

ОРИГИНАЛЬНАЯ СТАТЬЯ

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# Ролевое позиционирование и политическая функция российских СМИ\*

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## АННОТАЦИЯ

Новостные СМИ — рупор политики, экономики и дипломатии страны. Являясь особым символом социальной культуры, они фиксируют социальные реформы и отражают контекст национального развития. В процессе распространения информации российское правительство создает основные СМИ, устанавливая контроль над ними и интегрируя национальные ресурсы, а также используя взаимное влияние политики и СМИ, поддерживает политическое правление власть имущих. Российские новостные СМИ играют все более значительную роль в политической жизни России, реализуя свою функцию социального контроля путем формирования общественного мнения, определения повестки дня и наблюдения за деятельностью правительства.

**Ключевые слова:** основные СМИ; распространение информации; политическая функция

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ORIGINAL PAPER

# The Role Positioning and Political Function of Russian News Media\*\*

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## ABSTRACT

News media is an essential mouthpiece of a country's politics, economy and diplomacy, which, as a special symbol of social culture, records social reforms and grasps the context of national development. In the process of information dissemination, the Russian government builds the mainstream media by strengthening media control and integrating national resources and maintains the political rule of those in power by making use of the mutual shaping of politics and news media. The Russian news media plays an increasingly significant role in Russian political life, realising its social control function through public opinion guidance, agenda-setting and supervision towards the government.

**Keywords:** mainstream media; information dissemination; political function

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**N**ews media is the product of social and historical development, and it is a kind of communication tool gradually produced and developed to meet people's increasing demand for material and cultural exchanges. News media plays an active role in the historical development of modern society and has a profound influence on the politics, economy, society and culture in the process of social-historical development. Due to its public domain nature, the mass media can produce important political influence [1]. After a series of reforms and development, the Russian news media has gradually formed a political media model with Russian characteristics under the "national vertical rights" and vigorously developed the international mainstream media through the integration of national resources under the leadership of the Putin government, making it unique and professional in the process of communication, and giving better play to its political function.

## **1. THE ROLE POSITIONING OF RUSSIAN NEWS MEDIA**

### **1.1. The development of Russian news media**

In the early 18th century, Tsar Peter I founded Russia's first official newspaper, "Izvestia", the country's earliest news media carrier. In order to promote the development of the printing business, the monarchs strengthened the state control over the printing production, making printing journalism a special institution of the state at that time [2]. In the 1920s, with the publication of a large number of newspapers and the rise of radio stations in Russia, the era of Russian news media really came. In the Soviet era, the news media was completely subject to the administrative instructions of government departments, and it was part of the entire national administrative system, which was "strictly ideological and hierarchical" [3]. In the later period of Gorbachev's reform, the state loosened its monitoring of the news media, gave them more autonomy in personnel matters and reduced restrictions on foreign media. Even since 1987, residents of the Soviet Union had listened freely to Western radio stations such as BBC and "Voice of America". Although the news media in this period was still a tool of the government and was under the government's leadership, the freedom and independence granted by the loose political

environment endowed the news media with the function of "the fourth power" in the West.

Upon the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Russia entered a period of comprehensive transformation, and Russian news media was obviously characterised by "Westernisation" development. Although he was often criticised and attacked by the media during Yeltsin's first term in power, he basically adopted a tolerant and restrained attitude towards the news media [4]. After system transformation and conceptual changes, Russian news media actively moved towards the Western model and adopted a comprehensive privatisation policy, which created the conditions for the financial oligarchs to acquire the mass media and control the state power. It can be seen that the news media during Yeltsin's first term was characterised by marketisation and liberalisation [4].

The nature of Russian news media began to change in 1996. The media oligarchs gave Yeltsin's campaign a tremendous build-up through the use of their control of radio, television and newspapers, including the country's three main television stations of OPT, PTP, and HTB. On Yeltsin's re-election, the media oligarchs entered the country's political field, and at that time, the political characteristics of the news media were obvious. During this period, the media turned into a tool for the government to manipulate public opinion, and the financial oligarchs began to intervene in national politics. They began to wantonly purchase media organisations and expand their scale. At that time, 70% of the media in Russia were under the manipulation of the two major media forces Berezovsky and Gusinsky [4]. Several "media empires" sprang up, and the mass media entered a period of oligopoly. As Yeltsin put it, the news media of the day was: "Berezovsky and Gusinsky invested all their money in creating a powerful television conglomerate, a printing holding company, which, in essence, was an attempt to monopolise the mass media".

