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PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS IN THE FORMATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF UKRAINE'S INFORMATION POLICY WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF EUROPEAN INTEGRATION: ANALYSIS OF MANAGEMENT MECHANISMS AND THEIR IMPACT ON PUBLIC OPINION

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Abstract. Information policies are critical to the survival, prosperity, and progress of any nation. Over the past decade, Ukraine is trying to build effective information policy, capable of contributing to mitigation of the current war challenges, and maintain it. In this vein, the article considers core peculiarities, challenges, and pitfalls of information policy concept in today realities, with an emphasis on its psychological factors. Special attention is paid to the phenomenon of value adding and securitization. The paper concluded that the development of information policies should be based on the information needs of the citizenry and the knowledge custodian for the achievement of national development and national security.

Keywords: information policy, information wars, value adding, society, securitization

1. INTRODUCTION

Ukraine's information policy is a key tool in ensuring the effective promotion of European integration processes. It is aimed at raising public awareness, supporting reforms and the country's integration into the European space. The

process of Ukraine's European integration determines the need to adapt the national information policy to European standards and norms. This involves not only the implementation of a set of EU legal acts, but also the application of European practices in the field of media, protection of human rights and freedom of speech. Information policy in this context should take into account the need to harmonize legislation, introduce new technologies, and ensure compliance of the information space with European values. At the same time, one should remember that national information policies of EU member-countries are not unhomogeneous and are characterized by a complex 'matrix' of historical, cultural, geopolitical and geoeconomic factors. Thus, Ukraine faces a challenge to find its own, unique but efficient way to build and manage information policy within European standards as a framework, but with specific national background.

The implementation of national information policy in the context of Ukraine's European integration strategy and approximation to European standards in the field of information and communication determines the dynamics of changes in the information sphere of the state, stimulates positive developments in the use of new communication services, and influences the improvement of information legislation (Bashtannyk et al.,2024). In addition, information policy is of crucial importance for the effective implementation of the European integration process, ensuring wide access to information, transparency, and mutual understanding between all stakeholders. However, no less important ones are the psychological factors of the formation and implementation of Ukraine's information policy, closely related to both the effectiveness of management mechanisms and the influence of information policy on public opinion.

Information policies have an impact on how information is accessed, used, shared, transferred, stored, transmitted, private, secure, and shown. Many of the functions of information in a society are governed by these rules and regulations, but they are also influenced by those functions. In the development and application of information policy, psychological considerations primarily define these social positions, their essence, characteristics, and societal ramifications. In the meantime, there is a lack of research in this area, which establishes the need of looking into relevant subjects in this sector.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Information policy is the collection of norms, regulations, and laws that defines how information may be stored, given, and utilized. Policy research is, by its nature, multifaceted, multidimensional, and may be investigated using a number of theoretical frameworks. Governments, particularly at the national and state levels, make laws and issue rules that control the transmission and use of information by people, corporate enterprises, and government bodies. Information rules have an impact on how information is accessed, used, shared, transferred, stored, transmitted, private, secure, and shown. Many of the functions of information in a society are governed by these rules and regulations, but they are also influenced by those functions. The First Amendment's provision of freedom of expression, for instance, has influenced how the government can control or guide the flow of information in the United States by fostering a societal expectation that information will typically be accessible (Browne, 1997).

There are significant differences in how different countries manage information as a result of differing ideologies on information policy. Information policy's social measurement may show how policies affect both the people who want to access the information and the organizations that handle it (Borodin et al., 2023; Ferdman et al., 2025). A variety of social metrics, such as surveys, policy analysis, social interventions, and case studies, are used to study information policy.

Descriptive modeling of the policy environment, side-by-side analysis, review and analysis of legal and policy instruments, and assessment of outcomes measures are specific instances of social measurements of information policy. The literature contains examples of these measurement methods; some authors have explained how these methods can be applied in conjunction with various frameworks for examining the policy process, such as the "stages heuristic", "institutional rational choice,", and several other methods (Weible, 2023).

