

## STRUCTURAL AND FUNCTIONAL ASPECTS OF POLITICAL COMMUNICATION IN THE CONTEXT OF MODERN SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

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### Summary

The article highlights the structural and functional features of political communication as a process of communicative interaction in the political sphere in the conditions of modern social development. It was determined that political communication is a communicative process of mutual exchange of political information and broadcasting of political discourse among political subjects, state administration bodies, civil society, aimed at achieving consensus in making political and managerial decisions, legitimizing power and maintaining the stability of the democratic political system through means mass communication, Internet social networks, informal contacts, etc. The leading functions of political communication in terms of its structural elements are distinguished: 1) subjects of political communication: citizens, state authorities and management, political parties, movements and associations, civil society institutions, associations and groups of users of social networks on the Internet etc; 2) feedback between the subjects of political communication, acting as a communicative interaction that takes on different forms of information exchange; 3) information message as a relevant political discourse; 4) channels and means of information transmission and two-way communication between subjects of political communication.

**Key words:** political communication, social changes, communicative interaction, subjects of political communication, political discourse, mass media communication, social media, Internet space, social networks.

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### 1. Introduction

Political communication as a communicative process of interaction and mutual exchange of political information between political subjects and civil society represents the basis of the functioning and stability of modern democratic societies. Therefore, the functioning and stability of the political system depends on the establishment of the system of political communications. K. Deutsch, defining the political system as a network system of information interactions and communications, pointed out that it is this system and the totality of information flows that influence the adoption of political and state-management decisions (*Akayomova A., 2011:88*). In this aspect, political institutions depend on the ability to create conditions for dialogic communication between political actors and civil society (and citizens in a broader sense) in order

to ensure their functioning through effective and transparent feedback between political communicators and addressees. The effectiveness of the democratic system of state and public administration depends on high-quality and transparent mechanisms for the implementation of political communications, and the development of an effective mechanism for the implementation of political communication requires its analysis in the structural and functional dimension.

## 2. Analysis of recent research and publications

Among the publications on the problems of political communication and its structural and functional features in modern society, we should note the works of such authors as: M. Azhazha, A. Akayomova, Yu. Bokoch, O. Budanova, A. Vayer, T. Voronova, O. Dorofeev, O. Vinnichuk, V. Dabizha, A. Danko-Sliptsova, O. Maiboroda, I. Pronoza, O. Rafalskyi, L. Tesfaye, O. Shimanova-Stefanyshyn, T. Shlemkevich, I. Tsikul, D. Yakovlev and many others.

## 3. Formulation of the goals of the article

The purpose of the research is to single out the structural and functional features of political communication as a process of communicative interaction in the political sphere in the conditions of modern social development.

## 4. Presentation of the main research material

In modern scientific discourse, there are many definitions of the concept of "political communication". Thus, the most famous and widespread definition of R.-Zh. Schwarzenberg, is "the process of transferring political information, by means of which information circulates between the elements of the political system, as well as between the political and social systems. The continuous process of information exchange is carried out both between individuals and between those who manage and those who are managed, with the aim of achieving agreement" (*Akayomova A., 2011:89*).

I. Pronoza, analysing the available definitions of the concept of "political communication", singled out the following characteristic features and groups of interpretations (*Pronoza I.I., 2021:76-77*): 1) political communication is a public discussion, first of all, regarding the distribution of the budget and power; 2) political communication acts as a purposeful action through the use of various forms of communication by political competitors; 3) political communication as a dynamic element of the political system, which completely forms socio-political attitudes in the mass consciousness; 4) political communication is considered as a communication process consisting of such elements as political subjects and institutions, mass communication media, audience, media messages, and thus the level of their interaction; 5) political communication as a plane of influence on the recipient of the message.

We define the concept of "political communication" as a communicative process of mutual exchange of political information and broadcasting of political discourse among political subjects, state administration bodies, civil society, aimed at achieving consensus in making political and managerial decisions, legitimizing power and maintaining the stability of the democratic political system through mass media, Internet social networks, informal contacts, etc.

