



Strategic Communication in the Digital Age: Examining Linguistic Mechanisms and Media Influence on Public Consciousness Amidst Political Tensions

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Abstract

At the current stage of social development, political conflicts with ideological underpinnings increasingly attract public attention. In such circumstances, public opinion should remain as free as possible from manipulative political influences, as this contributes to the consolidation and sustainable development of civil society in Ukraine. The mass media and political discourse play a decisive role in shaping public awareness and interpretations of political conflicts. The aim of this study is to provide an in-depth analysis of communication and speech phenomena in contemporary political conflicts and to assess their impact on social dynamics, particularly on the level of public trust in the media. The research is based on a qualitative analysis of political discourse and a comparative examination of the most significant political speeches delivered over the past fifty years. The study also evaluates current media practices and the role of social networks in political communication. Key trends in the representation of political conflicts have been identified, including the simplification of public political speeches, minimization of content, increased reliance on emotional narratives, and

intensified influence on the electorate through the presentation of promising strategies. The findings reveal a gradual adaptation of political rhetoric to audience perception capacities. The growing importance of social networks as tools for political mobilization, voter segmentation, and public engagement has been established. Political conflicts function as catalysts of socio-economic dynamics, while contemporary communication strategies significantly influence public trust, political participation, and the development of civil society.

Keywords: rhetoric of political communication, influence of political speeches, political conflict, social networks, communication strategies.

Introduction

Political conflicts have a clear focus. In particular, rhetoric is used in political conflicts to effectively shape a certain conceptual perception of the conflict by society. The information and communication system and the unhindered dissemination of information through social networks allow society to interpret each political conflict in a certain way.

Political conflicts are characterized by the presence of a clear communication strategy, which allows for the implementation of large-scale information campaigns in the media. The social communication system, meanwhile, influences the formation of strategies for adapting to different political contexts and helps achieve socio-psychological unity with the reference group. Also, social networks are currently positioned as the leading platform for promoting political ideas.

Communication strategies for supporting political conflicts are currently characterized by integrity and comprehensiveness. They have a deterministic system of tools for influencing social development. Political rhetoric has the potential to resolve social tensions, as it takes into account the psychological specifics of the electorate.

A characteristic feature of modern Ukrainian civil society is the emergence of new features that play an important role in countering manipulative influences. Manipulative technologies achieve their goals through the uncritical thinking of citizens, as the media and social networks have a wide range of potential opportunities to influence public opinion. The war in Ukraine creates new opportunities for manipulation, as well as for combating it.

One of the key factors for effective communication in the context of political conflict is a shared understanding of the context by all participants in the communication process. Identical interpretations of the context facilitate interaction and help avoid misunderstandings. That is why special attention should be paid to preventing fake news, disinformation, and manipulation through the media.

Given the relevance of the issue under study in the current geopolitical context, particular attention should be paid to the phenomena of communication and speech in contemporary political conflicts, as well as the influence of the media and political discourse on the process of public awareness of political conflicts.

The scientific novelty of the study, compared to existing works, lies in substantiating the impact of political conflicts on macro- and microeconomic processes, the specifics of regional tourist flows, migration processes, and social transformations. The study highlights the importance of a comprehensive approach to studying the impact of political rhetoric and communication on social dynamics, which will prevent destructive social processes and promote geopolitical stability.

Literature Review

The scientific interest of contemporary researchers is focused on aspects of the formation of the socio-psychological basis of the communication process in political discourse. Among the relevant research perspectives, it is worth noting the publications by Reisach (2021), Manheim (2023), Bennett (2023), Cornfield et al. (2023).

The research by Torcal and Comellas (2022) investigates emergency political communication worldwide to establish vital elements for successful political speech and show how political messages expand their audience reach. The research by Tsebenko et al. (2023) demonstrates that social networks determine how people in their local communities view political conflicts which emerge in their area. Wolak (2022) describes media resources as channels which enable the transmission of political environments to public awareness while displaying political organizations' positions to different audience groups.

