

THE USE OF NEW MEDIA IN THE PROCESS OF CONDUCTING INFORMATION WARS: A SOCIOLOGICAL ASPECT

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Abstract: The relevance of this topic is primarily related to the current situation of communication processes in the information space, which are to some extent based on traditional and modern media. In particular, a certain transformation of traditional media is taking place, and they are acquiring features of the latest technologies (possibility of feedback, instant sending of messages to social networks, instant response to them, etc.). The purpose of the article was to analyze the specifics of using the latest media in the process of waging information wars. To address the purpose of the article, the following general scientific methods of learning social phenomena and processes are used, namely: logical-historical, structural-functional, and comparative methods - to study traditional and modern media, their peculiarities in the process of conducting information wars; analysis and synthesis - to highlight the content of the latest (digital) media; classifications - for typology of the latest (digital) media in modern sociological science; structural and functional analysis - to clarify the structure and functions of traditional and modern media in the process of waging information wars; generalization - to determine the prospects for the formation and development of the latest (digital) media in modern Ukrainian society, which is in a state of information war. The conducted research showed us the influential nature of the information society in which we live. There has been a change in the focus of attention on the formation of the information flow: while earlier information was provided to society for the purpose of informing, today the vector has changed to the manipulation of mass consciousness "in favor" of the social customer. The results of the theoretical analysis of trends in the influence of the latest media on public opinion in the process of waging an information war allow us to draw the following conclusions: 1. The fact of transformation (and not extinction) of traditional media channels (radio, television, print media, the Internet in its traditional sense) has been revealed and confirmed. 2. The conducted analysis proved that the key place in the conduct of the information war is occupied by the latest media channels, and the key ones among them are the following: Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Telegram, and TikTok. 3. The importance of the ability to resist the manipulative information flows received by society in the process of waging an information war has been proven.

Keywords: new media; traditional media; mass media; mass communication; information war; mass consciousness.

1 Introduction

The relevance of the scientific problem, which is related to the modern attributes of communication in the information space, is to some extent based on the dichotomy "traditional (classical) media - modern (digital) media", and the central feature of the latter is their interactive nature. New media is due to the emergence of the Internet and its rapid development (social networks, blogs, podcasts, etc.), which pose a certain threat to traditional media. Interactivity is manifested in the ability to transform the "outdated and ineffective" one-vector model of mass communication into a two-vector one, which is aimed at its recipient and has feedback. In particular, this leads to the emergence of a number of questions from this aspect: whether the theoretical developments of scientists are sufficient for understanding classic media and for explaining the emergence of the latest media (in some studies referred to as "Communication 2.0") and what place they occupy today in modern society in the process of waging information warfare.

Modern Ukrainian society in which the media acts as a system of certain mass communications between them, that are rapidly spreading in the world of "information explosion" (according to the definition of the Canadian sociologist M. McLuhan), and the

key characteristics of this society are chaos, immensity, and excess. In this context, social connections have inherent complexity, and this is what makes it necessary to delve into the understanding of the concepts of "traditional media" and "new media", their role in modern society and their background in more detail.

If to talk about traditional media, then it is, in particular, television, radio, printed publications (newspapers and magazines) and the Internet (in its traditional sense), which do not have feedback, that is, have a one-vector model of their existence. This is precisely the reason why the French sociologist J. Baudrillard announced the death of the mass media – their non-transitive, anti-communicative nature. In the well-known work "Requiem for Mass Media" he wrote: "they are what forever prohibits the answer, which makes the process of exchange impossible (unless in the forms of simulation of answers, which themselves turn out to be integrated into the process of information transmission, that, however, changes nothing in the direction of communication in one way)" [4].

In view of this, it is appropriate to note that the traditional understanding of the media has the right to exist as before - a stable image of society in the mass consciousness today also is formed based on information received from classic media channels (newspapers, magazines, radio, television, etc.). On the other hand, the deepening virtualization of society significantly expands the circle of information flows and its participants, which leads to the formation of the "latest" audience. As a result, a certain demand for the emergence and functioning of the latest media is being formed. With the development of Internet technologies both in the whole world and on the territory of Ukraine in particular, the desire to preserve a complete audience and striving for the adaptation of society to this request through the process of a certain transformation of the media is determined.