In the scientific literature, there are many classifications of the functions of political communication, which in general are quite similar to each other, differing in the direction and

content of political communication, its political subjects and addressees. Thus, H. Lasswell, highlighting as subjects of political communication power and society (those who rule and those who are ruled) and its goal as propaganda and manipulation of public opinion and public consciousness, singled out such leading functions as: 1) achievement power and establishing control over the social and political environment; 2) coordination of all elements of the social system to support its stability and preservation; 3) transmission of established forms of social and political organization of society as a legacy for future generations (*Akayomova A., 2011:90*). The functions identified by the scientist corresponded to the views on political communication and the conditions of social development of the beginning and middle of the 20th century, therefore they reflect the main functional connections of state power and society.

With the development and increase of the role of civil society as a self-organizing force in state administration, political decision-making and adaptive response to social changes and the rapid development of the information society, the functions of political communication acquire a slightly different focus, where the processes of maintaining the stability of the socio-political system, strengthening direct political participation of citizens and communicative interaction and mutual influence of the state and society. Among such functions, scientists single out (*Vayyer A.M., 2019:136*), (*Shlemkevych T.V., 2020:68*):

1) the information function reflects the cognitive aspect of information transmission through the dissemination of knowledge and ideas about the elements of the political system, forms and means of functioning of political institutions;

2) the regulatory function is aimed at optimizing and increasing the efficiency of the mechanism of interaction both between the elements of the political system and between the political system and civil society;

3) the function of political socialization contributes to the formation, implementation and implementation of norms and rules of activity and functioning of political institutions and patterns of political behaviour;

4) the manipulative function is aimed at forming public opinion regarding existing political problems, adopted political and administrative decisions, social and political problems of an extraordinary nature (war, political crisis, etc.). This function can have both a positive orientation in order to avoid destabilization of society, and a negative one – as the formation of a radical ideology in society (for example, the formation of public opinion in Russia regarding the war in Ukraine);

5) integration/disintegration function, which under certain political circumstances unites/polarizes citizens or their views on acutely relevant issues;

6) the motivational function through informational influence stimulates political participation of citizens (for example, during an election campaign), political subjects to communicative interaction on the basis of reaching consensus.

So, in the modern political discourse, the functional significance of political communication in society as a whole reflects the essence of political communication as an interaction between political institutions and civil society, where the main goals are: first, providing information to citizens based on the principles of openness, transparency and accessibility; secondly, establishment of communicative interaction and dialogue between the government and society; thirdly, the formation of political culture and normalization of political behaviour – as a mechanism of political socialization; fourth, legitimization of state power; fifth, maintaining the stability and stability of the social and political system.

The development of an effective mechanism for the implementation of political communication requires the identification and analysis of its structural elements. The most successful

structural model of political communication, which does not lose its relevance and scientific significance, is the linear model of communication by H. Lasswell. First described in 1948, the model proposes a structure for the communicative act of conveying a political message through a formula containing five questions: Who exactly? (communicator), Says what? (message), Using which channel? (channel), Addressing whom? (recipient), With what effect? (effect) (*Dan'ko-Sliptsova A.A., 2021*).

It should be noted that H. Lasswell's model is based on the behaviourist paradigm "stimulus-reaction" and primarily involves the study of the communicative process as a linear, monologic one, which narrows the range of elements of political communication. Therefore, in the future, scientists improved the proposed model, adding other significant elements that expand the possibilities of analysis: the social environment in which communication is carried out, motivational incentives of political subjects that initiate the communicative process; value and political orientations of the audience; the influence of external factors (so-called "noise" in other concepts); communicative strategies of political messages and global social changes. But a significant factor in the improvement of the classical paradigm of political communication is the introduction into the communication process of such an element as feedback between the communicator and the addressee (to which S. Shram, S. Thompson, P. Lazarfeld first drew attention), which made it possible to understand political communication as two-way communicative process, as information exchange between political subjects. This contributed to the fact that the communicator and the addressee, changing roles in communication, act as active political subjects of communication, the effect of which consists in the results of mutual influence (for example, the participation of civil society institutions in the discussion of political and state projects affects the adoption of management decisions by powerful political institutions).

