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**INFORMATION ANOMIE AND “PIXILATED CONSCIOUSNESS”  
EFFECT**

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**Abstract**

Fighting units - information bits manipulate mass audience in information society for being in its consciousness. Garbled information, obtained as a result of anomie communication, activates mechanisms of human response and becomes a trigger for making actions. We define the phenomenon of information anomie and describe aberration (misrepresentation) of information that becomes an integral feature of political communication in modern information society. This definition has never been used before by scientists. Norms of information exchange in technical communication is the absence of information aberration that Shannon (1948) called as fight against information entropy. We propose a thesis that aberration at all stages of the communication process makes qualitative changes of information, consequently, changes in behavior and information recipient's actions that lead to irreversible consequences. That is why, struggle with semantic information aberration is important and becomes the most central task for political communication in contemporary society. We claim that consequences of information anomie are irreversible. We denote such communication as anomic political communication. A person lives in a constant shock caused by various crises and information overloading - “information tsunami”. As a result of anomie communication, a “pixilated consciousness” effect occurs. The recipient of information is being in the state of uncertainty. Individuals cannot rationally estimate current events and make a sensible political choice. Information anomie creates the bound of possible and probable changes in the system of social interactions. The put-forward theses mark contours of a concept of information anomie and allow to designate its key attributes.

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**Keywords:** Political communication; aberrations; information anomie; ideology; power; extremism.

## 1. Introduction

The process of spreading and producing information is connected with new technical capabilities of means, methods and forms of information delivery in information society. Nowadays, information is spreading globally; the speed of its spreading is not like it was in oral or written epoch. Apparently, together with this positive dynamics, there is a «fluidifying» of the modern world (Bauman, 2010), which



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is difficult to understand and to manage. There comes an era of “weak relationships” in society: casual, short, unstable, which source is in the information-communicative system.

## **2. Methods**

### **2.1. Information epoch**

When new information technologies changed the existing social landscape, they brought destructions. New communication links and new “rafts” that redirect information streams, disrupting the balance, “water facility” and delivery means (vehicle), from an information message maker to a consumer are changed (Karpova et al., 2016).

We identify the period since the 1930s till present as an "information age". In the early 30s-50s of the 20th century, the models of the information communication explanation were developed, new scientific directions appeared (information theory and cybernetics), which formed a basis for studies of scientific issues in various areas. Since that time, it seems to be impossible to predict or at least to treat the result of information exchange unambiguously as information technologies began to play a key role in the course of the interaction and the influence of structural elements of society on each other. Uncontrollable interaction and the stochastic nature of the effect is a characteristic feature of information society. The action and the behavior of individuals become unpredictable; they can be predicted only with this or that likelihood ratio. The whole social system is overfilled with entropy.

"Liquid modernity" becomes not only a characteristic feature of a new stage of humanity evolution, but also a property of the information which is run into one another of the overall information stream, which turns into global "information tsunami" (Bauman, 2000). Deafened by this boiling flow of information, a man becomes disorganized.

Communication is a basis of information exchange in any system: natural, biological, technical or social. Communication is inseparably linked with information transmission and is considered as a means and a channel; it defines the effect of information exchange. Information interactions are defined by the development of new information network structures by means of which new communications are built, new forms of interactions appear, and all this has a comprehensive global character.

Each structural unit of society can have unlimited information capacity, an infinite number of opportunities of information interpretation. Information transmission can be of any amount that varies along its trajectory and action force, de facto, each participant of a communicative process can change the meaning of information. Consequently, a continuous process of information aberration becomes a characteristic feature of communication.

## **3. Results**

### **3.1. Information anomie**

The term "anomie" is a prerogative of sociological science and is used in various spheres of sociology and applied to analyze conditions of society. It literally means "lawlessness, normlessness" (French *anomie*). An anomie is a social disease, a condition of society which in the 19th century was diagnosed and described by Durkheim, (1951). The phenomenon of anomie is connected with transformation of the

structurally functional basis of society. The expressed tendency to growth of an anomie is shown during the crisis periods when there is a deformation of social communication; the social relations are broken at micro and macro-levels.

We can state that anomie always existed in society, it is not a new term - it is a fundamental process. Classical sociologists Durkheim and Merton covered only separate parts of anomie and gave them definitions (Durkheim, 1951). In complex modern society, we have noticed the traced regularities which can be named as a higher derivative and given it the definition of anomie. It existed at all times, even in the cave time, but it was more reduced as the society was reduced. When society develops, the processes of anomie in it are developed and transformed. The anomie as a destruction of a difficult normative construct in industrial society, and an anomie in information society have different characteristics. Conditions in which the phenomenon of social anomie observed changed, which deprived it of relevance; reflection of the phenomenon stopped corresponding to social reality under other conditions.

