nature of corruption and about the importance of combating it was obvious and had two consequences. First, it opened an official “window” for relatively free discussion of policies and measures, although opinions were expressed, in the first round, by officials, and only in the second round by representatives of business and article authors. Those accused of corruption were present as actors, but, unsurprisingly, not given the floor; the voices of common people were virtually absent. Thus, the discussion was promoted but channelled into a narrow spectrum. The second consequence, which was related to the first one, was the relatively calm nature of the public discussion. All these traits are absolutely untypical of the heated and unstructured discourse on nationalism.

Nationalism

*General background*

To explain the coverage of nationalism in the St. Petersburg press, it is necessary to describe the major relevant events. As the second largest megalopolis, St. Petersburg is a city with a large proportion of migrants, and in the past 5-6

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5 Migrants of Russian and other citizenship, as well as of Russian and other ethnic groups, often have similar problems, but the problem presented by “ethnic” migrants for “core” Russian cities is specific, as such people differ in appearance, speech and behaviour. They are the objects of everyday discrimination irrespective of their Russian/non-Russian citizenship. For instance, Chechens are considered as alien as Tajiks, although Chechnya was fiercely fought for as a Russian territory.
years, it has acquired the reputation of being a “nationalistic capital” owing to the numerous assaults on foreigners. Although there is no reliable evidence proving that the number of such assaults is higher than, for example, in Moscow, some murders have come to resonate in particular, and the peak occurred during the studied period. Initially, authorities were reluctant to admit the nationalistic character of many of the assaults, but the murders of two Russian antifascist activists in 2004 and 2005 made it difficult to deny the growth of nationalistic activities. In the discourse of the studied period, several murders were united into a single chain and often covered together. The most resonant among them was the murder of the Senegalese student Samba Lampasar in April 2006. Unlike other murders committed with cold arms, this was committed with a rifle that, moreover, had a swastika on it. This caused the authorities to become more active, and in mid-2006 a special 5-year programme called “Tolerance” was adopted by the local government. Procuracy – the body responsible for criminal investigation – demanded cancellation of the most resonant non-guilty verdicts. The released suspects of Tadjik girl Hursheda’s murder (see note 6) were retried and convicted; non-guilty verdict on Congolese student’s case (ibid.) was also cancelled and the case was sent for additional investigation. In Russia, the jury court is a very young institution, and its verdicts may be cancelled by higher courts.

It is also important to mention an event that happened outside St. Petersburg but that echoed in its press. On August 30, 2006, in the small town of Kondopoga (republic of Karelia in the North-West), drunken visitors at a bar offended its Azerbaijani barman. He ran for help and brought a group of friends, mostly Chechens; in the fight that followed, two Russians were killed, some wounded. The police who witnessed the event took no action either during the course of the fight or after it. The next day, the Azerbaijani-owned bar was burned down. In two days, leaders of the radical nationalistic organization Movement Against Illegal Immigration (MAII) gathered at a large protest meeting. An agitated crowd pogromed the local flee-market – a place where migrants are usually employed. Authorities made some arrests, promised to teach children tolerance and simultaneously to fight illegal immigration (note: Chechens are Russian citizens). They also had to hide local Chechen women and children in a san-

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6 Three murders preceded the studied period: 9-year-old Tajik girl Hursheda Sultanova in 2004; Vietnamese student Wu An Tuan in 2004 and Congolese student Roland Epasak in 2005. All were slaughtered by groups of young males. In late March 2006, when this study begins, the jury found a group of teenagers suspected of Hursheda’s murder, and with a nationalistic motive, guilty only of hooliganism, and gave them a very mild sentence. This immediately resulted in a protest demonstration whose participants were worried that from that point on, skinheads would feel safe and assaults would continue. The same evening, a 9-year-old black girl Liliana Sissokko was attacked and wounded with a knife. Later that year, a jury discharged the young people accused of murdering Roland Epasak (June) and Wu An Tuan (October), which was widely discussed in the press. The latter occurred just after another murder of an Indian student in September.
torium outside Kodopoga for several weeks. The story was top national news for about two weeks.

Dynamics of the coverage

The initial hypothesis was that there would be two major peaks, one caused by the murder of Lampsar Samba (the one perpetrated with the swastika-marked rifle), and the other by the events in Kondopoga. The first hypothesis was confirmed, although the articles in the April peak were equally focused on Samba’s murder and on the chain of events surrounding the “mild verdict for Hursheda’s murderers – protest march – assault at Liliana”.

The events in Kondopoga, however, were not the cause of a separate clear-cut peak, rather they were a part of a broad and relatively mildly sloping period of increased interest in the topic from September to November. This is explained by a whole series of various events discussed separately or together. Kondopoga per se was discussed only in the first two weeks of September, which corresponds to the highest level of interest in this event both in the national and Karelian press. Then until the end of November, one can trace a sequence of less covered events, including the protest actions of foreign students in St. Petersburg, the Russian-Georgian conflict, nationalist political events in the Ukraine, the nationalist “Russian march” of MAII, and discussions on a new jury verdict in which those accused of a racist attack on a Vietnamese student were declared innocent. Among all of these events, the “Russian march” sub-period was selected as the local event, not connected with students’ murders, as one such murder was already included in the analysis. Naturally, this sub-period does not only contain articles on the “Russian march”. It has been extended to a period somewhat longer than four weeks.

The calm period corresponds to medium-level coverage. It also includes news on the guilty verdict for the leader of the fascist organization Mad Crowd, which balances earlier non-guilty verdicts.

Keyword usage

The complexity of the issue of nationalism, racism and xenophobia has given rise to a need to search for and analyse the mentionings of all keywords, allowing us to more generally map the distribution of attention paid to the different notions. An analysis of references to keywords in the general population of articles and outside it has shown that nationalism and its derivatives are far ahead of racism, fascism and xenophobia, including their derivatives. Thus, in the small sample, xenophobia is slightly overrepresented. The qualitative analysis has shown that nationalism was usually used as an umbrella term embracing all other notions. For instance, the largest surge of discussion in which St. Petersburg is depicted as the capital of nationalism was provoked by assaults on two black people (Liliana Sissoko and Lampsar Samba), which could be called
cases of racism. However, the Russian nationalistic culture does not usually differentiate between black and non-black ethnic others, and therefore racism is seen as a sub-type of nationalism. In Russia, the word Fascism refers to German Nazism (the latter term being nearly unused), but classical Nazism has problems taking root in Russia, because it denies the rights of Russians themselves. Fascism is thus a term usually used from outside the nationalistic culture to completely deligitimize nationalists; radically nationalistic youth movements and groups prefer to call themselves skinheads, although this informal term hardly finds its way into the serious press.

It is also important to note that issues of nationalism, especially in the official discourse, are often indissolubly merged with those of extremism, which was not a keyword in the present study. In 2006, the peak in the campaign to combat extremism occurred. It included amendments to the Law on Combating Extremism that were discussed more than the law itself. The law defines extremism broadly, but mostly as anti-systemic political activity (including discursive activity). However, in the 2006 edition, it also includes: “damaging health and property of citizens in connection to their views, race or ethnicity, religion, social status or social origin”, propaganda about such activity and “propaganda and public demonstration of Nazi symbols” (Federal law, 2006). Given this context, it is easier to understand why organizations and groups that commit hate crimes, such as Mad Crowd, are more often called extremists than nationalists.

Typology
The structure of the small sample on nationalism was different from both of the other samples. Five-sixths of the articles were entirely devoted to the issue (in the corruption sample – less than a half), and of these 10 were devoted to the problem as such, not in connection with an event. These kinds of articles usually discussed solutions and policies aimed at the struggle against nationalism. The other, event-orient articles dealt not only with murders and non-guilty verdicts, but often with official and public reactions to these events (public statements, meetings, conferences, protest actions). Even superficial reading reveals the intensity of events and the high degree of social tensions underlying the publications. It is interesting, however, that coverage of this potentially global issue relatively seldom went beyond the boundaries of St. Petersburg, with the distribution of articles in terms of their globality-locality being very similar to the distribution for corruption.

Voices and opinions
In contrast to the other two issues, the polarization of opinions in general, and on some issues between newspapers, was much greater. The set of actors was much more varied than in the corruption articles. In the former case, as already mentioned, the dominant actors were representatives of authorities who were
depicted as dealing with or speaking about the struggle against corruption. The second most common actors were representatives of authorities who had been charged with corruption. In such cases, they were given coverage, but not a chance to speak (voice). In the nationalism articles, the great proportion of the actors were not representatives of authorities, but also included were NGO (non-governmental organization) members, experts, protesters, and victims of the problem and its sources. Although victims, as usually in social problems representations, were given more coverage than voice, one thing was very important. The question who is the victim of the social problem and who is its source/initiator was a contested matter; sometimes roles ascribed to a couple of characters in one article were reversed in another, and a victim was called an offender. In this uncertainty both from time to time were given floor to justify their positions, and so victims got more voice than usual.

The polarization of opinions of all those varied actors primarily concerned the causes, consequences and methods of combating the problem, but most visibly it concerned their interpretation of major events. Within the small sample, concerning the causes and methods of combating nationalism, it may be said that the articles that saw causes in such things as the “unwillingness of migrants to adapt” or in their competition for jobs or even as “provocation against St. Petersburg” (see later in the text) tended simultaneously to promote more repressive measures against nationalists. The proposed measures ranged from more police patrols to a general “firm administrative battle on extremism”, combined with stricter regulation of migration. Thus, ethnic minorities were automatically seen in the articles as migrants and guests who were currently not on “their own” territory (see also note 5).

Differences between newspapers
The articles that identified the causes of nationalism in “social problems”, such as the low social status of migrants or people’s false “stereotypes” about migrants, tended to insist on milder measures, such as development of education in the sphere of ethnic cultures and general promotion of tolerance. They also connected ethnic minorities to migrants less often. The first, harder group of measures was clearly more characteristic of Novy Peterburg (Sankt-Peterburgskije vedomosti, at least in this sample, avoided the topic of combating nationalism), while Delovoy Peterburg mentioned milder measures. Novy Petersburg, naturally, did not offer to help in the struggle against nationalism at all, as it saw nationalism as a virtue. Therefore, NP instead offered to struggle against the anti-Russian government. But, to repeat, the most obvious cleavages between newspapers concerned the events.

A first cleavage was connected with the assault on a black girl named Liliana Sissoko. Most newspapers viewed this event in the context of growing nationalism, but the most official paper, Sankt-Peterburgskije vedomosti, cited governor
Matvienko, who warned against drawing premature conclusions concerning the possible nationalistic nature of the assault. Even when commenting on the murder of a black student with a swastika-marked rifle, the authorities said that it was a provocation of unknown forces who wanted to discredit St. Petersburg in anticipation of the G8 summit to be held there three months later. This viewpoint was mentioned by all of the papers, but not always apologetically. Even the “almost-official” Novy Peterburg gave equal status to Matvienko’s interpretation and to the alternative opinion of the African Unity social movement.

The second important cleavage concerns mild and non-guilty court verdicts. Of the two most obvious interpretations (jury members are nationalists or city investigative bodies collect poor evidence), both are unfavourable for the local authorities. Therefore, Sankt-Peterburgskie vedomosti tried to vindicate the two groups, both of which worked under “difficult circumstances”; Novy Peterburg admitted to more general problems with the Russian legal investigation and court systems; Delovoy Peterburg and Metro assumed that the jury had a nationalistic bias, and NP – ironically – sympathized with SPV on the issue of the jury being objective. However, in line with its general policy, NP proclaimed that the true cause of what was happening to the accused was not the erroneous actions of investigators, but the intentional plot of the corrupt regime against honest Russians. Thus, according to this view, the jury’s behaviour constituted heroic resistance against the government’s policy of anti-Russian fascism.

A third visible point of cleavage was the so-called “Russian March” of the Movement Against Illegal Immigration (MAII), scheduled for the Day of National Unity, November 4. The dubious character of this new holiday was widely discussed in the press, especially in the context of the post-Soviet tradition in which different political parties and movements organized street demonstrations on November 7 and after the abolition of November 7 – on November 4. The “Russian March” was proposed by MAII, the movement that organized the anti-migrant pogroms in Kondopoga and viewed them as a successful action of true Russian patriots. St. Petersburg authorities hesitated in approving this march, claimed it would be prohibited and finally let it happen in a distant place, far from traditional locations for public actions.

Novy Peterburg critically commented on the discrepancies between the words and deeds of the local authorities. Delovoy Peterburg gave the floor to several youth movements that planned demonstrations for November 4, mostly movements with a pro-Kremlin and nationalist oppositional orientation, including

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7 The year before the studied period, the main Socialist holiday, the Day of the Socialist Revolution celebrated on November 7, was abolished and replaced with the Day of National Unity on November 4. The official decision on this holiday states that, on this day, the volunteer multi-estate army “liberated Moscow from Polish interventionists” (although the link between this event and this date is questioned by historians); it is also the day of the famous Orthodox Icon of Our Lady of Kazan.
the MAII. *Komsomolskaya Pravda* published an article headed “Russian March failed” and described it as a poorly attended farce. Using a mocking style, it depicted a minor fight between the MAII, who were shouting “Support Kondopoga! All power to the Slavs!”, and Antifa (antifascist) youth movement, who shouted “Fascism won’t do!” and who were the first to throw a petard at the MAII. Finally, *Novy Peterburg* stiltedly wrote about the success of the Russian March, which was held in spite of the viciousness of the authorities. Coverage of this event clearly shows that, when it comes to the heated topic of nationalism, the same cases may be not only interpreted, but also described using completely opposite terms – from failure to success.