In publications by Olof Larsson (2023), special attention is paid to the functionality of social networks as a location for active interaction between European politicians and voters. Sørensen and Ansell (2023) explain that politicians employ social networks to display information while they also use these networks to achieve deceptive goals. The research by Kovtunyk et al. (The authors in (2023) describe how different stories affect how people understand political speech which also applies to worldwide political situations.

The research by Khoma et al. (2020) study how people use social media to express their personal views and maintain their individuality in public spaces while showing how these platforms help people build civil society and support their political beliefs. The authors explain that organizations can use the crisis to build their political influence through strategic communication and speaking tools. Nisch (2024) studied Volodymyr Zelensky's Twitter political rhetoric to discover that he uses powerful emotional terms which help him achieve better international reach and public engagement.

The research by Kharchuk (2021) and Gilardi et al. (2022) analyze political stability

enhancement tools through their analysis of discourse and rhetorical elements. The researchers demonstrate how social media platforms together with mass media outlets create political conflicts which produce new communication patterns that affect the progression of current political disagreements.

Rogers and Niederer (2020) study digital strategies in political conflicts, highlighting the importance of political leaders' social media pages for the effective promotion of political ideas on the global web. At the same time, Jost et al. (2022) analyze the mechanisms of political position formation in the context of motivational and cognitive aspects. According to the authors, political disputes arise due to the prevalence of a certain stereotype in society, which causes prejudice in a large part of society. Negrine and Stanyer (2023) argue that political conflict is an integral part of social life and can have a positive impact on the development of society.

Contemporary industry publications confirm the importance of political rhetoric and communication in the context of their decisive influence on the formation of public perceptions of political priorities. The authors identify the main mechanisms of political communication formation and the ways in which political discourse and rhetoric influence the understanding of political disputes and conflicts (Akimova et al., 2022). At the same time, a number of aspects of the issue under study remain unexplored.

Contemporary researchers, such as Aluya (2025) and Makedon et al. (2025b), investigate the types of discursive strategies used to confirm and refute the decisions and actions of both warring parties, and describe the linguistic features through which these discursive strategies are implemented and their functions in speech. At the same time, Ehibor et al. (2025) conduct a linguo-stylistic analysis of leadership language in the political sphere and the business world.

The aim of the study is to conduct an extended analysis of the phenomena of communication and speech in contemporary political conflicts and their impact on social dynamics.

Methodology

The study uses an analytical approach, namely the system of critical discourse analysis. Critical discourse analysis involves the empirical analysis of speech in a social context. It includes both the course of speech and its preconditions, limitations and results, the extra-linguistic context and unspoken intentions that accompany the act of speech. The choice of this approach is due to the need for a deeper study of linguistic mechanisms and the impact of the media on public consciousness in the context of political tension. The process of data collection and analysis included the following stages - components of N. Ferklo's three-dimensional model: study of linguistic characteristics (analysis of vocabulary, language, grammar, use of devalued vocabulary in messages, etc., as well as transitivity, modality); study of discursive practices (chain of intertextuality); study of social practice (interactivity, progress/regression of information and psychological influence strategies).

Research construction and logic of empirical design

The current study is not limited to a superficial analysis of political texts. Its methodological structure is formed as an integrated system that combines linguistic analysis, discursive reconstruction, and media-institutional contextual consideration. The central object is strategic communication in a digital environment, which acts as a catalyst for political tensions.

The analytical logic is built on the intersection of three planes. The first plane is linguistic. The second is media-structural. The third is cognitive-political. Each of them is considered not in isolation, but in relation to each other. It is this three-layer model that allows us to trace how linguistic mechanisms are transformed into instruments of influence on mass consciousness. The methodological framework consists of four stages: the formation of a corpus of texts, categorical coding, discursive analysis, and interpretative comparison with socio-political indicators (Figure 1).

