

Print Mass Media as a Government Tool in Strategic Communications: A Study Based on Content Analysis of Publications in Russia

Sorokin, Gennadii G.; Rybakova, Anna I.; Popova, Irina N.

Veröffentlichungsversion / Published Version
Zeitschriftenartikel / journal article

Empfohlene Zitierung / Suggested Citation:

Sorokin, G. G., Rybakova, A. I., & Popova, I. N. (2019). Print Mass Media as a Government Tool in Strategic Communications: A Study Based on Content Analysis of Publications in Russia. *Media Watch*, 10(1), 79-91. <https://doi.org/10.15655/mw/2019/v10i1/49558>

Nutzungsbedingungen:

Dieser Text wird unter einer CC BY-NC-ND Lizenz (Namensnennung-Nicht-kommerziell-Keine Bearbeitung) zur Verfügung gestellt. Nähere Auskünfte zu den CC-Lizenzen finden Sie hier:
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/deed.de>

Terms of use:

This document is made available under a CC BY-NC-ND Licence (Attribution-Non Commercial-NoDerivatives). For more information see:
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0>

Print Mass Media as a Government Tool in Strategic Communications: A Study Based on Content Analysis of Publications in Russia

GENNADII G. SOROKIN¹, ANNA I. RYBAKOVA², IRINA N. POPOVA³

¹Tyumen Industrial University, Russian Federation

²Russian State Social University, Russian Federation

³Ural State University of Economics, Russian Federation

The article examines the socio-demographic characteristics of Russian print media readership along with a content analysis of press publications with a view of understanding the role of media in shaping public opinion from the perspective of theory and practice of strategic communication. A timely example of a resonant social process is considered in retrospect, showing the insufficient effectiveness of strategic government communications in Russia and the problems of information interaction in society. Several hypotheses were defined on the ways to improve the effectiveness of government strategic communications. Based on the research results, the authors suggest ways to optimize this practice, aimed at achieving more holistic and desired results in terms of stability and sustainability of socio-economic processes. The study determined that the use of complex tools and one-way communication methods through print media is not enough for effective "implementation" of the state's position on the solution of the problem situation.

Keywords: Strategic communications, public opinion, media, portrait of an audience, content analysis

The modern paradigm of social development is accompanied by numerous crises, which lead to the adoption of often unpopular measures by the government. In order to avoid the destabilization of society, these measures require a skillful management of public opinion. In this regard, the importance of functions performed by the press to determine consumer behavior of the general reader is increasing. The minimum task is to control possible panic moods. In some cases, a higher goal may be set – to change public opinion and attract it to the side of the changes. Along with the government, economic circumstances motivate business for manipulations. This, in turn, is reflected in the information background generated through the media.

The essence of strategic communications is taking root among the masses of certain opinions/feelings, leading to the desired behaviors or omissions. Qualitative strategic communication should translate into the individual's confidence in the justice of the actions performed. Burnett and Moriarty (1998) developed this idea in their *hierarchy-of-effects model*. It involves a three-step analysis of the impact of communication, based on the AIDA model (St. Elmo Lewis, 1908).

The mass communications system has a unique potential for implementation of humanitarian technologies and the following social transformations. Due to the mass

Corresponding Author: Gennadii G. Sorokin, Department of Business Informatics and Mathematics, Tyumen Industrial University, 38 Volodarskogo Str., Tyumen 625000, Russian Federation.

nature of information dissemination, it becomes possible to accelerate the transition of phenomena from the category of “unthinkable” to the category of “popular” and approved based on the principle of Overton windows (Sazonova, 2018). The crises, damaging part of the social groups, reveal the need for complex media practices of “problems management”. The approach described above allows managing complexities associated with unpopular changes, both in society and the team (Chumikov & Bocharov, 2010).

Any strategic initiative here can be considered initially as a crisis in the relationship between the initiator and the society (Abbas, 2018), since it violates the status quo. The communication strategy related to the lighting of preparation and implementation of initiatives could have a fundamental impact on the attitude of society to the changes. It is worth noticing that manipulation can have both negative and positive effects. Quite often manipulations are more effective than direct guidance in critical situations when society is in a state of panic and is not able to perceive reasonable government appeals (Markin, 2017). It should be pointed out that the relationship between the government and society is characterized by bilateral dependence. The authorities depend on public opinion, which may complicate or support their strategic measures. In turn, public masses are subject to the influence of authorities, which possess incomparably greater information resources.

This and other circumstances eventually led to the study of mechanisms of strategic communications through the media. It is of special scientific interest to find out which methods allow achieving stability and sustainability of public opinion under the conditions of socio-economic changes. The study is motivated by the complexity of the meaningful management of society state against the background of different interests and the structural problems of the information industry in Russia. Therefore, the research objective is to determine the role of print media as the most rigid segment of information space, in the system of the government strategic communications.