Various theoretical approaches determine the foundations of information policy formation. One of the key ones is the systemic, communicative, and normative approaches. Thus, S. Leshik (2024) gives the following classification:

– A systemic approach in the study of information policy allows considering it as part of a broader political, economic, and social context. This approach makes it possible to understand how information policy interacts with other areas of public life, in particular, with the economy, culture, and security (Borysenko et al., 2022; Gupta et al., 2024). Within the framework of the systemic approach, information policy is considered as a dynamic system that constantly adapts to changes in the external environment;

– A communicative approach focuses on the processes of information transmission and communication strategies used within the framework of information policy. This approach allows analyzing how different communication channels influence the formation of public opinion, how government and non-governmental organizations interact with citizens, and how information policy affects the media environment. In the process of European integration, special attention is paid to the communication strategy, which is aimed at raising public awareness of European values and standards (Zajacz, 2019);

– A normative-legal approach focuses on the analysis of the legislative framework regulating information policy. In the context of Ukraine's European integration, this approach is extremely important, as it includes the adaptation of national legislation to European standards. This covers issues of human rights protection, freedom of speech, access to information, as well as regulation of media activities (Karpa et al., 2023; Mykolaichuk et al., 2025). The normative-legal approach allows assessing the compliance of national legislation with Ukraine's international obligations and European norms.

However, it should also be mentioned that information policy today is directly related to national security and represents its integral tool. Modern experience of conducting information and psychological warfare (IPW) allows assuming that it can be considered not only as a specific method of non-lethal defeat of the enemy, but also as an independent form of political struggle. This is evidenced by the fundamental geopolitical changes characteristic of the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries, which occurred and are occurring against the background of the rapid development of a number of the latest information and communication technologies that are used in the military-political and information and psychological spheres of ensuring the security of the leading world powers (Koshova et al., 2022; Nekhai et al., 2024). Information and psychological methods of influence are becoming increasingly large-scale and politically effective, due to which they are increasingly used by states to achieve their political goals instead of so-called "hot" wars. In the world practice of interstate relations, conditions are created not only for the consistent transformation of armed confrontation into information-psychological confrontation (struggle, or war), but also for its transformation into an independent direction of foreign policy of developed states. Thus, information policy today should be considered as a complex phenomenon, the impact of which on public opinion is multifactorial and multi-vector in nature and is determined to a greater extent not by institutional characteristics, but by psychological factors.

3. METHODOLOGY

The methodological basis for examining the research problems is grounded on the methods of systemic, structural-functional, and institutional analysis. The research used the provisions of the theory of information wars, securitization, and added value in information processes. The main research tool is content analysis, carried out within the framework of the constructivist research paradigm.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Information policy is distinct from other policy kinds for a number of reasons. In the first place, it is a meta-policy since it has an impact on almost everything else in a society where information and communication technologies are taking over. Information affects everything, whereas other forms of policy have a variety of measurable effects. Second, information policy shapes many other policy areas, and those policy choices are influenced by information policy decisions. Economic growth, political deliberations, technological innovation, civic engagement, development, and urban planning, among much else, are driven in no small part by information policy decisions (Kulikov et al., 2022; Borysenko et al., 2025). Third, information policy dictates the management, gathering, sharing, and other facets of the use of information by a wide range of organizations, including government agencies, businesses, nonprofits, and institutions where information is essential to their operations, such as libraries, schools, archives, and museums. Fourth, every information policy choice has a direct impact on a wide variety of persons and organizations, resulting in both obvious benefits and drawbacks for society as a whole. Lastly, information is not limited like other resources that are important policy areas (Jaeger et al., 2015). Information, in contrast to other resources, is infinite and may always be created, resulting in special dynamics. Fifth, even though information is potentially limitless, there are a variety of factors that might affect its long-term availability, including how information is stored and retrieved, the medium that it is recorded on, and other considerations.

However, government policy responses to social difficulties in the information area have been fragmented, irregular, and, rather than being systematic, reactive in the face of particular crises, despite around thirty years of interest in information topics (Vasylevska et al., 2022; Kichurchak et al., 2024). The methods used to establish government policy objectives are a primary cause of this deficiency. Generally speaking, governments respond to lobbying and community concerns, and in the case of information-related issues, there hasn't been enough pressure to produce a cogent policy emphasis. It has frequently happened that particular concerns brought out by influential stakeholder groups have served as a primary catalyst for the creation of policies (Voronina et al., 2024; Zayats et al., 2024). An excellent example is the intellectual property issues brought up by writers and publishers who are worried about the easy and inexpensive copying that might undermine their earnings. Additionally, although policy intervention is crucial in this situation, responding to interest groups does not necessarily result in an impartial strategy that will guarantee the protection of individual users' information rights from a wider standpoint (Levinson et al., 2020).

Furthermore, governments have never before intellectually grasped the breadth and depth of information problems in society. This is seen by the manner that various government agencies in industrialized nations have divided up responsibilities for various, sometimes overlapping, parts of information policy (Sydorchuk et al., 2024;

Serhieiev et al., 2025). There are noticeably few overarching frameworks that may be utilized to integrate policy in a cohesive manner and at a wide conceptual level.

