

# Online Deliberation on Social Media as a Form of Public Dialogue in Russia

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## Abstract

The article presents the results of the analysis of online discussions on acute theme in Russian socio-political discourse correlating with the court sentence to Alexei Navalny. The investigation is based on modified discourse analysis methodology to identify deliberative quality of discourse. The analysis is carried out according to such parameters as argumentation, communication culture, interactivity, dialogicity and the degree of dialogue. Online discussions on the pages of Vkontakte social network of five Russian media are used as an empirical basis for the study. The authors come to the conclusion that online deliberation as a form of public dialogue in Russia is poorly developed and has predominantly entertainment nature. Russian online deliberations are very interactive, the degree of dialogue in them is high but the level of argumentation and culture of communication in online discussions is low which prevents the development of online deliberation on political topics as a form of public dialogue.

## Keywords

Online deliberation, discourse, dialogue, discourse analysis, social media, Russia, media

## 1. Introduction

In recent years, democratic systems and institutions have been increasingly attacked [1]. The integrity of the elections was under threat, the environment in which journalists work and civil society exist has deteriorated [2], problems related to the appearance of fake information regularly arise and confrontation on social networks is intensifying. In such a situation the concept of public dialogue and, in particular, online deliberation as its modern form is becoming more important than ever.

Deliberation is a process of communication between citizens that takes place in a public space through dialogue, discussions, negotiations with the help of which the search for solutions to common problems related to the political sphere is carried out. The concepts of democratic deliberation have been intensively developed as they are aimed at significantly expanding the opportunities for active inclusion of citizens in politics and their participation in it [3].

In general, issues related to the construction of effective dialogue between citizens, society and state are among the most discussed in the context of modern humanitarian knowledge. Nevertheless, Russian science leaves without due attention the problem of dialogical interaction between citizens and state on political issues in the online environment including generally accepted interpretation of the concept of online deliberation and the methodology for its study.

In this article we will analyze the discussions on social networks and try to identify what kind of deliberative potential they have as social media have taken on promising functions in the political context correlating with active development of the processes of political participation and democracy [4,5].

The main goal of the article is to assess the quality of online deliberation in social networks as a form of public dialogue in the modern Russian context. For doing this, a number of parameters such as argumentation, communication culture, interactivity, dialogicity and the degree of dialogue is used.

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## 2. Theoretical basis of investigation

The research presented in this article is based on the concept of J. Habermas. The deliberative model of democracy proposed by the German scientist comprises diverse forms of communication, continuous and maximally broad political discourse in society. The results of it are determined by the strength of arguments [6, p.391]. The concept implies that authentic problems of society are identified and revealed, directions for their solution, optimal ways to achieve goals are determined in the course of collective reflections.

In the theory of J. Habermas we come across with the concept of ideal democratic procedure for negotiation and decision-making which is created in order to achieve reasonable and honest results. According to the researcher's approach, deliberation "takes into account a higher degree of intersubjectivity of the processes of mutual understanding which are carried out, on the one hand, in the institutionalized form of meetings of the parliamentary corps, as well as, on the other, in the communication network of the political community. These subjectless communications inside and outside of political associations programmed for decision-making generate an arena where a more or less rational formation of public opinion and political will about significant for the whole society and need to be regulated topics can take place" [6, p.395-396]. Civil participation in discussions that unfold on various Internet platforms can be seen as a prerequisite for discursive democracy.

Online deliberation on issues of common interest to all participants is one of the most discussed forms of political Internet communication today. It is believed that Internet is a medicine that can help overcome the crisis of Western democracy [7]. Due to the lack of centralized control, Internet as an open communication environment has flexibility and enormous potential to quickly implement multilateral information exchange practically throughout the entire planet which, accordingly, facilitates interaction between citizens [8, p.48-56]. However, it is still not entirely clear whether Internet will contribute to the establishment of the principles of deliberative democracy and if so, how effectively it will be implemented.