The information age brought global anomie "epidemics", as infectious diseases can be spread in the world. Humanity experienced threat of global extinction from viruses at various times: smallpox, plague, cholera, influenza, AIDS, Ebola and others. Information as well as virus can spread fast and massively. Moreover, "infection" of whichever form of the anomie in the information exchange in the modern society seizes "power" over large groups of the society.

In the context of our research, we consider anomie as a process of norm destruction. But what is a norm? In relation to a social anomie, Durkheim emphasized that the concept of a valuable and standard ideal is relative.

With regard to the process of information exchange, we can state that the observed "information anomie" is beyond all that have been a norm up to now. This is due to the fact that the garbled information becomes a norm in the course of communication. When the total information noise, "a tsunami of available facts, contexts and perspectives" makes feeling of an overload in people's consciousness. The anomie can become a norm to some extent, and here is a paradox (Foster, 2007).

The progress of information technologies defines quantity and quality of "information wealth" (Stonier, 1983). Information becomes "technological raw material" in new information and technological practice (Castells, 2010), and the effect of the made information product influences the social, economic, and political relations in society. These are interrelated and interdependent phenomena. In political communication, information becomes a strategic resource of the power. Production and specific weight of the symbolical capital of the political power are in direct dependence on taking collective obligatory political decisions by mass audience. The research tradition which made the unique contribution to the emerging area of studying political communication is the tradition of political propaganda (Lasswell, 1948).

According to Hirschman (2010), citizens' belief in "loyal political strategy" is made by producing discursive distortions in the course of political communication. Citizens' belief is produced by the power through intermediaries which mass media are. Certainly, control overspreading information streams, control over distributing information in a stream and control over information "quality" must provide the power with conformity and managing political behavior of masses. However, information streams get out of control, extending over their own trajectory; mass media are getting "manufactured uncertainties" of information messages meaning, representing the interests of specific political actors (Beck, 2009). But the

recipient of information interprets the meaning in his/her own way. Due to such a distorted information exchange, the "boomerang effect» occurs. This effect is expressed in unpredictability of events and their consequences in existential measurement.

A continuous process of information distortions becomes the integral attribute of political communication. We give the definition to this process as information anomie as it is a continuous process of producing aberrations (distortions) of information in a communicative chain; it has natural and artificial forms of the origin and has characteristic features in modern information society.

Aberrations (Lat. *aberratio*) – the term used in the theory of optical systems means distortion, abnormality, deviation. In the mid-twentieth century, when the theory of information and cybernetics originated, the ideas of information phenomenon had been changed, its main attributes -uncertainty, surprise, difficulty, entropy were defined; the device for studying the process of technical communication was developed, and information entropy was introduced as a term in Claude Shannon's (1948) terminology as a "conditional entropy". The scholarly discussions evolved in the period of 1946-1953 at the Macy Conferences made a special contribution as they were reflected and had a special value in works of mathematicians, physicists, biologists, neurophysiologists, philosophers, sociologists.

On the other hand, the information theory brought information overload, information superfluity and information fatigue. Marshall McLuhan in 1962 made a paradoxical for that time prediction that information overload would lead to disorder that could not be overcome in the long run. McLuhan considering oral and written era stated that electronic communications would lead to technological simulation of consciousness (McLuhan, 1962). We can interpret his ingenious statement applied to destructive force of electronic communications.

Information anomie is "sui generis" (in Lat.) of the modern information society and its product. Information anomie accompanies communication just as in technical communication hash and noise can interfere with the process of transmitting the information signal. Information anomie can be considered as an additional attribute of information society.

### **3.2. Anomic communication**

The revolutionary ideas of mathematicians, engineers, physicists, cybernetists had a major impact on changes of social scientists' ideas about communication as a property of the social system to understand communication as an integral reason of system development and functioning. These ideas were expressed in Luhmann's model of autopoietic communication. Here, communication is presented as an emergent unity of the structure: information - message-understanding. Luhmann considered the power as the means of communication. The process of political communication can be artificially modeled, has specific goals, certain schemes of designing. All political information is selected by "intra system code", which Luhmann designated as a "complementary factor" eliminating alien elements, that is, everything that does not belong to this communication. Luhmann denoted structural interfaces between subsystems of mass media and policy on the basis of a symbolical code. Mass media are not means of communication, but the form of communication that constitutes interactions of systems. Consequently, media and policy "are doomed" to be in a constant engagement. The policy becomes public in the sphere of this interaction. Autocratic functions are implemented only in the communication process.

According to Luhmann, the function of the political system in the context of system autonomy is based on a binary code: legal/illegal lies in "making obligatory decisions". Thus, it respectively involves obligatory consequences of such decision or indecision making (Luhmann, 1968).

