Interfaces of Political Participation: Challenging the Analysis of Communicative Spaces

BELINSKAYA, Yulia and RODRIGUEZ-AMAT, Joan <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-8391-3638>

Published version

Copyright and re-use policy

Interfaces of Political Participation: Challenging the Analysis of Communicative Spaces

Yulia Belinskaya
University of Vienna
Vienna, Austria
e-mail: yulia.belinskaya@univie.ac.at

Joan Ramon Rodriguez-Amat
Sheffield Hallam University
Sheffield, UK
e-mail: mon.rodriguez@shu.ac.uk

Abstract—**Opening politics to direct citizen participation seems a double-edged operation that aligns communicative infrastructures with the governmental executive political sphere of participatory citizenship. While citizens' initiative platforms wave civic participation as a democratic opportunity, their relative distance from the executive core conditions their political effectiveness. This paper considers the participatory platforms as communicative spaces and analyses them following the four-mode model that considers communicative spaces under four facets: representations, structures, connections, and textures. This paper reports on the initial results of a study of the effectiveness of three participatory portals available to Russian citizens to test the analytical tool, and to adapt, expand, and challenge it. This brief paper is first at exploring the possibilities of the four-mode model of analysis of communicative spaces, applied to participatory portals.**

Keywords-direct participation; citizen initiatives; interfaces; communicative spaces.

I. INTRODUCTION

Opening politics to direct citizen participation seems a double-edged operation. The effort to facilitate grassroots movements showing "a renewed interest in community, place, and 'local identity'" [1] also challenges traditional governmental approaches that consider citizens as passive receivers and taxpayers [2]. Citizen participation is considered as a response to the civic engagement crisis within traditional democratic welfare states, moving them towards an XXI century-like active role of citizenship in policy-making processes, including volunteering, engagement with non-governmental organisations (NGOs), solidarity projects, or certainly, legislative initiatives. In this light, technology being both empowering and restrictive [3], helped the instalment of the transnational European Citizens Initiative (ECI), in 2007, and opened strands for research and critical discussion about the European Public Sphere [4] [5]; this trend has seen platforms sprout up either connected with national Parliaments (Spain, UK, Germany) or as non-governmental platforms (Belgium, Netherlands).

Online participatory platforms are considered to be communicative spaces [6] that can be analysed as such [7]. This paper explores how such an analytical model can be used to critically analyse participatory portals.

This piece focuses on the three main participatory platforms available in Russia today (the Russian Public Initiative [8], Petition to the President [9], and Change.org [10] the four-mode model (describing representations, textures, structures and connections) helps to compare them while suggesting ways of expanding the analysis to other platforms in the future.

The rest of the paper is structured as follows. Section II briefly describes the state of participatory spaces in Russia, theoretical considerations are discussed in Section III. Section IV is devoted to the methodology and the four-mode model of analysis and results are outlined in Section V. A critical discussion is provided in Section VI. The paper concludes with Section VII.

II. OPENING POLITICS IN RUSSIA

Russia has opened several participatory spaces [11], but research insists on pointing at an endemic disconnection between civic participation and executive power. Mamay [12] underlined that the concepts of e-government and e-participation were relatively new in Russia and unexplored in scientific discourse. Kuryachaya [13] criticised the development stage of the Russian e-democracy based on information shortage about the activities of the authorities, the absence of appropriate legal regulation, and the general inefficiency of the citizens' participation practices. The question looms, thus, on why do existing participatory portals not succeed at sorting this gap. Currently, several participatory platforms at a local level, such as "Active citizen" [14] in Moscow (launched in 2014) or "Our Petersburg" [15] also launched in 2014 [16]. Such platforms are aimed at building dialogue with local authorities; however, they do not provide any legislative power to the citizens, and because of their municipal range, they were not included in this study.