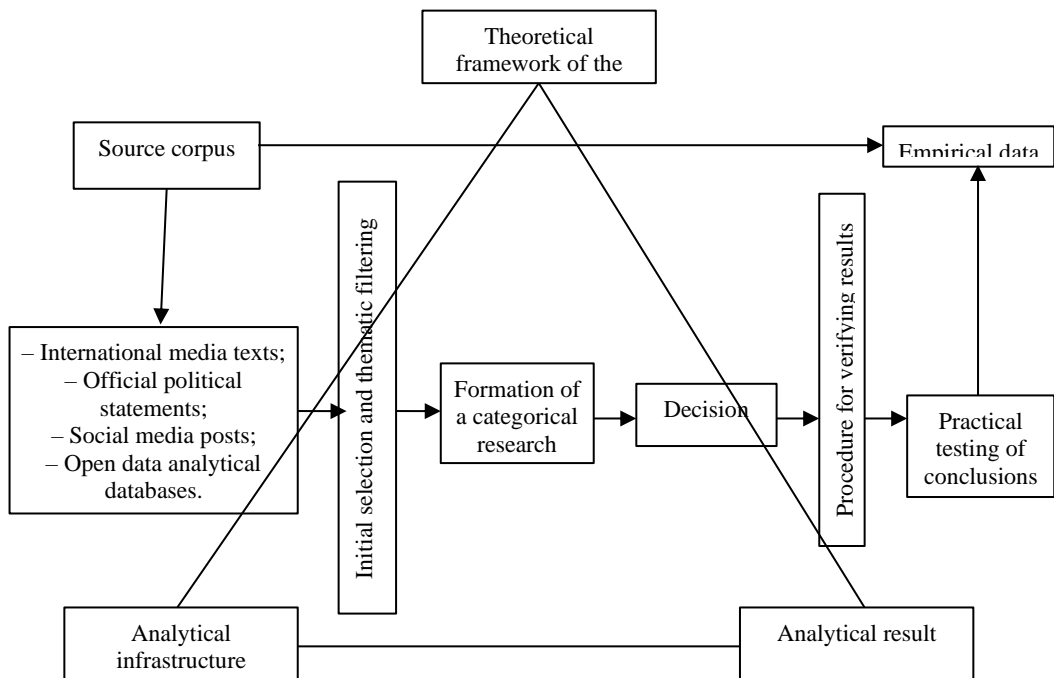


Figure 1. Conceptual diagram of the methodological organization of research on strategic communication in the digital environment

Source: compiled by the authors

The chosen structure ensures a combination of qualitative depth and procedural consistency.

Formation of the text corpus and selection criteria

The empirical base was formed on the basis of international media publications and official political statements released between January 2022 and March 2024. The sample includes materials from English-language and European publications, as well as public statements by political leaders published on official digital platforms. The selection criteria were strict. First, the text had to have a clear political context. Second, the material had to demonstrate the presence of rhetorical constructions related to mobilization, legitimization, or confrontation. Third, the publication had to be accessible in the open digital space, which ensures its influence. The total corpus included 87 media texts. The volume of each text varies, but all materials are subject to the same coding procedure. The sample was formed using a targeted selection method, which allows us to focus on relevant examples of strategic communication.

Coding procedure and analytical tools

The first stage involved initial open coding of the texts. Key rhetorical markers were identified: appeal to external threats, construction of an enemy image, narrative of unity, economic warning, legitimizing argumentation. The categories were refined during the process of reviewing the corpus. Next, axial coding was used to establish relationships between categories. For example, the narrative of threat is often combined with economic argumentation. In such cases, the linguistic structure takes on a cumulative character.

The content analysis was supplemented with elements of critical discourse analysis. Particular attention was paid to semantic fields, metaphors, and repetitive syntactic constructions. At the same time, the tone of the messages was assessed through a qualitative interpretation of the intensity of lexical markers (Table 1).

