

# opción

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Universidad del Zulia  
Facultad Experimental de Ciencias  
Departamento de Ciencias Humanas  
Maracaibo - Venezuela



## The information essence of politics

**Natalya Rinatovna Balynskaya<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>The department of public and municipal administration and personnel management, Nosov Magnitogorsk State Technical University

[n.balynskaya@ac.ru](mailto:n.balynskaya@ac.ru)

**Venera Nikolayevna Antonova<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>2</sup>The department of social pedagogics, the Pedagogical College of the North-Eastern Federal University named after M.K. Ammosov

[V.Antonova@ac.ru](mailto:V.Antonova@ac.ru)

**Victoria Willyamovna Ushnitskaya<sup>3</sup>**

<sup>3</sup>The department of foreign languages for humanities of the institute of western philology and regional studies of the North-Eastern Federal University named after M.K. Ammosov

[V.Ushnitskaya@ac.ru](mailto:V.Ushnitskaya@ac.ru)

**Pavel Viktorovich Limarev<sup>4</sup>**

<sup>4</sup>Accounting and economics analysis, Nosov Magnitogorsk State Technical University

[P.Limarev@ac.ru](mailto:P.Limarev@ac.ru)

**Yulia Anatolievna Limareva<sup>5</sup>**

<sup>5</sup>Accounting and economics analysis, Nosov Magnitogorsk State Technical University

[Y.Limareva@ac.ru](mailto:Y.Limareva@ac.ru)

**Liliia Midyhatovna Votchel<sup>6</sup>**

<sup>6</sup>Accounting and economics analysis, Nosov Magnitogorsk State Technical University

[L.Votchel@ac.ru](mailto:L.Votchel@ac.ru)

**Elena Vladimirovna Ereklintseva<sup>7</sup>**

<sup>7</sup>Accounting and economics analysis, Nosov Magnitogorsk State Technical University

[E.Ereklintseva.ac.ru](mailto:E.Ereklintseva.ac.ru)

### Abstract

In the article, the authors discuss the specific characteristics of the information essence of political processes via a functional and interdisciplinary approach. As a result, there are several types of information influence political processes. The first is the event line replicated in mass

media with a certain response to events that shape social conscience. The authors of the article have come to the conclusion that the new political elite should have the skills to work with such information, as only its deep layer can unite people into a kind of community that is able to effectively solve historical problems.

**Keywords:** Politics, information, management, mass, resource.

## La esencia informativa de la política

### Resumen

En el artículo, los autores discuten las características específicas de la esencia de la información de los procesos políticos a través de un enfoque funcional e interdisciplinario. Como resultado, hay varios tipos de información que influyen en los procesos políticos. La primera es la línea de eventos replicada en los medios de comunicación con una cierta respuesta a los eventos que dan forma a la conciencia social. Los autores del artículo han llegado a la conclusión de que la nueva elite política debe tener las habilidades para trabajar con dicha información, ya que solo su capa profunda puede unir a las personas en una clase de comunidad que puede resolver efectivamente los problemas históricos.

**Palabras clave:** política, información, gestión, masa, recurso.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The issue of the information component of politics at the current stage of public relations development is interesting for researchers. A huge variety of opinions about the movement and transformation of information in political processes exists. However, with all these opinions, scientists agree that equating the information resource in the sphere of politics with other resources is not right. In traditional political science, the following belief exists: the more some or other

resources we have, the more intensive political processes are. But the information resource is fundamentally different from all the others in this regard. Therefore, it is not right to pose the question of whether there is much or little information for a particular political action. Another important issue is whether there is any information in principle. Information is present in any case: it differs only in its quality.

To understand what qualities of information determine its functioning in political processes is important to realize the following: what exactly do we mean by information circulating in the framework of political processes, what qualities does information have in general and what qualities of information make it political? Determining what the difference is between political information and social information acting in the sphere of politics is also important.

## **2. THEORETICAL ANALYSIS**

Many interpretations of the information concept are available in modern literature. Thus, the researcher Pocheptsov believes that information is the basis to create the information space in which each person exists:

Information space is a resource generated by a national information creator, but the resource created by another party is also introduced in it in different ways. Information space has a certain closed and structural nature. In this sense, information

accompanies a person everywhere, including in politics (Pocheptsov, 2001: 16).