**Conclusions**

It is clear that the St. Petersburg press presented very diverse coverage of social problems, but how democratic was it? Did it provide a forum in which important decisions could be discussed by all interested parties? Did it promote citizen identities that value such discussion? The answer is no less complex than the coverage itself.

First, the structure of the voices that were represented is different for the different problems. In the relatively few articles on global warming, most references were made to Russian or foreign academic experts who stressed the causes and consequences of the problem, or to Russian or foreign officials talking in political and economic contexts about various measures to combat global warming. In articles on corruption as an officially acknowledged problem, the predominant actors were representatives of authorities who were speaking about the fight against corruption. The voices of businessmen and the journalists themselves were also present, but ordinary people were excluded. Those accused of corruption entered the articles as actors, but they were denied the floor. And a particular question in this context concerns whether, in light of the normative theory of democracy, the opinions of such actors should or should not be represented.

Articles on nationalism, often case oriented, were more diverse. A great proportion of the actors were not representatives of authorities, but included NGO members, experts, protesters, and victims of the problem and its sources. Opinions were more polarized, which seems to be closely connected to the fact that nationalism, unlike corruption, is not a univocally recognized problem in the official discourse.

The complexity of the studied phenomena is also seen on a more general level that stretches beyond differences between specific problems. Thus, regarding both nationalism and corruption, on the one hand, we could see a relatively wide spectrum of opinions, from a moderate liberal discourse standing for such problem solutions as deregulation and public mobilization and self-help, to a
statist, paternalistic and moderately repressive discourse close to the official viewpoint, and further to an extreme nationalistic anti-government but also very repressive discourse. On the other hand, by the time of the present research, the oppositional liberal discourse, more extreme than the one we found, had already been nearly eliminated from the press. Thus, the spectrum we observed was not complete and was shifted towards the nationalistic pole. A year later, the only newspaper promoting the extreme nationalist discourse was shut down, which made the spectrum more symmetrical, but also even more narrow. The situation with the official discourse is also complex: on the one hand, it clearly dominated; on the other, it drew in the elements of other discourses catering to different audiences, thus acquiring polysemy within itself and leaving room for limited discussion using its own terms.

The atmosphere of “free” discussion was most visible in Delovoi Peterburg. When it did not criticize the government, it still kept a distance from it, and in any case it gave the floor to the widest set of actors, including, e.g., victims of corruption, or liberal and nationalist politicians. But, even in this paper, articles presenting multiple viewpoints were not in the majority. Most common in all the newspapers were texts that promoted a single position, although DP, more than the others, published texts with diverging positions, thus opening a discussion between them. Its rigour and orientation towards presenting precise data and argumentation also contributed to the culture of discussion. Novy Peterburg, although very oppositional, on the contrary had no intention of discussing the position it stood for with the government or with anybody else. It used all the classical mechanisms of propaganda and balanced on the brink of what is legal.

It is also important to say that the agenda concerning all the social problems discussed here was not at all always set by the authorities. As concerns corruption, one may claim that this topic was initiated by the Federal Government, but this agenda setting was already based on a general consensus concerning the high level and great harmfulness of corruption and was preceded by an already quite high level of coverage of the topic. With regard to nationalism, the pressure of events was so strong and the degree to which they constituted a problem was so great that the authorities could not, even if they wished, keep them from being covered or leave them without a reaction – either discursive or embodied in actions. Their behaviour with regard to these events was indeed re-active and rather followed than anticipated them. The absence of a consistent governmental position on the matter made a great deal of room for public discussion; it was also reinforced by an absence of consensus in society itself. Finally, it cannot be concluded that the modest representation of global warming was the result of a conscious plot on the part of the authorities. Rather, it was not on the agenda in society in general and in the expert communities in particular.
It should also be noted that some “elements” of the social problems were covered less than others everywhere, as they usually are in the Russian press. Thus, the causes of problems were paid less attention to than the measures to combat them, and the problem victims were given a voice less often than the problem solvers were. However, on the whole, it cannot be said that all aspects of problem coverage were effectively controlled by the authorities, and the public discussion, though not without its limitations, did have an influence on the authorities’ actions.

The results of the present study on media coverage of the three problems also have several implications for a broader media theory. The media have often been accused of shifting their attention from tendencies and problems to separate decontextualized events. This, however, is not at all the case in the coverage of corruption and global warming in the studied press. A possible cause of such accusations seems to lie in the fact that most research has been centred around news as an event-oriented genre (or entertainment content), and thus what in the Soviet media was called a publicist/analytical item, as a problem-oriented genre, slipped from the attention of scholars. It also seems that an orientation to events shifts towards an orientation to problems as the “hotness” of the problem decreases. Because the hotness itself emerges when events are multiple, recent and have the potential to resound in the media.

Besides this, the depth of the problem analysis and the discussion of it has been shown to be dependent on public agreement on the problem. Where too much disagreement is present, both concerning the existence of the problem and concerning its features, emotional comments suppress democratic discussion, and the media reflect a wide spectrum of polarized opinions that do no talk to each other. When the problem and its main features are generally acknowledged and agreed upon, the discussion becomes calmer, deeper and more well-reasoned, and the various voices begin to interact. Although in Russia the spectrum of voices on corruption was purposefully narrowed by the authorities, it seems that with more consensus the spectrum should narrow anyway, as this is what constitutes consensus as such. Finally, when agreement is complete, there are no subjects left to discuss, whether this agreement is on the features of a problem, its existence or importance, or whether it is based on full and correct information as opposed to false and/or missing information (as with global warming, which was considered unimportant in the public opinion). Thus, it seems as though a medium level of agreement is needed to promote the most democratic and productive discussions of a given problem.
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7. Connection or Disconnection? Two Generations in Sweden Discuss Online Sociality

Sofia Johansson

How does online social interaction influence everyday life? As the Internet becomes further embedded in day-to-day routines, socialising online is increasingly popular.¹ The Internet, among other things, is used to keep in touch, meet new friends, flirt and find solace in social groups. A current example of the “sociable” aspect of the medium is the intense interest in social networking sites such as MySpace and Facebook, which, for young people, have become crucial sites for managing peer networks. With these and other forms of online sociality becoming central to contemporary lifestyles, we are seeing a transformation of the way many people socialise and relate to one another.

Following the rise of digital and mobile communication technologies, there is an expansive body of academic work on the social use of the Internet, with scholarly perspectives pending between utopian and dystopian views of its consequences. However, much of the empirical research has been aimed at specific sites for, or forms of, online social interaction, and less so on how this more generally is experienced on the user-level. Here, many wider questions concerning social relationships, everyday social practices and their relation to identity formations and understandings of cultural and social belonging are still in need of further enquiry.

This article attempts to shed light on how ordinary people in Sweden experience online sociality in their everyday life. It draws on a qualitative study involving 16 group interviews with two generations of Swedish inhabitants living in Stockholm, in their late teens (about 17 years old) and in their forties and

¹ Figures from the Pew Internet and American Life Project show that while e-mail continue to top online activities carried out on a daily basis, other kinds of social interactions are also gaining in popularity. Notably, a report from 2009 (Lenhart 2009) states that online social networking services are used by 65 per cent of Americans aged 18-24, whereas the share of adult Internet users with a profile on an online social network has more than quadrupled between 2005-2008, from eight to 35 per cent.
fifties (45-55 years of age), with varying social backgrounds and Internet habits. The focus is not on a particular online environment, neither on narrowly defined or quantifiable research questions – but on overall perceptions and experiences of online sociality as a general trend. As Sweden is one of the top countries for Internet access per capita, with over 80 per cent of the general population having Internet access in the home in 2007, and almost 90 per cent of 15-19 year-olds having broadband access – with corresponding figures even higher in Stockholm – this makes it an interesting case for studying social implications of the medium. Likewise, whereas the so-called “Internet generation” often is foregrounded in qualitative Internet research, it is valuable to take into account the experiences of an older generation, too, when trying to understand more widespread transformations to social life.

Identity and social relationships online and offline

Before moving on to the findings, it is useful to briefly sketch some of the international academic debates around the social role of the Internet. An area attracting considerable attention concerns identity in relation to online and offline relationships. At its most basic, the specific features of “computer-mediated communication” (CMC), as opposed to face-to-face communication, entails limited cues to physical activity such as facial expression and body language, potentially asynchronous communication, a transcendence of geography and one-to-many communication. These basic characteristics have been taken to mean a greater potential for relative anonymity within online social relations, greater control over self-presentation, a reliance on the written word, and a greater scope for socialising across national, geographical and cultural boundaries – raising questions about potentials and limitations to online relationships and their role in the offline context.

The fact that social determinants such as race, age and gender are not instantly detectable on the Internet, coupled with the potential anonymity of the medium, has, particularly in early research on online social activity, been seen to facilitate experiments with identity and self-presentation, as well as carrying liberating and democratizing potential. This emphasis on the distinctive nature

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2 The study is part of a larger research project, “The Role of Media for Identity and Democracy” involving a comparison between population samples in Stockholm and St Petersburg with regards to general changes in the media landscape (see anthology “Forward and Introduction” for details on the study).

3 In the OECD ranking of broadband access per capita Sweden is ranked as no. 6 in the world (June, 2008, at: www.oecd.org/sti/ict/broadband), and Sweden was placed at the top of a recent ITU ranking of countries’ information and communication technology development (March, 2009, at: www.itu.int/ITU-D/ict/publications/idi/2009/index.html). This can be compared with how, in the questionnaire part of the research project, nearly all of the teenagers in Stockholm stated they used the Internet and over 90 per cent of the adults did. For further statistics on Swedish Internet use, see Nordicom, at www.nordicom.gu.se.
of online social life was especially evident in research on “virtual worlds” around
the mid-90s, which, analysing online cultures as separate from the day-to-day
experiences of the participants, concentrated on questions of identity and on the
group cultures originating from the online social interactions (Jones 1995, 1997,
Bassett 1997). A pioneering study which however did relate the online world
with everyday life is Sherry Turkle’s (1996) work on participants in multi-user
domains (MUDs), where, through interviews with college students, Turkle
conceived of virtual environments as spaces for play with multiple identities, in
relation to relatively stable offline identities.

Later research on the social ramifications of the Internet has however
emphasized the interrelatedness between online and offline social relationships
and identity formations, tending to move away from virtuality as the defining
feature of online interactions (e.g., Miller & Slater 2000). In a study of an online
fan community Nancy K. Baym noted that even when it comes to virtual com-
munications, these “develop affective dimensions and experiences, and these
feelings, situated in the bodies of a group of members, do not distinguish
between virtual and real” (2000: 205). Such a stress on the connectedness
between the online and offline gains further relevance as the Internet becomes
fixed within everyday life, making it difficult to maintain strict distinctions
between the two spheres. Most online communications have, for example, been
shown to be between people who have also met face-to-face or talked on the
phone (Baym et al. 2004: 302), and despite the Internet’s potential for global
contacts, the pre-dominating online contacts appear to be local, with stronger
ties centred on pre-existing networks (boyd & Ellison 2007, Hargittai 2007).

Likewise, such research has pointed to the need to recognise the wide variety
of online social activities (Baym et al. 2004), for example drawing attention to
how types of self-presentations differ in specific online environments (Tetzlaff
2000). Following the stress on interlinkages between the online and offline, there
has also been a greater focus on the Internet user in everyday life, with
qualitative research on how online social environments relate to users’ day-to-
day situations. Researchers have for example looked at the offline contexts of a
range of online social phenomena, such as online communities (Sveningsson
2001), individual homepages (Kennedy 2006) and interactive online journals
(Hodkinson 2007). Along with the rise of social networking sites there have also
been efforts to study how young users experience these. danah boyd (2007)
argues that teenagers use these sites to seek autonomy from teachers and
parents, whereas Livingstone (2008), likewise, found in an interview study with
teenagers opportunities for creative exploration of self-expression and intimacy,
but also the risk of privacy invasion.

However, while research on users of specific online phenomena is necessary
for a differentiated understanding of Internet use, it tends to leave out less fre-
quent and older Internet users, and has provided less scope for qualitative
questions of online sociality as an overall trend – impacting both on those who engage with it and those who do not. Here, although there are some notable explorations into on how “ordinary” people create meanings around the Internet in general (e.g., Bakardijeva 2003, 2005, McMillan & Morisson 2006), there are thus openings for further research on how social activities on the Internet interconnect to shape experiences of social relationships, identity-formations and social practices in everyday life.

The community debate

Another focal, and related, strand of analyses of online social interaction concerns how the Internet is changing community structures. Contemporary society has been linked to a loosening of traditional communities, such as the neighbourhood and the family (Giddens 1990: 55-63, Bauman 2001), with the rise of online communication often considered part of this transformation (e.g., Castells 2001). In studies of the Internet, the concept of community has therefore been something of a “buzz word”, with researchers arguing both that the Internet destroys offline community structures and provides opportunities for new kinds of social belongings (see Fernback 2007: 50-55, for an overview of the concept of community in Internet studies).