Interpretative modeling and validation

The final stage involved the construction of a generalized analytical model of the impact of strategic communication on public consciousness. The model is based on the assumption that linguistic constructions function as triggers for cognitive mobilization. Rhetoric does not simply inform. It structures the emotional field. Modeling was carried out by comparing linguistic patterns with the context of political events. Where tensions rose, markers of external threat and collective unity became more active. In contrast, periods of relative stabilization were characterized by pragmatic economic arguments.

The results were validated by reanalyzing the sample over a time interval. Some of the texts were recoded independently. Discrepancies in categorization accounted for less than ten percent, which indicates the internal consistency of the methodology. We note that the study is qualitative in nature. It does not claim to quantitatively measure the scale of influence, but it does allow us to identify structural patterns in the linguistic construction of political reality.

Table 1. Methodological scheme for analyzing strategic communication

Stage	Object of analysis	Tool	Category	Evaluation criterion	Result
Corpus formation	Media texts	Purposeful selection	Political context	Presence of strategic rhetoric	Representative sample
Primary coding	Texts	Open coding	Threat	Frequency of lexemes	Basic categorization
Secondary coding	Texts	Axial coding	Unity	Semantic connection	Interrelationship matrix
Discourse analysis	Speeches	Critical analysis	Legitimacy	Argumentative structure	Interpretative model
Tonal analysis	Media	Qualitative assessment	Emotionality	Intensity of markers	Impact assessment
Comparative stage	Various sources	Comparison	Narrative stability	Repetition of plots	Typology of strategies
Interpretation	Generalized data	Synthesis	Media influence	Correlation with events	Analytical conclusions
Verification	Data corpus	Review	Consistency	Internal logic	Confirmation of results

Results

Currently, the issue of geopolitical disputes and confrontations is becoming particularly relevant. The resolution of international conflicts is crucial, as geopolitical disputes lead not only to social crises but also to destructive socio-economic consequences. The effectiveness of a political leader or state body in demonstrating their political position as genuine and simultaneously forming the necessary focus of public awareness of the situation is of particular importance.

One of the key aspects of resolving political confrontation in the current geopolitical situation is the use of the information and communication space of the mass media to transfer political narratives in the necessary context. Social networks, which actively influence the public by presenting the emotional narrative of disputes between politicians, are of particular importance in this regard. New media can be positioned as both a subject and an object of political manipulation, which is actively used in the modern world and often leads to a decline in trust in politicians and the media on a global scale (Culloty & Suiter, 2021).

For the most part, politicians convey their position to the public through political rhetoric – speeches that contain a certain idea and established bias. The narrative of

political speech determines how it is perceived by the public and the media, influencing the formation of the electorate (Kostyk et al., 2025).

Based on a content analysis of a number of speeches by politicians of global significance from the UK, India, Brazil, EU countries, China, the US, Turkey, and Ukraine, it is possible to identify the main ideas of contemporary political discourse on a global scale. In particular, the main themes are the deterministic definitions of “aggression,” “democracy,” “unity,” “threat,” and “sovereignty”. At the same time, emotional frames were identified as the main concept influencing the public.

Among the political speeches studied, political speech strategies occupy a prominent place. In particular, the “intimidation” strategy was used by politicians such as Boris Johnson (calls by world leaders to fight Russian invasion on March 23, 2022) and Joe Biden (calls for unity against authoritarian rule on April 7, 2022).

The “external threat” strategy is quite common. Vladimir Putin used it on September 21, 2022, when he said that Europe was seeking to destroy Russia.

The strategy of “national unity” is quite widespread. For example, it was used by Indian political leader Narendra Modi to unite public efforts on August 15, 2022, and by Volodymyr Zelenskyy to call for the building of a great Ukraine on February 20, 2023.

Key strategies of political rhetoric find practical transfer to the social environment through speeches in the media, which makes it possible to shape public opinion and regulate certain concepts of the society's perception of political disputes. As the analysis shows, from January 2022 to March 2024, the leading national and international media outlets predominantly used definitions of authoritarianism and democracy, national unity, and external threats to recreate in political discourse the image of a free, stable, and democratic Europe that effectively opposes authoritarian regimes.