As a practical example, the authors analyzed the pension reform in Russia, which is associated with the resonance socio-economic process. The reform itself is not subject to evaluation in the present article. The methods of effective management of public opinion through printed mass media serve as a research subject. To analyze the problem situation, basic hypotheses have been put forward, according to which:

- (i) The effectiveness of strategic communications of authorities can be assessed by the frequency and tonality of thematic publications, as well as the awareness and motivation of citizens to changes.
- (ii) Print media work well as a confidential strategic communication at the value level on vital topics with the population over the age of 35 years with higher education.

Literature Review

The socio-economic state of society is influenced by a complex of organized and unorganized communications between individuals and their groups, institutionalized and informal actors. Thus, the media as the scope of the study is profoundly synthetic (Vartanova, 2018). Whereas, the practice of studying the influence of the media on public life has a long history and counts dozens of recognized methods, while none of them is recognized as the best (Fomich, 2018).

American psychologists were the first to study the mass information effects, beginning with Charles Horton Cooley (1897, 1902). Following him, the area was studied by the prominent representatives of philosophy, sociology, culturology, etc. Herald Lasswell became a bright figure in this field in the middle of the twentieth century, once he published

his sociological model (Lasswell, 1948). Representatives of the nascent Palo Alto School, including Gregory Bateson, introduced the idea of bilateral interaction as the basis of mass information (Ruesch & Bateson, 1951). The Frankfurt School, headed by Adorno and Horkheimer, put into widespread use the universal notion of “*communication*” (Adorno & Horkheimer, 2002), which simplified the mutual understanding of representatives of various disciplines.

The system of relations between the creators and consumers of content is subject to various types of modeling. The main types of models are discussed below.

Lasswell’s “Magic Bullet Model” (Lasswell, 1948) represents a linear algorithm for transmitting the *Message from the Sender to the Recipient*, which leads to a transformation. After receiving it, the recipient must acquire new knowledge, feelings, aspirations, and, as a result, show a new behavior. The difference from the previous model is in the presence of *Feedback*, which verifies the result of communication. The Maletzke model (Maletzke, 1963) develops Lasswell’s approach, reducing it to four entities: *Sender, Message, Channel* and *Recipient*. Maletzke considers the interpretation of the message on the recipient’s side as an integral attribute of the latter. The circular Schramm-Osgood model (Schramm, 1954) is based on the idea of a closed transformation chain of the *Message*. The system includes feedback, which allows the dialogue to come to a mutual agreement of the parties.

The two-stage (multistage) model of Lazarsfeld/Berelson describes two (or more) phases of transmission and sequential conversion of the message to the target audience. The intermediate link converts and amplifies the signal (Berelson, 1952). The Robinson model (Robinson, 1976) as the Lazarsfeld/Berelson variation provides for passive or unreceptive recipients. In the real case, it may be part of the print audience, which is not related to the subject. In content analysis, it will create noise.

Newcomb’s communication model is based on the concept of asymmetry of the opinions of two or more players over a known subject. The Westley and MacLean conceptual model (Westley, MacLean, 1957) complements Newcomb’s model with the connections between individuals, groups and masses, and also considers the difference between the emotional and rational aspects of communication.

Mathematical media models are one of the varieties. They apply differential equations for a formal and detailed study of the nonlinear dynamics of media transformation. A typical model is based on a countable set of citizens n , divided in relation to the specific context into four groups: A (a group wanting certain changes), B (a group of knowledgeable citizens interested in the same change as the group A), C (people who are aware of the current processes and principles, and do not want any changes), and D (a group that does not know about the current processes in society and has no desire for changes) (Sukhodolov et al., 2017). Based on this model, Sukhodolov formulated a number of significant recommendations for ensuring the integrity of community by aggregating the maximum number of citizens in priority category B.

The variety of models leads to the conclusion that only by combining the structural analysis of the audience with the analysis of the content of messages in the media one can draw a conclusion about the nature of media influence on public behavior and moods in complex processes. Let us consider in detail an example based on the adapted methodical approach.

Materials and Methods

Mass media play a significant role in shaping and changing public opinion. Complex description, explanation and engineering of the processes of this influence, evaluation of

its consequences require system analysis at all stages. From the perspective of event-semantic discourse, the most notable forms of media products content analysis are: first, *the agenda*. This method is limited to identification of an interconnected set of topics covered in the media and regularly updated; second, *the priming*. This technique reveals the retention (including artificial) of specific topics on the agenda under the influence of certain political or social considerations, and thirdly, *the framing* (framework analysis). This approach to the analysis of verbal content, also called the second-level agenda, was first described by previously mentioned Gregory Bateson as a form of comprehending socio-economic reality (Bateson, 1972).