It is worth agreeing with T. Davis that online deliberation with emphasis on discussion carries both future opportunities and disappointments: "The opportunity is due to the flexibility of information and communication technologies which allows for online discussion and, even possibly, surpasses the usual off-network form of discussion in cases where access to information, time requirements and other factors limit the availability of direct discussion in the format "face to face". The disappointment, however, is that deliberative activity is definitely not in a rush to gain traction on Internet compared to communication that is more entertainment-oriented and more personal than collective" [9, p.3].

Nevertheless, political institutions have begun to provide citizens with new opportunities for offline and online participation which should ultimately increase the legitimacy and quality of politics [10]. These expectations are reflected in the ideas formulated by theorists of deliberative democracy who argue that consensual rational decisions through deliberation could help overcome the socio-political problems that have arisen in conditions of tension and uncertainty [11-13]. Hence, deliberation is a political model for formulating policies that could potentially be a solution to a smoldering crisis of legitimacy [14].

A number of empirical studies on online deliberation has increased in recent years. As a result, a huge amount of theoretical and empirical literature [15,16,17,18] became available but this triggered difficulties in defining what deliberation is [19] and stretched the concept. It resulted in that many authors understand deliberation as almost every type of communication [20].

More often than not, researchers define deliberation first and then speak about online deliberation using the same definition and linking it to usage of electronic communications. For example, Dennis Friess uses the concept of "deliberation" to refer to "thoughtful, attentive or prolonged consideration" by individuals and "formal discussion and discussion" in groups, so he is primarily interested in reasoned, focused and interactive communication [10]. The term "online" in combination with the concept of "deliberation" can be used to refer to discussion between participants using electronic communication technologies that enhance the ability to see and hear distant from us in time or space information.

In this paper we understand online deliberation as a process of public purposeful, reasoned, rational and equitable discussion between citizens with prevalence of a dialogical form of communication and

usage of electronic communication technologies aimed at solving common problems and achieving mutual understanding.

The point of view of D. Walton who considers deliberation as a form of dialogue in which each side presents its own view of solving a practical problem is also important for our research. Deliberation is a collective process of dialogical solution of common problems by participants of communication, therefore, the purpose of deliberative dialogue is to reach agreement on procedures and actions that can be considered as a solution to practical problem; the choice must be made between two or more mutually exclusive options [21].

Also, we will rely on the American School of Dialogue (Dialogue Group) by physicist D. Bohm who has developed a comparative description of genuine and rhetorical dialogues, i.e. "discussions" [22].

### 3. Quality of online deliberation on Russian social media: case of A. Navalny

On February 2, 2021, the Simonovsky Court of Moscow held hearings in the case of Alexei Navalny. During that meeting the issue of replacing the conditional term with a real one was considered. As a result, the accused will spend 2 years and 8 months in a general regime colony. This news gave rise to a lot of discussions on social networks about the fairness and injustice of the decision, critical statements towards both A. Navalny and the Russian authorities.

For the analysis we selected online discussions on the subject of A. Navalny's court verdict on the pages of VKontakte social network of leading Russian media: print («Komsomolskaya Pravda», «Meduza», «TASS») and television («Channel One», «Rain») dividing them by political affiliation: independent («Rain», «Meduza»), pro-state («Channel One», «Komsomolskaya Pravda» (KP.RU)) and neutral «TASS». Posts with news about the court decision and user's comments below them were posted from 2 to 6 February 2021.

A total of 1165 comments were analyzed. Table 1 presents online discussions on selected five online platforms in terms of their source, political affiliation, article title, material, post date and time, number of likes, reposts, comments and links on discussions.

