

Supplementary Materials

Available Online

Making Politics Attractive Satirical Memes and Attention to Political Information in the New Media Environment

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Appendix A. Ethical Considerations Regarding the Experiment

In this section we make a brief statement regarding ethical considerations. To confirm that our research project conforms to ethical standards in modern social sciences, and the experimental survey of students of HSE University is appropriate, we requested the approval of the Council of Peers. The experimental design was confirmed by the Council of Peers at the Ronald F. Inglehart Laboratory for Comparative Social Research.

To respect personal privacy and not to violate personal data protection, we invited students via their group emails, which are used for communication between lecturers and students in HSE University, instead of using personal email addresses. All the invitations to participate in the survey were sent either from the official email address of the Ronald F. Inglehart Laboratory for Comparative Social Research after the approval of authorized staff at student offices or by authorized staff at student offices themselves. Thus, we assume that students did not treat the invitation as spam, scam or any other kind of fraud.

We used a general link to have students entered the EnjoySurvey platform. In the invitation letter we informed students that by following the link to the survey they automatically give an informed consent to participate in the research. We also emphasized that the participation is voluntary, and we will not give extra credits for the participation. The survey was answered anonymously, so no survey responses could be tied to any specific individual. We did not ask students about their personal information except from an email address to register their participation in the lottery. These data were stored separately from the survey responses and could not be matched with them. The email addresses were securely deposited on the EnjoySurvey platform.

As we had promised, we randomly chose one of the participants and informed them about the lottery win. A student from Perm was informed about getting the prize in August 2018 and got their prize – a smart watch Apple Watch (the price of around 411\$ U.S. in Russia) – in September 2018. The student confirmed that they got the prize by sending us a signed voucher and a photo of the prize, which had been delivered on 24 September 2018.

Appendix B. The Eligibility and Baseline Sample Characteristics

As it is mentioned in the main text, only current undergraduate or graduate students of the HSE University were eligible to take part in the experiment, except from students of particular departments of Faculty of Social Sciences¹. Since we did not intend to estimate any kind of heterogeneous treatment effect beyond the variation which we could obtain from a student sample, we decided to use a convenience sample, which does not appear to consistently generate false negatives, false positives, or inaccurate effect sizes (Mullinix et al., 2015). The calculation of response rates, including the completion rate and the break-off rate, is shown in the main text. Baseline sample characteristics are given in Table B1.

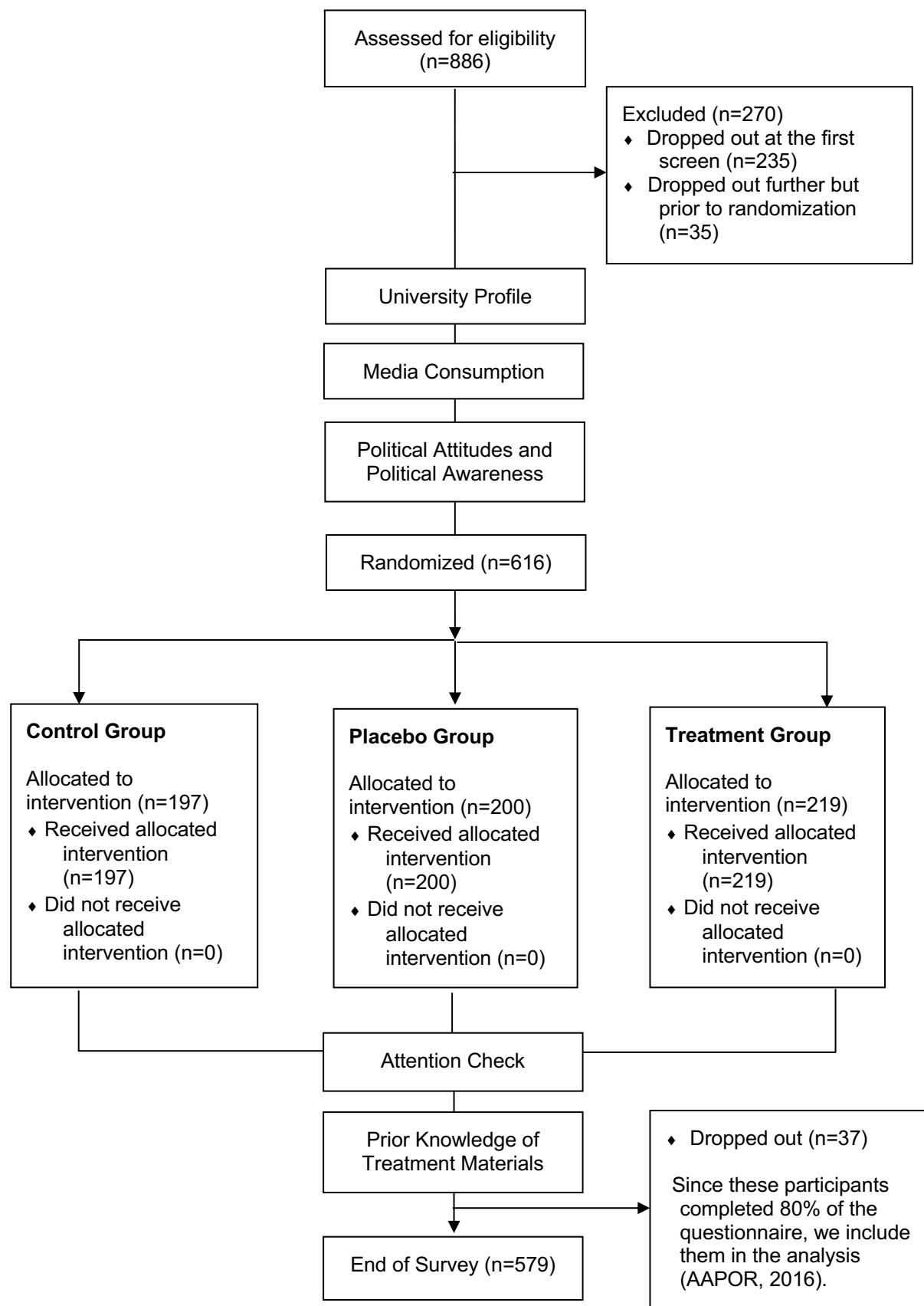
Table B1. Baseline characteristics in the final sample (N=616).