In the context of this study, the following can be identified as the main structural elements of political communication:

1) subjects of political communication: citizens, state authorities and management bodies, political parties, movements and associations, civil society institutions, associations and groups of users of social networks on the Internet, etc. Moreover, as we noted, in political communication subjects can act as communicators (initiators of communication) and addressees (receivers of information), changing roles depending on the socio-political situation, the emergence and exacerbation of socio-political problems, changes in political discourse in public space;

2) feedback between the subjects of political communication, acting as a communicative interaction, which acquires various forms of information exchange and provides a mechanism for the implementation of political communication at the cognitive, emotional-evaluative and activity-behavioural levels;

3) informational message as a relevant political discourse, dependent on the relevance of the social and political situation, and its communicative strategies reproduced in sign (textual), symbolic (visual) and speech forms;

4) channels and means of information transmission and two-way communication between subjects. Researching the process and mechanisms of political communication, R.-Zh. Schwarzenberg identified the following main channels of information transmission, which involve the use of various means: first, mass media – print media, radio and television, campaign materials in election campaigns, political advertising; secondly, political communication is carried out through political and public organizations; third, communication through

informal channels using personal connections (*Shlemkevych T.V., 2020*). It should be noted that the current stage of development of information and communication technologies allows us to talk about the significant role of new social media in the Internet – social networks, blogs, etc. In our opinion, it is modern Internet technologies that influence changes in the understanding of the process and mechanism of political communications in the conditions of modern social development.

Let us consider in more detail the main structural elements of political communication.

The basis of the functioning of the modern democratic system of political and social management is the effective and established communicative interaction of the state and society through the dialogue of state authorities, officials and institutions of civil society. As scientists note, institutions of civil society can also act as subjects of power relations, among which are distinguished: public organizations and associations, independent mass media and social media, political parties that are not represented in institutions of state power (*Dorofyeyev O.V., Dubynka O.M., 2022:100*).

According to researchers E. Arkhipova and N. Dmytren (*Arkhipova Ye.O., Dmytrenko N.O., 2016:94*), the effectiveness of the state administration system depends on optimizing the communicative interaction of state authorities, the public and self-governing structures (institutes of local self-government), which involves the formation of an effective communication policy of the state and a single communicative space based on partnership and dialogue in solving social problems and making political and managerial decisions.

One of the leading subjects of political communication are political parties and associations, which act as an element of the political space of any society. One of the leading characteristics of political parties is their political ideology, which is based on political orientations and attitudes in a certain society. But modern social changes have affected the understanding of political parties: in particular, the weakening of its ideological component, the reduction of the role of the organizational structure, the impact of modern information and communication technologies on the functioning of a political party, the creation of a party network structure. So, in modern conditions of social development, the understanding, functional load and organizational principles of political parties are changing, and it is political communication that is the basis of interaction between political parties and voters, which is most actualized during the electoral process at the election stage.

As T. Avksentieva notes, in the era of the information society, political communication between political parties and voters takes place mainly not in the plane of direct contacts (that is, in the primary political context), but through mass media, social media, the Internet and social networks, and acquires a virtual character, which allows those who possess such resources to impose one or another interpretation of socio-political events according to their reasoning and benefit (*Avksent'yeva T.H., 2013:52-53*). However, in our opinion, the modern democratic system and the development of information and communication technologies (Internet, social networks, blogs, etc.) form a new dimension of interaction between political parties and voters: on the one hand, it is the spread of a network form of political communication, in which the political participation of voters depends from the influence of reference "influencers" (experts, bloggers, opinion leaders, journalists) and the peculiarities of voters' cognitive perception of social and political information, their understanding, awareness and making certain decisions on this basis; on the other – from the availability of feedback, the possibility of information exchange, the establishment of dialogue and consensus forms of communication between political subjects.

The content of political communication is defined as an information message, which is a text-speech and sign-symbolic reflection of the political discourse in general, and the political discourse itself is a specific manifestation of political communication. N. Kondratenko notes that the political discourse actualizes the political text (message) in the communicative interaction of political subjects and objects (*Kondratenko N.V., 2007:12*). In turn, L. Nagorna defines political discourse as a type of linguistic communication and semantic space in the political sphere (*Nagorna L.B., 2005:34*). Therefore, informational messages in the political sphere are presented as a textual and symbolic reflection of political discourse, which actualizes certain interpretations of a political event, situation or problem, which are broadcast by subjects of political communication (authorities, political institutions, political parties, civil society, citizens) as in the vertical and horizontal plane.