In particular, the following directions of transformation of traditional media can be outlined:

- Digitalization (digitalization of the traditional format);
- Convergence (emergence of multimedia, merging of mass media into social networks, fusion of traditional and new media, etc.);
- Personification/demassification;
- Interactive formats (possibility of instant feedback from the audience).

2 Materials and Method

To address the purpose of the article, the following general scientific methods of learning social phenomena and processes are used, namely: logical-historical, structural-functional and comparative - to study traditional and modern media, their peculiarities in the process of conducting information wars; analysis and synthesis - to highlight the content of the latest (digital) media; classifications - for typology of the latest (digital) media in modern sociological science; structural and functional analysis - to clarify the structure and functions of traditional and modern media in the process of waging information wars; generalization - to determine the prospects for the formation and development of the latest (digital) media in modern Ukrainian society, which is in a state of information war.

The theoretical basis of the study was the fundamental scientific provisions of general and sectoral sociology in the field of information influence on public opinion in the process of conducting information wars, which are reflected in the works of I. Rushchenko, G. Pocheptsov, E. Magda, and others.

The analysis of research on the subject of traditional and modern media and their influence on mass consciousness is based on the principles of interactionism (J. Mead, G. Bloomer), the theory of

generalized means of communication (N. Luhmann), concepts of symbolic space (P. Bourdieu), etc. In Ukraine, the scientific achievements of O. Zernetska, N. Kostenko, Yu. Levents, L. Nagornaya, H. Pocheptsov, and other researchers, whose subject of research is, in particular, mass information and communication, deserve attention.

3 Results and Discussion

Digitalization of modern society represents an innovative coherent system – political, legal, technological, and managerial, within which various information institutes are being formed (“digital government”, “digital parliament”, “state in a smartphone”, etc.) and modern tools in the field of state and political decisions discussions are emerging. This certainly increases the informational influence on the mass consciousness of society, especially in the process of waging an informational war.

Modern society is radically different from all previous forms of human existence. A person finds himself in a world that is constantly changing, and is forced to adapt with great effort and transform it in search of new opportunities to realize his spiritual needs and individual inclinations. Creating new information technologies and constantly reorganizing traditional media in order to change the world, a person also changes his consciousness, worldview, and value orientations [12, p. 130].

That is why, in order to understand the path of transformation of traditional media, it is necessary to analyze their etymological understanding and the specifics of existence in the process of waging an information war. Traditional media are the printed press, radio, television, various sound and video recordings, various computer technologies, which are united by their focus on a mass audience, the relative accessibility of a large number of people, and the corporate nature of the production and distribution of information [2]. Formalized types of such media are mass information and communication media, which can be differentiated according to the characteristics of the medium – printed (newspapers and magazines) and electronic (television, radio, Internet). The functional features of these media depend on the goals of the activity, as well as their place in the general structure of the power field. One way or another, the main function of means of mediation, regardless of their organizational and status characteristics, is the informational (or communicative) function, which consists in collecting, creating, processing, and broadcasting information [8].

In particular, if to talk about the media (both traditional and modern) and the management of mass consciousness through their mechanisms in the process of waging an information war, then it can be said that they really carry certain functions for modern society. The following functions are distinguished: informational (cognitive); value-educational; functions of behavior organization (instructive); emotional and psychological (tonic); escapist (functions of diverting attention from reality); social-integrative, communicative [10].

Another classification, which practically repeats the first one, but in a certain way simplifies it, was used in the sociological project “Public Opinion”, which was conducted under the leadership of B. Grushin. The following classification was used in it: functions of informing, educating, organizing behavior, relieving tension, communication [17, p. 48]. As one can see, in both cases, the list of functions is really repeated (only in the second one the escapist function is missing, and the emotional-psychological function is replaced by the tension-relieving function), however (and this is the main thing!) there is no propaganda function among them.

One can probably say that it is hidden behind other functions – informational and communicative. But today, in the period of the information war of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, when everyone understands how powerful the influence of the media (traditional and modern) can be on the population of both own country and the enemy country, moving away from highlighting a special and very important function of the media –

propaganda – is practically impossible [15, p. 207]. At the same time, it is impossible to reduce the propaganda function to the function of communication, since the latter, although it involves the exchange of information and communication, is not at all aimed at actively convincing a certain audience of something.