Instead, this piece considers three active portals that link citizens' direct participation with legislative processes at a national level. First, the Russian Public Initiative (ROI - The acronym comes from the Russian title "Российская Общественная Инициатива" and the web address "roi.ru") was established in 2012. It allows citizens to submit legislative initiatives on the federal, regional, and municipal levels. Second, Petition to the President - PP (established in 2007) collects initiatives directed to the President of the Russian Federation. The third platform, Change.org is the most active, however, it does not have any legislative power or responsibility towards its contributors [16]. To bridge the relative distance of these platforms from the executive power, the 2013 law RF N183 [17] called for the creation of expert groups liaised with Parliament. These groups assess the ROI initiatives with more than 100 000 signatures on the federal level. The political effectiveness of the two other

platforms, instead, depends exclusively on actual parliamentary mediation.

III. COMMUNICATIVE SPACES, INTERFACES AND ANALYSIS OF PLATFORMS

Platforms for citizen participation are interfaces and communicative spaces. For Scolari et al. [18], interface is a network that includes various actors, users, individuals, institutions, organisations or technological actors. Interfaces are also described as "the connections between human psychological, perceptual, and motor systems on the one hand and codes, software, and hardware on the other hand." [19]. Furthermore, new platforms of a cultural metainterface are built on the capitalisation of a net culture [20] and their industry is based on a "semio-capitalism" that generates data that can be used to anticipate user behaviour. In this sense, platforms of citizen participation are interfaces that facilitate connections between the highly bureaucratic governmental processes and grassroot initiatives. Platforms are allegedly aimed at reducing the e-participation divide.

Communicative spaces are structurally necessary for democracy, as they set the conditions for civic (dis)agreement and struggle [21]. Platforms, thus, are also communicative spaces because, as in the public sphere, they are places for meaningful interaction where the differences between participants, their access, and critical discourse are necessary conditions for achieving consensus on public issues [22][23].

Even if the Internet public sphere can be fragmented [24], citizen participation platforms can function in their double role as interfaces and as communicative spaces facilitating deliberation by allowing the complex flows of communication within the interface: "...discussion forums, chat rooms, and other virtual communities' may very well be ideal discursive spaces for political deliberation" [25]. In this sense, the democratic potential of the Internet which functions globally and enjoys the freedom of regulations has been seen as a utopian rebirth of the Habermasian concept. Yet, research insists on showing that there is an "e-participation divide" – when the initiatives of the citizens do not meet the requirement of "the bureaucratic complexity of official decision-making procedures" [16] and while the European Union (EU) rhetorics includes the "potential shift from government-led to community-led planning" [1], the success rates and implementation levels of the initiatives are low. Factors are diverse, but evaluation of the viability of the platform seems favourite - "its ability to sustain the level of efficiency, popularity and, broadly, the changes in government – society relations it brings." [16]. The participation of the public "relies heavily on whether political leadership is stable and long-lasting to suppress or change stable informal institutions" [16].

Antecedents in the analysis of participatory platforms [26] identified four groups of factors to assess ROI: 1) organisational development; 2) technological parameters of the portal; 3) regulatory support, review procedure; and 4) the openness of procedures for citizens and feedback possibilities. Each group contained four discrete sub-factors to answer with "yes" or "no". Also, Fedotova et al. [27] developed a model assessing e-informing, e-consulting, e-involving, e-collaborating, and e-empowerment

participation levels of various Portuguese platforms, indicating, in percentages, the degree of public availability of these factors per platform. These authors employed quantitative approaches to measure efficiency and compare the portals. Chugunov et al. [16] used a combination of quantitative and qualitative techniques to study the popularity and viability of the portals.

Following Scolari et al. [18] and the concept of metainterfaces, we argue that a quantitative approach to analyse these platforms is not sufficient and that instead, a qualitative approach can bring a more comprehensive understanding, particularly if considering the involvement of specific narratives, attributes, and contexts embedded in the design of the platforms.