A particularly heated dispute regards whether online communication alienates individuals from the safety and responsibilities of “genuine” or “authentic” communities (Hodkinson 2007: 625-626). Critics argue that the Internet provides a cold and asocial setting for human relations, which, apart from uprooting individuals from their local contexts, contributes to disengaging, superficial kinds of socializing. Kevin Robins and Frank Webster (1999) illustrate this standpoint when painting a broad picture of “cyberspace” as anti-social and anti-political, and describing the development of virtual existence as “a perverse tendency, inherent in modern culture, towards detachment from reality and the loss of experiential engagement with the world” (ibid: 239). Similar arguments about online communication as harmful to community have been considered in psychological research perspectives, too. The so-called theory of problematic Internet use, for instance, links Internet use to negative psychosocial consequences, making the assumption that it may harm individuals’ abilities to form deep and lasting attachments to others. Using this hypothesis, Robert Kraut et al. (1998) found that scales of loneliness and depression increased with the amount of time a person spent online, spurring on enquiry into compulsive aspects of Internet use.4

4 In a follow-up analysis, Kraut et al. (2002) however found that these associations had disappeared once the users had gained more Internet experience. Modifying the theory, Scott E. Caplan (2003) suggests that it is those who are lonely and depressed in the first place that may use the Internet to further their disconnection from meaningful social relations.
On the other side of the fence, more optimistic commentators maintain that online social interactions carry the ability to strengthen relationships, expand social networks and enhance people’s sense of self-involvement and social engagement. Notably, research on “cybercommunities” has shown that online social formations, such as virtual worlds and discussion fora, can be close-knit and communal in nature (see Bell & Kennedy, eds., 2000, and Fornäs et al., eds., 2002), with the potential to carry over these experiences into offline life. Likewise, the Internet has been hailed as facilitating networking and social connections both online and offline. Baym et al. (2004), based on a study of the communication of college students, argue that there is no “trade-off” between face-to-face conversations and Internet interactions, but that individual relationships are maintained through multiple media, with the Internet supplementing other communication channels. Similarly, a report by the Pew Internet and the American Life Project (Boase et al. 2006) emphasises that the Internet and e-mail increase and strengthen users’ existing social networks, as it shows that the more contact by e-mail, the more contact is held face-to-face and over the phone. The report consequently claims that “Americans are probably more in contact with members of their communities and social networks than before the advent of the internet” (ibid: iv).

The two latter studies point to how networking is presently a significant part of online sociality. Reflecting ideas of the social network as a means for the individual to achieve a sense of security when traditional communities erode (Castells 2000, Wittel 2001), one of the authors of the Pew report, Barry Wellman (2002, 2004), argues that a major change as a result of Internet use is the intensification of what he calls “networked individualism”. Wellman sees a development towards loosely structured networks, centred around “the personalization, portability and ubiquitous connectivity of the Internet” (2004: 29). Rather than being rooted in the home or elsewhere, individuals, each part of their personalized networks, become available for contact anywhere and at any time. To Wellman, this development is not destructive to local communities, but is instead part of a more flexible and mobile way of social connectivity, strengthening social bonds.

In accordance with Wellman’s account, social networking can be understood as a positive aspect of what is often thought of as an increasingly “socialized” and participatory online media culture (see Jenkins & Deuze 2008: 5–6), which brings with it new creative freedoms and meeting spaces for the individual. But here, too, some scholars point to less elevating dimensions. Paul Hodkinson (2007) sees in a study of interactive online journals a tendency towards patterns of everyday interactions increasingly individual-centred, working against the formations of substantive communities. Similarly, Vincent Miller (2008) argues in an analysis of blogs, social networking sites and microblogs that online media culture is increasingly dominated by what he refers to as “phatic communica-
tion”, where the maintenance of connections (and audiences) in itself has gained importance at the expense of dialogue and narrative in the way that people socialise. Miller sees this as indicative of a wider socio-cultural trend towards social relations based on “keeping in touch”, as opposed to building meaningful relationships, and which further is heavily commodified.5

Focusing on a rapidly moving target, the debate about the Internet and community, then, entails fears as well as hopes about transforming social patterns. Although a body of evidence has shown how online communication can stimulate social contact, encourage “cybercommunities” and facilitate networking, the very same functions raise concerns about how new ways of socializing impact on the quality of social relationships and on existing community structures. From an everyday life perspective, it appears valuable to reflect further upon how users and non-users understand the developments sketched here within their day-to-day situations. For instance, how does the rise of the Internet as a social medium shape general experiences of social relationships? What do online social networking practices mean for day-to-day habits and wider notions of social belonging? How do different generations understand online sociality? The following analysis will explore how ordinary people discuss and experience possibilities and limitations of online social interaction, within the fabric of their society.

Notes on methods6

As mentioned, the analysis draws on 16 semi-structured group interviews with two generations of inhabitants in or around Stockholm, totaling 45 participants. Eight groups with teenagers aged about 17 and eight groups with adults aged between 45-55 were included, and the groups were furthermore divided by sex and socioeconomic status. The group interviews constituted one qualitative, Swedish, part of the wider research project on “The Role of Media for Identity and Democracy” that is the basis for this anthology, and participants were recruited on the basis of their participation in the quantitative questionnaire on habits and attitudes regarding media, leisure, consumption and society. In the case with teenagers this meant that participants knew one another, as questionnaires had been distributed in schools. However, all participants were selected to provide a range of perspectives rather than for any particular media patterns, and their Internet experience varied accordingly.

5 Online social platforms as part of capitalist ventures is an area some scholars (e.g., Fuchs 2009: 23) see as underrepresented in analyses of online social interactions. See Adam Arvidsson (2006) for an example of a study of commodification of social relations in relation to online dating.

6 See anthology “Foreword and Introduction” and the Appendix “Additional Description of Methods” for a more detailed discussion of research methods, and for further information about the participants.
The discussions about online social interaction were included as part of the wider interview questions on experiences of media development, with the interviews in total lasting between one and a half to two hours. Questions concerning online sociality were general and open, in order to facilitate insights into public discourses around this subject and to stimulate interaction between participants about their own experiences. Despite constituting only a part of the interviews, the material provides a rich picture of the meanings of online sociality in everyday life. As with much qualitative research the wealth of material has meant a necessary selection of data for analysis. Notably, questions of gender and socio-economic variations are downplayed in what follows – it is the generational perspective that is considered of most consequence, and the focus is on commonalities within this basic framework.

A generation gap? Perceptions of online sociality among teenagers and adults

Not all of the participants were avid Internet users, but all had something to say about how the medium had become important for socialising. The topic of online sociality provoked lengthy conversations in the interviews, as a subject of concern, curiosity and enjoyment to the 17-year-olds and the adults. But, although an engaging discussion topic within both age groups, there were significant generational differences in interpretations of this. The following section outlines this divergence in order to highlight how social practices associated with the Internet are perceptually linked to the young, and can work to distance generations from each other.

Given that people in their 40s and 50s will have lived a considerable part of their life without digital communication technologies, whereas teenagers in Sweden have grown up with the Internet, mobile telephones and other digital media, it is not surprising that the older participants more commonly emphasised the Internet as the primary domain of the younger generation. Although most of the adults appeared to use the Internet for different kinds of social communication, this sentiment was illustrated in sweeping statements when discussing online sociality, such as “it’s a question of different generations”, or “it’s not our thing”. Often, the adults used their children as examples of generation differences. “They spend their whole lives in front of the Internet”, as one of the female participants described her teenage children’s generation. Likewise, online social interaction appeared a more spontaneous talking point to the teenagers, showing this as firmly integrated into their habits and conversations. For example, in all but one interview with teenagers the topic was spontaneously mentioned in an introductory discussion about their general media preferences and media developments, whereas it was only brought up spontaneously in one interview with adults. This corresponds with the results of the questionnaire,
where social Internet activities such as chatting and communities were shown to be more common among teenagers than among the adults. Likewise, the teenagers used the Internet in their leisure time more frequently than the adults (see Article 2).

While the connection between the Internet and youth does not render online social communication irrelevant to older generations, it does underline how new media technologies become linked to specific “media generations” (see Bolin & Westlund 2009: 109-111, for a discussion), to whom a certain medium bear particular relevance, as well as putting into focus the idea of the young as at the vanguard of new social practice and technology. The representation of children and teenagers as “computer experts” has been shown to be persistent in the way families approach digital communication technologies, even though young people’s expertise is easily overvalued (Livingstone 2003: 149, 153). It was clearly observable in this study, where the adults repeatedly marvelled at the younger generation’s easy adoption of Internet technologies, for example describing teenagers as “up-to-date”, “fast in their heads” and “knowledgeable” when discussing their Internet use. This admiration is exemplified in the following discussion with a group of men about teenagers’ use of online games:

Ture: … today, when they’re playing games, like (my son) Kalle, who plays something called World of Warcraft…

Interviewer: Warcraft, that’s right. That’s a popular online…

Ture: And in that they’re playing with these characters and at the same time they’re chatting…

Interviewer: Oh yes.

Mikael: You got to be fast-thinking [for that], you got to be fast.

Ture: Well, they just think and at the top of their heads just… It just keeps flowing, like a geyser out of his head (laughs).

Teenagers, then, were seen to belong to a fast-thinking, fast-talking new media generation, a perception strongly connected to ideas of the Internet.

However, alongside the appropriation of the teenagers’ online competence, the adults’ accounts also illustrated how teenagers’ online social habits were felt to act as a barrier between the two generations. The discussions with adults brought up experiences of uncertainty regarding teenagers’ use of the Internet, with some explaining how their children’s online activities would leave them puzzled and shut off from contact. For instance, the same participant who described her teenage son and daughter as “living” on the Internet, explained how she felt her children were “hiding” from her through their Internet use, using this as an excuse to avoid conversation or household work. Herself only an
occasional Internet user, she found it hard to answer the question of the more precise nature of her children’s online endeavours:

Lena: Well, it’s this ms…, oh what is it, I don’t know all that they’re up to online. I don’t understand how they can be entertained for so many hours (online) but they evidently can. I suppose they build up networks of contacts.

In repeatedly using uncertain terms such as “I don’t understand” and “I suppose”, this mother is clearly struggling even to put her children’s day-to-day activities into words, pointing to the challenge that generational differences in media and communication habits may pose within a family context.

Experiences of a “distance” between generations were noticeable in the interviews with teenagers too. Some teenagers spontaneously mentioned their online social activities in relation to their parents’ concerns and worries, characterising their own Internet habits on the basis of a dichotomy between young and old. This finding mirrors another qualitative study on young people’s experiences of the Internet, where young adults defined their online habits by means of distancing themselves from older people (McMillan & Morrison 2006: 81). In the present study, the parents were used as reference points from which to contrast new media habits and social behaviour:

Jenny: If you listen to your parents, well my dad has practiced hockey, floorball, football and whatever, and he’s all like ‘do some sports’ and ‘When I was at your age, I worked all summers and…’ (laughter). I mean… they didn’t sit in front of the TV or the Internet as much as we do today.

These contrasts underline a “digital generation gap” (see Livingstone 2003: 149), whereby Internet use takes place in the context of different generational aspirations and meanings around digital technology. Portrayals of adults as distant from the teenagers’ media activities can be understood as part of this “struggle”, and so can a conception of adults as ignorant of online social codes. In this excerpt from a group of keen online gamers it is, for instance, taken for granted that an “adult” would be unable to distinguish nuances of online language:

Interviewer: But how do you notice that? You can’t see it on the person that he or she might be insulted…

Emil: No, but (…) they may for example suddenly stop using capital letters… or won’t use a full stop anymore or use a lot of dots….

Ludvig: (…) or he might write that he’s pissed off, I mean, it’s such a subliminal language that…

Emil: But, like, those who are starting out [in communities], or if an adult (my italics) tries to chat… they don’t notice those things.
One discussion with a group of teenage boys provided a particularly revealing glimpse into how different generational perspectives and habits could lead to conflicts in the home. In this discussion, a 17-year-old boy reflected upon how his Internet habits had caused a dent in the relationship to his father:

Rickard: I am in the habit of coming home and turning on the computer. Then I say I’m home.

(laughter) [...] It’s just turned out that way...I go to my room straight away, kind of, and turn on the computer. Then I go and say ‘Hi dad, I’m home’.

Interviewer: Why is that then?

Rickard: Well, I don’t know. It’s just… I don’t know. It’s just the way it’s turned out.

Interviewer: You want some time in front of the computer first, and then you can...

Rickard: Yeah… [...] But he’s always asking why I do that.

Interviewer: Ok.

Rickard: And I can’t say ‘well, I prioritise the computer instead of you’. (some laughter) I can’t say that. Well, I don’t [prioritise the computer], so I don’t wanna say that, kind of. But it’s so easy to come home, I take off my shoes, go to my room and then I just, just, turn on the computer. Then I go to tell him I’m home.

Interviewer: So it’s still the first thing you do...

Rickard: Well, that’s the way it’s turned out… [...] He makes a big deal out of it, but he sort of stands… sometimes he can stand… he knew that I was gonna come home, and then he stood by the door like this and waited for me to come home, kind of.

The picture of the father hovering by the door, desperately trying to talk to his son before he is submerged into the digital world, is telling of the everyday dilemmas that can arise in the offline environment, as generations relate in different ways to new communication technologies.