In the Russian presidential election in 1999, Putin finally became the president of Russia in the new century with a support rate of 52.9 per cent. Mr Putin realised that to end the country's chaos, and he had to control the public opinion orientation of the media and let the media escort the realisation of the dream of building a "powerful Russia". In the event of the sinking of the Kursk nuclear submarine on August 12, 2000, the slander

of some media strengthened Putin's determination to crack down on the media oligarchs, eliminate their interference in politics, strengthen the state's supervision over news media, and implement the operation license system for the media. Putin gradually established a media system composed of three management modes: state-owned enterprises and private operations. According to statistics, as of July 2010, the mainstream mass media in Russia, including most TV stations, had been almost directly or indirectly in the hands of the state [5]. At that time, if the media published news that was out of sync with the government policy, it would attract various kinds of legal investigation and punishment in terms of economy and laws, or sometimes it was just the unavailability of the information from relevant government departments. However, this "punishment" alone would make media agencies unbearable because the government was one of the key sources of information. Most of the news was routinely scheduled events planned by the government. Under such circumstances, the Russian media could only take orders from the administrative authorities and play the role of political rule [6].

Therefore, the government-controlled the mainstream news media in Russia, and the media began to serve the national policy, which was in line with Putin's concept that news media nationalisation was higher than liberalisation. Many scholars believe that under the control of the Putin government, a new social institution, the media-political system, has emerged in Russia. It is a new power institution that uses symbolic means to persuade the audience. The media information resources of Russia and the Russian authorities are linked together to form a special symbiosis of administrative resources of public opinion [7]. In fact, Putin's control over the state media is to incorporate the press into its political and economic fields, thus turning it into a lobbying tool. The acquisition of the media is not based on commercial profits but purely for political purposes to gain strong leverage to influence public opinion and affect the political decision-making process of the country [8].

### 1.2. The uniqueness of Russian news media

Under the influence of different countries, regions, cultures, development and other factors, news media presents different characteristics. In the process of Russia's transformation, the news media

has gradually formed a political media model with Russian characteristics under the "national vertical rights".

During his 20 years in office, Putin, proceeding from the actual situation of Russia, absorbs the achievements of Western news media while respecting the cultural traditions of his own nation, which enables the Russian news media to embark on a path with Russian characteristics. On the one hand, as the founder and owner of the news media, the Russian government has never left the media stage and has been controlling the development of media institutions. On the other hand, the role of the government in the news media is not only to provide financial support but also to exercise other powers, including politics. The government of the Russian Federation nowadays has the strongest voice in the news media, which indicates that the mainstream Russian news media is under the thumb of the government.

In recent years, the Russian government has gradually cultivated international mainstream news media. RIA Novosti, one of the most authoritative and largest news agencies in Russia, is a traditional news agency and a huge global information service provider. In December 2013, however, the Kremlin suddenly announced that Putin would replace RIA Novosti with Russia Today (RT). Later, Ivanov, the head of the Kremlin, explained to the press that the reorganisation of RIA Novosti was to "make better use of public funds".<sup>1</sup> Dmitry Kiselyov, who was appointed head of Russia Today at the time, said his task was to restore the world's fair attitude towards Russia. A year later, Russia's News Agency "Satellite" was established. It was an Internet-based new media to fade out the official colour of RT's external publicity, achieve seamless connection with RT in publicity, and improve the quality of communication. Obviously, it aimed to integrate national resources, improve the communication system, expand the influence of the international public opinion struggle, and make it better serve the publicity of national positions and policies.

Information influence is an effective tool for political and economic governance, and all information has become subordinated to political goals. The concentration of purposeful information ensures the accomplishment of ideological and

<sup>1</sup> РИА Новости стало вторым Russia Today. URL: <https://www.sostav.ru/publication/ria-novosti-stalo-vtorym-russia-today-7260.html>.

other tasks, especially military tasks. At present, this trend will continue to increase [9]. Putin intends to build a unified brand, enhance Russian media's overseas influence, and transform the mainstream media from a weak defensive tool to an offensive tool. The mainstream media concentrates purposeful information to "restore the world's just attitude towards Russia" and disseminate the truth about its domestic and foreign policies. The discourse behind these news media reflects the basic ideas of Russian public diplomacy and plays a complementary role in many international political issues. In the current deteriorating international situation, Russia needs a platform for effective interaction with the foreign public. RT channel is such a platform, and its role is not confined to pure strategic communication. Meanwhile, it supports the foreign policy of the Russian Federation, protects Russian interests in the energy sector, promotes a positive image of Russia, and acts as a tool for information warfare when necessary. These have made the news media a mature tool of Russian politics and foreign policies [10].

