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COMMUNICATION POLICY OF THE MODERN INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION SOCIETY

Досліджено роль та місце комунікаційної політики в сучасному інформаційно-комунікаційному суспільстві, яке тлумачиться як вища стадія розвитку інформаційного суспільства. Проаналізовано визначення поняття «комунікаційна політика», запропоновано власне трактування. Наголошено, що комунікаційна політика сприяє дослуховуванню до потреб та вимог громадян, включенню громадян у процеси прийняття важливих рішень. Виокремлено етапи створення комунікаційної політики.

Ключові слова: комунікація, інформаційно-комунікаційне суспільство, комунікаційна політика, комунікаційна стратегія, комунікаційний план, функції комунікаційної політики, громадськість.

Information and communication influence the efficient functioning of government structures, various organizations, progress and results of conflicts. Okinawa Charter of Global Information Society states that ICTs are one of the most important factors affecting the society of the XXI century. Their revolutionary impact refers to the way of life of people, their education and work as well as the interaction between the government and civil society [15].

Since the middle of 1960-ies within the social and futurological concepts scientists have been actively discussing the issue of entrance of the most developed countries in the stage of their information development. In the concepts of N. Luhmann, M. Castells, J. Habermas society is communicative in nature, and new information tools are one of the most important instruments of human orientation in the world and people's interaction. Information technologies and tools transform the industrial society into the information one.

The goal of the article is to define the nature and role of the communication policy of the modern information and communication society. The goal is to be achieved by performing the next tasks: to determine the new phase of society's development as the information and communication (IC) society; to specify the role of communication in the IC society; to define the term «communication policy»; to analyze the stages of communication policy elaboration.

In his work «The information society as post-industrial society» Y. Masuda has specified that after the establishment of the global information society worldwide communication activities of citizens will start, which will easily overcome all national boundaries, increase mutual exchange of information contributing to deepening the common understanding of global issues and enabling their solution from global perspective [28]. In the XX century, one of the theorists of the ideas of Information Society M. Castells argued that in the late XX century modern global information space would impose individual communication, and constantly growing amount of information would force to perceive it through emotional and imaginative impression [6].

Communication penetrates into all spheres of society, leading to 1) the emergence and development of a qualitatively new type of communication structures and processes, 2) deep rethinking of the communicative nature of social reality, modern changes in social and communicative environment, the place and role of communication in society [4]. It is the communication not merely the information that is the basis of the information society. This led to a paradigm shift in the whole concept of the information society. Information society has gradually transformed into information and communication society.

It is believed that one of the causes of the information and communication society emergence as the next phase of information society development is the very nature of the information revolution, i.e. not purely technological but socio-technological, caused by the development of ICT, network communication, the Internet, rapid westernization and globalization of modern society [19, c. 30]. I. Kazanskaya claims that the new information and communication society is characterized by the following features: the important role of ICT in all social practices; high concentration of any form of capital (resource, innovative, symbolic); absence of set time-space limits; restricted number of main actors; internal isolation in proclaiming the ideology of the open society; high level of globalization and virtualization of culture, economy, politics and education [11, c. 143].

D. Ivanov proposed the theory of the virtualization of society in order to explain the causes of information and communication society appearance [9, c. 10]. He claims that to understand the nature and role of information we should distinguish between the concepts of «message», «interpretation» and «communication». Specifically, the message means a «thing», that is the product of human intellectual activity which is transferred; interpretation is a «thought», that is acquired knowledge; and communication is the operation of broadcasting or transmission of

information (symbols) or interpretation. However, in a modern world «... operation of transmission is the crucial, dominant element of the triad «message – interpretation – communication»» [9, c. 11]. Thus, there is a paradoxical situation when the most informed is not the person who knows more, but one who is involved in a larger number of communications. *Homo sapiens* is transformed into *Homo communicans*. The researcher stresses that information can cause new operations only as a communication and not as a subject or knowledge; people act by using information, so communication flows are increasing and accelerating.

