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**COMMUNICATION MECHANISM OF SOCIAL GOVERNANCE
IN A TRANSFORMING MEDIA SPACE**

Subdivision: 5.4.7. Sociology of Management

ABSTRACT

of the dissertation for the degree of candidate of sociology sciences

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The dissertation by Elena A. Skachilova is devoted to one of the most significant and insufficiently developed issues in contemporary sociology of management: the theoretical and methodological interpretation of the communication mechanism of social governance under the conditions of a transforming media space, digitalization of social interactions, the growth of citizens' network subjectivity, and the increasing complexity of feedback between public authorities and society.

The relevance of the research is determined by the fact that, in contemporary conditions, communication can no longer be regarded merely as an auxiliary means of supporting managerial decisions. Under the influence of digital platforms, social networks, messengers, state information systems, regional management centers, electronic feedback services, and other instruments of public interaction, communication acquires the status of an independent managerial resource. It affects the quality of decision-making, the level of public trust in authorities, the speed with which social demands are identified, and the ability of governance systems to prevent crisis effects and adjust their actions in an environment of high informational turbulence.

Contemporary media space can no longer be interpreted solely as a channel for transmitting information or reflecting social reality. It is becoming a specific social environment in which public expectations are formed, social meanings are reproduced, everyday problems are articulated, zones of conflict become visible, horizontal networks of support emerge, and new forms of interaction between citizens and institutions of power are constructed. Society has moved from a model of one-way information transmission to a model of network communication, within which the user simultaneously acts as a consumer, producer, distributor, and interpreter of content.

The research problem lies in the contradiction between the expansion of the communication capacities of civil society and the insufficient institutional adaptation of governance bodies to the new logic of the media environment. On the one hand, citizens have gained the ability to identify problems in real time, unite around local and federal agendas, address authorities through digital channels, publicly evaluate managerial decisions, and initiate collective action. On the other hand, governance

practice often retains the inertia of a one-way informational model, in which communication is understood primarily as informing rather than as two-way coordination, public verification, adjustment, and co-design of decisions. As a result, the risks of managerial delay, resource overload, increasing social tension, and declining trust in institutions of power are intensified.

The dissertation substantiates the need to move from a linear understanding of communication to the interpretation of the communication mechanism of social governance as an institutionally embedded set of two-way communication procedures that enables the transition from directive governance to a dialogical and cooperative model. This approach makes it possible to consider media space not as an external background of managerial activity, but as an environment in which governance mechanisms function, where decisions undergo public verification, receive support or resistance, are adjusted, and become part of a more complex subject–subject interaction between authorities and society.

The degree of scholarly development of the problem is characterized by a substantial body of research devoted to social governance, communication, media space, digitalization, network society, risks, crisis processes, state–society interaction, and the transformation of the public sphere. The dissertation draws on the ideas of A. Giddens, N. Luhmann, J. Habermas, I. Prigogine, P. Sorokin, M. Castells, U. Beck, A. Toffler, P. Bourdieu, B. Latour, as well as on the works of Russian scholars in sociology of management, communicology, and media sociology, including A.V. Tikhonov, V.S. Bogdanov, O.A. Urzha, E.P. Tavokin, S.A. Kravchenko, F.I. Sharkov, V.N. Buzin, L.A. Vasilenko, E.A. Nazarova, E.L. Vartanova, D.V. Dunas, E.N. Yudina, and others.

At the same time, contemporary sociological scholarship still lacks sufficient studies in which the communication mechanism is considered not as a particular instrument of public relations, public information, or media support for managerial decisions, but as an independent sociological and managerial mechanism permeating all stages of the governance cycle. The question of how digital traces, network reactions, public appeals, emotional states of communities, platform algorithms,

and changing media needs of audiences may be incorporated into social governance procedures and used to increase governability, forecast risks, and prevent crises remains insufficiently developed.

The object of the dissertation research is social governance in the media environment.

The subject of the research is the communication mechanism of social governance under the conditions of media space transformation.

The aim of the dissertation is to develop the theoretical and methodological foundations of a new communication mechanism of social governance under the conditions of a transforming media space and to formulate proposals for its practical implementation.

To achieve this aim, the dissertation addresses a set of interrelated **research objectives**: to systematize the instruments of social governance used under the contemporary conditions of nonlinear complication of social reality; to identify sociological approaches to the transformation of media space as a sphere of social governance; to operationalize the signs of uncertainty in the socio-media environment in the context of social and managerial decisions; to establish the regularities and limitations of the functioning of the communication mechanism of social governance based on the practices of using Telegram channels and other digital communication platforms; to rank social factors that increase the effectiveness of managerial strategy in the contemporary media environment; and to substantiate, through specific communication projects, the possibilities of improving governance practice, including feedback protocols and algorithms of adaptation to crises.

