

## MEDIA AS A RESOURCE OF THE CAPITALIZATION OF SOCIO-CULTURAL PRACTICES OF INDIVIDUAL SUCCESS IN LIFE

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**Summary:** The possibilities of the theory of social field of Bourdieu in the study of media as a resource forming symbolic capital of personality are presented. The research focuses on the mechanisms of constructing the world picture of the subject of socio-cultural practices, influence on the formation of intellectual elites and the role of media in this process. Both traditional functions of the media (information, education, advocacy, socialization, criticism function and control, mobilization, innovation, operations, formation of public opinion), and those that appeared quite recently, including interactive, creative and converging, are indicated as well as their role in providing capitalization of sociocultural practices of agent in global and private social fields. The phenomenon of the virtual fighting as a mass entertainment and the media as a source of presentation of modern socio-cultural practices that ensure success in life personality is discussed.

**Key Words:** mass media, communication, sociocultural practices, personality, social field theory, symbolic capital, cultural capital, world view, interactive function media, habitus, social perception, model of success.

**Introduction.** Determining the Information Society as an actual historical form of life of a society has not purchased consensus in the field of modern social sciences yet [1; 6; 9; 13], while unanimity of views of researchers about the impact of information and communication technology (IT) and various forms of communication for social development in general has no doubts.

Modern resources of "fourth power" as a powerful agent of social reality of Ukrainian life were demonstrated during the revolution of Dignity, when the tragic events in Kyiv were being observed throughout the World on-line. Journalists and ordinary witnesses were posting video-, photo- and audio- materials in the media and social networks, with and without comments, creating content that allowed to mobilize progressive forces in Ukrainian society and achieved breaking the political system, which actions had triggered unprecedented protests.

The role of communities and individuals in these events should not be overemphasized. Popular bloggers and opinion's leaders appeared through publications, especially in social media. Presenting their position, they were influencing the mood of the audience and became the leaders of the real actions of activists.

A wide range of thematic content is another aspect of the media, where you can find information for all tastes, supporters and to present traditional and innovative sociocultural practices to discuss with the concerned public too.

Modern media have expanded scale of function which was limited or not represented at all until the emergence of new information technologies in social communication. This is the feedback of the audience (interactive media function) to the source of information, which in turn allows you to set preferences of the audience, to compare the interest of the audience on various subjects etc.

Along with the undeniable advantage, speed, technical precision and reliability of communication, there is a problem with the interpretation of messages that significantly limits their studies. As noted by most researchers [18], the mass media audience is seen as a passive participant of communication and the difference in the interpretation of the decoded messages is not taken into account. As a result, you can set the preferences of the audience, can compare the interests of the audience on various subjects, but it remains unclear how the audience interpret the message they get. In addition, the position in the ranking makes it impossible to judge about the effectiveness of communication in terms of the adequacy of interpretation of the message by the audience. Thus the personality of a message's recipient comes to the forefront, his/her worldview which is a resource of shaping human sociocultural practices that ensure successful functioning in the society.

This study is an attempt to define the role of modern media in shaping sociocultural practices that ensure success in personality's life.

#### ***Modelling of the capitalization of sociocultural practices of individual process***

As most experts suggest [18] in the study of media as a sociocultural phenomenon today there are several approaches that consider different aspects of operation, production, distribution and reception of communications in media. The main subject of the study of media is administrative, ideological, cultural and other aspects of the impact of media on the society. Given the nature of the subject most researches are empirical and it has become a basic part of the study of media.

Theoretically several strategies of study of media are defined. For example, followers of the antipositivist paradigm of M. Weber analyse and build a system of the significance of rational component in cultural activities, focusing on the organization of work of the media, their involvement in the social organism.

Supporters of the structural-functional approach of E. Durkheim focus on the problem of public perception

of media content, and analyse methods of formation of collective representations, in particular examining the problem of manipulation of public opinion and consider possibilities of integrative function of the media in the society.

Original concepts of study of media belong to M. McLuhan ("ecological" concept of the "Global Village") [2], A. Toffler and M. Kastels (the concept of Post-Industrial Information Society) [9; 13], G. Debord (Society of the Spectacle) [7] which represent an attempt to create the models that would help to describe patterns of functioning and perspectives of the development of media.

