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Research paper



Grouping of Japan's Media Sphere Elements

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Abstract

Today, Japan's media sphere is undergoing significant changes under the influence of globalization and the development of information and communication technologies, but it retains traditional features. In these conditions, a comprehensive analysis of the modern Japanese media sphere, in particular, an analysis of the problems of its institutionalization, as well as the identification of the features of the functioning mechanism, allowing it to occupy the leading positions in the world in terms of the development of media institutions, is becoming relevant. This paper presents the results of research on the media sphere in Japan and suggests the grouping of its elements. The adoption of the proposed grouping of elements of the media sphere will help researchers understand the essence of the media system in Japan.

Keywords: *Media Sphere of Japan, Elements of the Media Sphere, Media of Japan.*

1. Introduction

Changes in modern society as a social system actualize the issues of studying changes within its subsystems. The increasing role of information processes in the development of society and the growing dependence of social, political, economic and cultural development of society on information processes require a revision of the structural and functional characteristics of the modern media sphere and the definition of its place and role within the subsystems of society that are commonly called areas of society.

The development of information and communication technologies irreversibly changes the existing system of mass media. Its functional characteristics, economic aspects of functioning, its role in socio-political processes, and the so-called model of functioning are changing.

The globalization of society affects the national characteristics of the development of the media sphere, offering new patterns and models for the existence of media.

The global financial crisis of 2008-2017, which affected the media markets, promoted the search for new strategies for the development of journalism both at the national and global levels.

Given these factors, the institutional approach to analyzing the modern media sphere in Japan is of particular interest, first, from the theoretical-methodological point of view, making it possible to analyze the national characteristics of the institutions of the media sphere; secondly, from the practical point of view.

The unique culture of Japan, the features of the political system and the historical aspects of the development of journalism have brought unique features to the development of the media sphere. The system of media self-regulation is based on the actions of social regulators, the standards of behavior of journalists, as well as formal rules expressed in the ethical codes of media organizations. A high level of media consumption and an equally high level of media confidence predetermine their special role in the socio-political life of the country. According to the World Association of Newspapers, Japan shows the world's highest circulation of daily prints.

From the political point of view, in this study, we were interested in the main media organizations as a set of journalistic practices, a complex of functions and a set of norms and rules.

2. Methods

The theoretical and methodological basis of the study was the works of scientists in the field of political science – Belov, Gadzhiev [1], Solovyov [2], Mannheim [3]. In the field of methodology of political science and sociology, the authors relied on the works of Prokhorov [4], and Chigrinskaya [5].

The study had an interdisciplinary nature. In the process of work, the theoretical concepts of various sciences – sociology, political science, philology, and the theory of mass communications - were in demand.

The research was based on general scientific methods of cognition: analysis, synthesis, and classification, necessary for revealing typological changes in the journalism of Japan and creating a practical-theoretical model of the modern media sphere of the country. Using the methods of empirical analysis and non-formalized content analysis, the institutional characteristics of Japan's media sphere were determined.

To formulate the terminological apparatus of research from the point of view of the subject, the analogy method was applied.

The methodological basis of the study was the principles of modern socio-political sciences: structural and functional analysis and evolutionary principle, on the basis of which the dynamic development of the Japanese media was considered, as well as the establishment of the media sphere institutes.

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3. Results

The analysis of the institutional aspects and features of the functioning of the modern media sphere in Japan allow drawing the following conclusions:

- Based on the understanding of society by classical sociologists as a system, the paper defines the media sphere as a subsystem of society, part of the information sphere. The need for using this particular term is explained by the fact that in the framework of the study we have been more interested in the dependence of information processes and subjects on the information media, the analysis of which is impossible outside the context of the society in which they operate. The main difference in the notions of "media sphere" and "media system", according to the authors, is that the media sphere can be used only to determine the subject of mutual relations between subjects of information exchange using technical means, while the concept of "media system" has certain characteristics specific to this particular society. That is why, in analyzing the institutional aspects of the media sphere, a systemic and structural-functional analysis is needed;
- The socio-political context of the formation of media institutions of the country has a number of features. The most important of them are the following.

The democratic regime in Japan was formed during the period of economic decline, and the transition to a democratic regime was imposed from outside by the Alliance. An important feature of the formation of the institutions of the media sphere of Japan is that, in addition to the classically distinguished and socially-shaped rules, among the rules governing the structured order of the media sphere there are also those that were borrowed, introduced by the American administration in the years after the end of World War II.

At the moment, there is a coexistence of democratic regime and state nationalism, which has been a state ideology for a long period of the history of the country.