IV. METHODOLOGY

This paper analyses the three platforms available in Russia: ROI, PP, and Change.org. The analysis of the platform interfaces follows the four-mode model for the analysis of communicative spaces as described by Rodriguez-Amat and Brantner [28]. The model assumes the non-neutrality of the communicative spaces and helps dismantle the assumption that the public sphere is neutral. As an empirical tool, the four-mode model discerns the features of such non-neutrality, highlighting where participatory platforms become factors of inequality. The four modes upon which the analysis rests are:

1) Representations: the mode involves how platforms are perceived (by third parties), used (by participants), and how they are designed (as agents/actors) in the intentional shaping of the (conflicting) understandings of the public debate. Questions that guide this mode are the following:

a) What are the prevalent contents and the recurrent topics, what is understood as politically relevant? (Narratives);

b) What types of actors do the platforms distinguish? (Actors);

c) How much participation had the petitions? What is the success rate? (Diffusion and reach).

2) Textures: the symbolic charge of the site in which interactions happen. Some precedents identified as textures include the communicative value of places on their own, nuancing the conditions for the debate and the speech formulated from a historical balcony adding value to its contents [19]. The discussion of the historical success rates of the platforms settles a non-intentional precedent for forthcoming initiatives. The following questions may be asked:

d) Who owns the platform and where is this platform hosted? (Ownership);

e) When was it established and why? (Symbolic capital);

f) What ideological or political attributes does the platform have? (Attributes).

3) Structures: explain the (communicative) inequalities generated by the platforms: (un)equal access, barriers, transparency, direction, and channelling of information, priorities, centrality and peripheral interactions, or communication flows. This requires an analysis of the conditions for participation and the implicit conditions for success. The guiding questions are:

g) What mechanisms are there to disable or enable participation to the citizens? Are the contents moderated? (Access and Moderation);

h) What data is collected from the participants? (Privacy and Transparency).

4) Connections: explain what virtual possibilities of interaction enabled by the platforms and the identification of factors that multiply the network of contacts (social media sharing, engagement, media coverage). Connections are the imaginary territory of possibilities of interaction. The following questions are in the centre of attention:

i) Does the platform facilitate the sharing of the initiative across social media platforms? (Shareability);

j) Does the platform incorporate spaces of participation (such as comments, support, fundraising)? (Engagement).

The extension of this paper allows only to open the strands of future specific analyses of the Russian participatory platforms and sheds some light on the possibilities and challenges of the model to be applied in this context.

V. RESULTS

Tables I-IV represent a comparative overview of the analysis of the three Russian platforms for citizen participation aligned by the four modes – representations, textures, structures and connections. Tables I-IV visualise the answers to the ten questions *a)-j)* formulated in the Section IV (all data from June-July 2020).

A. Representations

The analysis of representations was structured along with three sets of questions (columns) that identified 1) Narratives and Understandings, 2) Actors, and 3) Diffusion and Reach (see Table I). The combination of the three and the general diversity or homogeneity of the contents are good indicators of how the platform can become an emerging space of discussion or rather a closed territory of status-quo confirmation.

The first look at the most popular topics (Figures 1-3) presents these differences: whereas the Change.org calls for more universalist principles such as human rights, the ROI is more specifically oriented towards regulatory decisions. The initiatives submitted through ROI are aimed at the legislative system and describe the measures, policies, or laws (for example, medical education reform with >50k votes). The PP includes more general value-loaded measures (against an increase of retirement age with >160k votes or increase of the period for legal abortion). Most of the petitions do not include any legislative propositions, and instead are broader and connected to general values: ecologic statements, animal protection, and health protection issues are considered politically relevant on this platform. Change.org has more human rights entries and has more cases-oriented character (for example, petitions to "free a journalist").