Gradually, the term «information and communication society» becomes part of the vocabulary of not only experts in ICT, but also politicians, economists, scientists, public figures. This concept is often associated with the development of high technologies (computer, information and media), means of communication that enable global society to respond to all the challenges of information technology revolution and the great social transformations of the modern world.

The use of modern means of communication has led to changing perceptions of the role of individuals in the process of making important political decisions. Internet has become a factor of political and cultural globalization; its accessibility and openness make it possible for any user to carry out political communication open, whose constructive and destructive criticism encourages owners of information resources to realize the need of evolutionary change of the political identity of actors [3].

By providing wide access to information and its analysis Internet enhances the potential of political communication and creates the illusion of overcoming the hierarchy of political power [18, c. 35]. According to S. Tikhonova, network organization of society changes the structure of the communication process, i.e. anyone can be both addresser and addressee in various communicative situations. The limits of communication processes are transparent and unclear, and different levels of communicative space are easily combined and are compatible [20].

Thanks to new technologies of Web 2.0 and Web 3.0 there is a new form of communication – mass self-communication which is multimodal and allows to reformat its content owing to free access to the software and spread of wireless connection. The content of such communication is updated and managed by users concerning messages and is selected by the users in terms of receiving messages «from many – to many». As a result, intermediaries disappear on the way of information transfer. Horizontal networks are built around individual initiatives, interests and desires; network society is gradually integrated into real life and changes the sphere of human activity [2]. Gradually, information and communication society is being transformed into a network that is «a society in which much of the information interaction takes place through electronic networks» [13].

In today's information and communication society communication is seen as a panacea for all social upheavals because it provides a general awareness of various social actors, contributes to a unified system of values and thus relieves tension in their relations and interactions. Communication processes occur quite active in the politics requiring constant connection between the authorities, political parties, public organizations, associations, lobbying groups, the media and the public on topical issues of socio-political and socio-economic life, which are provided by political communication.

Political communication is the most important factor in the democratization of power relations, as they are based on the principles of public policy and provide constant relations between political actors at all levels. Due to political communication the contradictions that complicate democratization of society (government bureaucracy, manipulating of public opinion, distrust of the authorities and NGOs, the low professional level of officials, etc.) can be overcome. Communication plays a significant role in the political process as a factor of understanding, convergence, consolidation of business policy, harmonizing the interests of different social groups within each country and sovereign states in the international arena [12].

In modern information and communication society where information and knowledge are the main subjects of labor of the majority of people, and information technologies are the tools of labor, the state and other political actors simultaneously perform information and communication functions, namely

- information function includes creating information; support of information that has national significance; preservation and protection of information necessary for the implementation of state functions; creation of specialized structures in the field of information and regulation of their activities; information exchange between public authorities (inside the state apparatus); use of the information in the internal interests of the state; storage of the information at different stages of the information process; the creation of the single information space of the state as part of global information space [16];

- communication function is manifested in providing citizens, business and organizations with public services quickly and efficiently, in establishing interaction between public authorities with citizens and organizations on the basis of equal partner relations [14].

In fact, the communication function of the state and other political entities is implemented in the following areas: assurance of transparency of activities; close interaction with the media; providing information services to citizens; public access to socially important public information; involving citizens in public discussions of important issues; responding to the requests of citizens, maintaining current real feedback; informing the public about the decisions taken and so on.

Applied research of communication in general and communication policy in particular began during the discussions that were initiated by the UNESCO back in 1946 and in 1972 the UNESCO offered the first definition of communication policy: «Communication policies are sets of principles and norms established to guide the behavior of communication systems. Emanating from political ideologies, the social, economic, cultural and legal conditions of the country and the values on which they are based, they strive to relate these to the real needs for, and the prospective opportunities of, communication. Communication policies exist in every society, though they may sometimes be latent and disjointed, rather than clearly articulated and harmonized. They may be very general, in the nature of desirable goals and principles, or they may be more specific and practically binding» [25].