Socio-psychological approaches among which is Freud-Behaviouristic concept of communication (G. Lassuell) [19] and the concept of public opinion (W. Lippmann) [10] are important for study the influence of media on the regulation of human's behaviour.

Neo-Marxist research that pays attention to the symbolic importance of media texts, viewing them through the prism of relations between base and superstructure, which represent media as a part of the superstructure, are represented fairly well. According to Frankfurt School's tradition (M. Horkheimer, T. Adorno [14]) and researches of Birmingham centre "of the contemporary cultural studies" [25] attention to the impact of media on the formation and development of culture has been increased. Media in neo-Marxist tradition is regarded not only as a "mouthpiece" of power to promote the dominant ideology, but even as a part of cultural characteristics.

In our study of the role of modern media in shaping sociocultural practices that ensure success in life of the personality, most relevant explanation is represented in the last of these approaches because neo-Marxist concepts provide a key role to the media in forming of the worldview of the personality as a subject of social life, as an agent of socialization practices.

In this context, we can consider the concept of known French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu [4, 33–35], who in his *theory of social field* considers social space in which subject (*agent*) is functioning.

Social field's concept [4] examines a social space where personality socialization process takes place. All social space or personality's social field is divided into economic, political, cultural, religious, and several other fields. According to Bourdieu, peculiar characteristics, patterns of functioning and development, and fight for status and power between people acts in each

field. Thus, the field is understood by Bourdieu as a place of correlation of strength and struggle, directed at relationship transformation, so each field becomes a place of incessant changes [4, 33–35].

For Bourdieu the *idea of class struggles between people* remains relevant, and in his opinion, such a struggle leads to a set of fields of power, which have their own direction of the force. The researcher concludes that, unlike physical space in which an object can exist regardless of other objects, in a social field the personality relates and identifies him/her with a particular position (i.e. the actual position) which acquires a certain value only in comparison with the other positions of the social field. Thus, the structure of social space will always be hierarchic [4, 47].

These fields intersect and form a stable interaction in the macro-network or a combination of objectified relations of the forces which are imposed on all individuals who fall into force fields. Fields cannot be correlated with individual personalities or their direct interactions. So they cannot be correlated with the intentions of individual agents or their direct interactions. According to Bourdieu the *problem of freedom of action* for human is not in that how he/she could avoid the social pressure, but in how he/she can choose the optimal strategy of behaviour to achieve their goals within social fields, recognizing objectively of existing restrictions, taking conscious stance.

The agent's position (real *position* in the social space) is important for Bourdieu because it does not always coincide with the way he/she imagines that position (agent's ideas about his/her place in the social space in the theory of social fields Bourdieu defined as a *disposition*) but in accordance with this disposition agent organizes and changes his/her social environment. There are as many fields for the agent in the social space as how many dispositions an agent has. The set of dispositions forms a system of strong orientations of agent after some time, which he/she uses in sociocultural practices. This system of orientations is defined by Bourdieu as *habitus*. Habitus as super-individual phenomenon provides active presence of past experiences of human in modern times, heredity social forms (models and algorithms for perception, thought and action). This way is more faithful than all formal rules which defines and warrants identity and sustainability practices of social agents in time [5, 105].

Habitus functions become clear only through the correlation of the social conditions, under which it was

formed, with the social conditions in which the habitus has been activated. It should be noted that the presence of the past in the individual consciousness provides some independence subject to external influence through habitus, making it inert with respect to possible sudden changes in the social field.

Practice of agents is the result of adaptation of habitus to a new situation and presents directly in space of fields where social action is occurring. This space according to Bourdieu is an incorporated product of the practical history, of the structure and of the habitus. The very same social action takes place within the fields — in more or less independent space of activity, endowed with a specific internal logic.