These online discussions were selected based on three factors. Firstly, the discussions corresponded to the stated topic (the court verdict of A. Navalny). Secondly, each contained at least one hundred comments which, as our experience shows, is a prerequisite for encoding them using a machine learning program. Thirdly, discussions were conducted by ordinary citizens on various media platforms. The discussions were moderated and comments were removed by administrators of online media groups whose loyalty to government structures varied. The discussions were not in any way initiated or led by the authorities. We studied and compared such parameters of online deliberations as argumentation, communication culture, interactivity, dialogicity and the degree of dialogue in order to identify the specific features of Russian public dialogue in the form of online deliberation on a current political topic. We used a modified discourse analysis technique developed by Yu. Misnikov which is described in detail both in the works of its author and in other works of the authors of the article [23,24,25,26,27]. Yu. G. Misnikov developed «Deliberative Standard to Assess Discourse Quality» [28] and described seven thematically different discourse parameters corresponding to specific research questions to guide the process of coding the messages of Internet discussions. These parameters are participatory equality, argumentation, communication culture, validity of statements, interactivity, dialogicality, thematic diversity. Each parameter contains a set of specific empirical characteristics designed to reflect certain discursive qualities.

Discussion materials were collected using parsing and loaded into Excel spreadsheets. When coding discussions, the following data was entered into an Excel spreadsheet: author's ID, author's link, author's first and last name, author's gender, link on author's image, link on comment, comment date and time, comment text and number of likes to the comment.

**Table 1**

List of analyzed discussions on media pages on social network «VKontakte»

Sources	Rain	Meduza	Channel One	KP.RU	TASS
Media type	Independent		Pro-state		Neutral
Article title, material	The suspended sentence was replaced with a real one for Navalny. Taking into account the time spent under house arrest, Navalny will spend two years and eight months in the colony.	Will Navalny be replaced with a real one? We follow what is happening in the court - and around it.	The Moscow City Court sentenced Alexei Navalny to 3.5 years in prison and a fine of 500 thousand rubles.	The court sentenced Alexei Navalny to 3.5 years in a general regime colony.	Navalny's lawyer said that her client will spend about 2 years and 8 months in the colony.
Post time	02.02.2021 (20:46)	02.02.2021 (18:34)	04.02.2021 (14:03)	02.02.2021 (21:24)	02.02.2021 (21:20)
Number of likes	499	154	116	177	92
Number of reposts	152	71	33	41	25
Number of comments	602	155	160	148	100
Link on discussions	<a href="https://vk.com/tvrain?w=wall-17568841_6487755">https://vk.com/tvrain?w=wall-17568841_6487755</a>	<a href="https://vk.com/meduza-project?w=all-76982440_4791700">https://vk.com/meduza-project?w=all-76982440_4791700</a>	<a href="https://vk.com/1tv?w=all-25380626_2610268">https://vk.com/1tv?w=all-25380626_2610268</a>	<a href="https://vk.com/kpru?w=wall-15722194_5300931">https://vk.com/kpru?w=wall-15722194_5300931</a>	<a href="https://vk.com/tassagency?w=all-26284064_3720193">https://vk.com/tassagency?w=all-26284064_3720193</a>

First, the attitude of online discussion participants to Alexei Navalny, his sentence and the actions of authorities was analyzed. At the first stage of the study, positions of users were analyzed in two categories:

1) «For» (support for A. Navalny, condemnation of the court verdict and criticism of the authorities, their actions).

2) «Against» (negative attitude towards A. Navalny, support for the court decision, agreement with the actions of the authorities).

The total percentage of positions "Against" was 85.2%, "For" - 14.8%. In online discussions of all five media at least 2/3 of users spoke out against Navalny supporting the court's verdict, although some people disagreed with him claiming that the term was insufficient but they still supported the actions of authorities. The highest percentage of negative attitude towards politician was illustrated in online discussions of pro-state media (92.75%), the lowest on platforms of independent media (75.35%); neutral TASS is in the middle: the percentage of "Against" positions was 87.5%. Considering each source separately we note that the largest share of negativity towards A. Navalny was recorded on the Vkontakte pages of Komsomolskaya Pravda (93.8%) and Channel One (91.7%). Participants of online deliberation on the Rain page (32.6%) were most positive about politician. Need to add that that data may not be entirely accurate as some user's comments have been removed. In addition, in the discussions of some media there were few opinions about the stated problems which to a certain extent limits the representativeness of results. Moreover, some participants in the course of online discussions

indicated on presence of bots and trolls which could leave an imprint on data obtained and discussion in general due to the fact that the bots were difficult to identify.