In the process of information dissemination, the news media can easily arouse public emotions through a large amount of information bombardment and the stimulation of videos and photos. When the Russian public sees pictures of terrorist brutality, scenes of Crimean compatriots' strong desire to return under the Ukrainian crisis situation, the daily new date of patients under the ravage of COVID-19, and even the so-called "Putin Palace" video released by Alexei Navalny, etc., these will arouse the emotions of the audience. These impulses may lead to the breakdown of diplomatic relations, the criticism of the international public opinion, or the demonstrations of the Russian people, forcing the Russian government to take corresponding countermeasures. That is why the Putin government has focused on building international media and striving for "its own endorsement". From the standpoint of international communication, the national mainstream news media and the government share the same frequency. Therefore, the Russian government not only strengthens the financial support for the publicity mainstream media but also gives "important" and exclusive information at critical moments, in an effort to attract more attention and public opinion, strengthen the soft power struggle with the United States and other Western countries, and better play its political functions.

## 2. POLITICAL FUNCTION OF RUSSIAN MEDIA

Based on giving full play to its communication function, the news media can also give better play to its political function, seize the high ground of public opinion, and lay a solid foundation for national ideological security and political stability [11]. At the same time, it plays an active role in the development of modern society and history. It has a profound impact on the politics, economy, society and culture in the development of modern society and history, indicating important impacts, especially in terms of politics [12]. It is manifested in aspects such as fact cognition, public opinion guidance, agenda-setting and supervision towards the government.

### 2.1. Cognitive Function

For the news media, reports should be timely, objective and accurate to protect the public's right to learn the truth. Only when there is a clear understanding of the truth can it actively and accurately play its social function to guide public opinion, shape public values, strengthen social consensus and form a political attitude. For the government, disseminating information by the media to the entire society helps eliminate barriers and build consensus and assists citizens in obtaining information about the current political situation and providing an information basis for their political participation.

However, when people get information from news media and communication, they will inevitably induce the public with false rumours. Therefore, the public hopes to get accurate information from the government through the media. After COVID-19 swept the globe, the Scientific Research Department of the Russian Higher School of Economics conducted an online survey on the epidemic: What do Russians think of the epidemic? It was shocking that 41.1 per cent of the respondents believed that the epidemic did not exist at all. Maybe, people with interests fabricated it. Even 74.22 per cent felt that the self-isolation system was unnecessary. The main reason people did not pay attention to it lies in difficulty getting accurate knowledge from the complicated news and understanding the truth and severity of the epidemic.

In addition, it is inevitable that some public opinions and rumours are not conducive to the stability and development of the country. The



Financial Times, for example, made a wild assertion with the epidemic that “as the number of confirmed cases imported from Russia increases, so does China’s anger. It is likely to reinforce China’s long-standing sense of superiority towards Russia and the anti-Russian sentiment. In Russia, the virus may aggravate the deep-rooted Sino-phobia.” The newspaper even predicted that the epidemic crisis would affect Sino-Russian relations, which is exactly the reflection of the use of the media by Western countries to provoke Sino-Russian relations in an attempt to pull Russia into the anti-China camp. In fact, the news media is to report “what is happening”. Due to the suddenness and threat of COVID-19, the news media should timely release correct information in a calm and neutral manner to stabilise popular sentiments, prevent political turbulence caused by public opinion rumours and even the destruction of relations between countries.

Therefore, when reporting COVID-19, the news media should make the public aware of the facts of the epidemic and give full consideration to the political attribute, scope, and consequences of the incident and report it with a prudent and rational attitude. At the same time, the media shall obtain and ensure the credibility of the source of communication and therefore help the government deal with the crisis. Otherwise, it will seriously affect the resolution of the epidemic and even lead to the escalation of the consequences of the epidemic.

## 2.2. Function in public opinion guidance

German sociologist Landz Huth once said that public opinion was the only recognised basis for the legitimacy of political governance. Modern countries regard people’s sovereignty as the premise of their own existence, and this kind of sovereignty is public opinion. Suppose there is no such premise, or public opinion is not regarded as the origin of the decision-making power that all power can have binding force on everyone. In that case, the modern democracy will lack the basis for its existence.<sup>2</sup> The most basic function of news media is public opinion guidance. Many scholars hold that the influence of media on citizen behaviour is realised through the establishment of certain public opinion, and the media has the ability to control or even manipulate public opinion [13]. The news

media is directly involved in the generation and dissemination of public opinion. That is to say; it does not express but create public opinion; it does not reflect people’s ideas about the world but forms these ideas themselves, thus forming people’s views on the world [14]. Therefore, the role of the news media is to constantly convey the decision-making information and guide the public opinion to develop in the direction of national interests.