Telegram, YouTube, and Facebook remain the most popular social media platforms, serving as the main channel for many to get quick news, share experiences, and exchange information. Social media is also a tool for helping to resolve political conflicts. An analysis of posts by prominent political players on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram shows a general focus on direct communication with the public, visualization, and regulation of public sentiment.

For example, Joe Biden and Ursula von der Leyen have posted on Twitter about affirming democracy and countering geopolitical aggression (Pandey, 2025). Russian politicians use Telegram as a social network to spread narratives about the need for “denazification,” i.e., the fight against supporters of Ukrainian statehood and independence. At the same time, Volodymyr Zelensky uses Facebook to spread narratives about freedom and the democratic values of the Ukrainian people.

The current problem lies in the growing dominance of public opinion control through political rhetoric, which shapes new algorithms for the perception of information

flows by society. The integrated communication environment currently provides unique variability in the ways certain concepts can be promoted to the target audience. Properly directed and rapidly disseminated information with political undertones can be implemented with the help of various psychological technologies. At the same time, the level of society's resistance to political manipulation depends on a number of situational factors, psychological characteristics, and individual traits.

In the context of political communication, the space for interaction between politicians and society occupies the entire country and can even extend beyond its borders. Within this space, targeted informational and psychological pressure is exerted, often with signs of political manipulation. Also, it's becoming common practice to integrate social projects so that society accepts information without really thinking about it. In particular, political technologies actively used in the functioning of Russian state media retransmit the official ideological position of the Russian Federation to the masses, developing ideas for rationalizing war crimes and violations of universally accepted human rights.

The problems of language discrimination, digital inequality, and the threat of manipulation through automated language processing are becoming increasingly relevant. The role of applied linguistics in addressing these global language issues focuses on new trends in language engineering, considered in ethical and social contexts (Ramberdiyeva et al., 2025; Shvetsova et al., 2025; Kryshtanovych et al., 2022).

Social networks today allow public opinion on political conflicts to be managed by providing opportunities for direct interaction between politicians and voters. At the same time, traditional communication channels mainly summarize issues of political conflict. A successfully developed communication strategy can contribute to the unification or differentiation of society and determine the emotional narrative of the communication process.

The essence of social mobilization lies in the assimilation of the population and its active participation within a properly formulated strategy. The level of communication between politicians and voters on social media determines voter turnout and their involvement in shaping public opinion. For example, the high voter turnout in the US in 2020 (69%) was the result of a good media strategy, where political communication through voter engagement influenced social mobilization.

Content analysis shows that politicians often use visual strategies to represent their positions more effectively on social media during political conflicts. Thus, the affective polarisation of society allows political forces to promote their own narratives and lay the foundations for confrontation and emotional responses to people with different political views. Political discourse is implemented on the basis of relevant information. Quite often, incomplete or unreliable political information leads to wrong or ineffective political decisions, which exacerbates crises in society (Makedon et al., 2025a). Artificial neural networks play a significant role in this process in the

context of behavioral analysis and cybersecurity optimization. In the field of political communication, artificial intelligence tools are used in the areas shown in Figure 2.