Simultaneously with the analysis of participants' positions in discussions the argumentation forms were identified.

The following positions were included in the analysis of argumentation [28]:

- 1) facts and numerical indicators of factual nature;
- 2) numeric data;
- 3) examples, cases, comparisons, events, citations;
- 4) references to political figures;
- 5) conclusions, generalizations;
- 6) recommendations, suggestions, calls to action;
- 7) links on various online sources.

The overall percentage of argumentation was 44.8% (see Table 2), however, we need to add that some comments had several types of arguments and some only one. The highest indicator of argumentation was recorded in discussions on the platforms of independent media (51.6%), the lowest on the neutral source "TASS" (35%); in discussions on pro-state media the percentage of argumentation was 47.7% which did not differ much from the percentage of argumentation in the discussions of independent media. The largest indicators of argumentation were found both in the discussions on page of independent source ("Rain" - 63.8%) and pro-state one ("Komsomolskaya Pravda" - 63.5%). The lowest percentage of using arguments was demonstrated in the discussion on Channel One (31.9%).

**Table 2**

Argumentation analysis (results presented in percentage)

	Independent		Pro-state		Neutral	
	Rain	Meduza	Channel One	KP.RU	TASS	Final data
Facts and numerical indicators of factual nature	8,3	8,2	2	5,3	2,9	5,34
Numeric data	1,1	3,3	2	1,1	5,7	2,64
Examples, cases, comparisons, events, citations	0,8	0	0	2,1	2,9	1,16
References to political figures	31	44,3	35,3	31,9	28,5	34,2
Conclusions, generalizations	53,6	42,6	58,7	56,4	60	54,26
Recommendations, suggestions, calls to action	2,3	0	2	3,2	0	1,5
Links on various online sources	2,9	1,6	0	0	0	0,9
General % of argumentation	63,8	39,4	31,9	63,5	35	44,8

Turning to the analysis of specific forms of arguments, the most popular types of argumentation were 1) conclusions, generalizations, inferences (54.26%), 2) mentioning politicians (34.2%); least popular: 1) recommendations, suggestions, calls to action (1.5%), 2) examples, cases, events, comparisons, quotes (1.16%) and 3) links on online sources (0.9%). Most of conclusions and generalizations were shown in the discussions on the TASS page (60%) and on the pages of pro-state sources (Channel One - 58.7% and Komsomolskaya Pravda - 56.4%). Speaking about mentions of

political figures one should highlight the discussion on the Meduza page (44.3%). It is interesting to observe that in the discussions on independent media in comparison with other media, arguments of factual nature were used most of all (Rain - 8.3% and Meduza - 8.2%) and links on online sources (Rain - 2.9% and Meduza - 1.6%). For example, not a single pro-state source and a neutral one did not use links on additional online resources as arguments. If we talk about suggestions and recommendations, then pro-state media showed one of the highest indicators (Komsomolskaya Pravda - 3.2 %, Channel One - 2%). Most of arguments in the form of numbers (5.7%) and examples, comparisons, cases from life (2.9%) were used in the discussion on TASS page.

We analyzed the culture of communication ("civility") in online deliberations on the subject of the court verdict of A. Navalny accordingly to following positions:

1) posts are directly addressed to other participants with mention of name or personal appeal but at the same time they do not relate to topic, problematics, i.e. they are personalized (this category includes only phrases or sentences indicating interpersonal characteristics and any other communications (including neutral));

2) posts mentioning a name of participant but rude and offensive in relation to him, his nationality, religion, ideology, etc. (including sarcasm);

3) posts mentioning a name of participant but rude and offensive in relation to the object of discussion;

4) polite and respectful posts in relation to a person with a mention of his name (may contain irony, humor, sarcasm in a positive aspect);

5) posts without mentioning a name of participant but rude and offensive in relation to him, his nationality, religion, ideology, etc. (including gross sarcasm);

6) posts without mentioning a name of participant but rude and offensive in relation to the object of discussion;

7) polite and respectful posts towards a person without mentioning his name (may contain irony, humor, sarcasm in a positive aspect).

