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Media Consumption by Russian Youth as a Factor of Political Socialization: Request for Media Literacy Education

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Abstract

Media consumption by young people has traditionally been receiving much attention within Russian science. However, scholars rarely analyze various aspects of political dimension of media practices widely spread among young people. In this regard, the purpose of the study was to analyze the influence exerted by media consumption on the nature of modern youth political socialization.

The article presents a brief overview of the latest research on media practices of modern Russian youth, highlights the features and trends of media consumption by the “digital” generation, i.e. personalization of consumed content, priority of online forms of information dissemination, “situationality” and ritualization of news consumption, a high level of technical literacy, an increase in the scale of digital escapism, multi-screen communication, etc.

The main attention is paid to the importance of media consumption by young people during their political socialization. Distinctive properties of media and cyber socialization are highlighted, and their role in shaping the attitude of young people to events occurring within the country and abroad is shown. Specific practical recommendations are formulated on the possibilities of correcting media practices and transforming media consumption by young people in order to form more balanced and objective assessments of political reality.

Keywords: youth, media consumption, media practices, Internet, political socialization, new media, media literacy.

1. Introduction

The constantly accelerating nonlinear development of society, among other things, involves dynamic spread of new types of mass media, increasingly widespread use of artificial intelligence and the latest digital technologies in everyday life. All this entails a whole range of various changes, including those affecting the content and nature of people’s media consumption. For example, according to M. Castells, emergence of digital means of transmitting content has become one of the main reasons for the burgeoning of “mass self-communication”, which assumes that an individual independently receives, generates and distributes information (Castells, 2004: 91).

The mixing of media consumption functions (i.e. getting information, entertainment, functions of personal identification, social integration, communication, etc.) and corresponding types of media consumption at the individual level can be considered as another consequence of the information space transformation (Fetsenko, 2023: 1682). This can be seen especially clearly in relation to young people (in our case, they included people born after 1990), who are more susceptible to the influence of various innovations than other social strata. Moreover, the rapid changes of different age groups’ media practices give scholars reason to talk about an emerging

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generational digital divide, manifested both in the varying degrees of mastery and intensity of use of digital media by representatives of certain groups of the population, and in “peculiarities of the existence of their representatives in real and virtual space” (Nikitina, Nikitin, 2023: 38).

On the one hand, it is obvious that the digital divide is the way things are, which is hardly possible to influence in any way: young people, in any case, will quickly become familiar with all kinds of technical innovations and more actively use them in their everyday media practices. On the other hand, media consumption habits acquired and consolidated in youth are most often preserved and developed in adulthood, which means that on their basis it is quite possible to build projections and trends that will determine the nature of interaction with media in the future (Poluekhtova, 2022: 95). Plus, it's hard not to agree with colleagues that the specifics of youth media consumption also “needs to be taken into account when organizing and implementing information and communication projects in the socio-political and social spheres” (Volodenkov et al., 2021: 44). Furthermore, in my opinion, it is precisely ignoring the peculiarities of media use inherent in young people that is one of the main reasons for the low efficiency of the state's efforts to provide information support for individual events, processes and policies in general.

2. Materials and methods

The empirical basis of our research consists of the results of surveys conducted in 2022–2024 by *All-Russia Public Opinion Research Center*, *Public Opinion Foundation* and *the Levada Center* (recognized as a foreign agent in Russia) that touched on certain issues related to youth media consumption. In addition, we clarified certain topics that were not covered by above mentioned centers through online surveys and focus group interviews conducted on our own. In November 2022 and 2023, faculty of the Department of Political Science of Saratov State University named after. N.G. Chernyshevsky surveyed 2018 and 862 respondents, respectively, aged 14 to 35 years. The online questionnaires comprised 24 questions, including 3 closed, 2 open and 17 semi-closed ones; 2 more questions suggested the need to assess on a five-point scale the level of one's trust in various sources of information and correctness of development of various spheres of public and state life in modern Russia. In total (over two years of conducting the online surveys), among the respondents there were 53.8 % women and 46.2 % men. According to the age criterion, respondents were distributed as follows: from 14 to 17 years old – 16.2 %; from 18 to 25 years old – 39 %; from 26 to 30 years old – 24.7 %; from 31 to 35 years old – 20.1 %. The final sample included residents of 50 constituent entities of the Russian Federation.