In 1978 the UNESCO team of experts while offering advice on the development of communication policies gave a number of reasons for the need of communication policy and communication plan according to which a national communication policy will help to achieve the following goals [29]:

- to create a climate of and the spirit of seeking common endeavor;
- to ensure the full and systematic use of communication resources aimed at social, cultural and economic development;
- to guarantee that the people are not only kept informed of developments relevant to their daily life, but also motivated in a sustained way to contribute to and participate in their country's development programs;
- to promote cooperation and coordination between the various agencies and organizations in the public and private sectors that are involved in the processes of collection, processing and dissemination of information;
- to contribute to the development of communication activity infrastructure and reduction of unnecessary duplication of work, waste of limited resources, the loss of jobs;
- to provide distribution and use of communication resources according to national goals and policies.

In 1980 S. McBride's Report «Many Voices. One World» drew attention to the importance of communication policies, specifically the research group argued that communication should be seen as a major resource of development, means of guaranteeing genuine political participation in decision-making process, as a central information basis for setting goals and a policy tool to achieve awareness of national priorities. Moreover, communication policy should be linked to the overall objectives of social, cultural and economic development. Such policies should be developed with extensive consultations with all interested sectors, which will result in setting goals and ways of their implementation with the participation of organized social groups [27].

Since then the discussions on communication policies have been conducted at national and international levels and they often regard such issues as a balanced flow of information, technology transfer, activities of transnational corporations. The purpose of communication is to inform, promote, persuade, educate, entertain, motivate people and to provoke changes in behavior that contribute to national development.

Therefore, F.R. Braid and her colleagues believe that communication policy concerns the basic principles of distribution and use of communications resources, property issues; it defines the role of communication in society, the relations between the media, government and business; provides a framework within which the said structures can evolve to support the goal of building a just and humane society [23]. The World Bank offers the next definition of communication, «[it is] the process that facilitates the sharing of knowledge to achieve positive change in development. This is the efficient dissemination of information and professional organization of the dialogue with stakeholders» [31].

The World Congress on the Communication for Development treats communication as «a social process based on dialogue using a broad range of tools and methods. It is also about seeking change at different levels including listening, building trust, sharing knowledge and skills, building policies, debating and learning for sustained and meaningful change» [30].

These definitions emphasize active, applied aspect of communication, so the author considers that, despite the use of the term they stress the understanding of communication policy. The key point in the definition is a procedural nature of communication, which is based on well-defined principles of cooperation, implemented by hearing each other, debate, which leads to evolutionary changes in society.

H. Bergenholtz suggests the general and specific understanding of communication policy [22]:

- a general communication policy involves the deliberate control of an organisation's internal and external communication in order to optimise the functionality of the organisation, including its product development and sales. Usually, a communication policy takes into account the values and vision of the organisation concerned. A general communication policy is language-independent and is usually issued by, and applies to, companies, organisations, or sub-national authorities;
- a specific communication policy involves general or thematic requirements or prohibitions concerning particular forms or channels of communication or a prohibition against acquiring particular information or documents. Such prohibitions include requirements concerning general or limited access to, or use of, specific types of information.

We believe that the concept of H. Bergenholtz refers more to the linguistic aspect of communication policy rather than its political role in a democratic society.

Various financial and commercial organizations were the first to develop their own communication policy as an effective means of communication with the external public. They typically understand communication policy

as a system that transmits information about a product or company to real or potential customers to promote the product on the market or create a positive image of the company and its products. Communication policy is based on the strategic goals and objectives of the company [5].

The communication policy of the company is defined as the strategy and technology of the usage of the set of means of interaction with stakeholders [8]; management of company's marketing communications for the most efficient achievement of its long-term and short-term goals and assurance of favorable attitude of all contact recipients (customers, partners, government agencies, etc.) on the selected target market [1].

Communication policy of a body of state authority is understood as continuous management activities of a subject of authority directed at the distribution of communication resources (information, conditions, factors, a set of methods and means of distribution) to improve the efficiency of the organization. The strategy of communication policy is aimed at managing the communication flows to construct the social reality, maneuvering resources in order to develop effective communicative relations with target groups which cover the following areas of the activity of state authorities bodies: planning the communication system; defining communication needs of the organization; resource management; information collection and dissemination; evaluating the results of communication and forecasting the further activities [17].