Variables	Categories	N (%) / M (SD)
Age	---	20.38 (1.29)
Sex	Male	105 (17.04)
	Female	511 (82.95)
Degree program	Undergraduate	596 (96.75)
	Graduate	20 (3.25)
Campus	Moscow	444 (72.08)
	Nizhniy Novgorod	103 (16.72)
	Perm	69 (11.20)
Department	Math, Electronics and Physics	3 (0.49)
	Computer Science	12 (1.94)
	Economics. Business and Management	109 (17.69)
	Law School	29 (4.71)
	Humanities	261 (42.37)
	Communications, Media and Design	148 (24.03)
	Other	54 (8.77)

Note: Mean and standard deviation are given for the ‘Age’ variable only.

¹ Students of Political Science and Sociology departments were not invited to participate in the survey under the assumption that they might be overly familiar with the treatment material, which was included in the experiment.

Appendix C. CONSORT Flow Diagram



Appendix D. Randomization Checks

Table D1. Randomization checks PRIOR to data truncation and elimination of outliers

	Sample		Control (C)		Placebo (P)		Treatment (T)		C vs. P	C vs. T	P vs. T	F / χ^2
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	p-value	p-value	p-value	
Sex [†]	0.17		0.17		0.14		0.20		1.000	1.000	0.480	0.308
Age	20.38	1.29	20.35	1.30	20.35	1.29	20.43	1.29	1.000	1.000	1.000	0.561
Frequency of Watching News	4.96	1.53	4.85	1.57	5.07	1.39	4.95	1.62	0.470	1.000	1.000	0.524
Interest in Politics	3.97	1.61	3.99	1.73	3.92	1.51	4.00	1.60	1.000	1.000	1.000	0.962
Frequency of Political Talk	3.46	1.54	3.42	1.54	3.35	1.46	3.60	1.60	1.000	0.650	0.260	0.203
Authoritarian-Liberal Ideology	4.98	1.41	4.93	1.46	5.00	1.33	5.02	1.44	1.000	1.000	1.000	0.546
Left-Right Ideology	5.22	1.35	5.41	1.35	5.32	1.23	4.95	1.41	1.000	0.001	0.014	0.000
Watching News on TV [†]	0.23		0.23		0.24		0.21		1.000	1.000	1.000	0.694
Following News on Social Media [†]	0.86		0.87		0.88		0.84		1.000	1.000	0.740	0.395
Following News on the Internet [†]	0.77		0.77		0.80		0.74		1.000	1.000	0.650	0.398
Prior Exposure to Political Satire Use [†]	0.48		0.50		0.46		0.48		1.000	1.000	1.000	0.697

Note: The p-values of F-tests for joint orthogonality (for continuous variables) and the p-values of chi-square tests of independence (for binary data) are reported in the last column. T-tests with the Bonferroni correction of p-values were used for multiple comparisons of means; Z-tests with the Bonferroni correction of p-values were used for multiple comparisons of proportions. P-values smaller than 0.05 are in bold. Dummy variables are coded by a dagger (†).

Table D2. Randomization checks AFTER data truncation and elimination of outliers

	Sample		Control (C)		Placebo (P)		Treatment (T)		C vs. P	C vs. T	P vs. T	F / χ^2
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	p-value	p-value	p-value	
Sex [†]	0.17		0.17		0.14		0.20		1.000	1.000	0.380	0.253
Age	20.36	1.26	20.32	1.24	20.35	1.30	20.40	1.24	1.000	1.000	1.000	0.841
Frequency of Watching News	4.96	1.54	4.83	1.57	5.08	1.40	4.96	1.62	0.330	1.000	1.000	0.276
Interest in Politics	3.97	1.61	3.95	1.73	3.94	1.54	4.02	1.59	1.000	1.000	1.000	0.856
Frequency of Political Talk	3.45	1.54	3.40	1.52	3.33	1.47	3.59	1.61	1.000	0.610	0.270	0.207
Authoritarian-Liberal Ideology	4.99	1.41	4.95	1.45	4.99	1.35	5.03	1.43	1.000	1.000	1.000	0.831
Left-Right Ideology	5.22	1.36	5.42	1.37	5.32	1.22	4.96	1.41	1.000	0.002	0.021	0.002
Watching News on TV [†]	0.22		0.22		0.25		0.20		1.000	1.000	1.000	0.578
Following News on Social Media [†]	0.86		0.86		0.88		0.83		1.000	1.000	0.590	0.351
Following News on the Internet [†]	0.77		0.76		0.80		0.74		1.000	1.000	0.680	0.405
Prior Exposure to Political Satire Use [†]	0.48		0.52		0.45		0.48		0.710	1.000	1.000	0.433

Note: The p-values of F-tests for joint orthogonality (for continuous variables) and the p-values of chi-square tests of independence (for binary data) are reported in the last column. T-tests with the Bonferroni correction of p-values were used for multiple comparisons of means; Z-tests with the Bonferroni correction of p-values were used for multiple comparisons of proportions. P-values smaller than 0.05 are in bold. Dummy variables are coded by a dagger ([†]).