After quantitative processing of results of the online surveys, certain points were clarified and specified during focus group interviews. The first three of them (n = 36) took place in January 2023, another four (n = 42) – in January 2024. When forming the sample of focus group interviews' participants, we also bore in mind the age and gender characteristics of young people living in Russia. During the focus groups, respondents were asked questions about the reasons and motives for the use of information sources they preferred, as well as meanings they attached to certain concepts related to mass media and politics.

Taken together, we believe that the study conducted in this way gave us an opportunity to identify the general features of media consumption by modern Russian youth in the context of their political socialization.

3. Discussion

The changed media reality requires new approaches and perspectives for analyzing information consumption by young people. It should be noted that today this issue is being studied quite actively. Moreover, depending on who is doing this, at least three groups of research can be distinguished: academic, marketing, and conducted by professional centers for the study of public opinion.

The former, in turn, can be divided into subgroups, and specifics of each of them is largely determined by the sciences within which researchers work. Sociologists are more often interested in the quantitative parameters of youth media consumption, the demand for individual information resources, the phenomenon of media socialization and other related aspects (Lobodenko, Shesterkina, 2022). Psychologists and teachers mainly analyze the nature and consequences (including destructive) of the influence of media content on the individual (Luchinkina, Petrovskaya, 2019), as well as the role of media education in the formation of a full-fledged individual (Fedorov et al., 2022; Levitskaya, Fedorov, 2022). Specifically, some scholars believe that technological advancements create new ways of informing and persuading citizens in

the political advertising context (Minihold et al., 2024) and try to measure the impact of information and voting reminder ads on millennial voters' turnout (Haenschen, Jennings, 2019). However, this probable link seems to me quite difficult to pinpoint since there are many other factors to be taken into consideration. In most cases, it is arguably a combined result of different processes, circumstances, and facts that influence one's behavior more significantly than technological advancements and voting reminder ads.

I see even more ambiguous attempts to document the influence of different types of selective exposure on political learning. For example, J. Guo, H.T. Chen, and S. Lu argue that "both topical and information channel selectivity directly reduce audience's political knowledge while ideological selectivity does not significantly affect political learning" (Guo et al., 2024: 377). It appears that topical, information, and ideological kinds of selectivity are so closely intertwined that it is hardly possible to sort out and assess the impact of each of them.

Quite often, attention of scholars studying media consumption by young people is focused on schoolchildren (Anikina, 2017; Davletshina, 2021; Frolova, Obratsova, 2017) or university students (Cherevko et al., 2018; Vyugina, 2018). The rest of the youth (within generally accepted understanding – that is, under 35 years of age) becomes the object of study much less often or is mentioned in the context of the entire population (Poluekhtova, 2018; Shchepilova, 2014).

A significant part of the research is devoted to the analysis of motivational factors of media consumption (Dunas et al., 2020; Cherevko et al., 2018; Poluekhtova, 2018). Scholars are actively comparing the various reasons that motivate young people to use specific media sources (Couldry, Hepp, 2016; Soldatova et al., 2017; Vartanova, 2019). Specifically, it turned out that young people turn to mass communications (primarily the Internet) more for socialization and self-realization than for entertainment or obtaining necessary information (Dunas et al., 2020).

It is worth mentioning that the Internet is no longer viewed solely as a set of technologies. Rather, it has become a natural environment and an organic part of the daily life of the younger generation (Soldatova et al., 2017: 18). As a result, needs that were previously satisfied only offline can now be satisfied directly – through online communication (Sundar, Limperos, 2013).

The issue of social media influencers' impact on young people is also rather important, because it entails possibility of developing "parasocial" relationships by source characteristics of expertise, similarity, trustworthiness, attractiveness, and interactivity (Cheng et al., 2023). I am not sure whether it can predict higher receptivity toward the influencers' political advocacy or elicit the followers' sharing intention. But it seems quite clear that influencers may not only convey political messages, but also make it more comprehensible for youth. At the same time, it does not mean that "Influencers may thereby raise young people's confidence in their political self-competence, and consequently affect their level of political participation" (Harff, Schmuck, 2023: 147). Arguably, political self-competence as well as level of political participation are dependent upon several factors, not limited to social media influencers' role.