The overall percentage of communication culture ("civility", politeness) was 47.44% (see table 3) but we need to add that in some comments there could be several positions, although most often one. It is curious that the percentage of communication culture (47.44%) is slightly higher than the percentage of argumentation (44.8%) but not significantly. In turn, this suggests that in the discussions analyzed, priority is given to the form of opinion expression and not to its content which, in our point of view, characterizes such deliberations from a negative side since the main thing in deliberation is the essence of position, its argumentation and not in what form it is presented, although this is no less significant as well.

Consequently, such discussions are more irrational than rational. However, if you look at the general indicators of communication culture, you can see that its main array is made up of off-topic comments that have an interpersonal character or are abstracted from main issue (38.8%). We add that the total percentages of rough communication culture, i.e. impolite, rude attitude towards participant as well as object of discussion strongly prevail over polite ones, especially the percentage of rude attitude towards other participants in the discussion which further distracts from constructive dialogue, topic in general, for sake of discussion of which online deliberation is carried out. The total percentage of intolerant attitude towards participant was 4.46%. It was calculated by adding the percentage of posts with and without mentioning a name, on topic but rude in relation to the participant (9.4%, 6.4%, 3.8%, 2.7%, 0%) and dividing by 5 as we analyzed the comments of five discussions.

The general percentage of intolerant attitude towards subject of discussion is 3.84%. It was calculated in a similar way, only posts were taken with and without a name, on topic but rude in relation to subject of discussion (2.5%, 2.6%, 4.4%, 6.7%, 3%). Such indicators characterize Russian culture of communication in the Internet environment as low, immature, intolerant and focused off the topic of discussion.

**Table 3**

Communication culture analysis in Russian online discussions (in percentage)

	Rain	Meduza	Channel One	KP.RU	TASS	Final data
Thematically empty posts with participant name's mention, only interpersonal communication	50	41,9	42,8	22,3	37	38,8
Posts with participant name's mention, discussion on topic, but rude towards participant	9,1	4,5	2,5	2	0	3,62
Posts with participant name's mention, discussion on topic, but rude towards object of discussion	0,7	0,7	3,1	2	2	1,7
Posts with participant name's mention, discussion on topic in a polite, tolerant way	0	0	0	0,7	1	0,34
Posts without participant name's mention, with discussion on topic, but rude towards participant	0,3	1,9	1,3	0,7	0	0,84
Posts without participant name's mention, with discussion on topic, but rude towards object of discussion	1,8	1,9	1,3	4,7	1	2,14
Posts without participant name's mention, with discussion on topic in a polite way	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total % of negative civility towards participant	9,4	6,4	3,8	2,7	0	4,46
Total % of negative civility towards object of discussion	2,5	2,6	4,4	6,7	3	3,84
Total % of civility	61,9	50,9	51	32,4	41	47,44

Speaking about specific discussions and media it can be seen that the highest percentage of communication culture (61.9%), posts of personal and abstract nature (50%) as well as a rude, offensive attitude towards participant (9.4%) was installed in the discussion on Rain page (50%). The highest percentage of coarse culture of communication in relation to topic, object of discussion was recorded

in the discussion of Komsomolskaya Pravda (6.7%). Comparing culture of communication in discussions of independent and pro-state media, we emphasize that in the discussions on pages of independent media there were the highest rates of posts of personal and abstract nature (45.95% (for comparison on pro-state - 32.55%)) as well as coarse culture of communication in relation to participant (7.9% (on pro-state - 3.25%)), while the largest indicator of coarse communication culture in relation to topic, object of discussion was demonstrated in discussions on pro-state media (5.55 % (for comparison on independent - 2.55%)).

