

**MEDIA SYSTEM ASPECTS  
OF SYNERGY ANALYSIS**  
(review of the book “Media System of Russia”)

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(рецензия на книгу «Медиасистема России»)

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In the context of an increasing role of information, especially the society information potential of Russian social media, there is a need for a substantial update of all major media system components and an

increase in their capability to provide mass audiences with a necessary set of knowledge, axiological, and projective behavioral resources. The media's worldview as reflected in the consciousness of its audience must have such information potential that allows individuals and different social communities to completely meet their needs for information and thereupon to actively, successfully, and cooperatively participate in the processes of learning about the world and its transformation on the way to social progress.

By setting the goal of media system study within a synergistic approach, a team of authors of the recently published book “**Media System of Russia**”<sup>1</sup> strictly follows these requirements.

The book emphasizes that the media system is a complex system object that actively interacts with its environment, using the potential of this environment for its unimpaired operation and development. First of all, it refers to different media subsystems, including an informational one, which must contain all critical knowledge as well as axiological and projective behavioral resources for a society and the world community as a whole. The editorial subsystem should be a wide editorial organization uniting all creatively active representatives of the spiritual field, in addition to the fields of management, economy, policy, etc. The organizational subsystem is designed to include not only editorial management but also a wide system of information policy and management as well as the legal apparatus of the media, legislative, executive and judicial authorities engaged in media system organization.

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<sup>1</sup> Vartanova E. L. (ed.) (2015) *Mediasistema Rossii: Ucheb. posobiye dlya studentov vuzov* [Media System of Russia: Manual for Graduate Students]. Moscow: Aspect Press, 384 p. (in Russian) Approved by ERO for classical university education as a manual for students of Departments and Faculties of Journalism at universities.

The authors of the book fairly include in the media system its technical and economic resources and analyze the impact of social networks, internet portals and mobile means in connection with the media system's functional and structural parameters.

The book studies the active influence of the political and economic fields as well as the spiritual field of society on the Russian media system. It characterizes the factors leading to politicization and commercialization of the mass media. It is noted that the politicization and the commercialization of mass media distort the media's worldview in the consciousness of its mass audience. There is also a need for genuine publicity of the policy and economy, as well as a necessity of broad participation in information exchange with the governance and capital of civil society and different public groups: ethnic, regional, religious, social, etc., including based on the modern processes of labor division.

As noted in the book, global trends, including globalization, affect the nature of the domestic media system. However, it is not less affected by unique patriotic history, political culture, the ethnic structure of society, ethical attitudes, or any number of other nationally determined features (p. 24).

The authors name the following as the main factors of environmental influence on media system:

- country geography, territory size, climate, as well as administrative and territorial system principles;
- societal multinationality and polyethnicity;
- economic development of a country that controls the amount of media capital;
- cultural, linguistic and religious differences;
- political regime peculiarities (p. 20).

The book is focused on the nature of media system integrity, which is treated by the authors as an integrative result of interaction

between its subsystems. In the process of continuous information interaction between social subjects that create and perceive mass information, the society information potential is being founded, enriched and updated, which is then reflected in the consciousness of the mass audience as the media worldview.

The researchers pay considerable attention to the functional integrity of the media system, considering the integrity as an integrative combination of editorial management functions, journalistic creative activities, and the functions of various social institutions that implement most of their target programs via the media system.

According to the authors' idea, the functional integrity of the media system provides realization and corresponding actualization of its various functions. Media system functional organization is based on editorial management, which provides optimal implementation of all management cycle stages in relation to all procedures of collection, processing, distribution and dissemination of published information. Its tasks as a mass information process organizer include actualization of journalism functions as a creative activity, as well as actualization of communicative functions of various social activity subjects: scientific, educational, political, economic, and etc. The implementation of advertising and PR functions is to a large extent carried out by the media system, and the nature of the activity is studied in certain chapters of the book.