Unfortunately, there are not so many attempts to develop an effective model for developing the ability of young people to resist false information (Chelysheva, Mikhaleva, 2023; Fedorov, Levitskaya, 2021; Frolova, Rogach, 2022) or to articulate the importance of media literacy for political communication in Russia (Bykov, Medvedeva, 2022; Jitsaeng, Tuamsuk, 2022). Exacerbation the situation is the fact that, according to scholars, the level of media literacy of most young people is actually not very high (Avdonina et al., 2022; Djumanova, 2022). In addition, they often tend to overestimate the quality of their own media competence (Frolova et al., 2022). All this together makes young people vulnerable to the spread of fake news and disinformation (Muzykant et al., 2023; Rojas-Kramer et al., 2022; Sarfo et al., 2023), which, in turn, necessitates paying more attention to the content and scope of media education practices used in modern Russia.

In general, despite the fairly wide range of issues raised by Russian researchers, the problems of youth media consumption can hardly be considered thoroughly studied. Firstly, as I.A. Poluekhtova rightly notes, "thanks to the efforts of many researchers, a large number of figures and data obtained by different methods, using different samples, are circulating in the public information space; different, often incomparable indicators (metrics) are given. This creates certain difficulties when analyzing media consumption, since the fragmentation and contradictory nature of the data makes it difficult to see the whole picture and track the dynamics of change" (Poluekhtova, 2022: 91). Secondly, certain aspects of media consumption by young people in the context of political socialization processes have not yet received proper understanding (Demidov,

Lomteva, 2022). In particular, it is not entirely clear what role the online forms of content distribution used by young people play in shaping their political views, perceptions and values.

In this regard, the purpose of this article was to determine the nature of the influence exerted by Russian youth media consumption on the content and results of their political socialization and to emphasize the potential role of media education in fostering better balanced, conscious, and secure behavior of youth within media space.

It should be noted that within the context of this study we use definition of media consumption proposed by V.P. Kolomiets', i.e. "social practice of using communication means (media) to obtain and master symbolic content and implement social connections and interactions" (Kolomiets, 2010: 61). At the same time, the focus of our attention is not on the entire complex of related processes of information consumption, but only on those aspects of it that directly affect the problems of political socialization of Russian youth. We consider the concept of "information consumption" as "a special type of digital activity of modern citizens associated with obtaining an information product (news, entertainment, analytical, etc.) on the Internet" (Volodenkov et al., 2021: 33) to be quite close in meaning to "media consumption".

4. Results

Analysis of the existing research of scholars, as well as results of sociological surveys on this issue and focus group interviews conducted on our own, made it possible to identify the following distinctive features of media consumption by modern Russian youth:

1. Young people express a strong preference for new media. Having a fairly high level of technological literacy (V'yugina, 2017), they feel very confident in handling various gadgets, through which they receive all the information needed. Moreover, they can simultaneously have several technical devices with Internet access at their disposal (Amzin, 2016). Obviously, traditional media are no longer able to satisfy various media demands of "digital youth" (Dunas, 2021: 135) and have less weight for them than the new ones (Zelentsov, 2022: 39).

This feature is confirmed by the results of mass surveys. Thus, according to *All-Russia Public Opinion Research Center*, to receive news, the youth audience prefers to use Internet resources, among which the most popular ones are social networks (they were chosen as the main source of information about what is happening by 25 % of respondents in the age group under 25 and by 28 % of those who are 25–34 years old) and instant messengers (23 % and 19 % respectively) (Novosti, 2023). *Public Opinion Foundation* conducted a similar survey using a slightly different methodology (in particular, respondents could choose several answers to the question "From which sources do you most often learn news and information?"). However, the final results were largely the same: among 18–30 years old people 58 % chose the option "news sites on the Internet", 54 % - "forums, blogs, social networks, instant messengers" and only 24 % opted TV (Novostnaya, 2024).

2. Media consumption by young people is becoming individualized, and the content they receive is getting more and more personalized (Efanov, Stepanchenko, 2019: 72; Poluekhova, 2016). Having access to a very large number of information resources, users have the opportunity to independently create news feeds for themselves, i.e. taking into account their own interests, passions, requests and preferences (Zelentsov, 2022: 41). That being said, individualization of media consumption did not eliminate its consolidating function: according to M.I. Davletshina, from time-to-time young people still practice watching streams, live broadcasts and other types of content together (Davletshina, 2021: 6).