Among the main forms of information messages in the process of political communication, the following should be highlighted: news, campaign leaflets, booklets, television commercials, political advertising, Internet mailings, interviews with political leaders, experts, public figures, experts, etc. That is why another element in the classical model of political communication is the channels of transmission and broadcasting of political information.

To the classical channels of political communication, researchers include mass media, holding business events (seminars, conferences, etc.), organization of events for the press (as a direction of activity of PR services in political institutes), support of social and cultural events, which primarily acts as a socially useful activity of sub objects of political communication, messages, blogs, communication in the Internet environment and social networks (*Tsikul I., 2021:216*).

Mass media (mass media communication) are traditionally the most influential means and channel of political communication. If we talk about the main purpose of MMC, it is primarily the dissemination of socially significant information among the audience, including information related to the political sphere of society – political events, processes, activities of political institutions and authorities. So, media or mass media in the classical version (press, radio, television) act as the main channel for transmitting political information. It was the analysis of the informational messages of the printed mass media that contributed to the emergence of classical models of political communication.

However, despite the significant role in political communication, classical mass media implement a mostly one-way, linear communication link between the communicator and the audience, acting only as an intermediary, a channel for the transmission of political information, although the presence of independent mass media in democratic political systems can ensure pluralism of opinions and views about political events and problems, as well as feedback through the involvement of civil society institutions in the public discussion of socio-political problems.

Social media are of particular importance at the current stage of social development, the emergence of which is due to the development of the latest information and communication technologies for the implementation of communication on the Internet. Information and communication technologies act as an actual form of political communication, which in turn leads to the emergence of new channels and methods of communication interaction between political subjects, among which civil society acquires a more significant role in political processes.

The Internet space is characterized by the interactivity of communication, which in the context of political communication is called "network activism" and "cyberactivism"



("network activism" and "cyberactivism"), which are understood as information activities and organizational actions for the political mobilization of citizens, the creation of political network communities, lobbying interests of political parties and associations through the use of information channels of social media (*Vayyer A.M., 2019:137-138*). The Internet space and the peculiarities of its media environment form a new procedural model of political communication, mediatization of politics, which manifests itself in such moments as the emergence of new socio-political and social movements through the unification of local communities with the help of computer networks and the expansion of opportunities for direct participation of citizens in political processes (*Shlemkeyych T.V., 2022:128*). L. Tesfaye singles out the following features of the Internet as a political communication space: audience structure, "horizontal" communication, content generation by users, the influence of user ratings on the perception of messages, high mobilization potential, unlimitedness, targeting, multimedia and responsiveness (*Tesfayye L.A., 2021*), which create a fundamentally new political and communicative space, in which the leading elements are "the current political situation, influencers of public opinion, processes of horizontal communication between citizens and online platforms, on which political communication processes take place" (*Tesfayye L.A., 2021:62*). Therefore, qualitatively new structural elements of political communication are being formed in the modern information space: first, the network community (as Internet users) acts as subjects; representatives of state authorities involved in e-governance; information services of political parties and blogs and websites of public organizations; secondly, new channels of political communication are emerging – social media (social networks, blogs, chats, forums, etc.).

A special role in the modern information society is played by social networks as a channel of political communication, which provides an opportunity to express one's views on social and political events in society, and taking into account the global nature of network communication and events in the international political space. As noted by O. Dorofeev and O. Dubynka, the social network can be considered in two aspects: first, as a channel of political communication, which is characterized by interactivity, information exchange and feedback between subjects of political communication (state authorities, officials individuals, political parties, political leaders, civil society institutions, citizens); secondly, the social network itself acts as a network community, which is characterized by certain values, political and civic orientations, models and norms of communication, etc. (*Dorofeyev O.V., Dubynka O.M., 2022:101*).

One of the significant aspects of social networks as channels of political communication in modern society is also their use in election and electoral processes through the use of public opinion formation tools with the introduction of digital marketing technology. On the other hand, "social networks primarily perform the function of positioning an individual or group in the online space with the help of specialized web resources" (*Voronova T., 2023:87*), which allows a politician or a political party to shape its profile and image, as well as speak "an instrument of interaction with society, with the help of which you can win elections, tell the electorate about new political actions, highlight how the current problems of the state are solved" (*Voronova T., 2023:87*). Moreover, social networks have become an important part of e-government, where public authorities and management carry out their professional activities as an additional communication channel and establishing a dialogue with civil society.