Moral and ethical norms in society retain their importance both in interpersonal relationships and in socio-political processes. As evidence of this, we can cite clannishness and family continuity as national features of the Japanese political system. At the same time, the political landscape is characterized by the activity of opposition parties. The media are directly involved in the transformation of the political system. The most obvious forms are: coverage of corruption scandals associated with political actors and publication of government rating during the inning period;

- In these conditions, the characteristic features of the modern media landscape of Japan have been formed. First and foremost, this is an extremely high level of confidence in media in the society and the highest rates of circulation of periodicals per capita. The first feature indicates the significant role of the media in the socio-political life of society, which is emphasized by the availability of political and party publications; the second one indicates a high level of development of the media market.

Secondly, we should note the equal development of the national press, represented by the five largest daily media, and the prefectural press.

The television market is a symbiosis of state-public television and radio broadcasting via the television and radio company Nippon Hoso Kyokai and private television networks, which are historically linked and owe their financial investments to major newspapers.

The modern media landscape and the functional characteristics of the media are actively influenced by the development and implementation (including the participation of the government) of new information technologies. As a result, the information agencies of Japan demonstrate the expansion of the scope of activity and the service sector of the news agency in its traditional sense. Kyodo and JiJi Press information agencies provide the widest range of information services for government organizations. In addition, online versions of traditional publications and online advertising are actively developing. Most clearly, the inclusion of new technologies in information processes is manifested in the media's orientation toward the development of mobile content. According to statistics, more than half of adults in Japan receive the content of news media on smartphones (cell phones).

New information technologies affect the distribution of information in the society, but at the same time, such traditional features for the Japanese media sphere as the newspaper distribution mechanism and the "setto" strategy (sets of morning and evening issues of the newspaper) are preserved. Almost 90% of the print run of daily newspapers and more than 80% of the magazine circulation are delivered to the house by subscription, for which special agencies have been set up, most often included in large newspaper holdings;

- There is no unified legislation on mass media in the country. The activities of the media are based on the provisions of the Constitution of 1947 and a package of specialized media laws adopted in the 1950s and 1980s. In fact, Japan has formed a legal order for television and radio, in which there are separate rules for private and commercial broadcasting, while the activities of printed periodicals do not have specialized legislation.

In Japan, the right to self-expression, the right to access to information, the rights to receive information from administrative bodies are legally enshrined. The activities of the media are legislatively limited by the human right to one's own dignity, the right to a personal secret, the protection of the honor and dignity of a citizen and society, the need to preserve public welfare and preserve the rule of "political impartiality".

Media ownership in Japan is limited to the number of broadcasters of the same type; cross-media ownership is not prohibited. The ownership and management of media organizations by foreigners are prohibited.

Practical control over the activities of media organizations in the field of television and radio broadcasting is carried out through the system of obtaining broadcasting licenses and registrations of all the changes that take place up to the opening of additional offices. The main problem of the emerging digital communication sector is the opacity of the digital broadcasting auction system. In Japan, policies and procedures are being formed to overcome these problems. The mechanism for ensuring guaranteed rights and statutory obligations is implemented through the Consultative Council of television programs.

The rules for the functioning of the media are implemented on the basis of a powerful ethical framework developed by numerous media organizations and professional journalistic unions.

The system of media self-regulation is based on the actions of social regulators, the unspoken norms of journalists' behavior, the formal rules for regulating media activities expressed in the ethical codes of media organizations. They describe the functional characteristics of the media, the standards for editing programs, especially the professional activities of journalists and distributors of publications. The latest revisions of ethical standards in the field of print media, as we know, were made in 2009;

– The main subjects of the media sphere are government organizations and professional associations of journalists. Governmental organizations pay special attention to the development and introduction of new information technologies in the life of society. Professional organizations of journalists of Japan were formed on the principle of journalistic activity. The largest ones are: the Japan Newspaper Publishers and Editors Association, the National Association of Commercial Broadcasters in Japan, and the Japan Magazine Publishers Association. They regulate the activities of newspapers, magazines, TV and radio companies, developing and modifying ethical rules in accordance with current realities.

Special attention should be paid to information institutions for collecting information – a system of press clubs, which has undergone a radical revision in recent years. The main drivers of change are globalization and the development of new information and communication technologies (ICT). Nevertheless, the system of press clubs retains elitism in the profession and continues to repre-

sent a possibility of secret censorship through a ramified system of membership and traditional ideas about the work of a member journalist;
- Nippon Hoso Kyokai Public Broadcasting Corporation is the initiator of knowledge and ideas about the functions and essence of television journalism. No wonder the main ideas about television journalism of the 1960s-1970s in Japan had been formulated in a retrospective analysis of the history of the development of television broadcasting by Nippon Hoso Kyokai. These are the awareness of the social importance of television and social media responsibility, the need to reduce the emotionality of the news, the lack of a direct link between the information interests of the community and the journalistic mission, the political importance of television.
In this regard, the four pillars of Nippon Hoso Kyokai activities - serving society, the preservation of trust, the formation of the future and reform and innovation – have become some certain key values of Nippon Hoso Kyokai in 2012 for the near future;
- A characteristic feature of the media sphere of the country is the historically conditioned interconnection of TV and radio broadcasting companies and companies of periodicals. The functioning of five large media conglomerates not only forms peculiar professional ties in the journalistic environment but also has a clear political connotation, influencing the formation of the political agenda.