The communication policy of the state is interpreted as an instrument of communication means of political governance that belongs to the group of methods of management based on conviction. Its characteristic feature is the use of cognitive mechanisms of formation of certain perception of the policy conducted by political elite [7].

Communication policy of the state covers the following activities:

- elaboration and improvement of legislation, which provides not only freedom of information, but the protection of state information from misuse by mass media, both international and;
- communication activities of the state, i.e., the creation and development of all types of own mass media;
- wide development of public information infrastructure (press centers, PR services, etc.);
- various forms, methods and ways of public authorities' influence on mass communication, including methods of infiltration of public information in mass political communication [10].

The offered definitions have got the common feature, i.e. the communication policy involves a lasting impact on the target audience in order to provide favorable attitude to the offered information as well as to the information source. However, the disadvantage of the definitions is that they do not stress the dialogue character of the communication interactions and obligatory feedback.

L. Uhryn understands communication policy as the activity of the state, its institutions, aimed at the formation and support of the processes of the exchange of socio-political information necessary for the functioning of the political system, as well as the circulation of information between the institutions, political and social groups, elites and masses. She also distinguishes two levels of information flows: 1) vertical (typical of authoritarian societies): the elite selects, transfers and directs the information which contains formal or «adjusted» data about the decisions and functioning of government institutions that shape and help maintain a favorable image of the political system, enhance its legitimacy; 2) horizontal (important in democratic societies): the combination of information flows produced and initiated by elite, the state and the information flows of civil society, its information needs, priorities [21]. In this active approach the importance of dialogue interaction between government agencies and citizens is emphasized, which should lead to mutual understanding based on shared priorities.

Nowadays countries seek ways of introducing common standards to their information spaces infrastructures, build public policies based on the latest communication technologies, including efficient communication of government, citizens and businesses. Communication policy helps clarify the relations of responsible government and the people, the consistent implementation of the democratic way of functioning. Thus, state authorities have also recognized the importance of feedback from citizens. Communication policy contains the main purpose of communication with citizens, businesses, organizations and other public communicators.

Communication policy refers to features of construction and operation of various means of political information; development and improvement of the sign, symbolic and semiotic systems for political and communication dissemination, methods of encryption and decryption of political information, the creation of myths of various political, symbolic, advertising and promotional images and stories; social and political consequences of information influence on the behavior and activities of politics, public opinion, the progress of the electoral process, the political management of society.

In the article the author treats the communication policy as a set of principles and measures directed at objective and unbiased dissemination of information about the activities and policies of a subject of communication, as well as establishing transparent relations between institutions and civil society and business, listening to the needs and requirements of citizens, involving citizens into the decision making processes.

Communication policy is aimed at performing the following functions:

- providing publicity, that is providing broadcast content and circulation of information in the area of social communications. Communication policy provides different processes, events and objects with transparency, information openness, helps to overcome the deficit of democracy;

- influencing public opinion, that is the formation, strengthening or change of attitudes, awareness and actions of social actors concerning political, economic and social decisions;
- inclusive function: communication policy promotes citizens' consolidation by creating a single information and communication space through the introduction of new technologies into the management, development of information content and influence public opinion, the supply of content in language understandable to the consumer of information, maintaining cultural traditions, effective interaction with mass media;
- maintaining stability, i.e., the coordination, harmonization of interests, positions and activities of subjects and objects of communication policy, regulation of political relations, the integration of society or social groups, optimization of governmental activity and political decisions.

At the heart of an efficient communication policy there are the following principles: the right to information and freedom of expression, inclusion, respect for all points of view of all citizens, ability to participate.