Appendix E. Control, Placebo, and Treatment Materials

Table E1. Control, Placebo, and Treatment materials (translated from Russian)

Item	Control	Placebo	Treatment
1	<p>Poklonskaya Identified the Main Goal in Life</p> <p>State Duma deputy Natalya Poklonskaya admitted that happiness for her is the main goal in life. She also said that she wants to benefit her country and make people around her happy. She spoke about this in a blitz interview for RT. Poklonskaya drew attention to her care about people. For her, this is a real thing to be proud of.</p> <p>In an interview with reporters, she explained that the past year flew by for her “in a second”. In addition, it turned out that she was a fan of the Spartak football team, prefers to use the Telegram messenger, doesn’t have a popular cryptocurrency called Bitcoin, and will share her wishes made for 2018 only after they are fulfilled, reports RT.</p> <p>Another interesting point was her answer to the question “What would you say to Nicholas II at the meeting?”. Poklonskaya answered in one word – “excellent”.</p>	<p>Poklonskaya Identified the Main Goal in Life</p> 	<p>Poklonskaya Identified the Main Goal in Life</p> 

Sverdlovsk Deputies Do Not Like that the Prosecutor's Office Looks at Their Pictures from Holidays on Social Networks and Matches them with the Work Schedule

Deputies of the Sverdlovsk Legislative Assembly complain on the sidelines of strict work rules: the prosecutor's office compares their work schedule and photos from social networks, reports URA.RU.

"Previously, between the meetings people left for two or three days with families to relax, unwind. Now, if you want to leave, they demand a vacation application from you. I asked you what it was like. They said that the prosecutor's office strictly demanded. They, it turns out, are looking at our photos in social networks and compared with the work schedule, and then they show the chairman as evidence that you are swinging," said one of the deputies.

Toughening by the prosecutor's office began on April 3. The deputies did not support the agency's demand to deprive the mandate of Just Russia member Armen Karapetyan, who violated federal law. The prosecutor's office confirmed that they are watching the deputies.

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Моя страница	
Кто видит основную информацию моей страницы	Все пользователи, кроме: Прокуратура
Кто видит фотографии, на которых меня отметили	Все пользователи, кроме: Прокуратура
Кто видит список моих сохраненных фотографий	Все пользователи, кроме: Прокуратура

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3

Putin Has Signed a Life Sentence Law for Terrorist Recruiters

Vladimir Putin signed a law on life sentences for terrorist recruiters. It is used if an act of terrorism led to the death of people. A life sentence can be obtained by a person who trained or recruited a terrorist, reports RBC. Quote: "They will be sentenced to life if people died as a result of their activities"

If no one died as a result of a terrorist act or hostage-taking, the maximum sentence will be 15 years in prison. Life imprisonment will be received by the recruiter who used his official position. For propaganda of terrorism a fine of 100 thousand to 500 thousand rubles or imprisonment for a term of 2 to 5 years is provided.

The law was adopted by the State Duma on April 14 and approved by the Federation Council on April 16.

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The Investigative Committee Launched its Channel on Social Media

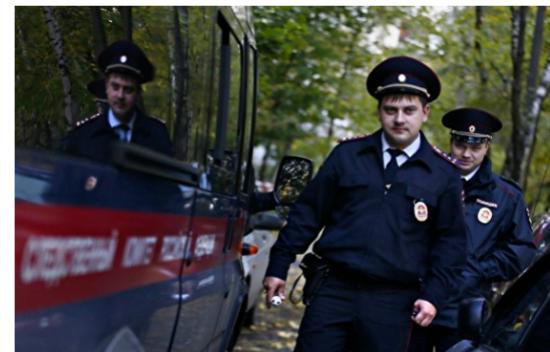
The Investigative Committee of Russia announced the launch of Internet television on YouTube. On a special channel, “news from the life of the Investigative Committee”, stories and reports on the investigation of crimes, as well as expert comments will be posted.

The goal of the initiative is to make the agency “even more open, mobile, objective”. “The video channel will cover the projects and initiatives of the Investigative Committee of Russia, the results of workshops and meetings on problematic issues, the life of educational institutions of the Investigative Committee of Russia, and documentaries about the history and formation of the Investigative Committee of Russia will be shown,” the statement said.

Anyone can subscribe to the channel. The ministry also called on citizens to express their opinions and share proposals on improving the work of the RF IC in the comments to the videos. “All wishes will be taken into account by employees and used for the further development of Internet television,” the department noted.

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The Central Bank of Russia Will Not Consider Cryptocurrencies as a Settlement or Payment Instrument

“We do not consider cryptocurrencies to be a means of payment, and we will not consider it,” said Olga Skorobogatova, first deputy chairman of the Central Bank of Russia.

At the same time, Deputy Finance Minister Alexei Moiseev said that the agency allows the use of cryptocurrency for investments in ICOs (raising funds in crypto assets) under a barter agreement. At the same time, the release of crypto ruble at the Ministry of Finance is considered inappropriate.

Moiseev explained that cryptocurrency is a phenomenon that has “many, unlimited number of emission centers”. Cryptocurrencies are proposed to be defined as other property, not a settlement and payment instrument. This means that you can’t buy anything on them.

Moiseev added that the agency proposes to tax mining by analogy with the taxation of entrepreneurial activity. At the same time, it is not planned to write direct instructions on the mining taxation procedure. That is, the applicable tax laws will apply.

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Yavlinsky Will no Longer Run for President

Grigory Yavlinsky, leader of the Yabloko party and former presidential candidate of Russia, called on the party to prepare new candidates for the next presidential election in 2024. He noted that fresh faces are needed so that voters do not say that “the same people are in the elections”.

“All my opportunities have been exhausted - now, look for new faces, look for new candidates, prepare them, make a whole bunch of them, let there be five of them, let them speak before parties and before society. I am ready to ride with them, to represent them,” – RIA Novosti reports.

The next presidential election “may happen unexpectedly,” since the six-year presidential term will pass very quickly, “this is one, two and all,” Yavlinsky said. Later, he explained to the media that he did not give up his intention in the future to again run for president of the country. He specified that he was ready to “face off” with new presidential candidates.

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Figure E1. Treatment samples (one item) demonstrated on screenshots of the EnjoySurvey platform: (a) placebo, (b) treatment, and (c) control.