The research hypothesis is based on the assumption that the transformation of the media environment and the emergence of new media fundamentally modify the traditional communication mechanism of social governance, which historically relied on a linear model of information transmission («one-to-many»), centralized selection of messages, and delayed feedback. Under conditions of network communication, instantaneous dissemination of public reactions, algorithmic information ranking, datafication, and platform-mediated communication, governance

institutions are compelled to move beyond subject-object interaction toward subject–subject relations. Consequently, effective social governance in the digital era requires an adaptive communication mechanism capable of continuously monitoring digital traces, clustering public demands, providing public verification of managerial decisions, adjusting governance actions, and preventing crisis escalation before it reaches a critical stage.

The theoretical and methodological foundation of the dissertation is based on the integration of classical and contemporary approaches within sociology of management, systems theory, communication studies, sociology of digital society, risk sociology, synergetics, network theory, media convergence studies, and public governance research. Communication is conceptualized not merely as an informational process but as one of the fundamental mechanisms through which social order is reproduced, collective interests are coordinated, institutional legitimacy is maintained, and governance systems preserve their adaptive capacity under conditions of increasing uncertainty.

The study synthesizes the conceptual achievements of classical sociology with contemporary theories of digital transformation, enabling the author to explain the transition from hierarchical administrative governance toward network-oriented models characterized by continuous communication, distributed responsibility, and adaptive coordination among multiple social actors.

Methodologically, the research employs a combination of systems analysis, structural-functional analysis, comparative methodology, case-study research, qualitative and quantitative content analysis, secondary analysis of sociological data, expert evaluation, and analysis of digital communication practices. Such methodological pluralism corresponds to the interdisciplinary nature of the research problem and allows the communication mechanism of social governance to be examined as a dynamic adaptive system operating within conditions of nonlinearity, uncertainty, permanent media transformation, and continuous public interaction.

The empirical foundation of the dissertation consists of several complementary sources. These include the practical implementation of an innovative communication mechanism during crisis management in the Moscow Region and the city of Krasnoyarsk; content analysis of social media accounts maintained by federal executive authorities; analysis of communication practices employed by regional and municipal leaders; monitoring data collected by the Regional Management Center of the Moscow Region concerning public utilities and energy-related issues; analytical reports produced by «Medialogia» and «PressIndex»; data generated by Mediascope, TGStat, and Popsters; as well as communication practices developed within the framework of the federal environmental project «Clean Air», implemented under the national project «Environmental Well-being».

The combination of theoretical analysis with empirical examination makes it possible to identify stable regularities in the functioning of communication mechanisms and to formulate recommendations directly applicable to contemporary public governance.

One of the principal findings of the dissertation is the demonstration that «new media» constitute an independent structural component of the communication mechanism of social governance. Their function extends far beyond information dissemination. «New media» facilitate citizens' participation in identifying public problems, evaluating governmental decisions, shaping public agendas, coordinating collective actions, and establishing horizontal communication networks.

The dissertation demonstrates the dual nature of «new media» within governance processes. On the one hand, digital platforms significantly improve interaction between government and society by increasing communication speed, strengthening feedback mechanisms, and enabling authorities to detect public concerns at early stages. On the other hand, in the absence of institutionally established procedures for processing digital signals, «new media» create risks of managerial overload, agenda fragmentation, communication conflicts, and declining decision quality.

A major theoretical contribution of the dissertation is the development of the concept of an adaptive governance loop, consisting of continuous monitoring of digital

traces, clustering of public requests, public verification of managerial decisions, and subsequent adjustment of governance actions. This model explains the transition from directive governance toward dialogical and cooperative governance, where managerial decisions continue to evolve after formal adoption through public discussion, continuous feedback, evaluation, clarification, and collaborative adaptation.

Within this framework, the communication mechanism performs not only an informational function but also serves as a mechanism for maintaining temporary stability in the relationship between public authorities and society by reproducing institutional order through regular feedback loops.

Another important contribution is the development of an analytical framework describing media transformation through the concept of «five Big Factors» functioning as sociological drivers of communication change. These factors include social, economic, technological, role-related, and hybrid determinants affecting public communication and managerial decision-making. The proposed framework enables operational diagnosis of shifts occurring within media environments, identification of sources of uncertainty, assessment of changing public demands, and selection of governance instruments appropriate to specific social situations. Consequently, media transformation is interpreted not merely as an informational phenomenon but as an object of sociological diagnosis, forecasting, and governance design.