Considering the problem of the effectiveness of the media, the characteristics of their influence on the population, it should be noted, first of all, that the result of their activity is, on the one hand, certain effects that arise in the process of communication, and on the other hand, effectiveness. As we have already noted, the concept of “effect” is broader than the concept of “efficiency”. An effect is any result of the influence of a communication tool on human consciousness (at the same time, the effects can be informational, value, communication, organizational [11, p. 271]), while “effectiveness” is the correspondence of the obtained effect to the goals of propaganda. While in economics, efficiency is interpreted as the ratio of the effect obtained as a result of economic activity with the costs associated with achieving such a result, in propaganda the effect obtained is correlated with the goals set in the process of this activity [14, p. 208]. At the same time, one can talk about both intermediate, communication effectiveness, i.e., recording the extent to which the level of awareness of citizens regarding the relevant problems has increased as a result of the media's informational and propaganda activities, and final effectiveness, in particular, how a person's worldview has changed under the influence of propaganda, how his views, attitude to events, maybe even direction of activity transformed. It is known, for example, that Russian propaganda (especially on the Internet) not only forces Russians to change their views on Ukraine, but also stimulates some of them to take active actions, for example, to voluntarily participate in the war.

Finally, let us point out some more aspects:

- New media act as one of the most important tools of information wars together with state management and coordinating structures, domestic and foreign interest and influence groups, international organizations, etc.;
- The activities of the latest media are key, most important and effective in the process of seizing and using the information space, displacing the enemy from the information sphere;
- The special importance of modern media in the process of waging information wars lies not only in providing support for military actions (although this is also very important), but also in actively influencing the mass consciousness at the level of one's country, the enemy country, and the international community.

With the passage of time and the development of information technology, the stable position of new media has been determined, and in this case, one needs to understand the difference between new and latest media. New media is the emergence of a new channel in the traditional media system of society. And the latest media is a certain transformation of the information transmission channels themselves (their interactivity, the possibility of feedback, etc.). Latest media have fundamentally changed the process of communication within society (both among themselves and at the state level), they have provided modern society with more perspectives and opportunities for information exchange.

With the development of new information and communication technologies for people who use them (according to some forecasts, the number of Internet users in the world will exceed 4 billion people in the near future), an information lifestyle that forms new values – virtual reality and virtual life – becomes natural. As the researchers rightly point out, the evolving practices of virtual self-construction led to the emergence of new cultural and social regulators of the communication process. The norms, stereotypes, and values embedded in cultural memory, necessary for the formation of personality, were created in conditions of a qualitatively different communicative situation. Thus, traditional forms required direct interaction and personal contact: modern forms, despite their impersonality, relied on

repetition, procedurality, and mandatory time costs. Today, in the mode of network communication, anonymity and the high probability that the interaction will be unique leads to the fact that the individual turns to the old regulators only because of habit, which decreases as the new communicative experience grows [16, p.58].

Modern studies show a rather rapid development of media and the transformation of their function, especially in the audiovisual and electronic component. A powerful influence is focused precisely on the mass consciousness through such media channels in the process of waging an information war. All this leads to the fact that the commonly used term "mass media" does not correspond to modern realities (as well as traditional media in particular). This term was much more relevant when information flows were somewhat official and one-vector, that is, traditional media channels (radio, television, printed publications, etc.). The modern information world has shown us that in the matter of information transmission, a significant part of the mechanism is devoted to feedback, that is, the audience's reaction to what they heard or saw. Thus, it can be argued that information is transformed into a process of two-vector communication, mutual exchange of information. That is what determines our appeal to the terminology of "latest media" and their influence on the mass consciousness in the process of waging an information war.

However, it should be understood that such a decline of the traditional media system has a "catastrophic" meaning of end and destruction only for the linear kind of accumulation that entails completion imposed by the system. The term itself etymologically means only a "turn", "a turning of the cycle", which leads to what could be called the "horizon of events", to the horizon of content beyond which it is impossible to go: there is nothing beyond meaning to us - however, it is enough to get out of this ultimatum of content, so that the catastrophe itself no longer represents the last day of reckoning, as it functions in our modern society [3].