Q201
Поклонская определила главную цель в жизни



Депутат Госдумы РФ Наталья Поклонская призналась, что счастье для нее - это главная цель в жизни, при этом она хочет принести пользу своей стране и сделать счастливыми людей вокруг. Об этом она рассказала в блицинтервью RT. Поклонская обратила внимание на оказанную ею лично помощь людям. Для нее это настоящий предмет для гордости.

В беседе с журналистами она пояснила, что минувший год пролетел для нее «за секунду». Кроме того, выяснилось, что она болеет за футбольную команду «Спартак», предпочитает пользоваться мессенджером Telegram, популярную криптовалюту под названием биткоин не имеет, а своими желаниями, загаданными на 2018 год, поделится только после того, как они исполнятся, передает РИА ФАН.

Другим интересным моментом стал ее ответ на вопрос: «Что бы вы сказали Николаю II при встрече?». Поклонская ответила одним словом — «отлично».

✓ Вперед

(a)

Q301
Поклонская определила главную цель в жизни



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✓ Вперед

(b)

Q101
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✓ Вперед

(c)

Appendix F. Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean / %	SD	Min	Max
<i>Dependent variable:</i>					
Selective Exposure: Report #1	590	238.33	204.08	13.00	1800.00
Selective Exposure: Report #2	590	285.28	262.83	0.00	1800.00
Selective Exposure: Report #3	590	215.13	183.82	14.00	1654.00
Selective Exposure: Report #4	590	201.27	198.47	9.00	1800.00
Selective Exposure: Report #5	590	250.92	247.06	0.00	1800.00
Selective Exposure: Report #6	590	214.36	206.62	9.00	1800.00
Selective Exposure: Overall	590	1405.28	954.98	99.00	7724.00
<i>Pre-treatment Covariates and Controls:</i>					
Sex: Male [†]	590	17%			
Age	586	20.36	1.26	18.00	26.00
Frequency of Watching News	590	4.96	1.54	1.00	7.00
Interest in Politics	590	3.97	1.61	1.00	7.00
Frequency of Political Talk	590	3.45	1.54	1.00	7.00
Watching News on TV [†]	590	22%			
Following News on Social Media [†]	590	86%			
Following News on the Internet [†]	590	77%			
Prior Exposure to Political Satire Use [†]	590	48%			
Prior Exposure to News Information	571	1.08	1.26	0.00	6.00

Note: Dummy variables are coded by a dagger.

Appendix G. OLS Models Estimates of ATEs

Table G1. Regression models of experimental treatment (the use of satirical memes) using the truncated data.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Placebo Group	13.169	23.895	3.139	-2.903	-20.665	11.486
	(20.666)	(25.187)	(17.845)	(14.423)	(21.094)	(21.613)
Treatment Group	50.938*	77.172**	37.731†	113.599***	59.131*	72.669***
	(20.364)	(24.999)	(19.434)	(20.798)	(26.678)	(21.646)
Constant	215.868***	249.989***	200.624***	161.577***	236.423***	184.672***
	(14.553)	(15.265)	(13.747)	(10.814)	(16.560)	(17.062)
N	590	590	590	590	590	590
R ²	0.012	0.015	0.009	0.077	0.019	0.025
F(2; 587)	3.424*	4.617*	2.651†	24.610***	5.785**	7.412***

Note: Robust standard errors are given in parentheses as to account for heteroscedasticity. The dependent variable is selective exposure rate for the corresponding news item. Variance influence factor (VIF) does not exceed 2 for each of variables in all six models. Significance levels are at †p<0.1; *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001. All tests are two-tailed.

Table G2. Regression models of experimental treatment (the use of satirical memes) and pre-treatment covariates using the truncated data.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Placebo Group	19.009 (20.822)	19.700 (23.928)	2.414 (18.201)	-4.776 (14.811)	-23.221 (22.284)	13.865 (22.686)
Treatment Group	50.160* (20.305)	75.848** (25.039)	41.180* (18.757)	105.191*** (19.632)	65.903* (27.538)	71.314** (22.344)
Sex: Male	-20.343 (17.747)	-34.905 (25.152)	-31.334* (15.924)	-15.957 (21.656)	-32.484 (25.449)	-37.558† (21.981)
Age	6.963 (5.981)	0.757 (9.023)	-0.575 (6.795)	4.364 (6.137)	10.421 (7.620)	-4.924 (6.274)
Frequency of Watching News	-12.201† (6.966)	-7.419 (7.824)	-1.269 (4.934)	-4.204 (5.097)	0.652 (8.545)	-8.981 (5.975)
Interest in Politics	17.074* (6.885)	-2.198 (7.349)	8.274 (5.097)	7.346 (5.362)	9.792 (7.154)	7.241 (6.210)
Frequency of Political Talk	3.337 (6.006)	8.411 (7.741)	-5.275 (5.791)	5.236 (6.706)	-5.509 (7.439)	0.771 (6.074)
Watching News on TV	41.026 (27.248)	-5.452 (26.986)	2.956 (21.455)	17.747 (22.304)	4.255 (29.062)	2.306 (19.176)
Following News on Social Media	26.755 (25.840)	10.706 (37.442)	57.073*** (16.988)	22.201 (23.143)	40.735 (29.964)	-5.115 (27.328)
Following News on the Internet	-47.432* (23.774)	-23.536 (29.460)	-33.048 (20.623)	-21.259 (17.784)	-6.173 (26.214)	-10.066 (20.151)

Prior Exposure to Political Satire Use	15.490 (16.530)	-6.307 (22.751)	-6.466 (15.483)	6.973 (16.042)	3.983 (20.732)	30.320 [†] (17.498)
Prior Exposure to News Information	-13.223* (6.547)	-10.015 (8.625)	-10.959 [†] (5.900)	-1.018 (7.307)	-10.025 (8.598)	-10.021 (7.215)
Constant	69.248 (140.386)	281.036 (201.748)	197.023 (146.223)	41.243 (127.817)	-16.266 (170.994)	314.437* (142.557)
N	568	568	568	568	568	568
R ²	0.052	0.029	0.044	0.090	0.035	0.039
F(12; 555)	2.557**	1.394	2.115*	4.571***	1.664 [†]	1.882*

Note: Robust standard errors are given in parentheses as to account for heteroscedasticity. The dependent variable is selective exposure rate for the corresponding news item. Variance influence factor (VIF) does not exceed 2 for each of variables in all six models. Significance levels are at [†]p<0.1; *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001. All tests are two-tailed.