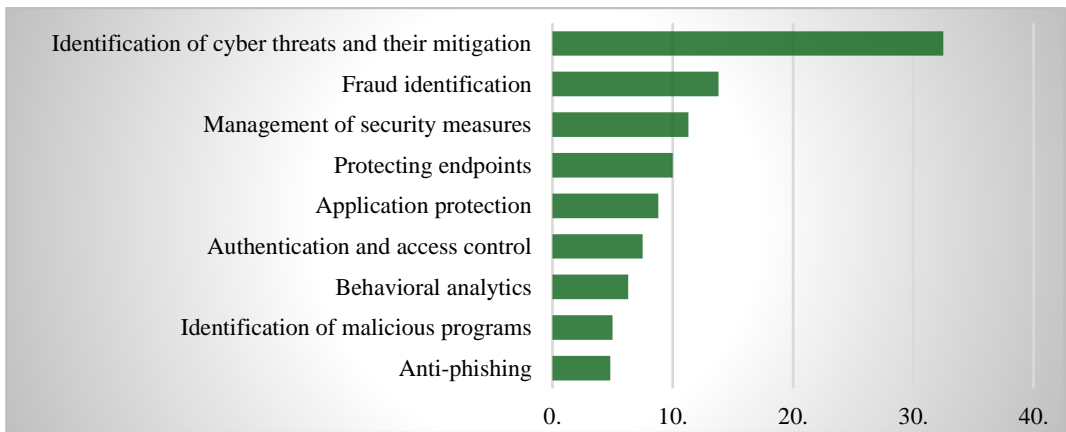


Figure 2. Areas of application of artificial intelligence in political communication and speech, %.

Source: compiled by the author based on (Culloty & Suiter, 2021)

Political conflicts not only determine crisis phenomena in the geopolitical field, they also actively influence the dynamics of the global economy, destabilizing it. This is due to the influence of communication strategies used in the political sphere on society, not only as an electorate, but also as consumers. Consumer behavior is determined by the course of political conflicts. In particular, sociological studies show that the rejection of certain goods and products as a result of political tensions leads to regional economic decline. An example of this is the political crisis in Sino-Japanese relations in 2012, which led to a 60% drop in tourism between the two countries.

Political conflicts also have a negative impact on macroeconomic indicators in various sectors of the economy. According to World Bank analysts, gross domestic product fell by more than 30% due to the Russian war in Ukraine in 2022. This is primarily due to the destruction and damage to infrastructure, critical disruptions to logistics chains and production processes, and forced migration of the population (World Bank, 2024).

The case study was also based on a publication by V. Viatrovych, Director of the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory (2018), which voiced the speaker's position on representatives of Russian culture who were not direct propagandists of the communist regime. The main axiological position of this discourse is a negative attitude to the spread of Russian culture and counterculture in Ukraine. There is also a counter-position and a discourse of compromise.

The discourse analysis based on the method of N. Fairclough allowed us to demonstrate how different positions of the discourse crystallized, in particular,

linguistic characteristics, discursive practices and communicative (social) practices of public confrontation allowed us to identify certain characteristic aspects:

- 1) the main communicative practices in the case study are activation of the “gray zone”, polarization of opinions, mobilization of the opponent, and personalization of the communicator;
- 2) there is a split of positions among communicators based on linguistic identity;
- 3) among the communicators of the discourse of compromise, both sides are represented equally;
- 4) communicators' approach to the discourse is proactive;
- 5) the influence of external groups on the discourse is present, although not strong.

Thus, the studied discourse actually contributes to the articulation of civil confrontation among a wide range of participants who engage in an open discursive conflict. It can be argued that the articulation of topics that politicize values can be used by communicators both to mobilize supporters and as an incentive to find compromise positions.

Therefore, it can be argued that political communication and rhetoric against the backdrop of political disputes and conflicts have a significant impact on society, as well as determining the dynamics of economic processes and regulating consumer preferences. This ultimately leads to economic losses and a deterioration in macroeconomic indicators.

Discussion

There are a number of problematic aspects of researching political rhetoric and communication in academic discourse. According to Davis (2023), political speeches should be simplified as much as possible, made concise and restrained, which will allow their narratives to reach a much wider audience. The authors recommend researchers to investigate how political social networks enable citizens to develop political involvement and boost their understanding of political matters. Bast (2024) explains that political speech language simplification leads to information quality deterioration which results in populism emergence and social segregation.

Whitfield (2022) explains that political speech has become more straightforward because of worldwide integration which requires politicians to use simple messages that evoke emotions. The author supports using basic political language to deliver information which enables people to understand complex matters for public dialogue with voters.