Nonetheless, when viewed in this light, there are four primary definitions of information - or maybe more precisely, sets of definitions - that must to be taken into account when formulating or analyzing information policy (Venglinsky, 2024):

1. The traditional definition of information as a resource is "bits" of information that are not connected to larger bodies of knowledge. In this instance, information and the people who create, handle, and use it are seen as distinct and separate entities. In this sense, knowledge is extremely helpful in supporting the growth of organizations or societies, but it has no inherent power.

2. Information as a commodity: It is evident that information increases in value as it moves through the information production chain, despite the numerous challenges associated with applying economic notions to the consideration of information as a commodity that can be purchased and sold. The fact that it leaves out a lot of information with cultural, religious, and artistic value is one of the issues with basing policy only on this concept of information.

3. Information as perception: When information is viewed as a pattern perception, context is provided as one moves up the hierarchy. Information's impacts, such lowering uncertainty, can be addressed at this level. This method is similar to considering information to be a subjective and intangible thing. It recognizes that context and patterns vary from person to person and that information is consequently relative.

4. At the summit of the hierarchy is the idea that knowledge is a constitutive force in society, possessing both independent power and the ability to influence context. Despite the fact that it has the potential to be a weapon for ideological manipulation, experts feel that this definition of information should serve as the foundation for all information policymaking (Braman, 2011).

Last but not least, a statement or model should preferably cover the following additional information policy-specific factors:

(1) The functions of the primary stakeholders, including users, creators, sellers, collectors, and others, in addition to information professionals (Basri, 2020);

(2) The methods that add value to information are said to have to do with quality, flexibility, time and money savings, simplicity of use, and "noise" reduction (Rowlands, 1996).

In other words, the "value" that the information policy's goals add, as well as the opinions and interest of key stakeholders, greatly influence the consequences of information policy. Many of the operations that contribute value are highlighted by information transfer models. These models depict a cycle that starts with the creation of ideas and how they are composed into various forms, as well as the typical procedures for gathering, storing, organizing, retrieving, and so on. It also encompasses the cycle's analysis, interpretation, assessment, synthesis, repackaging, and distribution activities, among others (see Fig. 1).
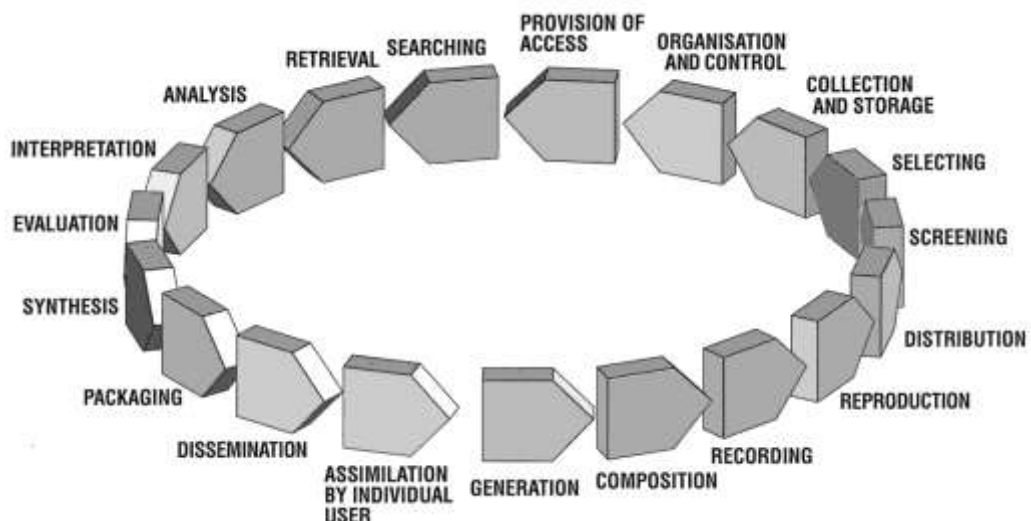

Fig. 1. Information transfer process (Weible, 2023)

Debates persist even after a policy has been settled upon and implemented because of the complexity and interdependencies among stakeholder interests. Reexamination and adjustments may result from this, occasionally in an ongoing cycle. Additionally, since operational procedures and technical advancements lead to new problems and conflicts, information policy creation is always changing (Pasek, 2015).