Table G3. Regression models of experimental treatment (the use of satirical memes) using the full sample.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Placebo Group	12.767	30.895	3.139	-2.903	-23.036	-21.604
	(24.575)	(27.784)	(17.845)	(14.423)	(22.136)	(42.178)
Treatment Group	46.520*	84.115**	37.731†	118.400***	79.221*	39.579
	(22.554)	(27.284)	(19.434)	(22.689)	(38.552)	(42.195)
Constant	220.286***	249.989***	200.624***	161.577***	238.794***	217.762***
	(17.485)	(15.265)	(13.747)	(10.814)	(17.868)	(40.037)
N	590	590	590	590	590	590
R ²	0.008	0.014	0.009	0.072	0.017	0.005
F(2; 587)	2.243	4.253*	2.651†	22.823***	4.952**	1.603

Note: Robust standard errors are given in parentheses as to account for heteroscedasticity. The dependent variable is selective exposure rate for the corresponding news item. Variance influence factor (VIF) does not exceed 2 for each of variables in all six models. Significance levels are at †p<0.1; *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001. All tests are two-tailed.

Table G4. Regression models of experimental treatment (the use of satirical memes) and pre-treatment covariates using the full sample.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Placebo Group	18.616 (24.496)	22.751 (25.295)	2.414 (18.201)	-5.108 (14.861)	-31.031 (24.710)	-23.980 (48.030)
Treatment Group	46.018* (22.377)	82.253** (27.092)	41.180* (18.757)	106.903*** (20.341)	85.924* (39.321)	35.669 (45.306)
Sex: Male	-20.303 (17.743)	-38.889 (26.000)	-31.334* (15.924)	-16.192 (21.679)	-47.568 (30.860)	-58.058† (32.355)
Age	6.321 (6.078)	-1.987 (9.867)	-0.575 (6.795)	3.729 (6.454)	13.613 (8.977)	-5.907 (6.586)
Frequency of Watching News	-14.939† (8.178)	-8.195 (7.965)	-1.269 (4.934)	-4.268 (5.108)	10.591 (15.293)	-2.200 (11.260)
Interest in Politics	19.357* (7.769)	-3.364 (7.920)	8.274 (5.097)	7.143 (5.395)	11.332 (7.653)	6.872 (6.520)
Frequency of Political Talk	2.271 (6.254)	10.530 (8.973)	-5.275 (5.791)	5.331 (6.715)	-7.178 (7.825)	0.114 (7.307)
Watching News on TV	53.399 (33.354)	-1.970 (31.570)	2.956 (21.455)	20.537 (23.930)	34.414 (51.120)	-10.720 (23.760)
Following News on Social Media	28.561 (26.058)	-4.969 (47.503)	57.073*** (16.988)	23.119 (23.294)	45.623 (36.516)	4.200 (29.179)
Following News on the Internet	-50.381† (26.639)	-23.776 (32.346)	-33.048 (20.623)	-20.218 (18.100)	6.749 (30.170)	-4.249 (21.344)

Prior Exposure to Political Satire Use	12.511 (17.350)	-12.478 (24.782)	-6.466 (15.483)	5.204 (16.969)	-13.062 (30.601)	41.198 [†] (21.137)
Prior Exposure to News Information	-13.144 [*] (6.566)	-8.468 (9.297)	-10.959 [†] (5.900)	-0.023 (7.945)	-16.852 (13.081)	-3.211 (14.426)
Constant	94.345 (147.538)	353.466 (225.148)	197.023 (146.223)	52.730 (132.822)	-129.239 (241.646)	321.875 [*] (146.113)
N	568	568	568	568	568	568
R ²	0.049	0.028	0.044	0.087	0.033	0.013
F(12; 555)	2.359 ^{**}	1.357	2.115 [*]	4.419 ^{***}	1.585 [†]	0.631

Note: Robust standard errors are given in parentheses as to account for heteroscedasticity. The dependent variable is selective exposure rate for the corresponding news item. Variance influence factor (VIF) does not exceed 2 for each of variables in all six models. Significance levels are at [†]p<0.1; ^{*}p<0.05; ^{**}p<0.01; ^{***}p<0.001. All tests are two-tailed.