4. Discussion

A meaningful informal analysis of Japanese periodicals covers 2012-2017, which is explained by the need to analyze the role of the technological revolution and the formation of conditions for mobile communication and global society, the role of print media in the political and social life of modern Japan. The empirical base of the research was made by the laws about information and activities of various types of media, other legal documents regulating mass information, statutory, legal documents of the media and new media of Japan, statistical reports of professional journalistic organizations and associations of Japan. The authors also relied on the materials of the leading daily national Japanese publications, analytical materials of the Japanese press and information portals of the main conglomerates of Japan and the main media companies "Asahi", "Mainichi", "Nikkei", "Yomiuri". There are scientific works devoted to the study of particular issues of the functioning of the Japanese media: Azarov [6], Lazarev [7], and Seferova [8].
The issues of the legal regulation of the information sphere and the formation of the institutional foundations for the functioning of the Japanese media, including the interaction of the media and the existing political system, are explored in the works of Govorov [9], Gureeva [10], Nikolaeva [11], Panteleeva [12], Savintseva [13], Uchikawa [14].
The study of the problems of the media sphere should begin with the consideration of the terminological variability of modern journalism as a field of theoretical knowledge. We can often come across the fact that different lexical units are used to designate the same concept. For example, media education is aimed at gaining media literacy, media education, information literacy, a complex of media competencies, etc. The distinction of word-concepts, similar in their roots but different in their qualitative characteristics, is an important stage in any study. The need to study the modern media sphere is conditioned by the complication of information relationships in modern society and the development of new ways of communication. The media sphere cannot exist outside the framework of the society as its part.
The notion of "mediasphere" was one of the first to be used by the French philosopher and researcher Debray [15], the founder of the school of mediology. He understands by the term "media sphere" a "mega-environment" of transmission and delivery of messages. The concept of the media sphere is conceptualized within the school of mediology, which arose in France in the 1980s. Representatives of the school offered to analyze media technologies (understood as widely as possible) in terms of the way they transformed social practices in the modern media sphere. The main task of the mediology was to understand and explain how changes in the methods of information transfer and message delivery caused transformations in the thinking and behavior of individuals and vice versa: the way cultural traditions caused, introduced or changed technical innovations.
Defining the object of mediology, Debray notes that this is "technically determined material set of medium, links and data facilities that ensure for each particular era its social existence". The method of mediation is based on four basic concepts: message, medium, milieu and mediation. According to Debray, it is the formula of "4M": "message, medium, milieu, mediation". The message is the cultural information transmitted, the essence of which is determined by those mechanisms and means that mediate its transportation. Mediation is an internal feature of the message, consisting in the ability to be transmitted, spread and stored. The term "medium" is defined by researchers by the formula: "A serves as a medium for B when B occurs through A and is practically impossible without A". Thus, the mass media are included in this element of analysis. The milieu is that system of technical and technological, as well as social, cultural and other conditions in which cultural transmission is developed.
The peculiarities of the mediological approach are that, firstly, mediology studies not only the influence of communicative technologies on social reality but also the transformation of concepts, signs, images, symbols, ideas that have circulation in culture, into some kind of "energy that allows us to manage society ". Thus, information products and their importance in society directly depend on the technical means by which they are transmitted.
In other words, mediology is interested in the circulation of ideas; it focuses on the technological infrastructure through which symbols are transmitted. Considering the development and introduction of new information technologies into the process of information exchange, this property is especially valuable for our research.
The second important feature of mediology is that, according to Debray and Bunu, the sociology of mediation is not so much a new field of scientific knowledge as a special method of analyzing the "socio-technological" reality. This method, which is based on the formula "4M", makes it possible to effectively analyze the interaction systems "media – society", "technology – society", "means of transmission – ideas" [16].
In the knowledge society, information flows are transformed into conscious meanings that accumulate in the media sphere – the space in which the content and information technologies are unified, which facilitates the assimilation of meanings. This approach to understanding the media sphere constantly brings it back to the relationship with society. At the same time, the media sphere is defined as a certain space, while the society in classical and modern sociology is perceived in the categories of the system. The study and development of the media sphere in Japan are now of great importance. Understanding that the government uses the media for the purpose of manipulation or other purposes is no longer a secret. Russian scientists Bykov [17], Nikonov [18, 19, 20], Labush [21] believe that understanding the way Japan's media system is formed contributes to the formation of the information strategy of the Russian state called Noopolitics.
Modern social science studies society as a system consisting of subsystems – spheres of social life. The sphere of social life is a certain set of stable relations among social actors. The study of the sphere of social life is reduced to the analysis of social subjects as the main elements and to the analysis and characterization of the links that arise among these subjects.
In the framework of this approach to understanding the sphere of public life, we would like to consider the relationship between the concepts of the media sphere and the media system, which are actively used in media studies but do not have a clear distinction

and often substitute for each other. To do this, we turn to the difference between the concepts of the political system and the political sphere of social life.