The analysis of actors and participants is a fundamental feature of representational mode. The latent presence of "The President" in the same title of the Petition to the President gives a specific frame to that platform. This actoral analysis also needs to include the possibility of

interactivity between participants. The anonymity seems to increase the participation but at the same times does not let identify the iteration - how many times one posts a petition or if there is a political organisation behind a petition (in case of PP). Instead, the necessity to sign with official state documents (ROI) grants the traceability of the authors. In the representation mode the perception plays a central role, for example, the chance of writing comments (Change.org) helps to believe that the 'debate' is permitted even if the platform has clearly fewer chances of generating laws. The official character of ROI is further consolidated by the presence of the Committee and its reports written in bureaucratic language.
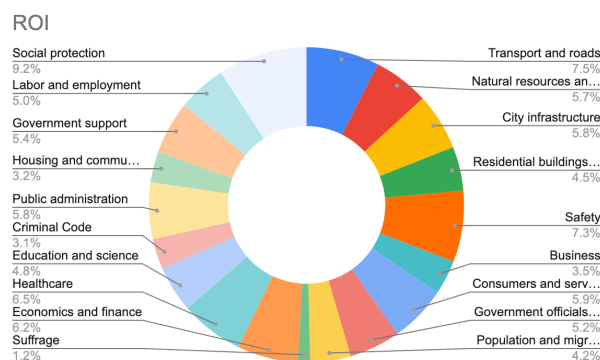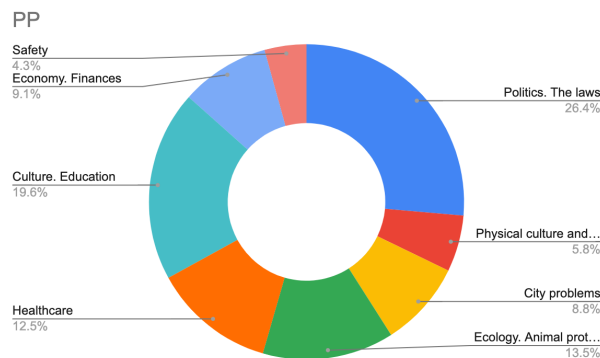
Figure 1. The main topics for discussion (ROI)

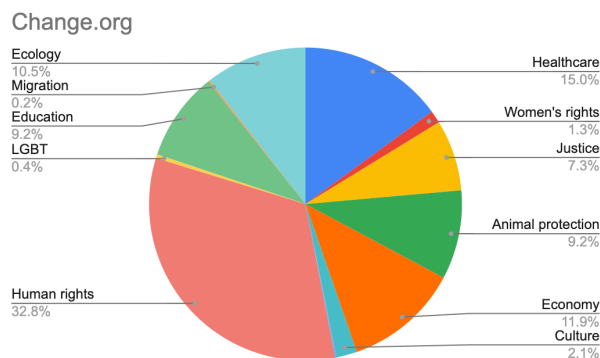Figure 2. The main topics for discussion (PP)

Figure 3. The main topics for discussion (Change.org)

TABLE I. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE REPRESENTATIONS

Platform	Representations		
	Narratives and Understandings	*Actors*	*Diffusion and reach*
ROI Established in 2012	Popular initiatives: medical education reform, toughening liability for offences on trains, prevention of domestic violence, "waste" reform, animal protection, e-government, corruption, retirement age, labelling of drugs.	- Authors (not visible); number of votes (visible). Number of votes on main page (votes against only on the page of initiative). - Committee resolves to forward (or not) initiatives to Parliament. Committee reports are available online. Committee Chair is known, not the rest of members.	- 17219 initiatives (8 years), 1983 active. 12 initiatives with >10 000 votes, (2 under revision). 35 (0,002% revised and approved by Committee, claimed success rate of 51%). 7 initiatives were supported by expert Committee (27,7%). - 2 were approved by Parliament and implemented: 1) Equip all railway crossings with video registration systems; 2) Green Shield around Moscow.
PP Established in 2007	Popular initiatives: against raising the retirement, increase of the "legal abortion" period, ban of animal hunting, suggestions to award Putin, support of a convicted mayor, suggestions regarding coronavirus, revival of monarchy or the Soviet Union.	- Authors are visible (pseudonyms allowed). Anonymity allows provocations: "Stalin" posted initiative for revival of Soviet Union. Comments can be logged in from any of 19 social media sites. - There is free legal chat support available. on site	- 1 902 petitions published (13 years) - 6 petitions >10 000 signatures. - Petitions allow comments. - Latest comments featured on the main page.
Change.org Established in 2007	Popular initiatives: petitions related to coronavirus payments, proposal of 5 steps to support the Russian economy.	- Authors, politicians, organisations, victims, promoters, etc. Network of actors on the platform. - Author or organisation are visible; can be followed. Some initiatives can be followed too.	- Petitions allow comments. Not discussion. - It is not possible to choose most popular or petitions with more than N votes. - Algorithms decide on "popularity".