There are more general, global fields of economic and political power and the private fields (which also contain sub-fields) — religion, education, science, art, etc. The logic of the functioning of such a hierarchic space becomes clear in the course of understanding of a person's motivations which encourage him/her to certain actions. A phenomenon of *symbolic violence* has become important for the process of forming of sociocultural practices in Bourdieu's theory that occurs as a result of activity of social space which elite's power has imposed as a system of values, a hierarchy of values, which, on the one hand, mandatory for all, on the other hand unconsciously perceived by people and can be used for managing most of them. The French researcher introduces the term "*ignorance*" to determine the distorted, incomplete knowledge, using which the so-called symbolic power exists with the complicity of the people managed by it, people who acknowledge its legitimacy. But in these conditions one can receive a reward — the capital which is considered by Bourdieu in innovative interpretation. In social field theory he classifies four main types of capital which an individual tends to accumulate and to possess in the process of socialization: the Economic capital (traditionally understood since the time of Karl Marx); the Social capital (the position in the social hierarchy, social status, preferred social roles, acquaintances and relationships); the Cultural capital (represents legitimate knowledge, ideas, skills, competencies, level and structure of education (educational or academic capital), cultural code that allows you to perceive "adequately" works of arts of the "high culture", the degree of mastering of a "prestigious" (cultural) form of the language and its variants (linguistic capital); the Symbolic capital (prestige, recognition, renown, name, even "canonization",

everything a person has in the social space, all that can be useful) [11, 61].

The concept of “symbolic capital” defines the autonomy of the field of symbolic production. Autonomy of the field of symbolic production does not mean complete independence both from an economic and from other social fields, and indicates only the presence of a specific law (or rules) in such field. But under certain circumstances, a significant symbolic capital can be converted into economic or political.

On the other hand, the symbolic capital is a person’s resource which symbolizes the position of the person in the entire social field and the degree of acceptance by the group, so access to the symbolic capital is the most limited. Symbolic capital is a form of capital, which can easily be converted into another. That is why individuals fight for this kind of capital in different fields, which has represent the influence of a personality on the power balance in the group. In social communities’ life, strategies that are aimed at increasing the symbolic capital are not less important than the strategies of physical survival, even in the circumstances where they are not profitable from an economic point of view [5, 156].

Specific power of agents of the cultural field is concluded in the ability to identify the existing implicit principles of the thinking and the practice, to formulate them and to impose on society as legitimate, that is, to force them to see what had previously been on the periphery of the field of view, what has been repressed, suppressed, and thus make such “hidden” resources as actually existing resources. Determining the boundaries of a field is a major bet symbolic struggle, so social agents whose position by most influential members of the community is defined as external to the boundaries of the field, is losing legitimate right to fight in this social field.

Thus the habitus, the ratio of positions and dispositions of an agent, the struggle for symbolic capital become the concept which is presented as the mechanism of perception or the process of environment cognition — it is figure's allocation from the background. Due to this mechanism, personality perceives and constructs the worldview (a system of representations of reality accepted in the culture of a particular socio-historical space) in the process of socialization. What should be interpreted as a background and what — as a major figure against this background, remains unclear for an individual until he/she receives a message

through education training or media what are the real figure and what its background is.

We can present the known picture U. Hill (W. E. Hill, 1915) to demonstrate this statement which shows the ambivalent nature of the learning process depending on previous human experience.



*Pic. 1. How old is this woman?*

If the agent has enough fair view of the world through habitus he/she moderately considers some reports about a woman’s age. Moreover, his/her behaviour will not be associated with radical attempts to prove only one of the points of view. Even if only one of the points of view is proved with the assistance of experts. It should be noted that the perception of somatic sensations is somewhat simpler than the social perception in which not only physiological characteristics but also the experience of sociocultural practice which in turn can have a multiplicity of contexts take part. The message delivered in a form that can be perceived only by means of organs of feelings (especially video or audio message) may cause a flurry of narratives which allow even fairly routine message to become an event of significant scale [23].