The formation of communication policy passes the following stages:

The first stage starts with the development of the communication strategy to spread information on specific subjects, events, situation to definite public. An efficient communication strategy represents the best approach to effectively inform the public on questions and problems of specific importance. The communication strategy involves long-term impact on the public and coordinating all messages. Communication strategy is elaborated according to the following items:

1. Statement of the main purposes of the future communication, e.g., to achieve the overall objectives of definite programs or campaigns, to establish close cooperation with stakeholders, to demonstrate success, to make sure that the public is aware of the objectives of the campaign; to change public attitudes to the situation or problem and to create a new public opinion etc. Only then clear short- and long-term goals of communication are set.
2. The next step is to analyze the communication benefits of the subject. Experts advise to conduct PEST-analysis in order to determine the political, economic, social and technological factors that may affect communication interaction of subjects, and SWOT-analysis, i.e. to analyze communication priorities from the standpoint of their strong and weak points, opportunities and potential threats [24].
3. The elaboration of communication activities that promote achieving the set goals. All activities have clear time frame for their implementation. The above-mentioned principles of communication constitute the basis for all strategies and key messages addressed to the target public.
4. Any communication fails without clear identification of its audience. Segmentation facilitates prioritization of communication activities. Experts offer to draw a «map» of the audience, i.e., to determine the ranking criteria of addressees, based on the degree of their interest in the policies, namely, *key players* include those directly involved in the formulation of policies and the implementation of communication policy (institutions, national governments, regional and local levels, local mass media). *Consumers of information* (e.g. citizens) should always be informed. *Opinions of the general public* should constantly be studied, because the ideas of citizens, their aspirations and proposals should be the cornerstone of any policy. *National mass media* (if necessary, foreign public) should be always satisfied.
5. Key messages are to be addressed to citizens in an accessible form without unnecessary terminology by the language they prefer and through priority channels.
6. Methods of communication directly depend on the type of addressees and may include conferences, virtual or real forums, seminars, press conferences, briefings, brochures, flyers, electronic newsletters, direct telephone line, special events, implementation projects, programs, etc.

Communication policy is closely connected with the notion of «communication plan» relating to the conclusion of short-term plans for effective and equitable use of communication resources in the context of specific communication strategies. In the second stage on the basis of previous provisions the working communication plan is developed, which provides basic communication measures, timing or exact dates of their implementation, the cost of implementation and the necessary resources. The communication plan is based on the following key points:

1. Finding out the reasons for the necessity of communication: the dissemination of information, raising awareness, encouraging actions, consensus building, behavior change, encouraging participation in community conflict resolution, encouraging the expression of new ideas.
2. Determining the public you want to reach: the addressees affected by the message, those who are interested in it, groups that are underestimated, the information the stakeholder has already possessed, the issues that are interesting to him/her, how he/she is likely to act, socio-demographic characteristics, knowledge of a stakeholder.
3. Wording the two or three key messages in terms of priority.
4. Defining channel of messaging: through media (special programs, articles, press releases, etc.), via email, through social networks, through a personal appeal to the audience, through press conferences, public hearings, meetings, through the translation of documents into different languages, etc.
5. Determining feedback channels: telephone line, interpersonal communication, forum, debating, voting and so on.
6. Calculating budget costs depending on the selected communication channels [26].

The third stage means the implementation of the communication plan according to specific tools and approved plan for coordinating efforts of all involved communicators and communication policy institutionalization, i.e. fixing specific norms of communication, streamline of communication channels, further balancing of internal and external information flows.

The fourth stage encompasses the analysis and monitoring of all activities and their efficiencies and deficiencies. To evaluate the success independent think tanks, political analysts, journalists, the public, etc. may be involved that is everyone can offer ideas of improving communicative interactions. The criteria for evaluating the efficiency of communication and the whole communication policy can include the number of participants in forums and the quantity and quality of their proposals and assessments; media coverage; polls and possible changes in the public perception of certain initially problematic issues; the number and quality of implemented projects and so on.

From the standpoint of democracy, communication is a key element in shaping the society where citizens and the state feel their interrelations. Communication promotes the establishment of trust-based relations among stakeholders, forming the right expectations from the public and establishing partnerships between subjects of communication. Communication policy as a set of principles and measures directed at objective and unbiased dissemination of information about the activities and policies of a subject of communication helps clarify the relations of responsible government and the people. Communication policy enables establishing transparent relations between institutions and civil society and business, listening to the needs and requirements of citizens, involving citizens in decision-making process. The further research may be conducted in the sphere of communication policy directions of national states and international organizations.

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