Political actions happen in all difficult social systems. Therefore, they need collective obligatory decisions, that is a "collective binding" in Luhmann's interpretation that distinguishes the political system from other systems. In fact, Luhmann described the ideal model of the political system, where the power legitimacy is provided through the accepting absolute binding decision of the political system and provided institutionally, independently from specific personal motivation of structures, subsystems excluding the state of terror and violence (Luhmann, 2010).

We believe that it can be considered as a standard (ideal) model of political communication. Contrary to such ideal and utopian, standard model, we state that in political communication of a modern information society, aberrations are the integral attribute of information exchange. Therefore, we name the process of such communication as an anomic political communication.

For technical communication, the reasons of information aberration are established, ways of minimization of these aberrations are found with mathematical precision. All available theoretical and applied models reflect the communicative process in studies of political communication, disregarding a continuity of producing semantic information aberration. The types of aberrations already known in "technical optics" can be applied to studying semantic information aberration in political communication.

We consider the norm of political communication as a balance between trust and mistrust to a source of information, and intermediaries of communication from the recipient of information. Such "normative" communication is in interests of all participants. If there is no trust, the power cannot provide "collective binding" and implement the decisions. If there is no trust in mass media, then both information channels, and the ranking of specific media persons are depreciated, that leads, first of all, to financial losses of media corporations. The removal of information entropy in the interests of the information recipient as s/he has an opportunity to make the "correct" choice only this way, that is to make social actions of creative, but not destructive character

In anomic political communication, there is a gap between the declared purposes of policy subjects and "advance expectations" of people. As a result, there is a growth of mistrust both to institutes of the power and to ideals of the civil society which are declared by the governance, depreciation of media information messages.

### **3.3. "Pixilated consciousness" effect**

According to the popular in the middle of the 20th century "Cultivation theory", the idea that the television changes the perception of the world in mass consciousness sets a mainstreaming perception of various people - the real world is replaced with the designed reality. Gerbner (1978) emphasized that "the information television industry blurs traditional distinctions in people's outlook, blends their private representations in a cultural stream and binds this new reality with their own institutional interests and interests of their sponsors". But the most significant remark made by Gerbner (1967), concerned the outlined tendency to transformation of political communication which changes all the system of mass interaction and nature of policy.

On the one hand, the television creates and aggressively spreads "the ready-made ideas" - templates, stereotypes in mass consciousness. On the other hand, it is forced to destroy them as if it does not constantly surprise, amaze, break traditional understandings, attract interest of an information user, consequently it can lose the symbolical capital. It is beyond arguments that fight for an information field is a primary objective for policy subjects. Media as a "mirror" reflecting policy are monopolized today by the power. Not only media underwent monopolization, but information itself did. Actually, media do not create information and analytical field, but they create political pseudo-reality, simulacra (Baudrillard, 1994), and transcendental illusion (Luhmann, 2000).

The western researchers believe that "basic changes in society and communication technologies influence the structure of audience, delivery of information. Therefore, the main problem which needs to be studied is that information technologies will narrow, but not expand the political horizons of users. Researchers note that in the modern world, information channels were widely adopted and at the same time became more individualized. This direction develops new theoretical approaches to understanding the behavior of TV and the Internet audience: the research of "self selection", the growing polarization of society. The trends of the communication relations development in the system "the power – media – society" are defined; conditions, ways and forms of political interaction are studied (Holbert, 2010).

The nature of modern risks in the field of information transmission was described by U. Beck (Beck, 1994). He claims that media, positioning the crucial role in identification of risks, in practice are producers of risks ("manufactured uncertainty" - by Beck). Media do not perform the exposing and critical function (Beck, 1992).

#### **4. Conclusions**

Garbling information, redundancy, randomness, mosaic produce the effect of "the pixilated consciousness". The messages made by media cause in mass audience a feeling of instability, variability of everything around, and, as a consequence, a feeling of insecurity. Mass audience is getting incapable of assessing events sensibly and independent political issues create a situation of inaccessibility of feedback effect from society to the governance (Karpova et al., 2015, 2016). Mass media, transmitting social information, become a generator of a social anomie when most of the citizens under the conditions of social, economic, political crisis are not ready to accept and get new rules of social life. Information streams in space of political communication exert a destructive impact on society.

As a result, the marker of information anomie is a low level of credibility with the governance, a low level of citizens' social activity. Social and political consciousness turns into "a free opinions ghetto". The effect of information anomie is expressed in the situation when citizens cease considering the governance and mass media as institutes which serve to advocate their interests according to the functional tasks. The system of mass communicative interaction aimed at creating society of a social compliance, political stability, and democratic participation of all subjects of the federation in the course of creating civil society, but in practice it is not capable of protecting these interests.

We claim that political communication of the modern information society has an integral attribute - information anomie, irreversible de facto. This process comes to the end with the fact that "a lot of people never use their initiative because no-one told them to" (Banksy, 2006).

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