In order to prevent the bad consequences of people's activities and/or to encourage the positive ones, policies are usually created to solve a problem, disagreement, or worry. A favorable outcome for one stakeholder group, however,

can have the opposite consequence for another (Pyatnychuk et al., 2024). This thesis is confirmed by the fact that manipulation of public opinion with the help of special information technologies has become a highly effective means of, among other things, political struggle and destabilization of the situation as a whole. At present, namely the information impact on a person and society comes to the fore (Petrukha et al., 2025). The development of information and, as a consequence, the development of technology leave a significant imprint on the inner and outer world of a person, which, in turn, is reflected in the level of his information security and protection. Information technologies are actively entering the psycho-socio-cultural space of a person, and it often becomes impossible for an individual to follow the course of their development (Poliova et al., 2024). In the conditions of informatization of society, information technologies are becoming one of the most important tools for the formation of needs, interests, views, value systems, and finally, a tool for influencing the worldview of a person as a whole, a mechanism for education and training.

Furthermore, information policies must be in line with other public policies; they are not created and carried out in a vacuum. According to Roper and Williams in Mutongi and Marume (2016), policy might mean: caution in handling matters; a specific plan of action chosen from a range of options; or a high degree of overall strategy that incorporates the general objectives and accepted governance practices. Information policy should ideally be viewed as a key component that influences a specific type of order (Obi & Mmejim, 2019).

The idea that information policy should support the interests of the public and the government is implicit. Nonetheless, some of the guiding principles put out to support information policy are the free exchange of information, international cooperation, and peace. The government views information as a policy object while implementing these principles. In other words, policymaking is based on information (Sharon, 2010). In this case, the government views information as a tool for policymaking (Pavlovskyi et al., 2024). However, the government decides whether and how data is gathered, created, shared, examined, and maintained in support of certain policy principles (such as social justice, accountability, transparency, or responsibility) or to accomplish particular objectives in a number of areas, such as environmental quality, public health, or economic growth and development (Dawes, 2016).

National development is closely linked to information policy. Since it impacts almost everything else and is increasingly dominated by information and communication technology, it is a meta-policy. Information reaches every part of the system, and other policy kinds have a variety of measurable effects. Many other policy domains are dependent on information policy, and those policy decisions are defined by information policy decisions, as Obi & Mmejim (2019) correctly assert. Decisions on information policy play a significant role in development, urban planning, civic involvement, economic growth, political discussions, and technical innovation. Most importantly, it permits the appropriate use of funds allotted for policy implementation.

With many hypotheses and explanations for the current crisis in international relations, it seems that most of them tend to analyze situations and facts that lie on the surface, and do not provide adequate information for making pragmatic decisions (Pasichnyi et al., 2024). However, the latent but true background of the ongoing processes is the information policy of countries - both domestic and aimed at players in the international arena.

In most cases, the information era (sometimes called digital era) is understood as the development and active implementation of computer systems in all areas of management and economics. But this misses a much more significant socio-psychological aspect of the problem. First of all, this is an unlimited expansion of access to the receipt, production, and distribution of any information by any interested persons or structures - something that never existed (was not possible) in previous eras. These are the factors that define the concept of a post-industrial society, much more open (the world has become transparent), mobile, and unstable. The thesis attributed to the Rothschild family that "whoever owns the information, owns the world" has lost its meaning, since, in fact, there is no longer any information that, under certain conditions, can be possessed by everyone or even all (Jackson, 2024). Not only personal life, but also top secret materials about spy scandals, corruption at the highest levels of power, war crimes and the "backroom" diplomacy of the great and all other powers are no longer an absolute secret (Bakshi, 2018). In addition, to a large extent, it is about influencing the mass consciousness, manipulative techniques, disinformation, control over political and electoral behavior. Thus, psychological factors of information policy come to the fore. There is even such a concept as "psychological turbulence in the conditions of information warfare" (Ventre, 2009).

One of the crucial tools of information policy today is securitization. Using this tool is based namely on psychological factors. According to securitization theory, policymakers and decision-makers consciously choose national security policy rather than it just happening. Securitization theory states that when political issues are labeled as "threatening", "dangerous", "alarming", "menacing", and so forth by a "securitizing actor" who possesses the institutional and social power to push the issue "beyond politics", they are considered extreme security issues that require immediate attention (Balzacq, 2010). Therefore, security risks need to be defined as problems by securitizing actors rather than just being "out there". For example, calling immigration a "threat to national security" elevates it from a low political priority to a high priority problem that calls for border security and other measures. According to securitization theory, which questions conventional approaches to security in IR, problems are not fundamentally dangerous in and of themselves; rather, they only become security concerns when they are referred to as "security" problems.