Appendix H. BLUP Estimates of Random Effects

Figure H1. Distribution of random effects model predictions for participants

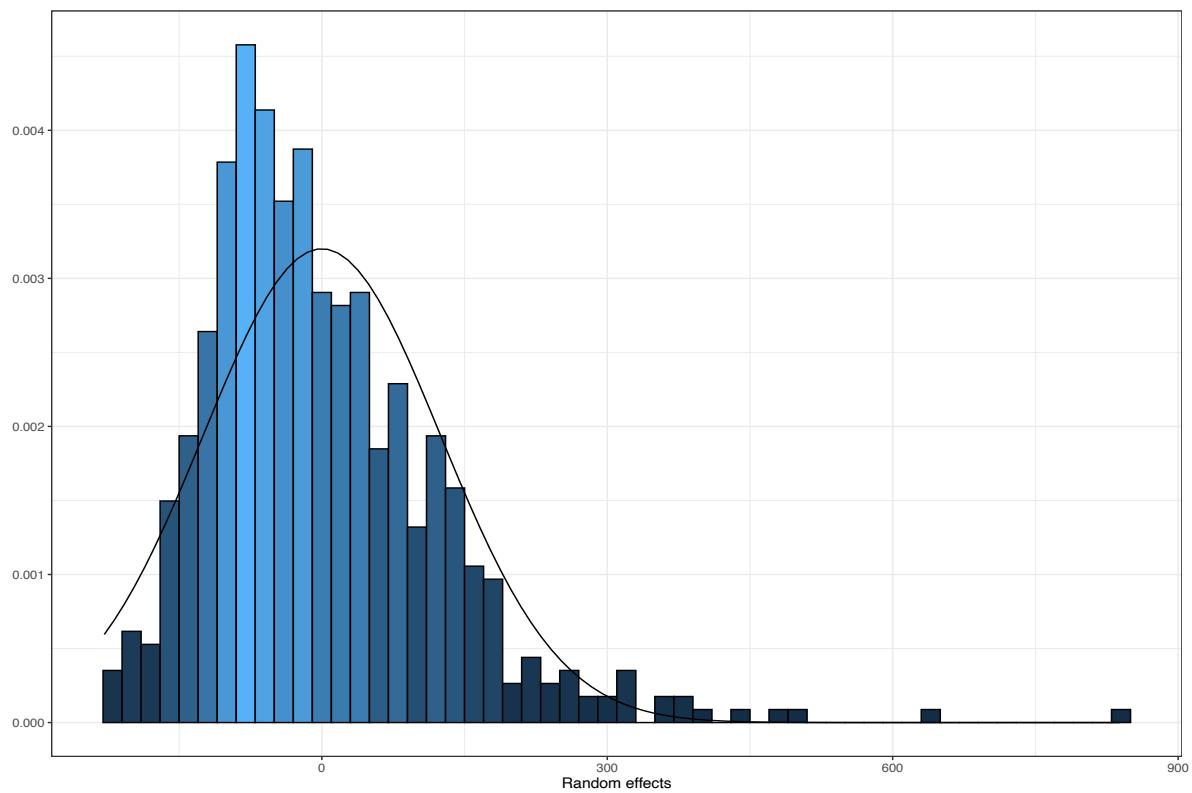
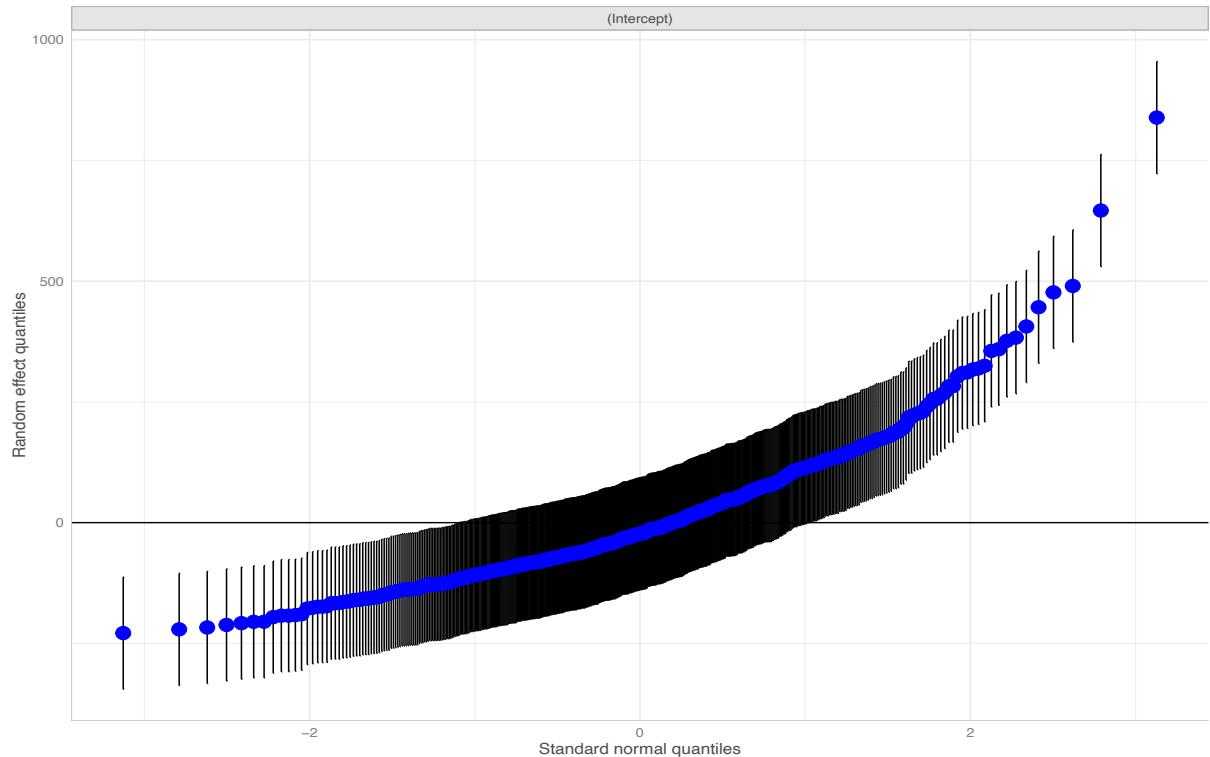


Figure H2. Quantile plot of random effects model predictions for participants



Appendix I. OLS Models Estimates of CATEs

Table I1. Regression models of experimental treatment (the use of satirical memes), pre-treatment covariates, and interaction effects using both truncated and full samples.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Placebo Group	81.165 (243.183)	67.770 (277.699)	-487.759 (344.150)	-395.561 (393.445)	-9.307 (255.896)	-4.261 (292.467)
Treatment Group	259.711 (235.194)	268.208 (268.576)	296.005 (311.318)	336.950 (355.911)	-36.770 (252.951)	-17.037 (289.101)
Sex: Male	-172.212 (107.441)	-213.079 [†] (122.690)	-173.809 (106.992)	-213.370 [†] (122.317)	-179.264 [†] (106.866)	-218.800 [†] (122.138)
Age	16.987 (31.203)	15.377 (35.632)	17.934 (31.161)	16.011 (35.625)	15.945 (31.116)	14.466 (35.563)
Frequency of Watching News	-35.126 (31.447)	-22.420 (35.911)	-73.064 (48.593)	-47.672 (55.554)	-38.714 (31.275)	-25.632 (35.745)
Interest in Politics	46.768 (31.585)	49.082 (36.068)	46.284 (31.515)	48.779 (36.030)	13.048 (43.935)	21.284 (50.214)
Frequency of Political Talk	-4.168 (49.436)	-0.341 (56.453)	10.544 (30.863)	8.416 (35.284)	0.560 (30.904)	-0.211 (35.321)
Watching News on TV	59.513 (96.016)	94.448 (109.644)	64.454 (95.721)	100.167 (109.432)	55.739 (95.581)	91.196 (109.240)
Following News on Social Media	145.506 (116.446)	146.923 (132.974)	155.522 (116.114)	156.215 (132.746)	129.477 (116.418)	131.676 (133.056)
Following News on the Internet	-144.618	-127.783	-133.392	-118.439	-149.981	-132.466