The political sphere of social life is a subsystem of society, which consists of subjects building their relations with regard to power. The political sphere assumes only the naming of a virtual space within which a stable political system is formed that cannot have special distinctive features within the framework of a particular society. The media sphere, in turn, will be called the subsystem of society, a part of the information sphere, a certain sphere of social life, which consists of certain subjects who are in certain relationships with each other.

The notion of the social institution was introduced by Spencer [22]. Within the framework of his theory of the existence of a lasting society as a living organism, he understands institutions as a system of social actions united by a certain set of functions necessary for the existence of society.

In the general theory of action, Parsons [23] understands the social institution as special values, normative complexes that regulate the behavior of individuals.

Durkheim [24], within the framework of the analysis of the institutions of society, refers to the functions of such a structure as professional labor organizations called "institutes of professional organizations".

The very notion of "institutionalization" is introduced already in the twentieth century by Wilton Hamilton [25] who defines an institution as "a common way of thinking or acting, imprinted in the habits of groups and customs of people". From his point of view, the institutions, reflecting the consensus on actions and activities, fix specific procedures. Institutions can be understood as trade unions, states, corporations, and customs.

One of the first theorists of institutionalism is Veblen [26], who analyzed the institute of an "idle class". He understands the institutions quite broadly: "Institutions are different customs, prevailing types of thinking, ways, and methods of activity ingrained in the minds of people".

According to Veblen, institutes are accepted forms of organization of society that control the behavior of people and determine their lifestyle. Veblen also formulated the basic principles of institutionalism in the framework of economic theory.

5 Conclusion

In this study, we have shown the features of media institutions in Japan that are closely related to the socio-political features of the development of society. With the transformation of technological and political communications, Japan's media institutions are forced to adapt to the demands of the new era, but, in general, national features such as the self-regulation of the journalistic community, the value of moral and ethical interpersonal relationships, the availability of a large number of professional media subjects, a unique system for collecting information and self-restraint journalists retain their status. At the same time, under the conditions of separate systems for regulating the print market, commercial television and radio broadcasting and public broadcasting, the phenomenon of media conglomeration, which is of great political importance, is still with us.

Within the framework of Japan's media sphere, the elements of the media sphere that we have identified are grouped as follows:

1. Traditional media can be combined into one group, as having similar tasks and functions in the society; among traditional media, public broadcasting is singled out, which stands alone in terms of ethical norms and has a separate legal basis and is not included in professional journalistic unions (structurally, this allocation is similar to European systems, but meaningful public broadcasting of Japan is oriented towards the realization of national tasks).

2. A unique element of the media sphere, which has not only a separate ethical-behavioral complex but also an independent functional, is a system of press clubs that has no analogues in Europe; the existence of this system is supported by nearly one-hundred-year (in 2013) traditions and unspoken rules of relationships established by media outlets and authorities; thus, the press clubs not only represent an institutionally independent journalistic institution within the Japanese media sphere but also fulfill the task of interacting with the political and professional-maternal spheres of activity.

3. The functional features of media conglomerates deserve to be singled out as a separate group. The regulatory and legal complex for this element of the media sphere is a collection of simpler object complexes, identified earlier. This includes ethical codes of the newspaper, magazine press, commercial broadcasting, and legislation regulating the activities of broadcasting, and the telecommunications market. Given that the media conglomerates are an economically advantageous combination of various media companies, the functional characteristics will not only be information-oriented but also economically conditioned. In the framework of the analysis, we can state that: 1) Japan's media conglomerates, concentrated vertically, on the one hand, do not have a strong owner, as is the case in European countries (for example, Spain's media groups); 2) and on the other hand, they have quite obvious behavioral characteristics, presenting the audience with political positions similar to those of political parties existing in the country. The presence of five media conglomerates, thus, represents a palette of political positions, generally providing political pluralism.

4. Professional organizations of journalists functionally do not differ fundamentally from European ones, except that governmental organizations in the information sphere are aimed at the development of new information and communication technologies and their introduction into the everyday life of citizens, which is also not fundamentally new for European traditions familiar to us.

5. The function of the distribution system, it would seem, cannot be allocated, because the distribution of print media cannot have a different functional task. But, given the existence of the normative and ethical base mentioned by us in the structural division of the country's media sphere, we are forced to emphasize that emphasis is placed on the dissemination function.

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