The dissertation introduces into scientific discourse the concept of the «network cultural standard of communication», defined as a system of communication practices characterized by promptness, institutional openness, comprehensible language, dialogue-oriented interaction, and the readiness of public managers to operate within networked public communication environments. The research demonstrates that such a communication standard stabilizes horizontal interaction, strengthens public trust, reduces conflict escalation, and enhances institutional legitimacy. In digital governance, communication competence ceases to be an auxiliary professional skill and becomes an essential component of managerial culture itself.

The dissertation also develops the concept of the «reverse vertical of support», describing situations in which civic communities institutionalize support for local

authorities by addressing higher governmental levels through digital communication channels. This phenomenon reflects the emergence of new forms of cooperative subjectivity, where citizens act not merely as recipients of public services or authors of complaints but as active participants in redistributing managerial attention, reinforcing institutional responsiveness, and initiating governance processes. The study demonstrates that such patterns emerge under conditions of transparent communication, open dialogue, and institutional trust.

Another significant contribution consists in operationalizing changes in media consumption as a trigger activating adaptive communication mechanisms. The dissertation demonstrates that systematic monitoring of digital communication makes it possible not only to identify already existing problems but also to prioritize citizens' needs, detect potential areas of social tension, and adjust managerial decisions before conflicts escalate. Consequently, communication is transformed from a reactive function into an instrument of preventive governance and early risk management.

Particular attention is devoted to thematic clustering of citizens' appeals according to problem domains. The dissertation demonstrates that data accumulated by Regional Management Centers and other digital governance platforms reveal recurring problems, territorial communication patterns, stable public demands, and emerging governance risks. Communication flows therefore become not merely collections of requests requiring responses but valuable analytical resources supporting forecasting, budgeting, strategic planning, and preventive public administration.

The dissertation further substantiates the necessity of establishing a «crisis communication module» as an obligatory structural component of the communication mechanism of social governance. Sustainable crisis management, according to the research findings, depends not on isolated communication campaigns but on institutionally embedded communication procedures formally incorporated into governance regulations and professional standards. The distinction between routine and crisis communication modes significantly reduces managerial overload, prevents the transfer of crisis effects into ordinary governance processes, improves public

responsiveness, and strengthens the legitimacy of managerial decisions during periods of heightened uncertainty.

Finally, the dissertation explicates the value–semantic architecture of an innovative communication mechanism of social governance. This architecture incorporates strategic vision, empathic communication practices, differentiation between routine and crisis communication regimes, and consideration of the emotional configuration of online communities. Emotional communication is interpreted not merely as a psychological background but as a sociologically significant factor influencing public trust, institutional legitimacy, collective action, conflict resilience, and governance effectiveness.

The scientific novelty of the dissertation lies in conceptualizing media space as the institutional environment within which governance mechanisms function and in reconsidering the subject-subject foundations of social governance under the conditions of digital transformation. The author proposes an original understanding of the communication mechanism of social governance as a system of purposeful communication actions permeating every stage of the governance cycle and possessing anticipatory functions that enable early crisis prevention, adaptive adjustment of managerial decisions, reduction of transaction costs, and enhancement of governance capacity within complex social systems.

The theoretical significance of the dissertation lies in the further development of the sociological understanding of the communication mechanism of social governance under the conditions of a transforming media environment. The research proposes a comprehensive conceptual model of the communication mechanism of social governance as an institutionally embedded system of two-way interaction between public authorities and social communities. This model integrates media logic, adaptive feedback procedures, crisis communication modules, digital trace monitoring, and mechanisms for continuous adjustment of managerial decisions within a unified analytical framework.

The dissertation substantially expands the conceptual apparatus of sociology of management by introducing and operationalizing a number of categories that reflect

the institutional transformation of governance in the digital era. Among them are social feedback, the network cultural standard of communication, the crisis communication module, the adaptive governance loop, and the reverse vertical of support. These concepts provide new analytical instruments for investigating governance processes in highly mediatized and dynamically changing social environments.

A significant theoretical contribution consists in the formulation of criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of communication within contemporary governance systems. The proposed criteria include public trust, citizens' involvement in dialogue, conflict resilience, the responsiveness of governance institutions, the speed of managerial adjustment, and the capacity to identify emerging social demands before they develop into large-scale public conflicts. These criteria considerably enrich the methodological toolkit of sociology of management and create opportunities for further comparative research into governance performance under conditions of digital transformation.

The dissertation also contributes to the theoretical development of adaptive governance by demonstrating that communication should be regarded not merely as a supporting administrative function but as an institutional mechanism capable of maintaining social stability, coordinating collective action, reproducing legitimacy, and reducing governance uncertainty. This conceptual shift enables a more comprehensive interpretation of the role played by communication within contemporary public administration.