In practice, separate speech constructs are considered as frames, which establish a way of representing the message and influence the real processes and phenomena that the reader recognizes while reviewing the corresponding text. For each frame, it is possible to define: an author or publication as the creator of a frame; text; reader; community, its values, culture, norms as factors of perception of a frame. The first two mark the creation of a frame and its investiture in a specific content. The third and the fourth – acquiring of the frame by the audience and further transformation of its consciousness. The entire process is generally defined as *media framing* (Fomich, 2018).

The destiny of the media frame is characterized by the speed of its spread and the dynamics of change, as well as the extent to which the audience is able to influence its transformation. From this point of view, the processes of media framing in social networks and online media are the most flexible. It is logical to expect a fundamentally different situation in the case of print media deprived of user content, which is an important motivating factor in this study.

In the government strategic communications, a huge role is played by who is the source of the message and what he does in this role. In the current concept of openness of the authorities, this is necessary for a manageable interpretation of processes and a stable impact on public opinion. To manage public consciousness and behavior effectively, a complex work of a full cycle is necessary. This means that the authorities should not only compose targeted messages for certain social groups but also accompany the creation and dissemination of information at all stages (Markin, 2017). Based on the content analysis of individual publications, Krasovskaya (2018) suggested the great potential of the print media in the formation of a useful information background and changing public opinion.

Linguistic and stylistic, sociological and psychological, aesthetical-cultural and political, intercultural and other methodologies are applicable to the analysis of the content of print media. There are traditional forms of synthesis of these approaches into interdisciplinary methods of analysis (Dobrosklonskaya, 2014). Combining these approaches in the field of media linguistics, researchers deduce a more holistic representation of the printed features of speech, which leads to profound conclusions about the methods, and possible consequences of its impact on the minds of the readers.

To describe strategic communications that accompanied the problem situation under study, the authors used such approaches as content analysis, media framing and mathematical modeling. The content analysis allowed identifying the key message objects, their frequency, tone, media index and priority types of publications. The analysis of the volume of publications by year includes the percentage of reprints showing the general spread of media interest in the subject matter. The analysis of the frequency of references to objects includes a deviation score of positive references from negative, showing the intensity of the object use:

$$\frac{(\text{positive} - \text{negative})}{(\text{positive} + \text{negative})} \times 100\%$$

The methodology of content analysis is designed for an unbiased systematic numerical description of texts of a series of printed publications. It is based on statistical processing of specific elements of the text (Berelson, 1952). This approach is useful primarily because of its flexibility: any element of the text can be selected for statistical analysis, which contributes to the unbiased description of the socio-economic reality presented in the publications under study. With regard to the study of media frames, the content analysis focuses on the quantitative study of the choice, location and internal arrangement of certain terms and phrases in the text. The purpose of such a study is to identify frame blocks created by certain terms. "Manual" comparison of the elements of communication with the respective frames allowed classifying the content of semantic and cultural characteristics, as well as to segment the target audience of the values (Jo-Yun & Rodriguez, 2015).

Results and Discussion

Problem Statement

When starting to analyze strategic communications, one should rely on historical background, including the results of previous information events that affected the public consciousness.

In 2002, a large-scale pension reform was launched in Russia, which resulted in the appearance of the concept of a funded and insurance part of the pension. The share of emotionally colored publications in the press was significant, with negative tone predominating. In 2006, the polls held by VCIOM (Russian Public Opinion Research Center) showed that people are actively interested in the national projects, but are mostly skeptical about them. The VCIOM management explained this by a lack of feedback between the authorities and the population at the stage of program development (Yakovlev, 2012).

In response, the Center for Strategic Research has involved more than 20 expert groups based on the "Higher School of Economics" University and the Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration and recruited public representatives to develop the Concept of Development of the Russian Federation until 2020. The Government adopted the Long-Term Development Strategy for the Pension System. The declared meaning of the measures is to provide a socially approved level of well-being (in the context of the optimal "income-expenditure ratio" (Dirzytė et al., 2016)). The increase in the efficiency of the funded part of pension is declared among the tasks related to this goal. In 2012, first citizens received pensions that included accumulative and insurance parts.

In September 2013, the government disseminated information about the "temporary" freezing of the funded part of the pension. Six percent of contributions to the funded part was transferred to the insurance part. The meaning of this decision was to reduce the deficit of the state budget. Thus, the decision, which really contradicts the previously adopted Strategy, was undertaken as an anti-crisis one. In subsequent years, the moratorium on the funded part was prolonged, and the frozen contributions in 2016 allowed creating an anti-crisis budget fund. By 2017, the anti-crisis moratorium on changing the funded part has acquired a long-term character. This should facilitate the adoption of changes in the pension system by the masses.