Public opinion is the social attitude generated and held by the public in the face of social problems, which is a kind of appeal and expression of the public’s demand for their own interests. In the information age, the ability to respond to public opinion has become an important part of the modernisation of government governance ability. As a global public health emergency, since the occurrence of COVID-19, all kinds of public opinions have been overwhelming. Russian politician Cherdiev once used the media network to call on the public not to believe in the “world conspiracy” but to find out the “truth”. He accused the government and hospitals of conspiring to make profits. The spread of rumours swayed some people who did not believe in the official news of COVID-19, and eventually launched a gathering named “Do not believe in COVID-19” in North Ossetia, triggering the reprocessing and ferment of the deep-seated native events under the influence of the epidemic, which was also related to the overall epidemic prevention and social stability in Russia.

In fact, negative messages that undermine trust are more likely to be concerned than positive messages that enhance trust. In the process of epidemic prevention and control, the negative guidance of public opinion often makes the public judge the speech and policies of the government, and at the same time, the trust of the government is inevitably lost. As a result, the news media should reform radically, correct the behavioural choices of the public, and actively guide the public opinion to a direction that is favourable to the government. Therefore, Russia has established an official COVID-19 news website that updates relevant news such as related data, epidemic prevention measures, government support, vaccine research and development, and international cooperation in real-time to guide public opinion and stabilise public sentiments. As the mass media permeates modern society, political propaganda has become ubiquitous and even necessary for survival. The

<sup>2</sup> Habermas, Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere. Xuelin Publishing House; 1999.

news media, through their influence, guides public opinion to play a key role in the political development stage.

### 2.3. Function in political socialisation

The dissemination of news media includes the transmission and popularisation of political information, which affects the formation of people's political cognition, political emotion and political attitude, the dissemination and convergence of political culture, and the formation of social consensus. The existence of a society as a unified whole requires its members to have a "consensus" on the society. Only on this basis can people's judgments and actions have a common basis, and social life can be coordinated. The provision of this kind of consensus is an important function of social communication, which in traditional societies was undertaken by education and religion, while in modern society, it has become a major task of news media.<sup>3</sup> In other words, in many cases, the news media determines the "facts" seen by the public and guides the public to form a certain political culture and political consensus. In the transmission of information by the news media, public opinion guidance is its most basic function to reach political consensus, concentrate public opinion guidance, avoid greater disasters or crises, and make society more united and stable, which is the biggest responsibility of news media.

The direct result of the Ukraine crisis in 2014 was Crimea's withdrawal from Ukraine and its entry into Russia. However, it has to be mentioned that the Russian news media played an important role in the process of Crimea's change of ownership, which stimulated the national unity consensus and political attitude of Russia and Crimea residents through the information pressure and public opinion manipulation of the media. Since the Ukraine crisis, the Russian government has made great efforts to build momentum using the media and expounded its historical and emotional views. Putin regarded Crimea's return to Russia as a way to protect its residents from the invasion of Ukrainian nationalists and a way for Russia to correct historical wrongs, which laid the emotional groundwork for the Crimean referendum. The Russian media has proved to provide a key platform for the implementation of government policies

in promoting the emotional consensus between the Russian and Crimean people. During the 2018 presidential election in Russia, the date of the presidential election was specifically set as the date of the return of Crimea. According to a survey conducted by the All-Russian Public Opinion Center, the Russian public generally hoped that Putin would continue to serve as president, and the Russian public's support rate for Putin had hit a record high. Therefore, one of the most important political purposes of the news media in the process of information transmission and public opinion guidance is to achieve social consensus. Once a unified consensus is reached, it will be conducive to the realisation of social coordination, and the news media can better serve the authorities and the public.

While the dissemination of news media promotes a unified political culture and social consensus, it cannot be ignored that its audience covers all social classes, and the needs of different classes of the public for information are also multi-level. Therefore, the media should improve the structure and quality of reports. In the process of information transmission by the media, the audiences of different ages, occupations and cultural backgrounds have different degrees and ways of reaction, and their demands on the media also present more particularity in a certain general sense. Only when each media consciously matches the needs of the audience within its scope of responsibility can the entire news media most appropriately undertake the political mission.