Five areas were identified by securitization theorists: the political, military, social, economic, and environmental sectors. A particular hazard is described as endangering a referent item in each sector (Song, 2015). For instance, identity is the referent object in the sociological sector, but endangered species and the ecosystem are the referent objects in the environmental sector. The state is still the referent object solely in the military sector. Several scholars have recognized that existential risks are not objective, but rather connect to the distinct attributes of each referent object by "sectarianizing" security (Floyd, 2019). This method also emphasizes how contextual security and threats are. For instance, some people are more anxious about suicide bombings than others are these days. However, suicide terrorism is frequently presented as a "global" threat. Securitization demonstrates that discussing problems like terrorism as though they affect everyone equally is wrong. Referent objects raise the questions: Security for whom? What kind of security? And by whom is security provided? (Kaunert and Wittman, 2023.

Demonstrating the rhetorical structure of decision-makers when presenting an issue and trying to persuade an audience to elevate it beyond politics is at the heart of securitization theory. Buzan et al. (1998) referred to this as a speaking act. It is crucial to conceptualize securitization as a speech act because it demonstrates how words not only explain reality but also create it, which in turn elicits certain reactions. In the process of describing the reality we perceive, we engage with it and do an action that will significantly alter our perception of it. For instance, calling an immigrant camp "the Jungle" paints the camp as dangerous and anarchic rather than accurately characterizing what it is (Schuilenburg et al., 2017). Threats are therefore not only threats in and of themselves; rather, they are created through words. The securitizing actor must highlight and frequently exaggerate the threat's severity and urgency, convey a point of no return - that is, "if we do not tackle this problem, everything else will be irrelevant" - and present a potential solution (raising the issue above politics), which is frequently presented in military terms, in order to persuade an audience to take extraordinary measures (Wertman & Kaunert, 2023). By doing this, the securitizing actor allows a regime of truth regarding the nature of the referent object and the danger, making certain behaviors more understandable than others.

In essence, securitization is the transformation of an "ordinary" problem into a systemic security threat. "Securitization is the process of state comprehension of a situation, during which certain phenomena begin to be viewed as security threats, for the neutralization of which emergency measures can be used, among other things" (Wertman & Kaunert, 2023). The reasons for securitization are varied, but in the most general sense, they can be considered as the inability of the state and society to repel threats in a standard, traditional format. Under these conditions, the alleged threat is declared an emergency. The arsenal of psychological factors of influence on the "recipients" of information policy enables decision-makers to achieve the "necessary" moods in society and even in the global political, geopolitical, and geoeconomic discourse.

Information can force the violation of public order and contribute to the incitement of national, racial and religious hatred. In other words, information security is an element of the system of state and regional security, which in the 21st century is characterized by both purely traditional and new challenges.

Within the framework of the psychological paradigm, information warfare is understood as a latent impact of information on individual, group, and mass consciousness using propaganda, disinformation, manipulation methods in order to form new views on the socio-political organization of society through changing value orientations and basic attitudes of the individual (Zajacz, 2019). The strategy and tactics of this war are, respectively, information policy and its structural elements. In turn, the implementation of securitization becomes possible due to the above-described mechanism of 'value adding' - passing through the cycle of the information transfer process, securitized postulates are strengthened. However, insufficient consideration of the interests and attitudes of stakeholders, as well as the impact of external information flows on them, can lead to the opposite effect.

Securitization theories suggest that information policy becomes a key component of the national security system. Understanding this is extremely important for Ukraine when forming information policy within the framework of European integration. An attempt to copy the best practices of Western or Northern European countries may lead to entropic processes in society. Ukraine, undergoing the process of European integration, is at the same time in the epicenter of geopolitical information wars. In such conditions, the development of a competent information policy is a critical condition for ensuring national security.

5. CONCLUSION

It has become commonplace that in many modern societies of the world, there have been fundamental changes in the field of information technology, a qualitative leap in the production, storage, accumulation, processing and transmission of information. But in practice this means that the information space is used both objectively and subjectively to implement social and political goals, influences politics, accelerating the process of making socially significant decisions and in many ways transforming the political process. In fact, in modern information societies, the processes of making political decisions are constantly accelerating, the transparency of functioning is increasing: the authorities and citizens get more opportunities to participate in the management of society. The information sphere is increasingly becoming a system-forming factor in the life of society, and not only on a nation-state scale, but on a global scale. At present, competition between various socio-political actors in the information space is becoming

increasingly intense. The result of competition between states and non-state structures has been the inevitable shift of politics from social reality to the information space, which, in turn, contributes to the constant increase in the role of information policy. In turn, the factors determining the effectiveness of this policy are multi-layered and multi-component, and the information policy itself has become a weapon of modern information wars in geopolitical confrontation. In the process of European integration, Ukraine needs to take into account all these processes and conduct a thorough systemic analysis of the psychological factors of information policy, patterns of influence on public opinion, with the aim of developing not only the information policy itself, but also management mechanisms for its implementation.

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