At the same time by July 2015, the public awareness of the reform was growing too slow. Acceleration was due to a sharp increase in the number of publications on the topic (Table 1).

In June 2018, the Russian government submitted to the State Duma a draft law on the pension reform, the essence of which is reduced to a single measure – a gradual increase in the retirement age from 60 to 65 for men and from 55 to 63 for women. However, the authorities managed to keep a stable title “pension reform bill” in the media space instead of a more specific “bill on raising the retirement age”. The moratorium on the funded part was retained.

Table 1. Awareness of the Russian citizens on the pension reform (2012-2018)

Respondents' answer	2012	2015	2018
Aware of, %	16	18	-
Heard of, %	55	60	97
Unaware of, %	28	20	3

Source: (VCIOM, 2012, 2015; The "Public Opinion" Fund, 2018)

Changes in the moods and behavior of the population are created through the formation of the necessary information background in the media. There is no direct external communication of authorities with the citizens (not through the media) about the reforms. The official website of the Pension Fund of the Russian Federation does not introduce the population to the planned changes, but only describes the existing practices, i.e. solves tactical and not strategic tasks. Against the background of such actions, the dynamics of loyalty is enlightening (Table 2).

Table 2. People's attitudes towards raising the retirement age

Respondents' answer	1998	2006	2009	2015	2018
Support, %	5.5	12.0	11.0	13.0	7.5
Do not support, %	23.0	22.0	28.0	29.5	18.0
Strongly disagree, %	67.5	62.	55.5	50.5	71.5
Not sure, %	4.0	5.5	7.0	9.0	3.0

Source: (Levada-Center, 2015, 2018)

When analyzing these figures, it is worth considering that the content of the planned reform has changed. If in 2015, the increase in the retirement age was only one of a number of measures, in 2018 only a waiver of the funded part of the pension accompanies it. Despite the growth in the number of those who disagree with the reform, one can state the success of strategic communications, given that the degree of the unpopularity of the reform is growing.

In the terminology of the mathematical model presented by Sukhodolov *et al.* (2017), over 6 years, the groups A and D have been minimized, while the group C still strictly dominates in relation to the target group B (informed and loyal).

Analysis of Publications on the Problem Situation

Following are the results of content analysis of the media publishing within the subject. From January 1, 2012 to December 31, 2016, according to the key words “raising the retirement age”, 40,405 publications were identified, 43% of which are repetitive (Table 3).

In terms of time, the tone of publications has gradually changed, while emotionally colored publications are rare. The predominance of a neutral tone of communication points to the good cooperation of press services of the authorities with the media. The effect is completed by a reasonable, conflict-free justification of government decisions.

Table 3. Number of publications in the media on the problem situation in 2012-2016

Indicator	Period					
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Total
Original (k)	3,287	1,620	1,344	9,754	6,910	22,915
Copy (l)	1,837	1,021	1,063	8,146	5,423	17,490
% of references (k+l)	12.68%	6.53%	5.96%	44.30%	30.50%	100.00%
% of copies (l/k)	35.85%	38.66%	44.16%	45.51%	43.97%	43.27%

In general, the share of emotionally colored publications fluctuates around 5-10% due to the news nature of the messages. Twenty-three per cent of publications account for forty per cent of the total number of emotional publications (negative and positive). This contributes to the effect of blurring responsibility: readers do not link their negative experiences with specific personalities and programs. Thus, there is a systematic dilution of media frames in publications.

Currently, the process of changing both the structure of the readership and the nature of the use of print media continues. The trend of deep redistribution of the audience and changes in the reader behavior is inevitable. According to VCIOM (2017), in 2017, 17% of citizens were ready to abstain completely from printed media. If one considers only the youth, this indicator will reach 36%. Hence, the print media do not play such a significant role in the mass of publications compared to the Internet. The press takes the third line among the media on the mention of pension reform (problem situation) (Table 4). About 61.5% of all publications relate to the genre of news, while 31.7% relate to analytics.

Table 4. Most active media in the subject in their categories

Media type	Share of this media type	References
Internet	76%	30,641
News agencies	13%	5,402
Magazines and newspapers	5%	1,962
TV	4%	1,445
Radio	2%	954

At the same time, media inevitably influence the formation of the value system of their audience. The change in value orientations depends more on the interpretation of the facts than on the facts themselves. It is for interpretation that citizens turn to printed sources of information. However, public confidence in the official media as a source of morality and significant values fell from 73% in 1989 to 46% in 2014 (VCIOM, 2017).