Let us turn to analysis of interactivity, dialogicity and the degree of dialogue. As mentioned above, we adhere to the theory of J. Habermas and Bohm's dialogical approach. Based on comparative characteristics of dialogue and discussion, we were able to determine the degree of dialogue, i.e. striving for consensus.

First of all, interactivity was analyzed (see table 4), i.e. all mentions of participants by other users in the process of communication. To calculate interactivity, you need to divide a number of all mentions of participants (by name or without) by number of all posts. You can see that the highest proportion of interactivity was presented in the discussions where there were 155 comments and above. This group includes Rain (66.6%), Meduza (65.8%) and Channel One (64%). Interestingly, the most highly interactive discussions were on the platforms of independent media (66.2%), respectively, they turned out to be the most highly dialogical (62.2%). Next, we calculated dialogicity (see table 4). To do this, we divided a total number of mentions of participants by name by total number of posts. In all discussions, the percentage of dialogicity was lower than the percentage of interactivity but insignificantly. Indicators of dialogicity cannot be higher than indicators of interactivity but they can be equal. As already mentioned, the most highly dialogical discussions were on the pages of independent media (Rain - 63.1%, Meduza - 61.3%) as well as on one pro-state source (Channel One - 62%). If we talk about ratio of interactivity and dialogicity, then the smallest gap in percentage between them was demonstrated in discussions on pro-state media (Channel One - 64% and 62%, Komsomolskaya Pravda - 52% and 51.4%, respectively) and neutral TASS (57% and 55%, respectively).

To determine the degree of dialogue, it is necessary to take all posts where an interaction between participants was recorded and analyze them guided by Bohm. As a result, we can assert (see Table 4) that in Russian online discussions the degree of dialogue is high: 55% on the page of neutral TASS, 54.3% on the pages of independent media, and 52.15% on pro-state media, and in all discussions, the degree of dialogue significantly dominated the degree of discussion, polemics (their indicators range from 2 to 14.1%) which confirms our hypothesis. This is a positive pattern but if we take into account the indicators of argumentation and culture of communication in Russian discussions, then it immediately becomes clear that the dialogue was predominantly not on topic of discussion but was more entertaining or abstract from discussion of main topic and political issues in general. Therefore, the Russian public dialogue in form of online deliberation can be characterized as entertaining, politically immature and of poor quality; accordingly, one can hardly speak of constructive role of such a dialogue in the field of interaction with state and adoption of joint political decisions based on deliberative discussions of political issues by citizens.

The highest indicator of the degree of dialogue was found in the discussion on Channel One (57%) despite the fact that a number of interactive posts there is not the largest (64%) compared to other discussions. However, returning to nature of dialogue, we argue that it is of low quality since despite the fact that the percentage of coincidence of positions was one of the highest (91.7% but few opinions were presented on topic of the particular court verdict of A. Navalny), accordingly, the degree of discussion, disputes is low (7%) with 57% of the degree of dialogue, the percentage of argumentation was the lowest (31.9%), and the percentage of posts of interpersonal nature, off-topic - one of the highest (42.8%). The smallest degree of discussion, controversy was in the discussions of TASS (at least 2% or less) and Komsomolskaya Pravda (at least 4.7% or less) while in the discussion of Rain it was the highest (at least 14 %). This is obvious as opinions of participants split in the following ratio: almost 1/3 for Navalny and against his sentence (32.6%), 2/3 against Navalny and for his sentence (67.4%). The smallest degree of discussion, controversy was in the discussions of TASS (at least 2% or less) and Komsomolskaya Pravda (at least 4.7% or less) whereas in the discussion of Rain it was the highest (at least 14%). This is obvious since opinions of participants split in the following ratio: almost 1/3 for Navalny and against his sentence (32.6%), 2/3 against Navalny and for his sentence (67.4%).