It should be noted that during the focus group interviews conducted by the author, young people were asked to name the media resources they use more often than others. Indeed, the sets of sources preferred by respondents overlapped extremely rarely: out of 78 focus group participants, only three had more than one of the named sources matching. In other words, the configuration of the resources used, and, consequently, the content of information consumed about all that is happening for each young person is actually almost unique.

3. Largely irrational and partly ritualized nature of news consumption. Young people often turn to media resources not because they feel the need for any information, but because it has become a habit for them – e.g., they start or end their day scrolling social network feeds, while away the time in transport in this way, wait for their queues, etc. Such actions have become part of the everyday reality of a modern young person (Couldry, Hepp, 2017). There has even appeared a relatively new term "phubbing", the essence of which can be boiled down to the obsessive habit of being distracted by gadgets.

All-Russia Public Opinion Research Center' data suggest that 74 % of Russians go online every day, while the share of so-called "heavy users", i.e. those who spend more than four hours a day on the Internet, was 35 % in June 2023 (in 2018, there were 23 % of them). Among young people, there are 86 % of "heavy users" (Tsifrovoy detoks, 2023). Quite indicative is that regular users of social networks and instant messengers with communication functionality (*VKontakte*, *WhatsApp*, *Telegram*, *Odnoklassniki*, etc.) spend on average 272 minutes or 4.5 hours a day on them. Moreover, among 18-24 years old people, this figure is even higher: on average, young people spend 493 minutes or more than eight hours a day on messaging, reading news feeds, making calls and other activities (Novosti, 2023). Of course, part of this time interaction with media occurs in the background format.

4. Thematic diversity and, to some extent, chaotic nature of media preferences of the "digital" generation. Researchers note among young people "the presence of interest in a whole range of topics that are different from each other (politics, art, music and cinema, economy, incidents, etc.), and the absence of a clearly dominant one" (Kaminchenko, 2022: 12), the predominance of non-linear (on-demand) types of content and diversity of video consumption practices in terms of technologies used, services and forms of viewing (Poluekhtova, 2022: 102-103). At the same time, as the results of our own surveys have shown, young people are not always able to clearly explain the reasons for turning to a specific source of information. In this sense, it is hard to disagree with S.V. Volodenkov and his colleagues, who consider multipolarity, inconsistency and chaos to be characteristic features of information consumption in the digital space (Volodenkov et al., 2021: 35).

5. Another feature of youth media consumption – situational and event-based conditioning of access to specific content – is quite closely related to the previous one. As D.Yu. Kulchitskaya notes, "Quite often, respondents do not intentionally search for news, but get acquainted with it by reading and consuming other information. For example, this can happen when a person goes to the start page of a search engine and accidentally stumbles upon a title that interests them. Situational consumption of news content can also occur while viewing news feeds on social networks." (Kul'chitskaya, Filatkina, 2021: 6). It is also noted that young people are less attached to exact information sources and, in this sense, they tend to give preference to specific materials that attracted their attention (V'yugina, 2017: 39).

At last, it is obvious that interest in any topic is often determined by events and processes taking place in the country and around the world: the more resonant they are, the more likely it is that young people will pay attention to them and devote part of the time they spend in the Internet. For example, 43 % of the respondents we sampled at the end of 2023 chose the answer "The desire to be aware of what is happening, not to miss something important and not to fall out of the current agenda" as a key motive for tracking information on a specific topic.

6. A significant portion of Russian youth are characterized by commitment to their usual sources of information and reluctance to expand the range of media resources used. As a result, the views and attitudes young people form towards certain persons or what is happening are largely a derivative of those narratives that are broadcast by the sources they prefer (Hutchens et al., 2021: 718).

Public Opinion Foundation provides interesting data in this regard. In February 2023, 32 % of respondents aged 18-30 most often used only one or two sources of news information (Istochniki, 2023). According to G.I. Avtsinova and M.A. Kozhevnikova, there are even fewer of them: "Only about 10 % of respondents get ideas about news events from sources of various content of all categories, preferring to compare different points of view and positions with information broadcast on neutral channels, without value judgments and emotional background, and sometimes with historical documents and facts" (Avtsinova, Kozhevnikova, 2023: 41). We believe that, among others, this circumstance is a reason for the formation of proverbial echo chambers, the consequences of which may be polarization of political preferences of young people and, in particular, the greater (compared to the whole society) popularity of opposition-leaning political figures among young people.