Perloff (2021) develops his conceptual framework about political rhetoric and communication through social media because this platform enables him to reach more people. The researcher notes that social networks enable political leaders to

quickly activate their population through their positive effects on social mobilization and emotional polarization. The researcher notes that social networks create two opposing effects which prevent voters from accessing reliable information while simultaneously causing them to become isolated from correct information and vulnerable to deceptive content.

Social networks create a sense of community. Huddy et al. (2023) are convinced of this. At the same time, the spread of false information leads to a negative perception of social networks as a tool for attracting potential voters.

The contradictory influence of political conflicts and communication strategies on consumer behavior is studied by Dan et al. (2021). The authors believe that political conflicts determine trends in the development of tourism and transport, emphasizing the reassessment of the impact of political conflicts on the economy.

Mäliksoo (2023) focuses on the study of the most obvious manifestations of the policy of genocide against Ukrainians, forming a firm conviction in the systematic and gradual distortion of Russia's national ideology and the implementation of persistent hatred of everything Ukrainian in the general public. The author presents a valid perspective about present-day problems because military operations create immediate effects which information manipulation through disinformation makes worse and more extensive in their negative consequences of Russian aggression.

The paper by Cho et al. (2023) explain that people need to develop resistance against political rhetoric through three essential methods which combine mass education with media literacy education and population-based information hygiene training and national identity promotion.

The theoretical contribution of the study is a thorough justification of the impact of political conflicts on macro- and microeconomic processes and a proposal for a comprehensive approach to studying the impact of political rhetoric and communication on social dynamics. In the long run, this can help prevent destructive social processes and promote geopolitical stability.

It should be concluded that the impact of political conflicts on society is expressed through political communication and rhetoric. The public's reaction to political disputes may vary, often determined by the influence of the media and social networks.

Final considerations

Having considered theoretical approaches and empirical research results, there can be identified the main instruments of political communication's influence on social polarisation, social mobility and economic dynamics. The concepts of political speech are directly linked to social mobilisation. Political conflicts are characterized by the presence of a clear communication strategy that allows for the implementation of large-scale information campaigns in the media. The social communication system

influences the formation of strategies for adapting to different political contexts and helps achieve socio-psychological unity with the reference group. In addition, social networks are currently positioned as the leading platform for promoting political ideas.

The study found that social networks significantly influence voter turnout and are an effective tool for disseminating political narratives. Strategic political campaigns influence consumer behavior and reduce income in certain sectors of the economy. Key strategies of political rhetoric find practical transfer to the social environment through media appearances, which makes it possible to shape public opinion and regulate certain concepts of the society's perception of political disputes. The essence of social mobilization lies in the assimilation of the population and its active participation within a well-formulated strategy.

The scientific novelty of the research lies in substantiating the impact of political conflicts on macro- and microeconomic processes and proposing a comprehensive approach to studying the impact of political rhetoric and communication on social dynamics. This will help prevent destructive social processes and promote geopolitical stability.

The research findings will help society understand political communication effects which will lead to better political communication methods. Research should focus on two main areas in the future by studying how political organizations and territorial locations affect the situation and how mental reactions to political speeches affect voting outcomes. This will contribute to the formation of a common conceptual vision of democracy in society.

The results obtained indicate a change in the very nature of strategic communication. It is no longer an auxiliary tool of politics. It is becoming a field of struggle for the interpretation of reality. The digital environment accelerates the circulation of meanings and at the same time enhances their polarizing potential. It is in this dynamic that the main risk lies.

The implications of the study affect several levels. At the institutional level, it is necessary to rethink the role of language strategy as a component of security policy. At the media level, it is important to develop internal protocols for verifying rhetorical narratives that are mobilizing in nature. At the educational level, there is a growing need to develop critical language literacy. When forecasting the further development of the situation, it is worth considering the growth of algorithmic mediation. The more complex the platforms, the more subtle the mechanisms of influence. Emotional rhetoric may intensify in response to global crises. However, at the same time, there is room for the creation of ethical standards for digital communication.

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