The way of using printed materials is fundamentally changing: printed materials focus on analytics, opinions, entertaining rubrics, while it is easier for readers to obtain operational information from virtual sources. The same applies to the professional use of the media, for example, when searching for mass data for statistical processing or marketing research.

Against this background, the role of the press in resolving the tasks of authorities and business is substantially changing: part of the audience is generally inaccessible through the press; the other part refers to the press with great confidence but addresses it only in connection with certain interests. Of interest is what topics still make sense in the press and which social groups they should be directed.

The press has a number of structural differences associated with specific characteristics of social portraits of its audience and with the reader behavior. The authors have tracked changes to these aspects over the past few years, available through the MediaScope service (MediaScope, n.d.). The data was taken from five newspapers mentioning the raising of the retirement age, in descending order to the least frequently mentioned: Vedomosti, Moskovsky Komsomolets, Rossiyskaya Gazeta, Kommersant, and The RBC Newspaper. The sample range is five quarters over 2.5 years: the 4th quarter of 2015, the 2nd quarter of 2016, the 4th quarter of 2016, the 2nd quarter of 2017, and the 4th quarter of 2017. The sample region is Moscow (Russia).

The total volume of the audience of the five newspapers has decreased by 26% over the period. A relative majority (30 to 50%) of the readers are economically active population. The table below shows the dynamics of the proportion of the audience aged 35 to 54 years (Table 5). Over the period under review, the proportion of the pre-retirement segment has increased on average from +10% to +35%.

Table 5. Share of the media audience aged 35-54 in Moscow in 2015-2017

Media edition	2015.Q4	2016.Q2	2016.Q4	2017.Q2	2017.Q4
"Vedomosti" newspaper, %	42.6	43.4	39.6	41.7	46.8
"Moskovsky Komsomolets" newspaper, %	39.1	34.1	32.3	28.6	35.6
"Rossiyskaya Gazeta" newspaper, %	29.6	36.4	31.7	34.3	37.3
"Kommersant" newspaper, %	44.6	37.9	36.3	43.8	49.2
"RBC" newspaper, %	41.6	32.3	38.2	37.3	45.8

The absolute majority (from 50 to 80%) of readers have a higher education. The change in the share of educated audience is non-monotonous and in most cases insignificant, though in general, it shows a rising trend. The structure of the audience by employment, income and social status is relatively stable.

In general, over the past 2.5 years, one can state a slight decline in the young audience and a significant growth in the audience segments over 55, especially male readers, and, respectively, pensioners and housewives. The latter determined the stability of the age category of 35-54 years. The portrait of the readership is changing towards increasing the average age. The category of entrepreneurs is predictably growing, correlating with the growth in the share of the readers employed in small businesses. At the same time, the share of managers has increased; workers and employees are less likely to read newspapers.

Summary data on changes in the socio-demographic portrait of the print media readership in Russia for 2015-2018 are given in the Appendix (Tables A-C). The analysis of these data, together with the content analysis of the press over the same period, prompts the conclusion on the forms of strategic communication that would be more effective than that applied in practice.

Building feedback with the audience is entirely the task of the media. Readers' initiative in this direction is declining. At the same time, attracting and processing readers' feedback can help to clarify the moods and requests of the audience (Shcherova, 2018). Virtual social sites, where the infrastructure for such cooperation is provided in advance and no additional effort is required by the editorial office, have an advantage over print media in this area, but the latter should invest resources and efforts in this work in order to maintain contact with the audience and the long-term effectiveness of influence on public opinion. At the same time, the content analysis of more than 6,000 publications and news agencies with the help of the Integrum system (Integrum, n.d.) shows a systematic increase in the importance of value problems for Russian periodicals.

To summarize this section, it is possible to give two recommendations for successful strategic government communications, especially on the topics with conflict potential:

- (i) to broadcast the image of the future that will come after the changes, not in its pure form, but on the background of topics, interesting to the audience: innovations, growth of the real household incomes, healthcare development, etc.
- (ii) to adjust information messages sent to certain channels, not only to the interests but also to the actual moods of the audience using these channels.

Conclusion

The analysis of the tone of publications has shown that real unpopular political actions within the framework of the chosen example are conducted in a mixed type involving individuals who are currently not burdened with specific obligations to society. Strategic communications specialists rely primarily on the central federal media. Federal media can quickly and efficiently inform the maximum proportion of the population about the nature of the planned activities and receive feedback, but not support. Over the period from 1998 to 2018, the number of citizens, who are loyal to the problem situation in question, has increased from 5 to 7.5%, which is quite understandable by natural factors.