At the same time, another important reason for the popularity of oppositional leaders among young people, in my opinion, is their significantly less exposure to the influence of media loyal to the authorities – primarily television channels. *The Levada Center* (recognized in Russia as a foreign agent) records a clear dependence of the choice of information source on the age of respondents: in the older age group (over 55 years old), about half of the respondents named state television channels as the most reliable and trustworthy source of information (55 %), while among respondents under 25 years only every fifth person thinks so (20 %) (Vospriyatie..., 2022).

7. Finally, the last feature of media consumption by young people is pragmatic, partly even “consumer” approach to news content inherent in some of them: when viewing any information, a young person, as a rule, seeks to satisfy one of his or her own interests (this could be the upcoming acquisition of something, a desire to learn something, communicate with someone, etc.). Of course, there are situations when a person is online and does not pursue any specific goal, but in most cases (s)he still clearly understands what (s)he needs at the moment.

In fact, depending on the goals pursued, scholars identify four strategies of media consumption: pragmatic, axial (actions on the Internet are focused on the implementation of attraction and recreational needs), real (involves a formal verification of what is happening in significant communities and realizes the social need for involvement and sense of community) and “data-driven” strategy (Internet activity aimed at acquiring and analyzing media content that is interesting to the user) (Bogdanovskaya et al., 2023: 7). It seems to us, that the first and fourth strategies overlap in many ways and to some extent even complement each other. Moreover, we believe that all four strategies are in a sense pragmatic, since in one way or another they are aimed at satisfying different types of needs that arise in a person

These are specific features inherent in the media consumption by modern youth. We do not want to evaluate them in terms of “good or bad” (as they are objective, so they should be taken for granted). Instead, we will note the key risks that arise in connection with this.

The main risk is associated with the enormous amount of time that the “digital” generation spends on the Internet. Obviously, this can lead to information overload, difficulties in mastering and systematizing information, and even to formation of the effect of clip consciousness. Besides, by plunging into their own echo chambers, young people become less tolerant of alternative views and values, unwittingly increase polarization regarding the most pressing socio-political issues and thereby contribute to the creation of additional tension in society (Chan, Yi, 2024; Filatkina, 2022: 143; Kaiser et al., 2022). Quite closely related to this is the practice of digital escapism, when young people escape from the real world into a virtual space that is often more attractive to them (Nuruzova, 2020: 459; Yang et al., 2023). It is also worth mentioning that scholars found significant positive relationship between social media use and social anxiety and smaller positive effect sizes for studies with adolescent-only samples (Nan et al., 2024). Lastly, one should not discount the idea of media drug addiction dysfunction, developed by P. Lazarsfeld and R. Merton back in the middle of the last century: if the majority of the audience’s time is spent consuming information, the share of it that can be devoted to organized social action inevitably decreases. The results of our surveys indirectly confirm this: 56 % of respondents believe that they take an active civic position, but only 23 % have taken an active part in any public events or actions over the past year. However, it is also argued that “political expression on social media can entail a public commitment to a political self-presentation, which may lead individuals to perceive themselves as politically active, interested, efficacious, and knowledgeable” (Lane et al., 2019: 49).

Huge amount of time spent by modern youth online gives reason to consider media as one of the agents of their socialization. Generally speaking, within Russian scholarship, there are two terms denoting this process. The concept of “media socialization” is used most often. D.V. Dunas interprets it as “a hybrid form of socialization of a modern person, in which the agents of socialization are: 1) “significant others” who exist in physical space and are close to the individual, socialization with whom continues in the media space; 2) “significant others” existing for the individual only in the media space (Dunas, 2021: 155). Along with media socialization, the term “cyber socialization” is sometimes used, which is usually understood as the process of qualitative changes in the structure of an individual’s self-awareness and motivational-need sphere under the influence of information and communication technologies (Aysina, Nesterova, 2019: 43), or – in a broader context – a set of phenomena associated with a person’s introduction to the culture of electronic communication, as well as to the values, norms and rules that determine the specifics of communication in cyberspace (Chitosca, 2006; Gálik et al., 2024).