In particular, in our opinion, there should be shifting of the emphasis of the traditional media extinction and the destruction of social communication and the evolutionary (innovative) emergence of the latest media, which bring with them new tools for building communication in modern society in the process of waging an information war. This is a certain reorientation of society, the motive of destruction should be considered not as a catastrophe, but as a turning point of a new development, that is, a new stage of communication in modern society. This makes it possible to build communication not from the position of old - new (outdated - progressive), without recognizing the achievements of the past that have already been outlived, and therefore are not relevant, but, on the contrary, to integrate past experience into the latest technologies. This is what determines the emergence and stable position of the latest media over the last five years, on which we will dwell in analysis in more detail.

In the context of sociology, new media today are considered as means of mass communication that use digital technologies to develop personalized and interactive communications. Individualization is expressed in the ability of new media to spread an innumerable number of messages aimed at a specific person at the same time. As noted by S. Kvit, interactivity implies a multilateral exchange of information both with one user and with the audience as a whole, while the communication acquires features of a synchronous nature [9, p. 155].

The latest media are completely open to the reader, interacting with him and giving him the opportunity to create and modify the content of messages, in contrast to traditional media, where communication is carried out according to the "one-to-many" scheme. These media include: Video-on-Demand and Audio-on-Demand; a system of individual delivery of movies, TV shows, and other content to the consumer at his request via the Internet (for example, YouTube, iTunes services; in Ukraine - the Internet cinema of the Star Media company); Catch-Up TV (a type of Video-on-Demand) - this is a type of Internet service that allows viewing television material during a certain limited

period of time, which occurs after the television broadcast of programs; social networks (Facebook, Instagram, Foursquare); blogs, including podcasts and vlogs; micro-blog networks (Twitter, Tumblr); online media players; photo services (Picasa, Flickr) [7].

Juergen Habermas, calling the latest media mediators, emphasizes that in fact they are used to manipulate public opinion, as they replace the place of the citizen in the public sphere [1, p. 80]. We fully agree with the scientist's statement, because the latest media is really appropriate to consider as a complex phenomenon that undoubtedly affects the mass consciousness in the process of waging an information war (and even manipulates in some cases). Therefore, attention should be paid to the fact that such a multi-vector influence, due to the overload of information flows on the mass consciousness, is dangerous for society. Firstly it is (and this is the main reason) due to the insufficient level of media literacy and media education of the society, which makes it impossible to take a critical attitude to the information received from the media channels.

The main tools that make it possible to manipulate the objectivity of information include:

- Manipulation of sociology: an audience survey is conducted, but any small group does not reflect the entire population of Ukraine (not a representative sample), at the same time the group is under the pressure of heard information and seen events, so its conclusions also begin to follow the direction set by the authors;
- Manipulation of the agenda of discussion of topics: precisely those topics that are discussed in the mass media gain wide publicity in society, thus forming the pretended or real importance of problems for solving;
- Manipulation of the order of discussion of the topic: the topic is discussed in prime time or, for example, at lunch time; it is discussed in top programs or unrated programs; reinforced by illustrative material or questions; it is presented by a strong or weak speaker, is interrupted by advertisements that weaken the passions during the discussion;
- Manipulation of guests: selection of experts or opinion leaders who a priori evoke sympathy/antipathy of the audience, which makes it possible to establish a certain attitude of the audience towards events, phenomena, people;
- Time manipulation: the opportunity to join the discussion, ask questions, speak longer than other speakers without interruption. As a result, a certain topic/person gets a more favorable context for presentation, etc. [16, p.292-293].

The modern world in which we live is not just saturated with various information, but oversaturated with communicative flows. Constant staying in such an information field can disorganize society, and such a society is quite easy to manipulate (manage). The past stages of the development of society have already encountered the theory of controlled chaos (according to H. Pochepstov), however, such chaos can be artificially created by the latest media, but it is practically impossible to manage it.

The historical development of the media cannot be characterized either as a linear process or as a series of radical breaks. Historically documented situations of application prove instead the medial interference between traditional and modern media, which in their interaction exceeded and changed the functions of a separate medium [18, p. 285]. Now, when we have already experienced two phases of communication (traditional and modern), there is an understanding of modern communication and the role of the receiver of this communication, who has the opportunity not only to respond to the received message, but also all the technical possibilities for this. We are on the threshold of a certain new virtual (innovative) society, a new phase of reorientation of society, where information flows acquire sacred features that can gather a fairly large audience around them.