The hypotheses of the study lead to the following conclusions. First, the use of a set of tools and methods of unidirectional communication through print media is not enough for effective "implementation" of the state's position on the issue. It is necessary to focus on the feedback, considering changes in the structure of the readership and the availability of alternative opinions through other media resources (including online media). Print media can contribute to a trustful strategic communication at the value level with a population aged 35 years with higher education, subject that they correspond with citizens' thematic interests and provide careful feedback processing. It is important to take into account that media-based learning does not necessarily make sense nor is it necessarily effective, for that matter, simply because it uses a medium (Giessen, 2015).

Secondly, the effectiveness of the government's strategic communications is not only linked to the frequency and tone of thematic publications. The growth of public awareness is achieved through the mass information media. Loyalty thus can be reduced, especially if the content of communication changes. Optimal results of strategic communications on sensitive social issues are achievable through the maximal approximation of style and content of communication media to certain moods and opinions of the audience.

The prospects for further study of the issues raised in this paper may be associated with the study of predictive tools of strategic communications, based on the change of the

media readership structure and its capacity for independent exchange through online services. The conjugate effects of broadcasting position on acute socio-economic problems among print media and online media, including social networks, can change the perception of the importance of traditional communications in particular and the mechanism of generating communication strategies as a whole.

References

- Abbas, S.A. (2018). Entrepreneurship and Information Technology Businesses in Economic Crisis. *Entrepreneurship and Sustainability Issues*, 5(3), 682-692. Retrieved July 24, 2018, from [https://doi.org/10.9770/jesi.2018.5.3\(20\)](https://doi.org/10.9770/jesi.2018.5.3(20))
- Adorno, T.W., & Horkheimer, M. (2002). *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (E. Jephcott, Trans.). Stanford: Stanford UP.
- Bateson, G. (1972). *Steps to an Ecology of Mind: Collected Essays in Anthropology, Psychiatry, Evolution, and Epistemology*. New York: Ballantine Books.
- Berelson, B. (1952). *Content Analysis in Communication Research*. Glencoe: The Free Press.
- Burnett, J., & Moriarty, S. (1998). *Introduction to Marketing Communication: An Integrated Approach*. Prentice Hall.
- Chumikov, A.N., & Bocharov, M.P. (2010). *Public Relations. Theory and Practice: Tutorial*. Moscow: Delo.
- Cooley, C.H. (1897). The Process of Social Change. *Political Science Quarterly*, 12, 63-81.
- Cooley, C.H. (1902). *Human Nature and the Social Order*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.
- Dirzytė, A., Rakauskienė, O.G., & Servetkienė, V. (2016). Household Income and Satisfaction with Life: Cognitive – Emotional Impact Paradox. *Entrepreneurship and Sustainability Issues*, 4(2), 198-210. Retrieved July 24, 2018, from [https://doi.org/10.9770/jesi.2016.4.2\(7\)](https://doi.org/10.9770/jesi.2016.4.2(7))
- Dobrosklonskaya, T.G. (2014). Media Linguistics: A Systematic Approach to the Study of Media Language. Moscow: Flinta.
- Fomich, M.O. (2018). Framing Method in Media Studies. *Belarus State University Journal. Philosophy. Psychology*, 1, 78-82.
- Giessen, H.W. (2015). Sustainable Entrepreneurship and Peculiarities of Media-Based Learning. *Entrepreneurship and Sustainability Issues*, 2(3), 154-162. Retrieved July 24, 2018, from [https://doi.org/10.9770/jesi.2014.2.3\(4\)](https://doi.org/10.9770/jesi.2014.2.3(4))
- Integrum. (n.d.). *Media Monitoring System*. Retrieved July 24, 2018, from <https://integrum.ru>
- Jo-Yun, L., & Rodriguez, L. (2015). Appeals, Sexual Images, Visual Metaphors and Themes: Differences in Condom Print Ads across Four Continents. *Online Journal of Communication and Media Technologies*, 5(3), 1-23. Retrieved September 10, 2017, from <http://www.ojmt.net/articles/53/533.pdf>
- Krasovskaya, E.V. (2018). The Role of Regional Media in Formation of the Modern Sociocultural Space. *Sofia*, 1, 80-86.
- Lasswell, H. (1948). *The Communication of Ideas*. New York: Harper.
- Levada-Center. (2015). *Poll of October 3, 2015*. Retrieved July 10, 2018, from <http://www.levada.ru/2015/03/10/povyshenie-pensionnogo-vozrasta/>
- Levada-Center. (2018). *Poll of July 5, 2018*. Retrieved July 8, 2018, from <https://www.levada.ru/2018/07/05/pensionnaya-reforma-3/>