In our view, taking into account the first feature of media consumption by modern youth highlighted above, these concepts can be considered synonymous. Both of them, in one way or another, focus on the role that new media play in shaping the worldview of young people. Moreover, this role is by no means unambiguous, since the influence of media can be both positive and negative. In the first case, a person safely masters the Internet space, fully uses its numerous opportunities and successfully transfers helpful experience gained in virtual environment in order to solve various problems in real life. In the second case, a high degree of user involvement in

virtual communications is combined with “a low ability for self-regulation when using network resources, the presence of deviant patterns when communicating in the Internet environment and/or high vulnerability to aggressive network interventions” (Aysina, Nesterova, 2019: 49).

An equally important negative aspect of media influence on young people was indicated by A.V. Selezneva. In her opinion, in their relationships with the state and society, young people are guided not so much by their own beliefs and principles, but by stereotypical images from the media space, which, in turn, reduces their political subjectivity, makes the process of political self-determination inconsistent and contradictory, and also contributes to the fact that political preferences of young people are becoming more relative and situational (Selezneva, 2023).

In what direction will the socializing impact of media on modern youth transform in the future? Based on what is observed in this area today, we see two vectors of further development as most likely.

1. According to data presented by *Meltwater* and *We Are Social* in their authoritative annual report “Digital 2024: Global Overview Report” (Digital, 2024), in the entire world and in Russia in particular, the trend towards an increase in the number of Internet users and the amount of time they spend online continues. It is logical to assume that in connection with this, the volume of information produced and consumed by people is also increasing. This means that there will be even less time and cognitive opportunities for its high-quality processing: it will simply be increasingly difficult for people to find the time and energy to critically comprehend what they actually see and hear non-stop in the online space; visual images will continue to increase their dominance over the logical perception of consumed content. As a result, the problems of information overload experienced by young people may become much more acute, and the effects of media may become more varied and less predictable.

2. Gradual loss of the monopoly of news aggregators observed today increases the degree of independence of young people in choosing the content they consume. Everyone begins to form their own media diet, building an information cocoon around themselves that prevents the penetration of ideas, values and views “alien” to its inhabitants. People actually find themselves in different information realities, which may well become a new basis for differentiation of society. Media socialization, thus, risks acquiring a new property for itself, i.e. the ability to potentially disintegrate society (primarily on political grounds).

5. Conclusion

Is it possible to somehow stop these negative effects of media socialization? In my opinion, such a possibility exists, but its implementation requires the adoption of systemic measures by the state. Unfortunately, the efforts of individual enthusiasts, scholars, or even non-profit organizations to solve existing problems will clearly not be enough.

First of all, the need to increase general level of media literacy and political culture of young people is obvious. Ideally, of course, it is advisable to solve this problem through the system of secondary, specialized and higher education. Moreover, in Russia, there are already examples of successful introduction of media education disciplines into curricula and even the opening of educational programs of this profile. However, experience shows that it is currently quite difficult to count on mass replication of such practices. Therefore, prospects for implementing a number of smaller-scale projects seem more realistic to us.

Obviously, it is possible to reach out to young people only in the space in which the absolute majority of them are present – in new, and not traditional media. The use of television and radio broadcasts, newspapers and magazines for this purpose will, by and large, be useless due to the lack of demand for these formats among young people.

Stories and pieces aimed at improving media competencies of young people need to be replicated in the most accessible, visualized and attractive form. Network users should learn about methods of manipulating public consciousness that are most often used and effective ways to recognize fakes and check the reliability of information through such usual for them media formats as short videos, pictures, cards, hypertext links, memes, etc. At the same time, the language used to present such content should be understandable not only to specialists, but also to the “average” young person.

It would clearly not be out of place to distribute specialized software and services with fact-checking functionality on popular social networks and instant messengers among young people.

Of course, the use of these resources should be free. Otherwise, the depth of their implementation in the everyday media practices of the “digital” generation will be minimal.

In addition to efforts to improve media literacy, it is also important to continue the fight against disseminators of false information. In this case, we mean both legislative and law enforcement activities: it is not enough just to increase the information “immunity” of young people, it is also important to fight the “viruses” that are trying to undermine it.

We are convinced that, ultimately, the mentioned measures will contribute to increasing effectiveness of socialization of the younger generation, including in the political dimension of this process: provided they are comprehensively implemented, media consumption practices inherent in youth will be much less likely to provoke the growth of protest sentiments and deepening of the split in Russian society along ideological and political grounds.

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