However, according to the researcher, the information for each group of people is proportioned and has its own specific character. In the opinion of Pocheptsov (2001), all Russian political electoral technologies, where media are a guide, fit themselves in this scheme. In this case, the goal is to manage information space by introducing into public consciousness information structures with a predictable response to them. In view of the researcher, the main thing is to change the world model. In this regard, the development of a strong, efficiently operating information infrastructure, which will allow to actively generate new ideas, becomes significant.

The researcher Solovyov considers information a “prerequisite for actions of any party to politics, and their most important condition allowing people to effectively interact in the political sphere in order to achieve their goals” (Solovyov, 2004: 19); he refers to the American scientist K. Deutsch, who has made the effectiveness of powerful institutions activity dependent on their abilities to regulate information and establish reasonable contacts between parties to political relationship (Perevalov, 1999). These contacts, according to Solovyov (2004), lead to communicating. The researcher notes that the concepts of information and communication processes used jointly within the political sphere are not identical in their meaning.

The first and main characterizes the technical and organizational part of exchange processes (in this sense, information processes are

considered to be the technological basis of political communication, this includes not only the content of messages but also information transfer means, the density level of message flows and other similar parameters on which the quality of communication directly depends). The concept of communication covers all aspects of subjective perception, interpretation and acquisition of information by people, all elements of the process of establishing reasonable contacts between senders and recipients of political information and its use in accordance with the intention of parties. These concepts define information and communication relationship as connecting elements of politics, within which prerequisites for the artificial management of a social and political system are formed.

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

We use a functional approach to our work. It helps to consider the mechanism of mass information functioning and its influence on a large audience at the level of its action. We also use methods of an interdisciplinary approach. Advantages of this approach show that Solovyov (2004), for example, has managed to define politics through information and communication characteristics. However, a reasonable question arises: if information and communication relationship is a connecting element in politics, and it gives rise to prerequisites for an artificial management of politics, then it should be assumed that earlier, before the technical revolution that enabled information to

circulate at a lightning speed in different directions, the management of the political system was inartificial, in other words, natural.

Meanwhile, throughout the entire mankind history, we have seen that the goal of any power at all times is artificial that is a purposefully targeted, management of the political system. And even at the time when such management was determined by the force of arms, it was artificial. This means that the information and communication essence of politics is not in the fact that prerequisites are created for artificial management of a political system, but in the fact that both the system itself and its management methods become qualitatively different.

#### **4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

In the work of Panarin (2006) one can find a lot of examples of managing the political system before the information has become widespread in the modern sense. From the point of view of the researcher, the manageability of political processes was the basis for perceiving nations as a kind of community. So Slavic tribes stood out and separated themselves from others. And the same mass information, distributed in the form of beliefs, myths, legends, contributed to this process.

This leads us to a completely different level of understanding the information essence of political processes. It is important for us to

understand not just the place and role of information in politics, but also the type of this information, as well as to identify the dependence of the course of political processes on various types of information. Examples from the book of Panarin (2006) illustrate that the information identifying the Slavic nation throughout its history has not always been widespread in the modern sense, that is, replicated using various mass media (newspapers, magazines, radio, TV).

There was also other information - myths, legends, songs, epics, and folk tales. And this information contributed no less to self-identifying the Slavic nation and managing political processes of that time. The researcher relies on the book of ancient Slavic people, in which the nation beliefs have been depicted, and in many respects, it is in this book that one should seek the source of the Slavic nation self-identification. We are referring to the Book of Volos:

This collection ... was not compiled with a chronological purpose; it is imbued with the idea of morality, upbringing, - each time based on examples from antiquity. And this is one of the reasons why texts of the Book of Volos are occasionally fragmentary and sometimes make a slight connection between each other in the plot, but they are all knit together by the Spirit contained in them, and it can be felt if one reads these texts with an open mind. This spirit is patriotism, love for Russia. The idea of the existence of the information-energy field as one of the Earth's shells and the ability of a person to contact these fields is particularly important. There is such a reality, which, being quite material, simultaneously has properties of the psychic... (2000: 19).