- Maletzke, G. (1963). *Psychologie der Massenkommunikation*. In *Theorie und Systematik*. Hamburg: Hans-Bredow-Institut.
- Markin, A.V. (2017). Manipulation of Consciousness in the Modern Information Space. *Scientific Bulletin of the Southern Institute of Management*, 3, 113-118.
- Mediascope. (2017a). *NRS. National Readership Survey – Russia. No. 2017/1 (September 2016 – February 2017)*. Mediascope.
- Mediascope. (2017b). *NRS. National Readership Survey – Russia. No. 2017/2 (December 2016 – April 2017)*. Mediascope.
- Mediascope. (2017c). *NRS. National Readership Survey – Russia. No. 2017/3 (March – July 2017)*. Mediascope.
- Mediascope. (2017d). *NRS. National Readership Survey – Russia. No. 2017/4 (May – October 2017)*. Mediascope.
- Mediascope. (2018a). *NRS. National Readership Survey – Russia. No. 2018/1 (September 2017 – February 2018)*. Mediascope.
- Mediascope. (2018b). *NRS. National Readership Survey – Russia. No. 2018/2 (December 2017 – April 2018)*. Mediascope.
- MediaScope. (n.d.). Retrieved July 24, 2018, from <http://mediascope.net>
- Robinson, J.P. (1976). Interpersonal Influence in Election Campaigns: Two Step-Flow Hypotheses. *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, 40(3), 304-319.
- Ruesch, J., & Bateson, G. (1951). *Communication: The Social Matrix of Psychiatry*. New York.
- Sazonova, A.A. (2018). Mass Media as an Instrument of Humanitarian Technologies to Influence Public Consciousness. *Historical, Philosophical, Political and Law Sciences, Culturology and Study of Art. Issues of Theory and Practice*, 1(87), 78-81.
- Schramm, W. (1954). How Communication Works. In W. Schramm (Ed.), *Process and Effects of Mass Communication*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Shcherova, M.S. (2018). Methods of Interaction with the Readership in Specialized Periodicals. *Bulletin of Lobachevsky State University of Nizhni Novgorod*, 1, 223-226.
- St Elmo Lewis, E. (1908). *Financial Advertising. (The History of Advertising)*. Levey Brothers.
- Sukhodolov, A.P., Kuznetsova, I.A., & Timofeev, S.V. (2017). The Analysis of Approaches in Modelling of Mass Media. *Theoretical and Practical Issues of Journalism*, 6(3), 287-305. [https://doi.org/10.17150/2308-6203.2017.6\(3\).287-305](https://doi.org/10.17150/2308-6203.2017.6(3).287-305)
- The “Public Opinion” Fund. (2018). *Increasing the Retirement Age: Citizens’ Reaction*. Retrieved July 10, 2018, from <http://fom.ru/Ekonomika/14057>
- TNS Gallup Media. (2016a). *NRS. National Readership Survey – Russia. No. 2016/1 (September 2015 – February 2016)*. TNS Gallup Media.
- TNS Gallup Media. (2016b). *NRS. National Readership Survey – Russia. No. 2016/2 (December 2015 – April 2016)*. TNS Gallup Media.
- TNS Gallup Media. (2016c). *NRS. National Readership Survey – Russia. No. 2016/3 (March – July 2016)*. TNS Gallup Media.
- TNS Gallup Media. (2016d). *NRS. National Readership Survey – Russia. No. 2016/4 (May – October 2016)*. TNS Gallup Media.
- Vartanova, E.L. (2018). Media Theory as a Crossroad of Scientific Approaches and Methods. *Theoretical and Practical Issues of Journalism*, 7(1), 165-176. DOI 10.17150/2308-6203.2018.7(1).165-176.
- VCIOM. (2012). *Poll for October 2012*. Retrieved June 25, 2018, from <https://goo.gl/PXmhZL>
- VCIOM. (2015). *Poll for July 2015*. Retrieved June 18, 2018, from <http://izvestia.ru/news/585177>
- VCIOM. (2017). *Press Release No. 3284*. Retrieved June 15, 2018, from <https://goo.gl/sYK8in>

- Westley, B.H., & MacLean, M.S. Jr. (1957). A Conceptual Model for Communications Research. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 34(1), 31-38.
- Yakovlev, I.P. (2012). Economic Problems of Regions and Industrial Complexes. *Problems of Modern Economics*, 2(42), 312.