Similarly, with the analysis of the diffusion and reach of each platform, the possibility of success should taint the activity in the platforms. Instead, the blind leap between the Committee publishing the assessment of the petitions and the Parliament results opens a space of uncertainty to the reliability of the platform as political space. PP does not count on this connection with the parliamentary activity and this makes the platform free in terms of content, the same is true for Change.org. This also turns the platforms into the spaces of discussion without further political consequences.

B. Textures

The textural analysis involves the values that come from the platform itself, as an aprioristic condition. Textures, therefore, derive from the crystallisation of the representations. The analysis of textures is done along three lines: ownership, symbolic and cultural capital, and attributes (see Table II).

The ownership of the platforms nuances their role. For instance, the distance of the site from the centres of power is the first point of reference. Whereas the owner of ROI is a former vice-Minister of Digital Development, PP was initially embedded within the Presidential official (currently it is disconnected). The aim of PP was to provide a more direct and personal channel of communication with the President. Change.org, instead, is a lucrative global platform with servers located in the United States of America (USA). Such nuance is also built by the accumulated cultural and symbolic capital: PP appeared within the liberal agenda of President Medvedev in 2007, which explains its disconnection from the current Presidential site. Change.org was created by Ben Rattray – a private individual (citizen of the USA), whereas ROI belonged to Putin's presidential campaign in 2012. The ideological colours of the three platforms also have a strong weight: Russian national symbols are visible in the outline of the interfaces of PP and ROI against the global map that characterises Change.org as a platform.

C. Structures

Structures of communicative spaces are the settings that generate centres and peripheries of the interactions: who can interact with whom, and where are the barriers and the operations allowing or restricting these activities. The structures describe the efficiency of these barriers, their validity, and capacity to affect. Therefore, two columns helped the analysis of structures (see Table III): one involving access features such as identification and moderation, and another about privacy, transparency, and data management features of the site.

The condition of access to online platforms is a key factor explaining the e-divide. PP makes it particularly easy for Russian citizens to register and to participate since it does not require any official digital identification. Both ROI and PP require knowledge of Russian, which limits inhabitants not knowing the language. The case of Change.org requires online registration which means access to an email account. The possibility of logging in from other platforms (such as Google or Facebook profiles) is also indicative of flows of data between the corporations, and ultimately how the citizens and participants' digital footprint can be traced back to other sources of information.

The data collected by the platforms, and the policies involving its storage have multiple implications, such as secrecy of the vote or ideological leaning of the Russian citizens who aim to participate. The possibility of deleting the digital footprint of inappropriate initiatives immediately shows the conditions for participation and the presence of a

dominant-authoritative operation of decision making. The moderation of petitions also establishes invisible conditions regarding what can and what cannot be petitioned and voted for, what can be discussed or not. It is impossible to determine which of the many possibilities of initiatives have been simply dismissed on ROI due to pre-moderation. In this sense, the diversity of calls on PP shows a more open approach as it allows all types of initiatives not necessarily formulated as legislation initiatives.

TABLE II. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE TEXTURES

Platform	Textures		
	Ownership	*Symbolic Capital*	*Attributes*
ROI	- Non-profit organisation - Private but known owner (linked to the Gov-t)	Established for Putin's presidential campaign (sign of Internet Freedom)	- Colours of Russian flag. - Similar design to Parliament sites. - Interactive map of Russia with regional numbers of petitions
PP	- Hosted in presidential website (no longer connected to it)	Product of Medvedev's liberalisation agenda	- Cyrillic URL - Design not changed since 2007 - Flag (movicon) - Flag and Russian Kremlin as background
Change.org	Private organisation, servers in the USA	Links to Russian Gov-t not known	World map as icon