Table 1 systematizes the results of the structural and functional analysis of political communication as a process of communicative interaction in the political sphere.

Table 1

**Structural and functional features of political communication**

Structural elements of political communication	Functions of political communication in terms of its structural elements and communicative interaction (feedback)
<p>Subjects of political communication: citizens, state authorities and management bodies, political parties, movements and associations, civil society institutions, associations and groups of users of social networks on the Internet, etc.</p>	<p>Functions of political communication in the dimension of communicative interaction of the state and civil society: 1) information provision and support of political and state-management decisions of authorities; 2) legitimation of political institutions of power and political leaders; 3) involvement in the development and adoption by state authorities of political decisions regarding the solution of urgent social problems of public institutions and political networks of active citizens; 4) creation of conditions for partnership, dialogue and consensual interaction of state authorities, local self-government bodies and citizens; 5) provision of social and public control over state administration bodies, activities of political parties, civil servants and officials of the highest category A; 6) democratization of public administration through an established reverse communication link between political institutions of power and civil society</p> <p>Functions of political communication in the dimension of communicative interaction between political parties and voters: 1) obtaining support for a political party in order to achieve victory in the election process; 2) legitimization of the political party as a political force in the representative authorities; 3) formation of public opinion regarding current social and political events and problems and ways to solve them; 4) support for the stability of the political system and the formation of political culture in society; 5) establishment of dialogue and consensus communication with voters and other political parties, movements and associations</p>
<p>Informational messages as a topical political discourse</p>	<p>The functions of political communication in terms of informational messages as the content of political communication: 1) informational as the broadcast of messages regarding current social and political events and problems; 2) mobilization – motivating the addressee to certain behavioral reactions and political participation in the electoral (and protest) process; 3) the ideological-influential function involves the activation of the electoral resource from the standpoint of the similarity of the political-ideological orientations of political parties and society; 4) the manipulative and propagandistic function is aimed at forming public opinion regarding the current political discourse on the part of the authorities and influential interest groups; 5) the stabilization function provides for the legitimation and support of state authorities and their political and administrative decisions due to feedback between the addressee and the communicator</p>
<p>Channels and means of information transmission and two-way communication between subjects of political communication</p>	<p>Functions of classic mass media in the context of political communication: 1) collection, storage and transmission of informational messages of political content and discourse; 2) formation of public opinion regarding the activities of authorities and their legitimation in the minds of citizens; 3) information provision of the election process; 4) promotion of political ideologies, values, models of social development</p> <p>Functions of new social media on the Internet as channels of political communication: 1) formation of a new type of political communication, which is based on interactivity and the formation of network communities; 2) individualization of political communication through increased participation of an individual citizen, group or community in the discussion of socio-political problems and the adoption of state-management decisions; 3) promotion of political ideas, leaders and parties in electoral and electoral processes through digital marketing technologies; 4) establishment of effective dialogue communication between authorities, political institutions and civil society</p>

Source: author's development



## 5. Conclusions and prospects for further research

So, summarizing the research results, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- firstly, political communication in modern society is characterized by: multi-subjectivity of subjects of political communication, feedback as a communicative interaction between subjects of political communication, political discourse as a manifestation of political communication, classic and new (social Internet media) channels of transmission and mutual exchange of political information;
- secondly, the leading functions of political communication are: providing information to citizens based on the principles of openness, transparency and accessibility regarding political events, problems and political-management decisions; establishment of communicative interaction and dialogue between the authorities and civil society, political institutions and citizens; formation of political culture and normalization of political behaviour; legitimization of state power and democratic political institutions; maintaining the stability and stability of the social and political system;
- thirdly, the structural elements of political communication are: 1) subjects of political communication: citizens, bodies of state power and management, political parties, movements and associations, institutions of civil society, associations and groups of users of social networks on the Internet etc; 2) feedback between the subjects of political communication, acting as a communicative interaction that takes on different forms of information exchange; 3) information message as a relevant political discourse; 4) channels and means of information transmission and two-way communication between subjects of political communication.

A promising direction of further research is the development of a structural and functional model of political communication in the conditions of social changes and the development of information and communication technologies.

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