If we accept this position and imagine that not an individual, but a certain human community (people, nation) is tuned in a certain way to a specific information wave in the noosphere, then information reproduction and distribution processes that help to identify a large number of people as a separate community become clear and understandable. So, it is possible to make an intermediate conclusion that the internal type of information exists, it is observed and fixed. However, no matter how specific this type is, like any type of information it requires a certain medium. And this medium was long ago identified by researchers - it is a human gene. Scientists note: "An operating life system surpasses any version of Windows. The tiny molecular set-up of life solves its problems reliably in various working conditions and with minor failures" (Wiggins & Wynn, 2005: 18).

Researchers have not yet solved the mystery of the human DNA responsible for transferring certain information. However, no one today challenges the fact that the information stored in a human cell determines human behavior. However, traditional political science ignores the influence of the information encoded in the human psyche on politics. In the framework of a classical political science completely opposite attitudes are imposed. Thus, researchers believe that leaders guide political processes, and researchers focus their attention on them.

Western political scientists at first focused on the study of individual traits of a leader (the theory of traits). Modern researchers associate the political leadership not only with individual traits of leaders, but also with social and other conditions in which they operate

- the influence of a particular situation on leaders (and leaders on a situation), the attitude of subordinates to their leader, respect and readiness to obey him (a psychological theory) (Perevalov, 1999).

Some political scientists believe that a certain grouping of world political leaders is emerging, who are similar in their behavior and habits. Distinctive traits disappear in the behavior of such supranational leaders, which allows referring them to the transnational political elite. The theory of leadership is undoubtedly engrossing, it explains a lot, but, alas, not the specifics of politics. The Researcher Panarin (2006), whose works we have referred to several times in this article, noted: The present ruling political elite of Russia, in fact, continues to be the Soviet elite that is the losing elite. Even the so-called Russian oligarchs cannot, and obviously, are not able to lead an effective information confrontation with foreign oligarchs. The researcher believes that: "Russia needs the new, spiritual and creative political elite able to unite spiritually and intellectually political elites of Eurasia" (Vasilenko, 2005: 18).

Here is again the idea of the spirituality of the new political elite. It means that the information, on which the new political elite should rely on its activities, should be based on the ideals of the good and justice. He refers here to the deep sources of the future Russian political elite activity, not a simple perfunctory correspondence to the common theory of leadership traits. Thus, we again deal with very specific information, which has been discussed above. Where else should we look for ideas of the good and justice, if not in the inherited

memory of our nation? These arguments may seem to be remote from the actual political practice, yet they are supported by material evidence. If such information has helped the whole nation to form an identity for centuries, then it will be a kind of a sore for the nation.

There are also some topics considered dangerous topics by political scientists, journalists and diplomats, national and religious issues in particular. Indeed, this is the platform on which these very ideals of the Good and Justice are formed. Therefore, it is not surprising that sometimes a completely even line of politics is suddenly disturbed if national and religious issues emerge. These issues are a part of the internal information contained in the depth of the human psyche. At the same time, other information, which is intrinsically more important and necessary, recedes into the background. National and religious issues often give rise to military confrontations. Why are these issues exactly?

It seems that there may be a lot of explanations, but one of them is the role of the concealed information contained in the depth of the human psyche, the memory of the nation. It is this information that helps people to be identified as members of a particular community. Consequently, if in information flows, inactions of other people a person senses danger or threat to such an identification or the community integrity, he/she begins to react in order to protect this concealed information space. Such a reaction to internal information can qualitatively change the policy pursued in the society. Indeed, the twentieth century is full of examples of religious and national conflicts.

However, one often fails to rationally explain many reactions. For example, in the Chelyabinsk region, Bashkirs and Russians have lived together for many centuries. The boundaries of Bashkiria are clearly defined and no one threatens it geographically, so there are no objective reasons to express dissatisfaction.