As evidenced in this example, the adults were concerned about the consequences of the younger generation’s online activities. Mirroring popular and academic debates, these concerns included fears about the younger generation spending too much time on the Internet, losing connection to genuine communities and to the ability to understand appropriate social codes offline, and being susceptible to Internet fraudsters. In all interviews with adults such concerns were mentioned, with some expressing strong worries about the developments. One female participant, for instance, remarked on children of today as “trapped” in front of the computer, describing them as “not having any experience at all of what’s going on outside of their own houses”. In contrast to
the discourse of teenagers as technology experts, the young were here seen as especially vulnerable. In particular, young people were considered at risk of becoming “addicted” to the Internet, whereas the older generation was seen as more resilient and better able to balance their social life with other activities:

Berit: Well, you can understand those who get addicted (to online social activities). I think so, it’s not hard to understand, even if I was too old when I started this (communicating on the Internet), so I can’t really become addicted I don’t think. Or, perhaps you could. But I don’t think I’m in a danger zone or anything. […]

Cecilia: I don’t think so, because we have been brought up in a different way. But I mean, when they’re started on this at such an early age, I mean… we’re talking about primary school here, I mean six years and upwards, with computers and all of it. […]

Marie: I think we’re seeing a danger here.

Cecilia: Exactly. I don’t think that it’s as risky for us.

Marie: Because I at least think that for me, or that’s what I think anyway, that for me this is a complement, it’s nothing that takes over completely…

Cecilia: Exactly.

Marie: It’s a complement…

Cecilia: A complement. But the younger… the younger they start… it takes over for many people.

However, the discussions with teenagers showed that they, too, were acutely aware of public apprehension around Internet use. There were, for example, several spontaneous comments among the teenagers on the risk of fraudsters in online communities. Some also commented on what they perceived as “overuse” of the Internet by themselves or their peers, and, as shall be analysed in more detail later in the article, the topic of Internet addiction attracted much discussion. Concerns about the vulnerability of the young were also mentioned in two of the groups with teenage girls, but with reference to the way that even younger people, or children, were unable to manage online social activities.

Then, the discussions around online sociality interlinked with ideas of youth and with categorisations of generations. With the emphasis on the difference between young and old, a notable finding was how the new communication patterns had generated experiences of disconnection between the two generations. This can be viewed in the light of how different media experiences are thought to create “media gaps” between different social groups (Gumpert & Cathcart 1985: 23, in Bolin & Westlund 2009: 109), or to a “digital generation gap” being brought about by computer technology in everyday life. It is also indicative of a more general struggle between generations over definitions of
social change, which historically has centred on the introduction of a “new” medium, such as the radio and the television. As one male participant expressed it: “Old folks have always worried about the youngsters.” Yet, the next section will show that when considering online relationships within their own lives, there are many overlaps between the generations in the characterisations of the possibilities and challenges of socialising online.

The Internet as a “glass wall”: relationships online

Discussing how they met and kept in contact with people on the Internet, many participants from both age groups emphasised that, given the time and opportunity to do so, they liked to socialise with people offline. Nevertheless, online social interactions were valued for the convenience when managing busy daily schedules, for the flexibility of communication channels and genres and for the ease of keeping up a social network. As one teenage girl, who used MSN to keep in touch with distant friends, exclaimed: “Sure, it’s fun to do every now and again but I think it’s so much more fun to talk!” Such statements demonstrate the supplementary position of the Internet in the management of social relations (Baym et al. 2004), and its strong role in the maintenance of existing contacts.

Overall, the adults were more sceptical than the teenagers of meeting new people on the Internet, with one or more participants in each adult group claiming to have no experience of, or no interest in, expanding their social circle in this way. The teenagers on the other hand consistently offered examples of friends or relationships created on the Internet, with only one interview with teenage boys bringing up the viewpoint that the Internet was preferred solely to communicate with known contacts. Nevertheless, there were comments among the adults, too, that offered insights into how the Internet could be a treasured arena for getting to know new people. “I’ve never met as many people since I started hanging out on the Internet”, as one of the adults asserted, explaining later on how his partaking in online forums had “enriched” his social life.

Demonstrating the permeable boundaries between “offline” and “online”, there were also many examples of how contacts initially established online had led to relationships in offline contexts, for example in stories about finding love online. As this adult man astutely points out, online relationships meander and change, with the potential to move across online and offline social settings:

Interviewer: But do these (online) contacts stay within the forum?

Roland: No, they change. Well, it was a new thing with chat (via online forums) a few years ago. It’s almost… it’s over ten years ago now. And then I was part of this place on the Internet, and that has, really, almost died now because so many of those who were there have met, and had kids, and…

Kurt: Oh.
Roland: We hardly have time to meet anymore and so... But, it kind of... it changes in this way, the whole time.

For some, as for this teenager, the online-offline distinction had proven to be precarious even in a supposedly anonymous environment, such as the online game:

    Emil: A really funny thing happened to my brother. He had been playing a game, and gotten some friends there and he talked with them through different means on the Net. And then he kind of played less and less, because he got bored with it. And then several months later... then a guy had called our house and asked if he was there...this guy had noticed that he had disappeared and gotten worried and thought: 'What the fuck? Is he ill or something, I’d better check!'

Interviewer: He cared...?

    Emil: Yeah, so he’d done research on the mailing address, managed to get hold of my brother’s name, found the home number and then succeeded to call through this whole long research process, like. (laughs)

Such examples show the link between online and offline relationships in everyday social encounters, supporting research perspectives that emphasise the contextual nature of online sociality.

Yet, participants also shared experiences which showed that in certain situations, it was precisely the potential for anonymity that provided the draw to online relationships. When wanting to avoid the constraints of other kinds of relationships, the Internet, as one 17-year old girl poignantly expressed it, worked as a “glass wall”, allowing for flexibility in self-presentation and, as others explained, protection from the risks involved when getting to know someone. For instance, the attraction of anonymity was emphasised in discussions with adult women about dating sites. Although dating sites were considered means to eventually get to know a potential partner, the online sphere, when it came to this particular activity, was experienced as a shield from embarrassment and risk-taking:

    Pernilla: [...] but, if we take this dating business. I don’t want to have phone contact with them exactly, I don’t know them, I don’t want to give out my phone number or anything, so... The chat is an excellent opportunity to get to know one another... even though, in one way, with the computer... you don’t get that human contact, but you do get some idea of what kind of person it is and so on. And that is really good before you move on.

Interviewer: Mm. So you can get to know each other a bit?

    Pernilla: Yeah, exactly.

    Catherine: But there...
Pernilla: You still get an idea…
Catherine: Hang on. How do you know that you get to know someone…
Pernilla: No…
Catherine: Because it can just be, like, ‘I’m 25 and really good-looking’…
Pernilla: But I’m also always 27.
Catherine: Ok.
(laughter)
Interviewer: So it’s the same for both people?
Pernilla: No, well, if I put it like this. These are, like, serious dating sites. Sure, there are unserious people there. But if you chat a little bit almost every day… I mean, you can read between the lines and figure out if that’s the case. And if nothing else… well, it is the case that everyone thinks they’re slim and good-looking. And then when we meet it’s clear that… they aren’t necessarily good-looking…
Catherine: They’ve been standing in front of a distorted fun-house mirror.
Pernilla: They haven’t been slim, but, well…almost fat I’d say. But it, it’s…
Catherine: It’s really hard to discuss self-images.
Pernilla: Yeah, right, but when it comes down to it I haven’t gone to the altar with them. I mean, I see them, I’m still anonymous to them, and vice versa, and you get to know them a little and what have you. You don’t date them straight away, but it’s this chat contact. So…

In this discussion it is clear that certain online environments can be experienced as especially suited to identity play, again pointing to the multitude of online social activities. The study also included participants who experienced the Internet as having opened up opportunities for the creation of more advanced multiple identities and virtual relationships, similarly to Turkle’s (1996) informants. The teenage gamers, again, had found their online relationships to break down both age and gender barriers:

Interviewer: Ok. So you…So Emil, you said it’s an advantage to communicate with people in that way? That you can better get to their personalities somehow?
Emil: Well, your prejudices go away.
Interviewer: Do they really? They do…?
Emil: Yeah, for sure. I mean, I was chatting with this guy for six months, like, and he, like, he talked like he…he was alright, like, he had a cool mind that made me talk about really interesting things, and then, like, after half a year it emerged that he was 13 or 14 years or whatever. And I was like, ‘Shit! I thought you were 18’. If he’d told me to begin with I would’ve been prejudiced and sort of looked down
on him, but now I talked to him, like, about everything between heaven and earth, and I didn’t have a clue.

Johan: This is the way it is: prejudice never quite gets in the way when you talk online.

Emil: So the Internet helps to break those kinds of prejudice. And maybe build up new kinds… (laughs)

Ludvig: When I bought a game once I took on a female character, because it was fucking boring and I was like ‘Why not make a female character?’ Yeah, and I played and… and then there was a cool guy that started to talk to me, like, and I talked to him, in a normal way, you know. And then after a while he asked if he couldn’t go to Sweden and if he could sleep over…

(laughter)

Ludvig: And at first I didn’t get it. You know, I was like, ‘Erm, no, but sure, like, if you ever come over we could meet up and grab something to eat. Nice to meet up and talk’, like. But then… he started laying it on thick, and finally I was kind of ‘Ok, I get it!’.

(laughter)

Although research has indicated that the performance of alternative identities is relevant only to a minority of Internet users (see Kennedy 2006: 864-865), the anonymity of online environments can clearly be conducive to alternative virtual relationships to some users and within some contexts. While “online sociality” can be discussed on a general level, then, the differing forms of social activity must obviously be recognised as shaping different kinds of relationships.

Thus, whereas online social interaction was experienced by some as a practical way to maintain existing contacts or to establish new relationships, to others it entailed a more experimental social dimension, two approaches which could also differ depending on the online activity discussed. Similar contradictions emerged when discussing levels of commitment online. On the one hand, socializing online was consistently referred to as “easier”, more “lazy” and “hassle-free”, and requiring less “effort” than being sociable in offline contexts. It was, for instance, mentioned as easier to send e-mails instead of talking on the telephone, and, just as in the previous excerpt about dating, the online relationship initially appeared to require minimal emotional investment:

Interviewer: But how… how do you, kind of, make contact with someone (in a community), then, or, how do you become friends or meet someone… do you just say something?

John: Yeah, exactly.
Rickard: It’s just to talk. So if you don’t get an answer, you don’t care. And if you do, maybe you shouldn’t care anyway, because you never know who it might be. (laughs)

[…]

Interviewer: Mm. Is it easier to make contact, or…? You said that…?

Rickard: Yeah, it’s easier, like, to write what you think than to say what you think.

Interviewer: In what way, really?

Rickard: Well, I don’t know.

John: It’s two clicks. Then you can block that person, and you never have to see that person again.

Being just “two clicks” away from removing that relationship out of the realms of experience, for the teenagers in this group the anonymity of online communities evidently allowed for a cool, detached approach. Another discussion with a group of teenage boys provided an insight into how the online relationship was valued precisely for this lack of commitment, as this, importantly, meant a reduced risk of rejection:

Anton: It’s easy to, like, write ‘Hi’ instead of going up to someone on the street and just, ‘Well, hi’…(laughs) It’d be a bit strange. Kind of, like, ‘Well, hi, who are you?’, kind of thing.

Interviewer: But why is that so much easier, if you think about it?

Anton: Well, it’s like this… you’re anonymous. You don’t have to look them in the eyes, like this, ‘Hi’, and then get rejected, like...

In the same group one of the participants reflected on how, even with regards to people he knew, the online means of communication was preferred to face-to-face contact, as it was considered less demanding to have contact with people via the computer. Having contact with someone online, moreover, involved less effort because it was experienced as less ‘real’:

Nils: Yeah, but if you see someone (on the street), like, ‘Oh yeah, that guy…maybe I should go up to them. No, I’ll wait until I get home’. (laughter) I’ll deal with it when I get home instead… when it isn’t real (my italics), kind of.

Again, it is the virtual quality – the “glass wall” – of the online relationship that is valued, in these instances appearing to contribute to a more distant form of socialising.

On the other hand, experiences of virtuality had also paved way for sincerity in communications, with relationships characterised by dedication and mutual disclosure. Comments on how the Internet was seen to unblock personal guards
correlate with research on how online social interaction facilitates intimate and confessional modes of communication (Henderson & Gilding 2004), and there were consistent examples of how participants felt that they could divulge more intimate information online. One teenage girl for instance explained how she felt that anonymous Internet contacts had provided especially valued listeners when she had personal troubles. Another teenage girl, who had been a member of several online fora a couple of years earlier, noted that the openness of her online friendships had been the most rewarding part of these:

Erica: The positive thing that I noticed... when you talked to people on the Internet, it’s easier to say certain things. You don’t have to hear their voice, you don’t have to see their faces, and then... difficult things are easier to say. And the fact that you can plan a little before you write something. [...] You can take a little time to react.

Interviewer: But this thing about difficult things being easier to say, why is that do you think?

Erica: But, like, facial expressions and things like that affect you a lot when it comes to what to say or not. If it’s something you wanna say about yourself or about something you’ve found out about someone... then it can feel easier to say it if you dont know... because the other person is, like, completely nullified, you have no idea what he or she looks like.

Some scholars (ibid: 501, Livingstone 2008: 402-403) have used Anthony Giddens' concept of the “pure relationship” (1991: 90) to describe the particular intimacy of online relationships. The pure relationship, according to Giddens, is a relationship that puts stock in flexibility, intimacy, mutual trust and performance over reputation, appearance and social hierarchies; a form of social bond he argues is replacing relationships grounded within traditional community structures. Contrary to descriptions of online relationships as non-committal and disengaged, it is possible to see the participant descriptions of confessional online relations as an indication of how online sociality simultaneously may foster new forms of intimate relationships.