### 2.4. Agenda-setting function

News media often cannot determine the specific opinions of the people on a certain event or opinion, but it can effectively control the facts that people pay attention to and the order of discussion through the provision of information and arrangement of related issues. It is the agenda-setting function of news media; although it cannot determine how people think, it can affect what people think.

Russia is one of the major powers in the world. Western countries have always been viewed in terms of domestic politics, economy, military, society, or national leaders since the image of a country is its culture and traditions and the leaders who represent the country on the world stage. It is no exaggeration to say that Russian President Vladimir Putin is one of the most discussed political figures in the domestic and international media.

<sup>3</sup> Social consensus encyclopedia knowledge website. URL: <https://baike.baidu.com/item/>.

The frequency of reports from Western media on Putin's remarks is no less than that on Russia. Daily Mirror, a Western media, reported in 2008 that Putin, a tough ex KGB man, was ruthless in the pursuit of the interests of his country; In 2013, the BBC reported that under the influence of Putin's KGB experience and authoritarianism, he made no secret of his nostalgia for the Soviet Union [15]. In addition, Putin has also been demonised into a "new tsar", and a "dictator" by the Western media, and Russia under his leadership has also been regarded as "a real threat to world stability and peace". In the Ukraine crisis in 2014, there were 361 reports by the Washington Post on Russia's position and the image of the Russian president in just 59 days from February to March, of which the negative reports on Russian President Vladimir Putin and Russia under his rule account for a considerable proportion [16]. According to the Washington Post, "Putin regime" is a corrupt system and a non-representative regime; It emphasises Putin's background as a former KGB senior officer; The report points out that Putin is an autocratic totalitarian tyrant who suppresses the development of domestic democracy for his own benefit, an unpredictable dictator and a bellicose revanchist leader; Putin holds the attitude of Cold War thinking and implements the foreign policy of nationalism [16]. In the Ukraine crisis, the U.S. mainstream media, "The Washington Post", mainly attacked Russia's foreign policy. They demonised Putin, calling for a strong response from all walks of life in the United States and Europe to Russia's diplomacy. The West tried to damage Russia's international reputation, further isolate Russia in the international community, put pressure on Putin's regime, and force Russia to embark on the road of complete Westernisation [17]. In the minds of many people in Western countries, Russia is still a dictatorial country. It is a deliberate attempt by Western countries to discredit the image of Russia and its president and to use media to imply that Russia is the "enemy" of their own people, thereby weakening Russia's strength and winning domestic public opinion support for achieving their own political goals in the international community [18].

Russia was unwilling to admit itself has outdone. It used the national mainstream media to change its stereotype during the Soviet era, spread its own culture and image of great power, and at the same time, it created the image of a "soft and tough man" leader through the media. After years of political planning and media shaping, Mr Putin's political

image of being "tough, resolute, firm and persistent, and macho" has gained huge popularity at home and abroad. According to sociological research, Putin had always enjoyed strong approval ratings and maintained "charismatic" among the domestic public. In the list of "Global Powers" published by Forbes, Putin had always been among the top and even surpassed Obama to rank first in 2013. Putin plays an active role in the political arena with his high popularity. Of course, a highly skilled team is only a part of success, and it takes careful agenda-setting to create a comprehensive and three-dimensional leader image. Putin's appearance is mostly the product of careful planning, which aims not only to create news, attract media coverage and fight back against the "demonisation and weakening" of the West but more importantly, to take the initiative to set the theme and tone of the reports and guide the public opinion in a favourable direction.

Traditionally, the most important factors in international relations are the country's economic and political structure, military potential and geopolitical status. However, it is worth noting that national image has recently become an equally important feature. One of the most important components of the national image is the image of the country's top leader [10]. Therefore, one of the agenda-setting functions of Russian news media is to influence people's concerns, shape the positive image of national leaders, and promote Russia to win more discourse on the world political arena. News media with the ability to influence public opinion can, to some extent, contribute to enhancing Russia's political influence in the post-Soviet era and even on the entire international arena.