Yet, when the Commission tasked with developing the National Security Concept of the Chelyabinsk Region announced its research findings indicating that Tatars outnumbered Bashkirs in the Republic of Bashkortostan, strong disapproval was registered among Bashkirs. However, these were only statistical data. The same can be said about other nations. For example, the number of Russians on the constituent territory slightly exceeds that of national minorities. Still, taking into account the active extinction of the Russian population these figures may quickly change. On learning, this finding Russian people started delivering angry speeches. In mass media, materials about the origin of the coat of arms of the Chelyabinsk region have been in demand (according to one version, a red camel is a spirit animal of Bashkir people. The independence of these people is expressed on the coat of arms of the Chelyabinsk region representing a camel in front of a defensive wall.

These examples further confirm that the internal information - present in the human psyche and working on the self-identification with a certain national and ethnic, religious community - is able to significantly influence the policy pursued in the society. One can make certain assumptions about the qualities of this information. Since the

medium on which this information is recorded is human DNA, it is inherent in each person. It may not be required for a certain time or maybe demanded constantly. It depends on a kind of context – external information support. One should clarify the author's attitude toward this issue. We have focused on the fact that the information, which we normally have defined as internal, was already applied in early stages of the mankind development, while the information became mass after inventing the method of transferring replicated information by mankind, and thus external information emerged.

No doubt, internal and external information has coexisted and interacted for a long time. Information, for example, can be considered external if it is introduced from outside, disturb the human community having lived on the basis of internal information. The interspersion of extraneous culture codes, symbols, etc. can be considered external, while the community lives primarily on the basis of internal information, it lives harmoniously. For example, Panarin observes this on the example of the nation called the Rus: “The Rus lived in nature, considered themselves to be a part of it and, so to say, merged with it. It was a sunny, lively, realistic religion” (Panarin, 2006: 20).

Over time, external information has begun to play a more important role in the life of people. With the invention of the printing machine, the ratio between internal and external

information has radically changed: there has become more of external information. The contradiction is in the fact that, as we see in the examples above, internal information has not ceased to play its role in political processes. No doubt, in the modern age, it is external information that plays a crucial role in political processes, because it is visible, more noticeable, available to be studied, analyzed. And the role of external information in political processes is much greater than it might seem at first sight. Mass information replicated by mass media can almost explicitly direct political processes into a certain course. This was recognized by many politicians (it is no coincidence that one of the first decrees approved by Bolsheviks in the first days of their coming to power was the Decree on printing).

However, mass information performs one more function - it is able not only to bring into being internal information but also to transfer it to the category of political information. The feeling of self-identification, inherent in a person as a representative of a certain nation, has nothing to do with politics until it gets into the environment of external information. And here even simple statistics can play the role of an accelerator, provoke a rapid transition of internal information, essentially social, to the category of external, political. The imbalance of the quantity of internal and external information in favor of the latter changes a person's life. Many researchers pay attention to this feature of modern political processes: "The most important information revolution took place

on the sidelines of mass media. It was associated with the emergence of information and psychological weapon able to effectively influence the psyche, emotions and moral of people” (Vasilenko, 2005: 18).

This weapon, in our opinion, is the transfer of internal information into an external, political sphere.

## **5. CONCLUSIONS**

Modern politics in Russia is specific. On the one hand, the country political course has been determined, the period of the society consistent transformation has passed. On the other hand, this does not mean that political processes have become predictable. Nonlinearity, the unpredictability of politics in many respects is the result of the predominance of external information over internal information, which provokes various unplanned actions on a religious and national basis. The direction of politics into a predictable course is the task of practical political science. However, without understanding the problem on a theoretical level, without realizing that politics in Russia is specific, the problem will not be solved.

Moreover, within the framework of traditional political science, there seems to be a tendency to realize and recognize the information essence of politics. The role of information in the life of human society as a modern stage is important. And if information determines the behavior of people in many spheres, then there is no reason to ignore the political one. On the contrary, it may become the research subject not only of the political science but also of the communication science, sociology, anthropology and many disciplines of humanities which will for sure enrich modern scientific knowledge and help to make political processes predictable and manageable.

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