Media scene characterization as an integrative entirety, as its new integrative feature arising in the process of structural and functional components interaction described in the book is of a great interest. When studying system concepts contained in the work, we see that the researchers make distinctions between the media system and media structure. This important concept rationalized by the fact that the media system means a combination of components

the interaction of which generates new integrative qualities of the system as a whole. One of these qualities is the media structure as a way of system components communication, as its composition. System organization is impossible without it.

The media scene means a structural formation that serves to ensure actualization of various potential qualities of the system's components. They may be actualized only if each special social space based on media structures will have open, public relations between social subjects as part of this space.

The media scene means an integral media structure that is not limited by the structure of combined editorial bodies and covers not only communicating components of the media system but also a significant part of their environment. This all-embracing mass information complex involves the totality of the potential subjects of the mass information process: producers and distributors of spiritual and information products constituting the basis of the societal information potential. It also includes those who develop the societal information potential by interacting with those who produce and distribute mass information. In other words, all social subjects actively and successfully participating in the fields of spiritually theoretical, aesthetic, spiritually practical, as well as practical activities become both potential and actual participants of information interaction processes carried out via the media system. The media scene is not only a network of information relations. It also means economic, legal and organizational relations connected with the carrying out of mass information activities that cover the processes of production, distribution, and consumption of mass information.

The mass media typological structure is characterized in the book as an optimized media scene existing in the framework of global, national, regional or any other social space, where

the public media sphere and information relations between subjects of production, distribution and consumption of mass information occur. When characterizing the differentiation of the media system typological structure, the authors proceed from the characteristics determined by the audience's nature, its information needs, as well as judge by the functional, thematic, technological, economic, and other models of media system (See Chapters 4, 5, 6, 7).

The book studies the degree of Russian media system optimization and the nature of its participation in production, distribution, and development of societal information potential. According to the first chapter, in addressing these problems, the Russian media system rests both upon global patterns and trends, as well as upon national specificities intending to combine national and global characteristics (p. 28).

The authors note the dominance of public terrestrial federal channels in these processes, which are the most successful in the coverage of national policies and in mass entertainment. The role of regional print and terrestrial media in responding to the informational requests of local audiences is also noted. The positive role of new media (online media, social networks) forming corporate and alternative agendas is also characterized in the book. Non-terrestrial subscription channels focus the attention of the audience on thematic and specialized programs. Moreover, printed periodicals have significantly weakened their positions in the national public sphere, notwithstanding certain achievements of weekly publications and magazine editions(p. 26).

The book "Media System of Russia" contains a wide range of chapters which:

- characterize system patterns of the media and the mechanism of their implementation (Chapter 1);

- identify the basis of mass media legal regulation in Russia (Chapter 3);
- study the audience of Russian mass media (Chapter 14);
- characterize historical stages of domestic media system development (Chapter 2);
- give a structural analysis of the domestic media industry (Chapter 13);
- contain a typological characterization of the domestic systems of television, radio, print media, on-line media, and information agencies (Chapters 4, 5, 6, 7, 8);
- define the nature of interaction between the media system and advertising and PR (Chapters 9, 10);
- study the features of interaction between the film industry and the media system (Chapter 11).

The publication contains appendices:

- Table 1. Legislation Related to Mass Media in the Russian Federation (1991–2015);
- Table 2. Basic Documents Related to Mass Media Self-Regulation in Russia;
- Table 3. List of Organizations Governing Mass Media Activities in the Russian Federation;
- Table 4. The Largest Media Enterprises of Russia.

The study of the domestic media system and media systems of other states is an important media research trend in Russia. There are many unanswered problems in the study of mass media system patterns and the mechanisms of their implementation. A comprehensive analysis of media system integrity problems as well as its functional, structural, communicative, and organizational aspects lies ahead. Under current conditions, extreme importance is given to the optimization of the media system as an integral part of the information sphere and as one of the main factors of

the formation, enrichment, and update of the societal information potential, and its opening by the mass audience.

An important step in this direction is the publication of the book “Media System of Russia”, which summarizes many detailed studies carried out in recent years at the Faculty of Journalism of Moscow State University. It will play a significant role in the implementation of the scientific research of this thematic problem-driven trend, as well as in the professional training of future journalists who study at Russia’s universities.