The information field of modern society in terms of the latest media provides opportunities not only to follow current events, but also to express one's opinions or positions regarding certain state events, especially in the process of waging information wars. On the one hand, this is influenced by the emergence and adaptation of new technical means for the implementation and maintenance of direct democratic processes, and on the other hand – by informal methods of influencing the mass consciousness of society. Informal methods (i.e., social networks) have made a certain revolution in the transmission of information, not only in the means of disseminating information, but also changed the approaches to conducting traditional warfare. Now victory depends not only on the battlefield, but also on the narratives of the parties to the information conflict. Namely social networks play a practical role in this process. In particular, informal influence on mass consciousness occurs through the following channels of the latest media:

- Twitter - allows to instantly share a message with the original source or opinion leader. Also using the original hashtag, the tweet spreads quickly, causing new messages and viral messaging across the web. The hashtag is included in the list of current topics on Twitter and is presented to all users of the social network. For example, namely emotionality became the impetus for the popularity of Twitter. In his book "War of Likes", the Australian philosopher Peter Singer describes this phenomenon as follows: "... the king of pop music, Michael Jackson, died. His passing into eternity shook the Internet. However, an irreparable loss for the music world has become a godsend for Twitter. Millions of people shared their grief and reflections on the social network. The platform's traffic soared to a record 100,000 tweets per hour, and the servers couldn't keep up. People used social networks for something new - joint experience of an event in real time" [13];
- TikTok – it is duplicated and distributed by the leading Ukrainian mass media, that is, the social network goes beyond just an application for entertainment and becomes a full-fledged source of information. So, on the pages of the national media, one can find stories about TikTok bloggers (tiktokers) who publish interesting content, news about popular challenges, conflicts due to videos published on the network, etc. [19].
- Facebook, Instagram (they are the most popular social networks among Ukrainians) – an effective way of disseminating visualized information, which serves as a sign of people's moods, because by uniting, users draw attention to an event or problem;
- Telegram - it is a certain phenomenon in the aspect of post-truth analysis, which is really quite a powerful tool for influencing the mass consciousness in the process of waging an information war. Indeed, through Telegram channels, it is possible to both discredit the opponent, impose a certain ideology, and influence the recipients of the message with a manipulative purpose. The use of Telegram's features (speed, the ability to both leave and remove feedback, anonymity) make it quite popular among users.

Also, it should be noted that most traditional media (TV channels, newspapers, magazines) have their own Telegram channels, Facebook and Instagram pages, which once again proves the hypothesis that traditional media are not being replaced by new ones, but transformation and adaptation of old information channels with the latest technologies is going on.

In the context of the information method of influence, a type of information noise is information noise - an element of information technologies and influences, as well as deliberate overloading of the recipient with insignificant, secondary information in order to divert his attention from receiving information, the disclosure of which is undesirable for someone [5, p. 160.]. But in order to control such information flows from the latest media, or to avoid influence (if possible), we consider it appropriate to introduce the following steps:

- 1) Independent control of media resources by their owners or editors (self-censorship), compliance with the rules of media pluralism;
- 2) Media literacy of both individual citizens and society as a whole, which will enable critical thinking when receiving information flows, distinguishing between informational noise and important information;
- 3) Introduction of media education for society at the state level, in order to ensure effective communication between society and the media.

4 Conclusion

The results of the theoretical analysis of trends in the influence of the latest media on public opinion in the process of conducting an information war allow drawing the following conclusions:

1. The fact of transformation (and not extinction) of traditional media channels (radio, television, printed newspapers and magazines, the Internet in the traditional sense) has been revealed and confirmed. This makes it possible to build communication not from the position of old - new (outdated - progressive), not recognizing the achievements of the past that have already been outlived, but on the contrary to integrate past experience into the latest technologies. In particular, this determines the emergence and successful functioning of the latest media.
2. The latest media bring new opportunities, both for the use of social networks by society, and for manipulative influence on the mass consciousness of society in the process of waging an information war. In particular, we analyzed the following social networks: Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Telegram, TikTok and noted that the comprehensiveness of these information distribution channels is operational and viral in nature (which is quite difficult to resist).
3. The importance of the ability to resist the information manipulative streams received by society has been proven. Among the main steps, we noted the following: self-censorship of media channel owners; society's media literacy to distinguish between fake and true information; media education to establish quality communication between society and the informant.

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