TABLE III. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE STRUCTURES

Platform	Structures	
	Access and Moderation	*Privacy and Transparency*
ROI	- Russian language, Version for visually impaired. Registration through Russian e-government system (18+) - Petitions published after moderation (up to two months) - Singular votes collected for a year, a vote is permitted once	Login through the system of e-government
PP	- Russian Language - No registration required for voting: vote permitted every 24h with no log-in - Petitions pre-moderated, comments not	Comments after login from 19 social platforms
Change.org	- Many Languages - Registration required - Author can chose vote target - Petitions not pre-moderated	Login with Google and Facebook accounts (asks for photo when publishing)

TABLE IV. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE CONNECTIONS

Platform	Connections	
	Shareability	*Engagement*
ROI	- Initiatives can be shared: via platforms: Odnoklassniki, vk.com, mail.ru, Facebook, Twitter, Mail - Petitions need to be structured: Problem-Result of implementation-Steps to be taken	No other forms of engagement
PP	- It can be followed and shared via platforms: Odnoklassniki, vk.com, mail.ru, Facebook, Twitter, Google+. - Initiatives can be followed on social media	No other forms of engagement
Change.org	- Sharing and donation request - Comments allowed if voting, comments can be liked - Change.org has Facebook and Twitter account	Alternative forms: fundraising, events, news, campaigns, involvement of celebrities or politicians

D. Connections

Connections explore the virtual network of possible interactions. The connectivity of a communicative space is a factor to make it legitimate and valid. To analyse the connections, Table IV shows two columns: shareability and engagement. The former refers to how much social media platforms can help expand and increase the knowledge and impact of the campaign. If the initiative is located only on the platform, citizens are required to visit it, whereas if it can be shared on social media, other users might show interest. The case of engagement involves the chances of the campaigns to be grown by activating new users in the promotion and development of the initiative, for instance, fundraising.

ROI and PP incorporate a possibility to share the initiatives on the social media platforms that are more visible within the Russian cultural landscape such as Odnoklassniki ("Classmates" with 200 million users mostly from the former Soviet Republics), vk.com ("Russian facebook" - social media platform with more than 500 million accounts, mostly Russian speaking) or the service Mail.Ru, as well as on Facebook, Twitter or via email. Such similar connectivity of both platforms shows a preference for the Russian social media landscape, as a difference to what Change.org offers. The platform requires a vote before sharing while enabling the possibility of fundraising, events, news, campaigns, as well as the involvement of celebrities and politicians.

VI. DISCUSSION

The four aspects analysed in the communicative spaces as modes are not independent of one another. In this section, the columns defined as analytical operations are explored in

combination to eventually respond to the underlying question: do participatory platforms in the Russian political landscape demonstrate serious efforts to enhance participation?

The analysis of the platforms has shown that the level of diversity and dispersion of topics among them is not straightforward. Whereas there are some overlapping combinations amongst them, and they could be assumed to give a comprehensive understanding of the political relevance and efficiency of the e-democratic participation, the differences between platforms show that they are established with different purposes. There is a clear tendency on Change.org to engage with topics beyond the strictly national debates and involve universal values. The textural analysis has shown, precisely, that the three platforms are loaded with aprioristic intentions and that they emerge as part of previous political strategies: PP is related to a Medvedev strategy that ceased with his presidency and ROI aligns with Putin's strategic interests.

The analysis of the structures also complements those findings. There are clearly several forms of barriers that insist on the nationalistic framing of the debates. Even then, if they do not say it explicitly, the platforms set rules and conditions about who can and who cannot participate. Even if from the representations the debates seem diverse, structures show three kinds of barriers:

- identity (established through conditions for registration);
- language (established by the conditions of the interface access, impaired access enabled only in PP);
- skills and legislative knowledge.