The practical significance of the research is determined by the possibility of applying its theoretical conclusions and methodological recommendations in the activities of federal, regional, and municipal authorities responsible for public communication and strategic governance. The proposed communication model may serve as a methodological foundation for improving communication strategies, designing institutional regulations, developing crisis communication protocols, organizing systems for monitoring public demands, and strengthening interaction between government institutions and civil society.

The practical recommendations developed in the dissertation may also be employed by Regional Management Centers, public communication departments, analytical units, digital governance platforms, crisis management structures, and governmental project offices. Furthermore, the proposed approaches may contribute to improving the professional training of civil servants responsible for public communication and digital interaction with citizens.

An important practical outcome of the dissertation is the development of recommendations concerning the institutionalization of communication competencies within public administration. The author demonstrates that communication competence should be considered an integral component of managerial professionalism rather than an auxiliary qualification. In this regard, the dissertation proposes communication standards, public dialogue protocols, and criteria for assessing communication performance under both routine and crisis conditions.

The reliability and validity of the research findings are ensured through the internal consistency of the theoretical framework, the correspondence between the research design and the stated objectives, the application of contemporary sociological methodologies, and the integration of theoretical analysis with extensive empirical material. The conclusions presented in the dissertation are supported by a broad range of empirical evidence obtained from analyses of governmental communication practices, digital platforms, social media, crisis communication cases, and regional public administration projects.

An additional guarantee of the validity of the research results is provided by their practical verification. The proposed communication approaches were tested within the framework of public governance projects involving crisis communication in the Moscow Region as well as communication support for the federal environmental project «Clean Air», implemented under the national project «Environmental Well-being». These practical cases confirmed the applicability of the proposed communication model and demonstrated its potential for improving governance efficiency in complex and uncertain environments.

The principal findings of the dissertation have undergone extensive scientific approbation. Individual aspects of the research were presented at national scientific conferences devoted to sociology of management, digital society, and public administration, including the All-Russian Scientific and Practical Conference «Digital Society: The Sociological Dimension of the Present and the Future» organized by the Russian Society of Sociologists, and the All-Russian Scientific and Practical Conference «Effective Governance: New Opportunities and Potential Risks», dedicated to the 85th anniversary of Professor A.V. Tikhonov. The research findings received positive evaluation within the academic community and contributed to scholarly discussions concerning the transformation of governance under conditions of digitalization.

The dissertation has also been reflected in the author's publication activity. The research results have been published in nine scientific papers, including four articles in peer-reviewed journals recommended by the Higher Attestation Commission (VAK) of the Russian Federation, as well as five publications in conference proceedings and other scientific editions. These publications consistently cover the principal directions of the dissertation research, including media transformation, communication mechanisms of social governance, emotional dimensions of managerial communication, digital interaction between authorities and society, and adaptive communication strategies within public administration.

The structure of the dissertation is fully consistent with the objectives and logic of the research. The dissertation consists of an introduction, two chapters comprising six sections, a conclusion, a bibliography, and appendices.

The first chapter develops the theoretical and methodological foundations of social governance under conditions of nonlinear social transformation. Particular attention is devoted to the evolution of governance concepts, the transformation of media space, sociological approaches to communication processes, and the emergence of uncertainty as a defining characteristic of contemporary governance environments. *The second chapter* focuses on the practical implementation of communication mechanisms within public administration. It examines digital

communication practices employed by governmental institutions, the functioning of Telegram channels as governance instruments, interaction between executive authorities and citizens within the ecosystem of new media, and social factors contributing to the effectiveness of governance in contemporary media environments. The chapter also presents empirical verification of the proposed theoretical model through analyses of crisis communication and practical governance cases.

The dissertation fully corresponds to the scientific specialty 5.4.7 – Sociology of Management. Its content addresses key areas of the specialty, including interaction between governing subjects and objects, principles and methods of governance under contemporary conditions, management of nonlinear social processes, governance under uncertainty, evaluation of governance effectiveness, social monitoring, social forecasting, social planning, social design, and crisis management.

Overall, the dissertation "Communication Mechanism of Social Governance in a Transforming Media Space" constitutes an original and comprehensive scientific study that makes a substantial contribution to the development of contemporary sociology of management. The research proposes an innovative conceptualization of communication mechanisms operating within digital media environments, develops new theoretical models explaining the transformation of governance under conditions of mediatization, and offers practical recommendations aimed at improving interaction between public authorities and society.

The results obtained in the dissertation significantly advance theoretical knowledge concerning communication mechanisms of social governance while simultaneously providing practically applicable solutions for enhancing the adaptability, legitimacy, resilience, and effectiveness of public administration in the context of digital transformation, increasing societal complexity, and the continuous evolution of contemporary media space.