## 2.5. The function of supervising the government

The function of news media to supervise the government is to guide public opinion to supervise some undesirable phenomena or behaviours of political parties and individuals, such as breaking the law and discipline, exposing, disclosing, and attacking them through media reports to achieve the purpose of the restriction. Supervision by public opinion is an important means for the development and operation of modern politics, economy and society. "Supervision by the news and public opinion" is a kind of supervision by public opinion that reveals the problems existing in real life and urges them to be solved through the



news media. It is a kind of supervision by public opinion that all walks of life express their views and opinions through the news media and form public opinion, thereby supervising and restricting the official behaviour of the state, social groups and individuals.<sup>4</sup> According to this definition, one of the key functions of the media is its direct influence on the power structure of the government. News media create a variable picture of political life, set up the “agenda”, arouse people’s attention to the activities of various political actors, and form the value attitude of citizens and affect the political activities of various social groups and individuals [19].

News media can independently generate political information, influence the political process and form public opinion. That’s why the authorities must try to control the activities of the media. In Russia, the government has even greater influence in the generation and dissemination of information, and this phenomenon has become highly natural. In this case, is the Russian mass media able to express the interests of the authorities and the interests of the majority of the people? While abiding by the existing laws and safeguarding the interests of the country and the entire society, news media should also protect the rights and freedom of citizens. In short, it should provide opportunities for representatives of social and political forces to communicate with each other on the power structure of major social issues [2].

In the development of the entire society, Russian people have been using the news media to monitor the behaviour of the government. During every presidential election in Russia, the candidates use news media organisations for propaganda. In fact, this also strengthens the Russian people’s attention and supervision of the country’s presidential election, thus ensuring the fairness and democracy of the election. In addition, Russian President Vladimir Putin uses media organisations to maintain dialogue and communication with the public every year. He is subject to the supervision of the entire Russian public to ensure the effective implementation of national policies.

On the other hand, the public will also confirm, evaluate and disseminate various information and decisions through their own exchanges with the president, and eventually form strong public

opinion pressure to supervise and criticise the government’s decisions and measures and supervise the reporting behaviour of the media. In 2011, Putin had more than four hours of direct dialogue with the television viewers, promising the introduction of a series of reforms to strengthen public supervision and access to the media and greater oversight over the government. The state of the union message in 2012 emphasised that “ensuring equal access to the news media for all political parties, and making our political system more just, open, and competitive”. These measures expanded the rights of citizens to freedom of association and political participation, to some extent satisfied the wishes of the opposition and voters with protest sentiments in the 2012 presidential election [20]. It also expanded people’s use of the media to supervise the work of the government and the behaviour of the government and public servants, expressed social emotions through the media, improved voters’ trust in Putin and the ruling party, and urged the authorities to take necessary measures to regulate and stabilise the social situation.

### 3. CONCLUSION

By combing the development process and positioning of Russian news media, it can be seen that the relationship between Russian media and the authorities has changed many times. In the early days of the development of news media, the media enjoyed considerable independence and was an uncontrollable force that participated in the power struggle between liberal governments. Under President Yeltsin, the large-scale privatisation of the media lost its independence and turned into a tool for commercial organisations to exert pressure on the authorities. After Putin took office, the media has been under the pressure of strengthening the vertical system of power and has become a tool to legitimise the exercise of state power [8]. In fact, as a superstructure, news media in any society serves certain political power or capital. However, in Russia, the news is more visible and more prominent in maintaining the rule of those in power [6].

Nowadays, the Putin government is attempting to deal with the challenges and threats of the modern world and vigorously develop the international mainstream news media to demonstrate its viability in the face of the struggle among the world’s major powers over the current and future use and distribution of world resources,

<sup>4</sup> News supervision encyclopedia knowledge website. URL: <https://baike.baidu.com/item/>.



and defend Russia's interests and values on the international stage. The successful practice of "Russia Today" and other international mainstream media has proved that the role and importance of information resources, including news media, will increase significantly. To some extent, news media is also a means to control social consciousness and a necessary tool for the dissemination of national policies and the competition for international discourse power, which means that the influence of the state on news media activities will survive.

The main activity of the news media is to attract the attention of the audience to political events through news reports and public opinion rendering to transmit certain political ideas, political attitudes and political emotions to support the modern political system. Therefore, the political

influence of news media in aspects such as fact cognition, public opinion guidance, agenda-setting and government supervision cannot be ignored. However, recognising the influence of mass media on modern politics, we cannot say in exaggeration that mass media can solve all problems [1]. The speed of information dissemination in today's society is very fast. The relevant remarks and videos published by Russian opposition Alexei Navalny on independent media have made Navaline's attention soar, even higher than the number of viewers on Russian state television. The attention and supervision of the public have affected the changes of the political situation in Russia. Therefore, at present, the Russian government will not indulge the freedom of the press, and the political functions of news media will turn to be increasingly abundant.

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