ROI requires a high level of formality for an initiative to be considered by the Commission. The set of requirements and rules (a necessary high number of adhesions, and a complex niche legislative language used by highly bureaucratic and law-educated committees) work as the perfect mechanism of exclusion for the public participation in the debate. These three structural barriers still do not consider other external factors: how many citizens have access to the Internet to participate in the public debate, how many of those citizens know about the platform, and how many of them would try publishing initiatives that would later be moderated as irrelevant. Connections also insist on the setting of national and cultural boundaries to the participation in the platforms. This includes, for example, the prioritization of Russian social media platforms. The sovereignty of legislation still resides on the national citizenry, but considering the formal difficulties identified in the structures, this operation of visually and conceptually appealing to the national community might respond more to a form of flagging the nation than an actual form of empowering citizens. Allegedly, the apparent openness of Change.org could be a counter-argument to this, but the fact that it is a for-profit platform and that it does not have any link to the Russian government only confirms that the gap remains. These initial considerations are already pointing out that the platforms are not immediately empowering spaces to enhance the public debate. Some of those interfaces work more as activating devices of national pride through language and flagging symbols, or as propagandistic tools to "consolidate" a democracy for a

show, or eventually to channel the social outrage as disconnected spaces of highly emotional interaction.

VII. CONCLUSION

This article has analysed the main three platforms of political participation in Russia. The analysis has been done by considering them as interfaces planted as a way of sorting the gap between the society and government and as a communicative space that should enable the citizens to engage in public debates. This analysis is based on a model that identifies four aspects of the communicative spaces: representations, textures, structures, and connections. Such a model helps move beyond the quantitative research that could count the effectiveness of the initiatives by simply measuring their success. Instead, the analysis has led to the formulation of questions about the openness and closure of the three platforms. However, there are still some limitations: even if the model could incorporate the press coverage as forms of representations of the platforms, it cannot analyse invisible processes such as the petitions that were not considered or moderated out or external factors such as the extension of Internet access among the citizenry or their knowledge of the platforms.

The analysis has shown that the three platforms are not neutral. They are neither innocently enabling the flow of information from the debate to the parliament, nor are they free of intentional preferences. All the platforms considered are loaded with historical and symbolic capital that taints the result and balances the expected equality of opportunities of the initiatives. All three platforms appear disconnected and limited in their capacity of fulfilling their expected role. ROI includes highly complex legislative features while requiring the participation of rather broad citizen numbers, PP's openness and lack of moderation make it a space of fast-spinning emotional posts. Similarly, Change.org seems to have more in common with any social media platform than with a political participatory platform. The initiatives expect to have some impact on the public opinion and then to be picked either by the media or by the political organisations. The gap seems, therefore, to remain. The signs suggest that the platforms were never established as a real instrument of political participation, but rather as one-directional interfaces from power.

REFERENCES

[1] D. Da Silva, L. G. Horlings and E. Figueiredo, "Citizen initiatives in the post-welfare state," Social Sciences, vol. 7, no. 252, pp. 1-21, 2018.

[2] L. Schulpen and H. Huyse, "Citizen Initiatives for Global Solidarity. The New Face of European Solidarity," Forum for Development Studies, Routledge, May 2017, vol. 44, no. 2, pp. 163-169.

[3] Z. Papacharissi, A private sphere: Democracy in a digital age. Polity, 2010.

[4] J. Organ, "EU citizen participation, openness and the European citizens' initiative: the TTIP legacy," Common Market Law Review, 2017. [Online]. Available from: https://livrepository.liverpool.ac.uk/3010694/ [retrieved: August, 2020].

[5] P. Vigier, "Towards a Citizen-driven Innovation System in Europe: A governance approach for a European innovation agenda," Innovation, vol. 20, no. 3, pp. 191-202, 2007.

[6] J. R. Rodriguez-Amat and C. Brantner, "Occupy the squares with tweets. A proposal for the analysis of the governance of communicative spaces," Obra Digital, vol. 11, pp. 2-19, 2016.

[7] Y. Belinskaya, C. Brantner, and J. R. Rodriguez-Amat, "Revisiting the (urban) public sphere: A model of analysis" [Revisitando la esfera pública (urbana): un modelo de análisis], LIS Letra. Imagen. Sonido. Ciudad Mediatizada, vol. 20, pp. 106-133, 2019.