“A party that never stops”: The constant connection and Internet dependency

While there were intriguing paradoxes in characterisations of online relationships, the findings concerning experiences of connectivity and online networking were more clear-cut, with the interviews suggesting that online social practices had considerable influence on everyday routines, identity constructions, and feelings of belonging. However, as this was especially pronounced in the discussions with teenagers, it is instructive to focus on the teen-
age accounts in this section, especially in relation to their discussion of online communities of interest, such as fan sites, and social networking sites, such as the popular Swedish site LunarStorm, as these discussions brought up interesting issues around aspects of identity-creation and Internet dependency.

Social networking on the Internet was an especially keen topic of discussion for the teenagers, who had the most experience of this as users of online communities and social networking sites, where some of the participants proudly claimed to have extensive contact lists with over a hundred people. Alongside the practical ability to keep in touch with friends and acquaintances on the Internet, there were frequent comments on how it was easy to meet new people on these kinds of sites, without the physical restrictions of the offline environment. It was also obvious that a main attraction of online social networking was the ability to get an insight into the lives of other people:

Nils: It’s an interest in other people, I think. Its probably that simple. Everyone has their own personal little page. And there are so many people and... well, you look at a friend’s page and you start to…. I don’t know, but everyone has a few different friends, like, and then you go ‘Ok, who’s this?’ that you don’t have on your own list. (laughter) Then you start looking at that person and you might see that that is a person you …[might know of]… and that’s what I think is the most fun part...

(laughter)

Nils: You don’t need to be like that, but, like, you can have some form of control over people you don’t know. And the fun part is when you it’s somebody you might have met in real life maybe, or you have some distant acquaintance [...] that you can still watch them, like this… (laughter) I think it’s really…. It’s a human thing to be a bit curious.

Here, being part of an online network has little to do with the quality of the relationships, but with the way it satisfies curiosity about others. The way that Nils’ description is interrupted by several spots of laughter also indicates a somewhat “guilty” pleasure, with the desire to peek into other people’s lives of low cultural standing. Furthermore, this example of the pleasure in having “control” over, and being able to “watch” online contacts, draws attention to the way that online social networking can be analysed from the perspective of surveillance, whereby online communities and social networking sites enables a scrutiny of the lives of others.8

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7 See Skog 2005, for an analysis of how the technology of LunarStorm influences users ability to socialise.
8 A recent analysis of social networking sites (Fuchs 2009) places these within the general idea of a “surveillance society”, whereby the way that the sites collate data about their users to sell to advertisers and market research organisations is connected to a more widespread develop-
The teenagers were aware of how they themselves were watched within these online social environments, and corroborating previous studies on users of sites such as Facebook and MySpace (boyd 2007, Livingstone 2008), the discussions exemplified how online networking played a role to self-presentations and positioning within peer groups. Nils from the previous quote, for example, explained how he appreciated being able to show off certain aspects of himself online, referring to his activity as “a form of exhibitionism”. Similarly, comments from a teenage girl about the popular Swedish site Bilddagboken (the Picture Diary), a form of an illustrated interactive diary, highlighted that some saw overt identity performances as connected to a yearning for popularity and confirmation about their self-worth:

Sara: I think that many people use sites such as Bilddagboken as a kind of confirmation of that ‘I have friends and that my life is interesting’. […] There are a lot of people who uploads pictures of themselves, like, and then go ‘Oh, I’m so ugly!’ when really they look great, and then all their friends are like ‘Honey pie, you’re so pretty! Kisses!’ I see that everywhere.

In another group with teenage girls it was similarly stressed how giving and receiving compliments and commenting on peer profiles could be a way to achieve a higher standing in the peer group, although one of the girls here noted that “too much” activity could have the opposite effect, resulting in a “forum troll” – someone desperate to achieve popularity on the sites. Likewise, a group of teenage boys explained how the links to others were crucial for showing who you are, supporting research on how, within some online environments, identity is shown by stressing group belongings rather than through a personal narrative (e.g., boyd 2007, Zhao et al. 2008, Livingstone 2008).

While online social networking encompasses more than simply keeping in touch with people, the habit of using the Internet for such interaction is in itself a noteworthy feature of everyday life, contributing to the connectivity associated with the Internet. All of the teenage and most of the adult groups included participants who explained how they felt disconnected, uncomfortable or “out of touch” during times without Internet access, showing the centrality of this habit to day-to-day routines. To some of the participants, it had become so central that they described it within the framework of “addiction”. “The more time you spend there, the more of your social life is there and the more you wanna be there”, explained one teenage girl, in response to accounts of peers who found it hard to control their Internet use. Another, who spontaneously referred to herself as an “Internet addict”, explained how her online social contact made it hard to go to bed:

ment of different forms of surveillance of citizens. It is interesting in this respect to note the surveillance performed by the users themselves.
Mariana: When you’re going to bed for example, you think: ‘Oh no, now I just thought of this!’ And then I log in again and do certain things. Then I might promise myself that I’m just going to be ten minutes, but then it’s half an hour, or 40 minutes. And then it kind of feels... you get disappointed all the time. Yeah. At the same time you feel that ‘Well, but why shouldn’t I log in and have fun?’, kind of.

A striking finding in the questionnaire was that slightly more than half of the teenagers found the Internet “addictive” (see Article 2), which again correlates well with the observations from these discussion groups. In one group of teenage boys this kind of forceful use was related to a fear of “missing something” – being disconnected from the Internet was likened to missing an ongoing party:

Jonathan: It’s this need to always be updated.

Nils: Yeah, exactly. A bit like, ‘Ok, now there are 4 billion people online at the same time as me’. And if I then disconnect, what am I gonna miss out on? You do miss out on something, both... well, you can miss out on anything, kind of.

Jonathan: Something unexpected.

Nils: You could be the first to find out about a world news, or, like, the first to see the pictures from the weekend (on the sites).

(laughter)

Nils: Well, I don’t know... Most of the time when I’m by the computer there’s absolutely nothing happening. (laughter) But you anticipate that someone might send a really exciting message, kind of, something fun.

Jonathan: You click on the inbox 220 times before anything arrives.

Nils: Yeah, updating...and soon, maybe, someone of interest... might log on.

(laughter)

Nils: And then you can talk to that person: ‘Hello, hello.’

[...]

Jonathan:...the thing is you’re really scared of missing out on something... It’ like a party and you’re not there.

In an article on what she calls “the tethered self”, Turkle (2008) argues that mobile and online communication technologies have contributed to a state where people, on a physical and psychological level, are increasingly bound to their online selves, dependent on the gratifications offered by these aspects of the individual identity. Suggesting that this state is even more compelling to adolescents, her analysis bears relevance to what was found in the present study. In three of the teenage groups drug metaphors were used to describe this more compulsive element to their Internet use. The online gamers – one of whom
stated he had used to play online games for nine hours per day – for example referred to heroin when discussing the attraction of the medium:

Ludvig: Well, when I sit by the computer and don’t use the Internet, then I feel… well, the hardest, the thing that I get anxious about, it is that I feel lonely. Because if you’re online then you know you’re not lonely. I’m not the only person sitting there, like…

Emil: Online…you just feel secure knowing that they (other people) are there.

Ludvig: Yeah. It’s like having a heroin shot next to you, just to push in the needle, like, whenever you want to. (laughs)

While the participants in this particular discussion group were at the more extreme end of Internet use, and the references to drugs, as shown in the humorous approach, should not be interpreted as a seriously intended comparison, a feeling of dependency on the online social connection, then, was widespread. So was the experience of being left out when not online. To some, as the comment on being “lonely” when offline shows, the connection to others online had become of such significance that even minor discontinuities raised fears of social isolation.

The examples above open up challenging issues for analysis. The teenagers’ accounts initially appear to follow Wellman’s (2002, 2004) conception of the “constant connection” of networked individualism, whereby the Internet and other digital media have placed flexible networks at the centre of social life. However, rather than showing this as an unproblematic development, with people simply having better and more flexible opportunities for social contact, the findings draw attention to the struggles involved when getting to grips with technology that allows “constant” connection, but only at the expense of withdrawal from other activities. The teenagers’ stories of connectivity show how this contributes to experiences of being part of a wider community in its most loose definition – of friends, contacts and, more vaguely defined, other Internet users. Taking part in the social “party” of the Internet, here, means having access to an important site of identity construction, being able to feel noticed and popular among peers, and being linked to the security of a social network. But, as these gains are based on continuous performance and updates, even necessary breaks from the online social sphere, such as during sleep or school, can cause a tear in the role achieved within the network, with the pleasure of this “virtual togetherness” (Bakardieva 2004) framed by the fear of exclusion. The comments on loss and loneliness when being offline illustrate the discrepancy between the experience of a constant connection, with its promise of constant togetherness,
and an everyday life which by necessity is restricted by offline responsibilities, and ultimately by the physicality of the human body.9

Although this study is obviously limited in scope, it thus provides evidence for how online sociality can contribute to the experience of a continuous connection to others, which in turn interlinks with a desire for togetherness and belonging. That this “search for a community”, to use Zygmunt Bauman’s (2001) description of the contemporary striving for social belonging, has its limitations is also clear. The comments on feeling “disappointed” when going online only to find that no message is waiting in the inbox, or that no one has made a comment on their online profile, further illustrates how the notion of continuous social interaction provides the lure of a complete togetherness and the frustration of unfulfilled expectations.

Conclusion

Taking a wide perspective on the role of online social interaction in everyday life, this analysis has provided some exploratory insights into the centrality of Internet-based social relations in a society with widespread Internet access. Basing the analysis on discussions with two generations of Internet users in Stockholm, the intent was to fill a gap in the qualitative research on online social communication, which, although a highly diverse and wide-spanning field, has tended to investigate either specific spaces for, or types of, online social interaction, or, when looking at the audience/user end, primarily focusing on young Internet users. A limitation of the study is that it is necessarily unspecific in the discussion of different types of online activities, as it is the general experiences of the trend of online sociality in everyday life that take centre-stage. Yet, this approach has allowed for discussion of how various social activities on the Internet interconnect in the creation new social dimensions and practices.

It is evident that participants experienced the Internet as of increasing importance to social life, seeing online sociality as a trend with significant impact on day-to-day routines and ways of managing social relationships. As the adults and teenagers differed in their ways of perceiving and engaging with this trend,

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9 Exclusion from the online social sphere is of course not just a question of temporary disconnection from the Internet but on another level related to the well-documented “digital divides” linked to social difference and technological competence. The “generation gap” sketched earlier to some extent bears evidence of this, and there were individual examples in the study of participants who felt barred from online social activities due to inabilities with computer technology. One woman with teenage children was for example curious to know more about blogs but did not know how to find them online, whereas a teenage girl with dyslexia found online communication difficult and too text-based, and another stated that she avoided the Internet because she was uncomfortable with online social codes, not knowing “how to behave there”. That these participants were all females from low-education backgrounds can serve as a reminder of continuous divisions that shape Internet use in general and that have a bearing on the participation in new social spaces (see DiMaggio et al. 2004).
however, it could be seen as pushing the two generations apart; contributing to a “digital generation gap”. Representations of teenagers as both Internet experts and as especially vulnerable to the perceived threats of online social activities are illustrative of how public discourses around this trend are centred on ideas of youth and on dichotomies between young and old. Nevertheless, when looking at actual possibilities and challenges posed by the presence of online social relationships within participants’ everyday life, there were many overlapping areas. For young and old, characterisations of online relationships showed the connections between the offline and online spheres on the one hand, and the appreciation of the virtuality and anonymity of the online social environments on the other. Similarly, the online relationship facilitated a particular intimacy and openness, but was also experienced as more disengaged and distanced than face-to-face contacts. These contradictions show the difficulty for researchers when trying to pinpoint the nature of online relationships, drawing attention to the multitude and nuances of online social relations not necessarily apparent in studies of specific Internet phenomena.

While there were similarities between the two generations in their experiences of online relationships, there was likewise a commonality in terms of how, for regular users, the online social activities had contributed to the experience of dependency on a “constant” connection to other people. Not surprisingly, this was however more pronounced in the discussions with teenagers and particularly visible in discussions of networking on online communities and social networking sites. As shown, the teenagers’ accounts can be understood through theories of how Internet use facilitates social ties between people, strengthening existing networks and opening up for new contacts. Wellman’s idea of “networked” individualism, for example, sits well with these descriptions of expansive individualised networks, held together through continuous online performances and flexibility in communications. However, it was also clear that the notion of a constant connection comes at a price. One of the more striking findings of the study concerns the stress created by necessary disconnections from the online social sphere, pointing to a difficulty for individual Internet users when grappling with the feeling of a constant connection while being restricted by day-to-day demands on time and by physical limitations on Internet use.

The study has highlighted some of the complexities around the social practices that emerge as the Internet becomes further embedded into everyday life. While the Internet connects people, enabling practical and creative means of social contact, the discussions with participants also revealed experiences of an increased distance between generations, and of struggles when trying to cope with continuous updates and connectivity. The use of the Internet for day-to-day social interaction, then, connects and disconnects, unites and fragments. As further research is needed to investigate more precisely how social practices and
meanings transform with the development of online technology, it is illustrative to finish the article with a last quote from the interviews. A 17-year old boy, reflecting on the social role of the Internet among his peers, provides a final, telling, account of the complicated notions of social change:

…when you were younger, then...you spent more time with, all your friends, outside and stuff. And you still do, of course, but it... it is one step further today to go out and do something with someone than...like the way it was before, like. Now we can socialise on the Internet and it is actually working quite well, like. Sure, you misunderstand each other more, but...It's ok. Erm, and then you can like the idea, erm, many people probably like the thought that you can sit there on... on the Internet and be able to talk to several people at once. And that is very... that is really good. You get to know more people that you’re interested in, which... you might never have talked to them otherwise. Erm... but then if you look at it from another side... if the Internet didn’t exist, then maybe you’d... maybe it would be considered more normal to go up to someone and talk to them. I don’t know. Here in Sweden, like, we don’t talk to each other much really, I mean on the tube and stuff. It’s kind of crazy, really, but you can’t break the trend. That’s not possible.