	(95.532)	(109.091)	(95.568)	(109.257)	(95.325)	(108.948)
Prior Exposure to Political Satire Use	49.492	32.264	46.842	28.781	48.694	31.723
	(83.632)	(95.503)	(83.397)	(95.342)	(83.231)	(95.126)
Prior Exposure to News Information	-53.858	-51.042	-53.588	-51.306	-58.319 [†]	-55.428
	(33.276)	(37.999)	(33.201)	(37.956)	(33.162)	(37.901)
Placebo Group <i>X</i> Frequency of Political Talk	-16.209	-25.076				
	(65.945)	(75.305)				
Treatment Group <i>X</i> Frequency of Political Talk	42.387	36.522				
	(61.704)	(70.462)				
Placebo Group <i>X</i> Freq. of Watching News			103.068	75.821		
			(66.405)	(75.917)		
Treatment Group <i>X</i> Freq. of Watching News			24.010	13.082		
			(60.487)	(69.151)		
Placebo Group <i>X</i> Interest in Politics					9.786	-2.481
					(59.907)	(68.469)
Treatment Group <i>X</i> Interest in Politics					111.618 [†]	103.686
					(58.807)	(67.211)
Constant	940.959	924.398	1,039.627	990.419	1,121.364	1,090.850
	(689.789)	(787.694)	(698.720)	(798.805)	(692.437)	(791.396)
N	568	568	568	568	568	568
R ²	0.065	0.053	0.068	0.053	0.071	0.057
F(14; 553)	2.755***	2.207**	2.877***	2.232**	3.008***	2.385**

Note: Models 2, 4, and 6 are estimated using the full sample. Robust standard errors are given in parentheses as to account for heteroscedasticity. The dependent variable is selective exposure rate for the corresponding news item. Variance influence factor (VIF) does not exceed 2 for each of variables in all six models. Significance levels are at ${}^{\dagger}p<0.1$; ${}^{*}p<0.05$; ${}^{**}p<0.01$; ${}^{***}p<0.001$. All tests are two-tailed.

Appendix J. Bayesian Evaluation of Informative Hypotheses

To test the robustness of the results, we applied Bayesian evaluation of informative hypotheses (BEIH) instead of null hypothesis significance testing (NHST) to our data. In latter approach, to test our hypotheses we had to explicitly formulate a null hypothesis ($H_0: M_{Control} = M_{Placebo} = M_{Treatment}$) and an alternative one ($H_1: M_C \neq M_P \neq M_T$), though these hypotheses did not exactly represent the substantive meaning behind them for at least two reasons. First, frequentist inference is supposed to give evidence to reject a null hypothesis (H_0), but in case of an alternative one (H_1) there is a lot of uncertainty, i.e. “something is going on, but we don’t know what” (Hoijtink et al. 2008: 1). Hence, to test our hypotheses we wanted to use those methods, which make inference explicitly about H_1 rather than *not-H₀*. Second, multiple comparisons, which were used in our analysis, are generally applied to compare means in each of pairs, however they cannot give evidence of an *ordering* of means.

Hence, it might be better to evaluate the level of confidence in the hypothesis and its variations in terms of possible orderings rather than to compare alternatives with the null hypothesis. In all, we have three parameters (means of groups), six (or 3!) possible orderings and four informative hypotheses. The question is in how many cases parameters are ordered as proposed by H_1 , if there is no ordering imposed, i.e. if they are randomly ordered?

Following the assumption of random parameters ordering we could easily calculate prior probabilities of all hypothesis variations. We called these prior probabilities as expected support (S_{exp}). To obtain posterior probabilities or, in other words, observed support (S_{obs}), we estimated Bayesian linear regression on Selective Exposure Rate using non-informative punishing priors for regression coefficients with means of zero and standard deviations derived from frequentist estimates. Then we calculated Bayes Factors ($BF = S_{obs}/S_{exp}$). In this section we show only robustness checks for the overall measure of selectivity, which is the Overall Selective Exposure, rather than for each of news reports.

Table J1. Results of Bayesian evaluation of informative hypotheses

Hypothesis	S_{exp}	S_{obs}	BF	PMP
$H_{1a}: \{M_{Control}\} < \{M_{Placebo}\} < \{M_{Treatment}\}$	16.7%	31.5%	1.888	27.6%
$H_{1b}: \{M_{Control}\} < \{M_{Treatment}\} < \{M_{Placebo}\}$	16.7%	0.00%	0.003	0.00%
$H_{1c}: \{M_{Control}, M_{Placebo}\} < \{M_{Treatment}\}$	33.3%	99.9%	2.998	43.9%
$H_{1d}: \{M_{Control}\} < \{M_{Placebo}, M_{Treatment}\}$	33.3%	31.5%	0.946	13.8%
$H_2: \{M_{Control}, M_{Placebo}, M_{Treatment}\}$	100.00%	100.00%	1.000	14.6%

Note: PMP is a posterior model probability calculated as $PMP = BF_i / \sum BF$.