[8] Russian Public Initiative / Российская Общественная Инициатива. [Online]. Available from: http://roi.ru/ [retrieved: October, 2020].

[9] Petition to the President / Петиция Президенту. [Online]. Available from: http://петиция-президенту.рф/ [retrieved: October, 2020].

[10] Change.org. [Online]. Available from: http://change.org/ [retrieved: October, 2020].

[11] O. N. Demushina, "Portals of electronic petitions as a form of interaction between government institutions and Russian citizens. State and municipal government" [Порталы электронных петиций как форма взаимодействия институтов власти и граждан в России. Государственное и муниципальное управление]. Scientific notes, vol. 4, 2016.

[12] E. Mamay, "Citizens' inclusion and eParticipation initiatives in Russia," Proceedings of the International Conference for E-Democracy and Open Government (edited by P. Parycek, and N. Edelmann), pp. 99-110, 2014.

[13] M. M. Kuryachaya, "E-Democracy in modern Russia: the establishment, development and prospects," Kutafin University Law Review, vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 93-105, 2016.

[14] Active citizen / Активный Гражданин. [Online]. Available from: https://ag.mos.ru/ [retrieved: October, 2020].

[15] Our Petersburg / Наш Петербург. [Online]. Available from: http://gorod.gov.spb.ru/ [retrieved: October, 2020].

[16] A. V. Chugunov, Y. Kabanov, and Y. Misnikov, "Citizens versus the government or citizens with the government: a tale of two e-participation portals in one city-a case study of St. Petersburg, Russia." Proceedings of the 10th International Conference on Theory and Practice of Electronic Governance, Mar. 2017, pp. 70-77.

[17] Decree of the President of the Russian Federation N183 "On consideration of public initiatives by citizens of the Russian Federation using the Internet resource 'Russian Public Initiative' (with amendments and additions)", Mar. 2013 [Online]. Available from: hhttp://base.garant.ru/70326884/ [retrieved: October, 2020].

[18] C. A. Scolari and F. Pires de Sá, "Media ecology, transmedia literacy, and redesign of interfaces," Matrizes, vol. 12, no. 3, pp. 129-39, 2018.

[19] P. C. Adams and A. Jansson, "Communication geography: A bridge between disciplines," Communication Theory, vol. 22, no. 3, pp. 299-318, 2012.

[20] C. U. Andersen and S. B. Pold, The metainterface: The art of platforms, cities, and clouds. MIT Press, 2018.

[21] A. M. Schlesinger, The cycles of American history. HMH, 1999.

[22] J. Habermas, The Theory of Communicative Action: Jurgen Habermas; Trans. by Thomas McCarthy. Heinemann, 1984.

[23] H. Arendt, Hannah Arendt: critical essays. Suny Press, 1994.

[24] J. Habermas, "Political communication in media society: Does democracy still enjoy an epistemic dimension? The impact of normative theory on empirical research," Communication theory, vol. 16(4), pp. 411-426, 2006.

[25] R. S. Geiger, "Does Habermas understand the Internet? The algorithmic construction of the blogo/public sphere," Gnovis. A Journal of Communication, Culture, and Technology, vol. 10, no. 1, pp. 1-29, 2009.

[26] L. Bershadskaya, A. V. Chugunov, and D. Trutnev, "E-participation development: a comparative study of the Russian, USA and UK e-petition initiatives." Proceedings of the 7th International Conference on Theory and Practice of Electronic Governance, Oct. 2013, pp. 73-76.

[27] O. Fedotova, L. Teixeira, and H. Alvelos, "E-participation in Portugal: evaluation of government electronic platforms," Procedia Technology, vol. 5, pp. 152-161, 2012.

[28] J. R. Rodriguez-Amat and C. Brantner, "Space and place matters: A tool for the analysis of geolocated and mapped protests," New Media and Society, vol. 18, no. 6, pp. 1027-1046, 2016.