References


Mcmillan, Sally J. & Margaret Morrison (2006) 'Coming of age with the internet: A qualitative exploration of how the internet has become an integral part of young people’s lives', New Media & Society, Vol. 8(1): 73-95


Appendices
As mentioned in “Foreword and Introduction”, the project involves a comparative analysis of young people around 17 years of age and 45- to 55-year-olds in two cities – St. Petersburg (in Russia) and Stockholm (in Sweden) – as well as interviews with media experts. This section provides details of the methods used, in addition to the overview of the different parts of the project in the Foreword.

The questionnaire (see next Appendix) in the quantitative data collection consisted of approximately 90 questions corresponding to more than 550 variables with fixed response alternatives and some twenty variables with open-ended responses. It was completed by 1,607 respondents – 431 adolescents in St. Petersburg, 390 adolescents in Stockholm, 394 adults in St. Petersburg, and 392 adults in Stockholm.

The aim of our quantitative studies has not been to generalize the reported percentages to a wider population (for instance, all 17-year-olds in St. Petersburg). Instead, we have consciously endeavoured – by means of multivariate analyses of the large number of variables – to search for patterns of media and leisure habits, cultural and social apprehensions and values, as well as background variables – patterns that can contribute to theoretical generalizations.

In line with our aim to give an apprehension of the relative distributions of different activities, values, etc., in the four groups studied and to search for statistical connections between the many variables, we have only sparsely mentioned exact percentages in the text and, instead of tables, chosen to present many findings in diagrams pointing to overall tendencies of the respondents’ activities, etc.

The quantitative data collection with the adolescents was carried out with a convenience sample consisting of 21 strategically selected classes from different upper secondary schools in Stockholm and 20 classes from different corresponding schools in St. Petersburg. The sample of schools and classes was made as varied as possible and simultaneously as comparable as possible – in principle the samples of classes in the two cities have the same structure regarding theoretical/practical orientation and profile/study programme. The schools are also spread in economically more, middle or less well-to-do areas in both cities.

The quantitative data collection rounds with the Stockholm teens were mainly conducted during late autumn 2006 when the students from 17 classes replied to our questionnaire; students from four classes filled in the question-
naire during spring 2007. The majority (16 classes) of the St. Petersburg teens answered the questionnaire during spring (mainly April) 2007; 81 students in four classes, however, filled in the questionnaire during late autumn 2006.1

The data collection rounds with the adult respondents in both cities were performed by means of a postal questionnaire. In Sweden, a simple random sample of 800 persons was drawn from the census register (SPAR) valid for Stockholm, suburbs and nearby municipalities. The response rate after two written reminders, with a new questionnaire included, followed by telephone reminders, is 49 per cent of the gross sample (and more than 50% of the net sample, which, however, is difficult to estimate in a postal inquiry). Also in St. Petersburg, we used a random sample from a register of the city’s inhabitants, which, unfortunately, was some years old, which implied that more than one third of the persons in the original sample (approximately 1,500 persons) no longer lived at the given addresses.2 Regrettably, it is not possible to get hold of a sample frame better than this register, which thus far is the only register available even for Russian researchers in St. Petersburg, if they do not choose to use different kinds of convenience samples. Otherwise, the data collection in Stockholm and St. Petersburg was conducted in the same way (apart from practical aspects connected to sending out questionnaires, and the like), which is why we have achieved maximal comparability in our results, taking the different circumstances in the two cities into account.

It ought to be underlined that our data collection by means of postal questionnaires is unique, as corresponding investigations in St. Petersburg (as well as in the greater part of the former Soviet Union) are conducted using other methods that are considerably less reliable and moreover that entail methodological problems of decisive importance to comparability. It is for this reason the Russian data were collected later that the Swedish data.

In Sweden the postal questionnaire study with the adults (as well as with the adolescents) was mainly carried out during October-December 2006; some delayed answers arrived in early 2007. Most of the Russian adults filled in the questionnaire during November-December 2007.

The age distribution for the answered adult questionnaires is even (which, naturally, is also valid for the adolescents) across the two countries. The data are

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1 Preliminary data collection rounds with the young people and adults in St. Petersburg were conducted (by the company NPK Sinergia Plus, St. Petersburg) in fall 2006 in parallel with the empirical work in Sweden. After analyses of the structures of the databases, we concluded that a large part was not usable for comparative analyses of the kind our project had in view, and we decided to repeat both data collection rounds in St. Petersburg – with the exception of the students in four school classes (81 respondents), whose answers are included in the current databases. The repeated data collection sessions were performed in collaboration with personnel at the Centre for Independent Social Research, St. Petersburg, and were preceded (for the adult sample) by an extensive pilot study during May-June 2007.

2 This also implies that persons who have recently moved to St. Petersburg (including many immigrants from the former Soviet Union) are not represented in our sample.
also comparable with respect to young people’s/classes’ orientation/profile, as well as with respect to the adults’ level of education (highly educated persons make up 39-40% of the respondents in both samples). At the same time, men are somewhat under-represented among the respondents in the sub-samples (apart from among the adolescents in St. Petersburg, where the boys make up 49% of all respondents). However, such a bias is quite common in postal enquiries. We have carried out a great number of additional analyses in order to control for influences of the uneven distribution of the gender variable.

The in-depth group discussions were accomplished with young people and adults, respectively, who in the questionnaire had stated that we could contact them again if we wished to know more about their media habits. The persons were strategically chosen after gender and low versus high education level/practical versus theoretical study programme, respectively, and the groups were also formed based on all combinations of these two variables. The group discussions lasted 1 ½ - 2 hours and were carried out during the first half of 2007, with the exception of the St. Petersburg adults whom we met with in autumn 2007. The total number of persons participating in the group discussions was 95: 22 teens in Stockholm, 22 adults in Stockholm, 27 adolescents in St. Petersburg and 24 adults in St. Petersburg. The group discussions were recorded and transcribed. The semi-structured interview guide contained in-depth questions about aspects in the quantitative questionnaire related to media, advertising and celebrities, and society.

As mentioned in “Foreword and Introduction”, personal interviews were also conducted with 32 media experts (on average ca. 90 minutes each), half in each city, during the period autumn 2007–spring 2008 in Stockholm and autumn 2007 in St Petersburg. The experts were journalists and programme presenters, editors, administrative leaders, advertising and PR managers, as well as media politicians. The semi-structured interview guide also focused on the three areas – media, advertising and society – but with greater focus on the media as organizations (such as ownership structure, freedom of speech and the role of media globalization). These interviews, too, were recorded and transcribed.
Questionnaire on media, society, leisure

1. Are you... □ Female □ Male

2. What is your year of birth? I was born in 19......

3. Which of the following media exist in your household?

   There may be two marks on each row

   In your household | My own/have myself
                      | Number          | Number
   a. TV set/s      | ................. | ............... 
   b. Computer      | ................. | ............... 
   c. Mobile phone/s| ................. | ............... 
   d. Video player  | ................. | ............... 
   e. DVD player    | ................. | ............... 
   f. CD player     | ................. | ............... 
   g. Video camera, web camera (for moving images) | ............... | ............... 
   h. MP3 player    | ................. | ............... 
   i. Console for video games | ............... | ............... 
   j. Digital camera (for still pictures) | ............... | ............... 
   k. Car radio     | ................. | ............... 
   l. Newspaper subscription | ............. | ............... 

4. How many TV channels can you watch at home?

           ............... channels □ □ I have no television at home
### 5. How often do you use the following media?

**One cross on each row**

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<th>(Almost) never</th>
<th>A few times/year</th>
<th>1-3 days/month</th>
<th>1-2 days/week</th>
<th>3-5 days/week</th>
<th>6-7 days/week</th>
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<td>a. Watch television</td>
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<td>b. Listen to the radio (ordinary or via the Internet)</td>
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<td>c. Read newspapers</td>
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<td>d. Read weekly/monthly magazines</td>
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<td>e. Read books for work/study</td>
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<td>f. Read books for leisure</td>
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<td>g. Use the Internet for work</td>
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<td>h. Use the Internet for study</td>
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<td>i. Use the Internet for leisure</td>
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<td>j. Play video/computer games</td>
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If other media, which ones?

### 6. Approximately how long do you use the following media on an average day?

**One cross on each row**

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<th>Not at all</th>
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<th>30-59 min</th>
<th>1-2 hours</th>
<th>2-3 hours</th>
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<td>a. Watch television</td>
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<td>c. Read newspapers</td>
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<td>d. Read weekly/monthly magazines</td>
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<td>g. Use the Internet for leisure</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Listen to recorded music</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j. Play video/computer games</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 7. How often do you watch the following TV channels?

**One cross on each row**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>(Almost) never</th>
<th>A few times/year</th>
<th>1-3 days/month</th>
<th>1-2 days/week</th>
<th>3-5 days/week</th>
<th>6-7 days/week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. SVT's channels</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. TV 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. TV 4's channels</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Channel 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. TV 6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Children's channel(s)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Kunskapakanelen*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. MTV, ZTV</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The question continues on the next page...*
APPENDICES: QUESTIONNAIRE

If other TV channels, which one(s).................................................................

* The Knowledge Channel.

In St. Petersburg, the question took up the following TV channels: Pervyj kanal, Rossija, Pjatij kanal (SPb), NTV, Kultura, CTC, TNT, TV100, TV3, MTV, Muz TV, Discovery, Eurosport, CNN, BBC, Euronews

8. How willingly do you watch the following TV programmes?

Ring one figure on the scale from 1-5 on each row.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very unwillingly</th>
<th>Hard to say</th>
<th>Very willingly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. News emissions</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Documentaries</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Factual programmes</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Music programmes</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Cultural programmes</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Science programmes</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Soap operas</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. Reality TV, docu-soaps</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Children’s programmes</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j. Drama serials</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k. Crime serials</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l. Comedy serials</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m. Science fiction</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n. Action serials</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o. Thrillers</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p. Programmes about nature</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>q. Programmes about technology</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>r. Talk shows</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s. Current debate, political discussions</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t. TV theatre</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>u. Horror movies</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v. Sport</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>w. Art movies</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x. Fashion reports</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>y. Advertising in programmes</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>z. Shopping programmes (TV shop, Tvis, etc.)</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aa. Cookery programmes</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bb. Quizzes</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9. How willingly do you watch TV serials from the following countries?

Ring one figure on the scale from 1-5 on each row.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very unwillingly</th>
<th>Hard to say</th>
<th>Very willingly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Swedish/Russian serials</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. American serials</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. European serials</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Serials from other parts of the world</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Question No. 10 was only put to the Swedish respondents

11. How willingly do you listen to the following radio channels?

Ring one figure on the scale from 1-5 on each row

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Radio Channel</th>
<th>Very unwillingly</th>
<th>Hard to say</th>
<th>Very willingly</th>
<th>Don't know of them</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. P1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. P2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. P3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. P4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Radio Stockholm 103,3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. FM+FM</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Mix Megapol</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. The Voice of Hiphop &amp; R'n'B</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Lugna Favoriter</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j. NRJ</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k. Vinyl</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l. Bandit Rock</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m. Svenska Favoriter</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n. Rockklassiker Stockholm</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o. Foreign radio</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p. Other radio channels</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If other radio channels, which ones? .................................................................

In St. Petersburg, the question took up the following radio channels: Translyacionnaya set, Russkoye radio, Europa 1, Automaradio, Radio Rossiya, Mayak, Radio chanson, Retro FM, Echo Moskvy, Love radio, Radio maximum, Radio hermitage, Radio studio, Eldoradio, Radio Sputnik, Radio svoboda, Radio kultura, Foreign radio, Other radio channels

12. Which newspapers do you most often read as paper editions (printed papers)?

...................................................................................................................................................

☐ □ Do not read any newspapers as paper editions

If you have a mobile phone (otherwise, go to question No. 14):

13. How often do you use your mobile phone to...

One cross on each row

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Almost never</th>
<th>A few times/month</th>
<th>Ca. once/week</th>
<th>A few times/week</th>
<th>1-3 times/day</th>
<th>4-8 times/day</th>
<th>9-20 times/day</th>
<th>More than 20 times/day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Call others</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Receive calls</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Send, receive SMS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>d. Take photos</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Send, receive pictures</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Change settings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Use e-mail, use the Internet</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. Play games</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Listen to music</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Score</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following question was only put to the adults:

Is it you yourself or your work that pays your mobile phone calls?

