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MARIA ANIKINA

Lomonosov Moscow State University, Russia

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION AND SOCIAL DIALOGUE: JOURNALISTIC CULTURE IN RUSSIA

Abstract:

Proposed paper is based on results of empirical studies of Russian journalists realized within the frames of two projects – “Journalism in Change - Professional Journalistic Cultures in Poland, Russia and Sweden” (2011-2014) and “Media Systems in Flux: The Challenge of the BRICS Countries” (2012-2016) – searching journalism doctrines in last decades. Sociological studies let to discuss the potential of social dialogue from media perspective, to formulate assumptions about the readiness of journalistic community to organize and support citizen activity.

The quantitative survey of 500 journalists from different Russian regions in “Journalism in change...” project clarifies that such factors as the chance to hold social service, to supply social demand are valued relatively low when respondents reflecting the roles of journalism in society and the choice of a working place. Factor analysis shows that integrated factor related to social development is weaker than the factor related to creative growth of a journalist (the indicators are 3,7 and 3,83 out of 5 – respectively). Results show that Russian journalists do not give high estimations to such social functions as public opinion formation, social mobilization of people etc. Moderate orientation to citizen participation differentiates journalistic culture in Russia from professional cultures in European countries.

The qualitative study of 48 journalists working in traditional and online media located Moscow region in “Media Systems in Flux...” project allows to stress that metropolitan journalists stay quite passive in civic life. Only few respondents are the members of NGOs, parties or social movements what indirectly confirms weak inclination to realize any social activity except information one. Since 83% of respondents from online media 54% of traditional ones have positive attitude to citizen activity and protests, general attitude to social movements of last years in Russia among journalists is moderate: “If we speak about protests of 2011-2012 I am tolerant” (male, old media). Discussion about the protests represents the opposition that exists in journalistic culture. The differentiation between political positions, personal and professional viewpoints is obvious: “We understand that politics is superficial issue. There are things fastening us stronger” (male respondent, traditional media). Often people describe the protests from professional point, stress professional aspect of journalist’s participation in citizen movements.

The paper argues that in current context in Russia journalists form specific type of professional culture combining the tendency to creative development with peculiar civic positions what in certain sense impedes social dialogue in Russian public sphere.

Keywords:

journalistic culture, social dialogue, social roles of media, empirical studies, participation