**Table 4**  
Interactivity, dialogicity and the degree of dialogue analysis (in percentage)

	Independent		Pro-state		Neutral
	Rain	Medusa	Channel One	KP.RU	TASS
Interactivity	66,6	65,8	64	52	57
Total % of interactivity		66,2		58	
Dialogicity	63,1	61,3	62	51,4	55
Total % of dialogicity		62,2		56,7	
The degree of dialogue	52,5	56,1	57	47,3	55
Total % of the degree of dialogue		54,3		52,15	
Number of posts	602	155	160	148	100

Speaking about quality of public dialogue in form of online deliberation on Rain, we note that ambivalent tendencies are noticeable: on the one hand, such a dialogue is better than others since the highest percentage of argumentation was recorded there (63.8%) due to the fact that there is a division of opinions, different positions are presented in the above ratio, on the other hand, of poor quality as the percentage of posts not discussing the main issue (50%) and with a rough culture of communication in relation to participant (9.4%) were the biggest. In our opinion, public dialogue of better quality compared to others can be traced in the discussion of Komsomolskaya Pravda as it is more aimed at discussing A. Navalny's court verdict. For example, the percentage of coincidence of opinions ("against") was the highest (93.8%), respectively, the degree of discussion, disputes, polemics was small (4.7%), with 47.3% of the degree of dialogue; the percentage of argumentation was one of the highest (63.5%) while the percentage of off-topic posts was the lowest (22.3%), although with rough culture of communication in relation to topic, subject of discussion is more than the rest (6,7%), which, in turn, could give rise to controversy and debate on the part of participants, to some extent, offended by this form of expression.

Based on several examples it can be concluded that in form of dialogue a discussion is much more effective than in form of discussion, polemics as participants are less distracted by clarifying relationship between each other, they show less rude attitude towards other participants and object of discussion and more direct efforts to search for new arguments, conclusions, truth. Although there are situations when it is a discussion that is useful, as, for example, in the discussion on Rain page because this can generate more motivation from participants to find the truth and, therefore, more arguments. However, if these efforts are not aimed at reaching agreement and discussion of topic but on participant, then the likelihood of escalation of interpersonal conflict increases which, in general, can harm the discussion reducing the degree of its deliberation and the quality in general and alienate participants from reaching the truth and rational consensus.

#### 4. Conclusion

All in all, online deliberation as an implementation of dialogical relations between citizens can take a form of both dialogue and discussion. In either case, it will be a public dialogue but the quality of discussion will be different: online deliberation in form of cooperative dialogue is much better and more effective than in form of discussion.

To assess nature and quality of online deliberation as a form of public dialogue, one should analyze 1) positions of participants, to what extent their opinions coincide and differ; 2) general level of argumentation in discussions, 3) culture of communication, especially in terms of posts of personal

nature, off-topic, as well as a rude, intolerant attitude towards participant and object of discussion and 4) the degree of dialogue, discussion, disputes, polemics as a form of communication. These are not all but main parameters for analyzing the quality of public dialogue.

Definitely, online deliberation does not always resolve all disagreements in society and reach a rationally based consensus.

As indicated in other studies including ours, a type of media plays a role in achieving results of discussion [29]. That is, pro-state and open government media hold discussions in support of government policies and actions. Likewise, media outlets that are independent of government control are more critical of authorities. However, influence of media identity has its limits. The study's findings support findings of those studies that argue that when it comes to political conversation, citizens are more likely to talk with like-minded people than with others. However, these are only general observations that require more research.

Further studies include a need to study online discussions in foreign countries for comparative analysis. So far, we can only assume that in countries with established democratic traditions, the quality of online deliberation as a form of public dialogue is higher than in Russia. In our country, at the moment, online deliberation as a form of public dialogue is poorly developed and is largely entertainment in nature. Russian online deliberations are interactive, the degree of dialogue in them is high but levels of argumentation and communication culture in online discussions are low which prevents development of online deliberation on political topics as a form of public dialogue.

## 5. Acknowledgements

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