1 □ Pay myself   2 □ Partly myself, partly my work  3 □ My work pays all my mobile phone calls
The following questions are about computers and the Internet:

**If there is a computer in your home (otherwise, go to question No. 16):**

14. When did you first get access to a computer in your home? Year ..........

15. When did your household obtain its newest computer? Year ..........

16. How good are your computer skills for managing the following things? 
   *Ring one figure on the scale from 1-3 on each row.*

   - a. Copy and change files 1 2 3
   - b. Remove viruses 1 2 3
   - c. Install software 1 2 3
   - d. Make presentations (e.g., Powerpoint) 1 2 3
   - e. Search for information on the Internet 1 2 3
   - f. Download music, films, software 1 2 3
   - g. Make home pages 1 2 3
   - h. Configure a network of my own 1 2 3

**If you never use a computer, go to question No. 19**

17. How often do you use a computer? 
   *One cross on each row.*

   (Almost)  | A few times/year | 1-3 days/ | 1-2 days/ | 3-5 days/ | 6-7 days/ |
   never    | 1-3 times/year   | month    | week      | week      | week      |

   - a. At home  
   - b. At school or at work  
   - c. At friends  
   - d. In an Internet café  
   - e. At another place  

18. How often do you use a computer for the following things? 
   *One cross on each row.*

   (Almost)  | A few times/year | 1-3 days/ | 1-2 days/ | 3-5 days/ | 6-7 days/ |
   never    | 1-3 times/year   | month    | week      | week      | week      |

   - a. Text processing  
   - b. Compilation of tables  
   - c. Programming  
   - d. Picture processing  
   - e. Editing films  

307
If there is a possibility to connect to a Internet connection in your home:

19. When did your household get its Internet connection? Year .........

20. Do you have...?
One cross on each row

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don’t know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Internet connection via modem</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Broadband connection via ADSL (in the telephone jack)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Broadband connection via cable (separate plug)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Mobile Internet connection</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Own home page on the Internet</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Own blog on the Internet</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you never use the Internet, go to question No. 30.

21. How often do you use the Internet in each of the following places?
One cross on each row

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>(Almost) never</th>
<th>A few times/year</th>
<th>1-3 days/month</th>
<th>1-2 days/week</th>
<th>3-5 days/week</th>
<th>6-7 days/week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. At home</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. In school/ at work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. At friends</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. In an Internet café</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. At another place</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

22. How often do you use the Internet for the following things?
One cross on each row

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>(Almost) never</th>
<th>A few times/year</th>
<th>1-3 days/month</th>
<th>1-2 days/week</th>
<th>3-5 days/week</th>
<th>6-7 days/week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Read newspapers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Read magazines</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Chat, instant messaging</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Send and receive e-mail</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Shop (auctions included)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Use Internet banking</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Phone (via Skype or the like)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. Enter communities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Write blogs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j. Read blogs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k. Listen to the radio</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l. Search entertainment information</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m. Search scientific information</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n. Search political information</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o. Work with home page/s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p. Submit income tax returns or the like</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>q. Search travel information</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The question continues on the next page...
### APPENDICES: QUESTIONNAIRE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>(Almost) never</th>
<th>A few times/year</th>
<th>1-3 days/month</th>
<th>1-2 days/week</th>
<th>3-5 days/week</th>
<th>6-7 days/week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>r</td>
<td>Search juridical information</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s</td>
<td>Search trade union information</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t</td>
<td>Search study information</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>u</td>
<td>Search economic and financial information</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v</td>
<td>Search health information</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>w</td>
<td>Search for acquaintances, dating</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>Eroticism</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>y</td>
<td>Post pictures of myself or others</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>z</td>
<td>Download music</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aa</td>
<td>Download games</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bb</td>
<td>Download software</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cc</td>
<td>Download films</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

23. Please mention the three websites on the Internet that you use most often – apart from search engines, such as Google, Yahoo, etc.:

1…………………………………… 2…………………………………… 3……………………………………

---

24. Which newspapers do you read most often on the Internet?

…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

☐ ☐ Don’t read any newspapers on the Internet

---

25. Have you become acquainted with new persons via the Internet through your studies?

☐ ☐ No (go to 27)  ☐ ☐ Yes

*IF YES:*

26. Have you met this person/these persons in reality later?

☐ ☐ No  ☐ ☐ Yes, 1-2 times  ☐ ☐ Yes, more than 2 times

27. Have you become acquainted with new persons via the Internet in any private (leisure) context?

☐ ☐ No (go to 29)  ☐ ☐ Yes

*IF YES:*

28. Have you met this person/these persons in reality later?

☐ ☐ No  ☐ ☐ Yes, 1-2 times  ☐ ☐ Yes, more than 2 times

29. Do you find the Internet addictive on your part?

No, not at all  1  2  3  4  5  Yes, very addictive
The following questions are to be answered by everyone:

30. How important is it for you personally that the media deal with the following areas?
*Ring one figure on the scale from 1-5 on each row*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Not important at all</th>
<th>Very important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Fashion</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. National news</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. International news</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Local news</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Beauty</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Sports</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Culture</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. Entertainment</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Pornography</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j. Interior decoration, home furnishing</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k. Crime, accidents</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l. Medical service, health service</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m. Economy in general</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n. Corruption</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o. Economic divides in society</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p. Child care and family issues</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>q. Alcohol and drug issues</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>r. Labour market issues</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(unemployment, occupation)</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s. Environmental issues</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t. Educational issues, school issues</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>u. Gender equality issues</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v. Refugee and immigration issues</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>w. Defence issues</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x. Development assistance issues, help to other countries</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>y. Terrorism</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>z. Reports about celebrities</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aa. Music</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bb. Technology, computers</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cc. Cars</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dd. History, science</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ee. Animals, nature</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ff. Food, cooking</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gg. Travels, tourism</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hh. Relations and love</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii. HIV/AIDS</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jj. The homeless persons’ situation</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kk. The relation between different ethnic groups in Sweden/Russia</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ll. Other subjects</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If other subjects, which? .................................................................

31. Below are some statements on new information technology. How well do they agree with your personal opinions?
*Ring one figure on the scale from 1-5 on each row*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Don’t agree at all</th>
<th>Agree completely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. The new information technology with the Internet and mobile phones makes the world a better place</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Ordinary people can influence what is happening in society by making their voices heard on the Internet</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. People who do not have access to the Internet are in a seriously disadvantaged position</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. People devote too much time to the Internet</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The question continues on the next page...
### APPENDICES: QUESTIONNAIRE

#### 32. How important are the following media and persons to you when it comes to knowledge and information?

*Ring one figure on the scale from 1-5 on each row*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not important at all</th>
<th>Very important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. The Internet</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Books</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Television</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Radio</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Newspapers</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Magazines, journals</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Cinemas</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. Associations/organizations</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Family</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j. Friends</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k. Colleagues, fellow students</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l. Teachers</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 33. How important are the following media and persons for you when it comes to entertainment and pleasure?

*Ring one figure on the scale from 1-5 on each row*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not important at all</th>
<th>Very important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. The Internet</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Books</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Television</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Radio</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Newspapers</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Magazines, journals</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Cinemas</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. Associations/organizations</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Family</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j. Friends</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k. Colleagues, fellow students</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l. Teachers</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m. Video and computer games</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 34. How important do you think the following means are to your social intercourse with other people?

*Ring one figure on the scale from 1-5 on each row*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not important at all</th>
<th>Very important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Direct contact, to meet</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Ordinary telephone</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Mobile phone</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. SMS</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Letters and postcards</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. E-mail</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. ICQ, AOL, MSN</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. Chat</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Internet communities</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The following are questions on advertising and consumption:

35. What is your general attitude towards advertising?

1 □ Very negative  2 □ Negative  3 □ Neutral  4 □ Positive  5 □ Very positive

36. How important is it to you to follow fashion and trends when it comes to:

*Ring one figure on the scale from 1-5 on each row*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Not important at all</th>
<th>Very important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Clothes, shoes</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Accessories, jewellery</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Home electronics/technical equipment</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Travels</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Music</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Books</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Films</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. Video/computer games</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Interior decoration, home furnishing</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j. Sports articles</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k. Hobby articles</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

37. Please mention three brands/trademarks that you appreciate:

0 □ Don’t appreciate any brand/trademark, they are of no importance to me

38. Do you feel more self-confident when you use certain products, fashions and styles?

0 □ No  1 □ Sometimes  2 □ Yes

*If YES: 39. Please give an/some example/s of such products:.................................................................................................................................

........................................................................................................................................................................

40. How important is it to you to live up to your ideals concerning appearance in general (as regards body, clothes, etc.)?

0 □ Have no such ideals  1 □ Not important at all  2 □ Rather important  3 □ Very important

41. Please mention three places/shops where you usually buy clothes, or where others buy them for you:

0 □ Never buy clothes

42. To what extent do you believe that you are influenced by the following factors in your choice of clothes style?

*Ring one figure on the scale from 1-5 on each row*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>Very much</th>
<th>Don’t know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Price</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 □</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Friends</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 □</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The question continues on the next page...
### APPENDICES: QUESTIONNAIRE

#### 43. Are there any special TV programmes or films where someone/some persons dress prettily or smartly, in your opinion?

- Yes, which programme/s, film/s?
- No (Go to question 46)

#### 44. Are you inspired by this programme/film in your own clothes style?

- No
- Yes, partly
- Yes, much

#### 45. Please give example/s of three celebrities who you think dress prettily/smarty:

- Cannot give any example/s

#### 46. How well do each of the following statements agree with your opinion?

*Ring one figure on the scale from 1-5 on each row*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Don't agree at all</th>
<th>Agree completely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Advertising makes it more difficult for me to choose among similar products</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. I feel pressure from those around me to fit in when it comes to clothes and products</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Other people become interested in, notice the products I have bought</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. I feel need to get/have status products that other people have</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. I distinguish between persons depending on the things they have</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. The products I buy become part of my personality</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. It happens that I feel envious of others because of something they have purchased</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. Advertising makes me buy things that I don't really need</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Via advertising I have discovered new products that I didn't know existed</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j. It is worth paying extra for a well-known brand/trademark</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k. The expression &quot;the higher the price the better&quot; the product is correct</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The following questions are about society:

47. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?  
*Ring one figure on the scale from 1-5 on each row*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Don’t agree at all</th>
<th>Agree completely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Competition and struggling for life are more natural than mutual help and cooperation</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. A human being’s prosperity ought to be wholly dependent on how well she succeeds in taking care of herself and her family</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. I would like people to stand up more often for common interests in society</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. The state ought to help the weaker and less capable to live a life fit for human beings</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Privatization and an open market economy are good for Sweden/Russia</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

48. How much trust do you have in the following institutions?  
*Ring one figure on the scale from 1-5 on each row*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No trust at all</th>
<th>Hard to say</th>
<th>Great trust</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. The government</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. The prime minister/president</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. The police</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. The medical service</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. The defence</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. The parliament/state duma</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. The banks</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. The newspapers</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. The trade unions</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j. SVT and SR (public service radio and television)/the state radio and television</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k. Private radio and TV channels</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l. The school</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m. The multinational companies</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n. The church</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o. The legal courts</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p. Your local council</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>q. The European Union</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>r. Universities and colleges</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s. The political parties</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t. Opinion polls</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>u. The UN (United Nations)</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

49. What is democracy, according to you? Please choose three of the following expressions that you find best describe a democratic society:

- a ☐ Freedom of expression  
- b ☐ Order  
- c ☐ Justice  
- d ☐ Economic prosperity for all  
- e ☐ That everyone helps each other  
- f ☐ Discipline  
- g ☐ Fellowship among people  
- h ☐ Something else, please write what  

..................................................
50. On the whole, how satisfied are you with the way democracy functions in...
Ring one figure on the scale from 1-4 on each row

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not at all satisfied</th>
<th>Not especially satisfied</th>
<th>Satisfied on the whole</th>
<th>Very satisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Sweden/Russia</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. The Stockholm/</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St.Petersburg area</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

51. Do you find that the development in Sweden/Russia is getting better or worse in the following areas?
Ring one figure on the scale from 1-5 on each row

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Much worse</th>
<th>Much better</th>
<th>No idea</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Unemployment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. The environment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. The schools and education</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. The offering of goods and</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. The individual’s possibility to consume</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Business conditions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. The health and medical</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>service</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. Private motoring</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Public transport</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j. Refugees/immigration</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k. Foreign and security issues</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l. Criminality</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m. Corruption</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n. The ethics and morality of</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>industry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o. The ethics of the public</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sector (among civil</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>servants/politicians)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p. Gender equality</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>q. Equality between</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ethnic groups</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>r. Economic divides between</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>different population groups</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s. The individual’s possibility to express her/his</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>opinions publicly</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

52. Do you find that the development of Sweden/Russia as a whole after ca. 1986 (the past twenty years) has deteriorated or improved in the following respects?
Ring one figure on the scale from 1-3 on each row

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Development</th>
<th>The development has deteriorated</th>
<th>As a whole nothing has changed</th>
<th>The development has improved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Economically</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1  2  3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Democratically</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1  2  3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

53. Which immigration policy should the Swedish/Russian government follow, according to you?

1. Try to restrict the flow of immigrants
2. Not put up any obstacles but offer the best possibilities for both immigrants and Sweden/Russia
3. Something else, please write what .................................................................
4. Don’t know
54. Which party do you like best today?