Table J1 confirms the robustness of the key findings. According to posterior model probabilities (PMP), we found the support for H_{1c} equal to 43.9%, so the mean value in the Treatment group is greater than means of the Control and the Placebo groups, which are expected to have statistically equal means. This is the largest PMP, hence this is the most credible hypothesis which can be confirmed. Alongside, the support for the hypothesis H_{1a} turned out to be appreciable (27.6%) as well, what allows us to expect that the placebo effect could also be observed. Considering the placebo effect, we observe only 13.8% of the support for H_{1d} which is even lower than the support for random ordering (H_2 : PMP = 14.6%). Hence, we conclude that the treatment effect is different from the placebo one.

Appendix K. Questionnaire

Intro. Thank you for participating in the survey! First, we ask you to fill out a short questionnaire. We remind you that the information is anonymous, and it will not be used for any purpose other than research.

Q001 [Single]. Your gender

- Female
- Male

Q002 [Free]. Your year of birth: _____

Q003 [Single]. Your current education level:

- 1st year bachelor student
- 2nd year bachelor student
- 3rd year bachelor student
- 4th year bachelor student
- 1st year master student
- 2nd year master student
- PhD student

Q004 [Single]. Your department:

- Faculty of Mathematics
- Faculty of Physics
- Moscow Institute of Electronics and Mathematics
- Faculty of Computer Science
- Faculty of Business and Management
- Faculty of Law
- Faculty of Humanities
- Faculty of Social Sciences
- Faculty of Communication, Media, and Design
- Faculty of World Economics and World Politics

Q005 [Single]. Please, choose your HSE campus:

- Moscow
- Saint-Petersburg
- Nizhny Novgorod

- Perm

Q006 [Multi]. Which of the following sources do you use to follow the news agenda?

TV	Print press
Social Media	Radio
Internet Media	Family
YouTube and bloggers	Colleagues and friends
Messengers and Telegram channels	Other: _____

Q007 [Single]. Please choose your prioritized information source:

TV	Print press
Social Media	Radio
Internet Media	Family
YouTube and bloggers	Colleagues and friends
Messengers and Telegram channels	Other: _____

Q008 [Multi]. Do you watch news programs on any of the following TV channels?

Channel One	NTV	REN-TV	BBC
TV Rain	Euronews	Moscow24	Other: _____
Rossiya-1	TVC	CNN	Do not watch any

Q009 [Multi]. Do you use any of the following online media?

Republic	Rossiyskaya gazeta	Vedomosti	Gazeta.RU
Snob	RT	The Village	Izvestiya
Lentach	RIA Novosti	Lenta.RU	RBK
Afisha	TASS	TJ	Other: _____
Meduza	Inetrfax	Mediazone	Do not use any

Q010 [Multi]. Do you use any of the following telegram channels?

Nezygar'	WOW News	Kashin	Usy Peskova	Other: _____
Varlamov's blog	LIFE SHOT	Protest Moscow	Stalingulag	Do not use any
Davydov.Index	Navalny	Mash	Venediktov	

Q011 [Slider]. How often do you read/watch news?

Once a month	2-3 times a month	Once a week	2-3 times a week	Once a day	2-3 times a day	More than 2-3 times a day
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Q012 [Slider]. Are you interested in politics?

Not interested at all	2	3	4	5	6	Highly interested
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Q013 [Slider]. How often do your friends, relatives and colleagues discuss political issues with you?

Once a month	2-3 times a month	Once a week	2-3 times a week	Once a day	2-3 times a day	More than 2-3 times a day
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Q014 [Single]. Which of the following parties do you like the most?

United Russia	Just Russia	Party of Progress
CPRF	Parnas	Other: _____
LDPR	Yabloko	No party

Q015 [Slider]. How, in your opinion, should power powers be distributed?

I support the only and strong leader who concentrates all power in his hands	2	3	4	5	6	I support collective management and democratic representation
--	---	---	---	---	---	---

Q016 [Slider]. How, in your opinion, should the financing of the health care system be organized?

Citizens should pay for health services by their own	2	3	4	5	6	State should finance all services
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[RANDOMIZATION]

QInstruction. You will see several news reports about the events that have happened in our country and around the world over the last couple of months. We ask you to have a look at them as if you go through news posted on the Internet and social media. Feel free to

scrupulously read, skim or skip them by clicking the "Next" button. You have an unlimited amount of time to complete this part of the survey.

[TREATMENT: SEE APPENDIX E]

Q017 [Single]. What is Natalya Poklonskaya's main goal in life?

- Happiness
- Family
- Love
- Faith
- Do not remember*

Q018 [Single]. Which law has Vladimir Putin signed?

- On life sentence for terrorists
- On life sentence for those who help terrorists
- On life sentence for terrorists' recruiters
- On life sentence for terrorists' informants
- Do not remember*

Q019 [Single]. Will Grigory Yavlinsky run for the next presidential elections?

- Yes
- No
- Do not remember*

Q020 [Single]. In which social network did the Investigative Committee of Russia launch the channel?

- YouTube
- Telegram
- Twitter
- VK
- Do not remember*

Q021 [Single]. Have you seen the news appeared in the newsfeed?

- I have seen all news appeared in the newsfeed
- I have seen some news appeared in the newsfeed
- I have not seen any news appeared in the newsfeed

Q022 [Multi]. What news were you familiar with before taking the survey?

- Poklonskaya Identified the Main Goal in Life
- Sverdlovsk Deputies Do Not Like that the Prosecutor's Office Looks at Their Pictures from Holidays on Social Networks and Matches them with the Work Schedule
- Putin Has Signed a Life Sentence Law for Terrorist Recruiters
- The Investigative Committee Launched its Channel on Social Media
- The Central Bank of Russia Will Not Consider Cryptocurrencies as a Settlement or Payment Instrument
- Yavlinsky Will no Longer Run for President

Q023 [Free]. And the last thing. Fill in your email address and click the “Next” button to complete the survey and take part in the lottery. This information will not be used in other mailings and will not be transferred to third parties: _____