Annexes (A-C)

Table A. Gender and age structure of the print media audience

Period	Gender – M	16-34 M	35-54 M	55+ M	16-34 F	35-54 F	55+ F
2015, Q4	44.4%	17.1%	15.8%	11.5%	17.7%	17.8%	20.1%
2016, Q1	44.4%	17.1%	15.8%	11.5%	17.7%	17.8%	20.1%
2016, Q2	44.4%	17.1%	15.8%	11.5%	17.7%	17.8%	20.1%
2016, Q3	44.4%	17.1%	15.8%	11.5%	17.7%	17.8%	20.1%
2016, Q4	44.3%	16.6%	15.9%	11.8%	17.3%	17.8%	20.5%
2017, Q1	44.3%	16.6%	15.9%	11.8%	17.3%	17.8%	20.5%
2017, Q2	44.3%	16.6%	15.9%	11.8%	17.3%	17.8%	20.5%
2017, Q3	44.3%	16.6%	15.9%	11.8%	17.3%	17.8%	20.5%
2017, Q4	44.3%	16.4%	15.9%	12.1%	16.9%	17.9%	20.9%
2018, Q1	44.3%	16.3%	15.9%	12.1%	16.9%	17.9%	20.9%

Source: (NRS 2016-2018)

Table B. Education, labor status and total household income of the print media audience

Period	Second. education	Higher education	Working	Employed in the public sector	Employed in their own business	Upper class	Middle class	Lower class
2015, Q4	56.9%	38.8%	62.3%	31.7%	8.1%	19.1%	24.2%	10.2%
2016, Q1	56.9%	38.8%	61.6%	31.3%	8.6%	17.7%	25.0%	10.9%
2016, Q2	57.3%	38.8%	61.3%	31.7%	8.1%	17.6%	24.6%	11.0%
2016, Q3	57.7%	38.8%	61.7%	31.6%	8.0%	18.8%	24.0%	10.3%
2016, Q4	57.3%	38.8%	61.3%	31.4%	8.5%	18.7%	23.8%	10.4%
2017, Q1	57.1%	38.8%	61.5%	30.9%	8.6%	18.4%	24.6%	10.6%
2017, Q2	57.5%	38.8%	61.8%	30.7%	8.7%	18.9%	24.4%	10.2%
2017, Q3	57.3%	38.8%	61.2%	32.1%	9.1%	19.2%	23.1%	9.7%
2017, Q4	57.0%	38.9%	61.0%	32.0%	9.8%	19.6%	22.6%	9.6%
2018, Q1	57.1%	38.9%	60.0%	30.7%	9.9%	19.9%	23.1%	9.7%

Source: (NRS 2016-2018)

Table C. Social status of the print media audience

Period	Top-managers	Specialists	Officers	Work people	Students	Retirees	Unem- employed	House- wives
2015, Q4	13.0%	17.0%	10.2%	19.8%	5.5%	22.5%	3.6%	5.7%
2016, Q1	13.3%	16.7%	9.8%	19.5%	5.8%	22.4%	4.0%	5.9%
2016, Q2	13.3%	16.8%	9.6%	19.2%	5.7%	22.4%	4.2%	5.9%
2016, Q3	13.1%	17.1%	9.5%	19.4%	5.5%	22.5%	4.1%	5.8%
2016, Q4	13.3%	17.1%	9.1%	18.9%	5.5%	23.0%	3.9%	5.9%
2017, Q1	13.6%	16.9%	9.5%	18.5%	5.8%	22.9%	3.6%	5.8%
2017, Q2	14.3%	17.1%	9.6%	18.1%	5.5%	22.8%	3.5%	5.8%
2017, Q3	14.4%	17.8%	9.0%	17.5%	5.3%	23.2%	3.6%	6.0%
2017, Q4	14.0%	17.6%	9.3%	17.4%	5.1%	23.7%	3.3%	6.0%
2018, Q1	13.6%	17.5%	8.9%	17.3%	5.4%	24.0%	3.4%	6.4%

Source: (NRS 2016-2018)

Gennadii G. Sorokin (Ph.D., Tyumen State University, 2006) is an Associate Professor in the Department of Business Informatics and Mathematics at Tyumen Industrial University (Tyumen, Russian Federation). His research interests are: algorithms for solving non-standard problems, theoretical Informatics, sociology of education, and information technology.

Anna I. Rybakova (Ph.D., Russian State Social University, 2008) is an Associate Professor and Dean of the Faculty of Additional Vocational Education of the Russian State Social University. Her research interests are: education, social psychology, complementary education, poverty, social work, labor relations, and social and economic development.

Irina N. Popova (Ph.D., Ural Academy of Public Service, 2006) is an Assistant professor in the Department of Business Economics at Ural State University of Economics (Ekaterinburg, Russian Federation). Her research interests are: organization of entrepreneurial activity, economy of small and medium businesses, and social problems of society.