1 ☐ Kristdemokraterna  2 ☐ Moderaterna  3 ☐ Folkpartiet  4 ☐ Centerpartiet
5 ☐ Socialdemokraterna  6 ☐ Vänsterpartiet  7 ☐ Miljöpartiet
8 ☐ Other party. Which one? ..............................................................................................................................
9 ☐ Uncertain  9 ☐ No party suits me

Kristdemokraterna/The Christian Democrats; Moderaterna/The Conservative Party; Folkpartiet/The Liberal Party; Centerpartiet/The Center Party; Socialdemokraterna/The Social Democrats; Vänsterpartiet/The Left-wing Party; Miljöpartiet/The Green Party

In St. Petersburg, the question took up the following parties: United Russia; The Communist Party; The Liberal-democratic Party; The Alliance of the Right-wing Forces; “Jabloko”/The Apple; A Fair Russia; The Agricultural Party

55. Do you think that you yourself can influence the societal development in Sweden/Russia?

1 ☐ Not at all  2 ☐ Only marginally  3 ☐ Yes, partly  4 ☐ Yes, to a great extent  6 ☐ Don’t know

56. How do you think the following organizations/institutions/countries influence people’s life conditions on a global level?

*Ring one figure on the scale from 1-5 on each row*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very negatively</th>
<th>Very positively</th>
<th>No idea</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. The UN</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. The World Trade Union (WTO)</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. The USA</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. The EU</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. China</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. The Russian Government</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. The Swedish Government</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. Multinational companies</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Global protest movements</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j. The World Bank</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k. NATO</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l. Press, radio, television</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

57. How well do you think Sweden/Russia lives up to the UN convention on the rights of the child?

1 ☐ Very badly  2 ☐ Rather badly  3 ☐ Neither badly nor well  4 ☐ Rather well  5 ☐ Very well
9 ☐ No idea  9 ☐ Don’t know what this convention is about

58. How well do you think Sweden/Russia lives up to the UN convention on human rights?

1 ☐ Very badly  5 ☐ Rather badly  3 ☐ Neither badly nor well  4 ☐ Rather well  5 ☐ Very well
9 ☐ No idea  9 ☐ Don’t know what this convention is about
59. How important do you think the following methods are for people’s ability to express their views?

Rog one figure on the scale from 1-5 on each row

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Not important</th>
<th>Very important</th>
<th>Cannot say</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Letters to the press</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. General opinion polls</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Appearance on TV broadcast</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Telephone call in TV broadcast</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. SMS to TV programme</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Appearance on the radio</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. The Internet</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. Being in a political party</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Being in another organization</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j. Demonstrations, protest meetings</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k. Strikes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

60. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

Rog one figure on the scale from 1-5 on each row

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Don’t agree at all</th>
<th>Agree completely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Ordinary people can make their voices well heard in the media</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. The picture of reality conveyed through TV news is usually true and correct</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. By reading newspapers I get a correct picture of the situation in society</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. The media contents are controlled by a few powerful persons</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

61. Which of the following groups do you think you can say ”we” about?

Rog one figure on the scale from 1-5 on each row

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Cannot say ”we” about at all</th>
<th>Can fully say ”we” about</th>
<th>No idea</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Swedes/Russians</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Immigrants</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Fellow workers, colleagues</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Fellow students</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Successful people</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. People who do not get on very well in life</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Intellectual people</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. Poor people with hardships in life</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Affluent, economically secure people</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j. People in decision and responsibility positions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k. Ordinary people, average Swedes/</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russians</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l. Christians</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m. Muslims</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n. People belonging to another religion</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If another religion, which one? ...........................................................................................................

Other group, which one? ...........................................................................................................................

62. What countries and nationalities do you feel most allied to?

Name three countries/nationalities at the most
63. If you had to leave Sweden/Russia and settle down somewhere else, which country would you choose?

64. From where have you got knowledge of the country you mentioned in the above question (No. 63)?

Mark all response alternatives that apply:

- Have been there
- Through relatives, friends, fellow-workers
- Through books
- In school
- Through film and television
- Through newspapers, magazines, journals
- Through the Internet
- In another way:

Now some questions that have to do with leisure time:

65. How often do you do the following things in your leisure time?

One cross on each row

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Almost never</th>
<th>A few times/year</th>
<th>Once/month</th>
<th>2-3 times/month</th>
<th>Once/week</th>
<th>Several times/week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Take a walk</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go to a concert with classical music</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go to a concert with other kind of music</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go to the theatre</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go to a disco</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do gardening</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meet friends</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meet the family</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be home furnishing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go in shops for fun</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cook</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go to a restaurant/pub/cafeteria</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go to the opera, ballet</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go to a sports event</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Devote myself to outdoor life, go out in the nature</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go to museums, exhibitions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go to parties</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sing, play a musical instrument</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities with house pets</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participate in a study circle, courses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take photographs, make a film</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Build, do carpentry, repair</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunt, fish</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knit, sew, and the like</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The question continues on the next page...
**APPENDICES: QUESTIONNAIRE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>(Almost) never</th>
<th>A few times/year</th>
<th>Once/month</th>
<th>2-3 times/month</th>
<th>Once/week</th>
<th>Several times/week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>t. Draw, paint</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>y. Write letters, a diary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aa. Do repair work on cars, motors, technical equipment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bb. Bet on the pools, Lotto, horses, and the like</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cc. Play billiards, darts, and the like</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dd. Play cards</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ee. Devote myself to beauty care</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ff. Go to church, take part in other religious activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gg. Meditation/yoga</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hh. Go in for sports, training</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you do sports, which sport(s)? ..................................................................................

66. Approximately how long are you together with your family/relatives during an ordinary week?

... hours  99  ☐ Don't know

67. Approximately how long are you together with friends during an ordinary week?

... hours  99  ☐ Don't know

68. How often do you watch film...

One cross on each row

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>(Almost) never</th>
<th>A few times/year</th>
<th>1-3 days/month</th>
<th>1-2 days/week</th>
<th>2-5 days/week</th>
<th>6-7 days/week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. On television</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. On video/DVD</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. At the cinema</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. On the computer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

69. How willingly do you watch the following films?

Ring one figure on the scale from 1-5 on each row

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very unwillingly</th>
<th>Very willingly</th>
<th>Don't know of such films</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Newer Swedish/Russian films</td>
<td>2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Older Swedish/Russian films</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Newer American films</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Older American films</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Newer European films</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Older European films</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Films from other parts of the world</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

70. Please mention three examples of films or film directors, etc., that you appreciate

1........................................................................... 2........................................................................... 3...........................................................................
71. How often do you listen to music?

One cross on each row

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>A few times/year</th>
<th>1-3 days/month</th>
<th>1-2 days/week</th>
<th>3-5 days/week</th>
<th>6-7 days/week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. On the radio</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. On television</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. On a CD player</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. On a LP, cassette player</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. On an MP3 player</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. On the Internet, computer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

72. How willingly do you listen to the following music genres?

Ring one figure on the scale from 1-5 on each row

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Genre</th>
<th>Very unwillingly</th>
<th>Very willingly</th>
<th>I'm not acquainted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Punk</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Techno</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Disco</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Hip hop, rap</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Reggae</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Country</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Jazz</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. Blues</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Musicals, operettas</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j. Classical music (symphonies, quartets...)</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k. Opera</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l. Swedish/Russian folk music</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m. Foreign folk music</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n. Songs and ballads</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o. Church music</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p. Pop</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>q. Rock</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>r. Hard rock, metal</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s. R'n'B</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t. Soul</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>u. Dance band</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v. House</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>w. Spirituals</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x. Schlagers</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>y. World music</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aa. Latino</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bb. Funk</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cc. Goth</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dd. DMB</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ee. Pump</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ff. Bitpop (video game music)</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gg. Film music</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

73. Please mention three examples of pieces of music/singers/music groups/composers that you appreciate:

1........................................2........................................3........................................
APPENDICES: QUESTIONNAIRE

74. Imagine that you will be participating in a photo competition. How readily would you choose each of the following motifs in order to make beautiful pictures?

Ring one figure on the scale from 1-5 on each row

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motif</th>
<th>Don’t choose</th>
<th>Choose very willingly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Natural landscape</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Girl playing with a cat</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Pregnant woman</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Still life</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Woman breast-feeding</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Scaffold</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Head of cabbage</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. Sunset in the sea</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Working weavers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j. Folk dance</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k. Rope</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l. Car accident</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m. Bark (of tree)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n. Famous monument</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o. Scrap yard</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p. Confirmation in the church</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>q. Wounded man</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>r. Picture by a famous painter</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s. Tramps quarrelling</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t. Slaughtering-block</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>u. Snake</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

75. In your opinion, to what extent is it possible to trust people in general?

1. One ought to be very careful about trusting people
2. In general one ought to be careful about trusting people
3. People are generally trustworthy
4. One can totally trust most people
9. Don’t know, cannot say

76. Which figure on this scale describes best how you regard work (housework and schoolwork included) in relation to leisure and relaxation?

It is leisure that makes life worth living, not work 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
It is work that makes life worth living, not leisure

77. How often do you feel…?

Ring one figure on the scale from 1-5 on each row

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feeling</th>
<th>Almost never</th>
<th>Very often</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Under stress</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Full of anxiety</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Depressed</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Happy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Appreciated</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

78. Mark the two of the following things that are most important to you:

2. The latest and best technical things
3. Love
4. Lots of money, wealth
5. A life full of enjoyment
6. Great knowledge
7. Power and influence
8. Family security

321
79. On the whole, how satisfied are you with the life you live?
1 □ Not at all satisfied 2 □ Not especially satisfied 3 □ Rather satisfied 4 □ Very satisfied

Questions No. 80-83 were only put to the adolescents

80. What is your dream profession? ...........................................................................................................

81. What kind of job do you believe you will actually have in the future?
................................................................................................................................................................

82. Please mention three professions that you think have high status/are prestigious in Sweden/Russia today:
1 ........................................ 2 ........................................ 3 ........................................ 6 □ Hard to say

At last, a few questions about your background:

The following two questions were only put to the adults

What is your highest completed level of education?
1 □ Compulsory school or equivalent
2 □ Qualified vocational training
3 □ Gymnasium
4 □ Folk high school
5 □ University (university college) – not completed
6 □ Degree from a university (university college)
7 □ Postgraduate studies or equivalent
0 □ Other education. Which one? .................................................................

In St. Petersburg, the following categorization of education was used:
1 □ Not completed gymnasium
2 □ Gymnasium
3 □ Technical/specialist gymnasium
4 □ University (university college) – not completed
5 □ Degree from a university (university college)
6 □ Two university degrees or postgraduate studies
0 □ Other education. Which one? .................................................................

What direction does your education have in the main?
................................................................................................................................................................
83. What is your parents' highest completed level of education?

Your mother:  
1 □ Compulsory school or equivalent  
2 □ Qualified vocational training  
3 □ Gymnasium  
4 □ Folk high school  
5 □ University (university college) – not completed  
6 □ Degree from university (university college)  
7 □ Postgraduate studies or equivalent  
0 □ Other education. Which one?  

Your father:  
1 □ Compulsory school or equivalent  
2 □ Qualified vocational training  
3 □ Gymnasium  
4 □ Folk high school  
5 □ University (university college) – not completed  
6 □ Degree from university (university college)  
7 □ Postgraduate studies or equivalent  
0 □ Other education. Which one?

In St. Petersburg the same categorization of education was used as above, under “What is your highest completed level of education”

84. How many persons live together in your household, yourself included? ........... (persons)

The next question was only put to the adults

How many children under 18 years of age live in your household? ........... (children)

How old are they? .......... years, .......... years, .......... years, .......... years

The next question was only put to the adolescents

85. Do you have any sibling/s?

0 □ No  1 □ Yes, I have .... sibling/s

If yes: How old are they? .......... years, .......... years, .......... years, .......... years

The next two questions were only put to the adults

What is your main occupation at present?

1 □ Full-time studying  2 □ Part-time studying  
3 □ Full-time working  4 □ Part-time working  
5 □ In search of work  6 □ Something else. What?  

What is your main profession? .................................................................

86a. What is your mother’s main profession? ..............................................

86b. What is your father’s main profession? ..............................................
87. How would you like to describe your household’s economic situation?
1 □ I/we hardly manage, there is not enough money even for food
2 □ There is enough money for food, but buying clothes is a serious problem
3 □ There is enough money for food and clothes, but buying long-term consumer goods is a problem
4 □ I/we can without problem purchase long-term consumer goods, but cannot afford really expensive things
5 □ I/we can afford to purchase a sufficiently expensive house/flat, summer house and much else
9 □ Don’t know

88. How long have you lived in the Stockholm/St. Petersburg county? ....... years

89. How long have you lived in Sweden/Russia? ....... years

90. In what country were you born? ...........................................

91. In what country was your mother born? ...........................................

92. In what country was your father born? ...........................................

N.B. ABSOLUTELY VOLUNTARY!

If we find we would like to know more about your media habits, could we possibly contact you again?

1 □ Yes. My contact details are:
   Name ........................................................................................................
   Address .......................................................................................................
   Telephone number ................. best ................. o’clock
9 □ No

Many thanks for your participation!

If you have any other opinions you would like to convey, please write them here:
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Russia's political system has since the 1990s undergone a radical change, followed by economic and social crises in which the media system, too, has radically changed. This is in contrast to Sweden, where adaptation of media and society to global changes has taken place continuously in a context of relative economic and political stability.

This anthology presents a group of articles based on quantitative and qualitative research performed within the project "The Role of Media for Identity and Democracy". The project involves interviews with media experts in St. Petersburg and Stockholm, analyses of the media structure and media contents, as well as comparative analyses of two age groups – 17-year-olds and middle-aged people – in the two cities.

The project aims at illustrating the interplay of society and media, on the one hand, and, on the other, people's media use and preferences, their leisure, consumption and cultural identity, their work activities, social background and poverty-welfare, and their perceptions of societal institutions and democracy.