Human’s cognition is not based on the principle of direct mapping of objects of the outside world in his/her mind. There is a mediator for learning person. It is a picture of the world or worldview [8]. This worldview is based on the ideas of common sense and sci-

entific ideas that have become part of the established ideas about the world. The width of semantic scopes in an individual's picture of the world is predetermined by basic philosophical metaphors and assumptions that have become the truth in certain cultures. They lay the foundations of traditions of a society, of the dominant norm; delimit the meaning and meaninglessness, reason and madness, both in everyday life and in the specific areas of cognition such as science, religion, and philosophy. Social groups (called intellectual elites), whose main task is to interpret the world, including the social one, are sending the message about facts to all the groups which function in this sociocultural space [12, 181].

These facts are announced as reality by the intellectual elite in certain religious, philosophical, and scientific worldviews, acquire an ontological value for a while. However, a question that always remains: which of the proclaimed facts actually exist? And this question is inevitably linked with the others: who and how determines what exists in the world, and what does not? The last question necessarily generates the fight between groups of intellectuals for the right to produce true knowledge of the world [12, 183].

In the society where there is no *feedback* from an audience to the source of information (*interactive media's function*) or where such *feedback* is limited the fight between groups of intellectuals for the right to produce true knowledge lets it remain at the elite's level. But in modern society the agent's audiences takes part in media discourse among the intellectual elites of different social fields directly or indirectly due to a modern information technology.

The audience actively uses media, especially social *networking*, for discussing the quality of messages from elites, clarifies, deepens or refutes them. The struggle for symbolic capital is a motivation for such activity of agents — according to Bourdieu the resource that can be converted to any other form of capital that can help best to achieve success in the agent's life.

Modern media particularly in social networks is implementing as traditional functions for them (such as: information, education, advocacy, socialization, criticism function and control, mobilization, innovation, operations, formation of public opinion) and those that has appeared recently including interactive, creative and converged (the use of "new" forms of media presentation of the product — online newspapers, radio in the Internet, web TV, etc.) [16]. These media's

functions provide additional resources to the agent for the development of his/her sociocultural practices that can help effectively achieve success in life.

According to Ukrainian researcher L. Bevzenko [3, 150] the problem of the cultural genesis of socially significant representation about the social and life success most clearly comes through the studies of social anomie. This problem cannot be solved unequivocally in favour of building a chain of dependency "Culture — Values — Model of success" especially in the case where values mean conscious of value's preferences which correspond with the people's choice reflected in opinion polls. This causal connection can be realized in a situation of social and cultural stability. Causal sequence in this case is "Culture — Values — Model of success." But in a situation of serious cultural transformations, availability of competition of cultural modes and cultural codes that correspond to the process of becoming a new dominant idea of social success is associated primarily with the adoption of a life style as a dominant projection of deep value displacements. Causal sequence in this case is "Culture — Lifestyle — Model of success".

Ukrainian sociologist concludes that the situation in the cultural modernization of the society (understood as the entry of Ukraine into the space of gravity semantic fields which correlate with the culture of Modern) is a natural dominance in the trending model of success emphasis on his/her own subjectivity competitive position in the struggle for limited resources which are associated with success — money, power, career's positions. Volumes, dynamism and the aggressiveness of the consumption are available in these styles which are part of the language of the message of the life's success that is essentially inherent in any lifestyle [3, 151].

As we can see life success in the current interpretation is still the epitome of symbolic capital, as in traditional society. Only replace of the chain "Culture — Values — Model of success" with the "Culture — Lifestyle — Model of success" requires from the agent the search of more new forms and technologies of self-presentations. In a traditional society such presentation needed to attract a significant audience in real physical space and real time. For example, mentioned by Marcel Mauss [20] Native American's ritual "Potlatch", which is based on the tradition of giving — making a gift — given for return or on the values of gratitude and respect. Mauss was stressing that the recipients of the gifts sometimes "didn't return" gifts properly so it

could lead to that resources of community in which the ritual were not restored and what could cause the death of the whole tribe.

Thanks to modern media and the transition to virtual sociocultural practices the agent has the ability to self-presentations that increases the symbolic capital and ultimately strengthens the position of the agent in a particular social field approximating him/her to the elite of this field. Among the examples we can mention modern Reality-shows the idea of which is based on the broadcast by media of certain sociocultural practices of agents which collected millions of audience despite their banality [15]. The costs of resources are minimal and they are connected by a majority with access by using the newest IT. Often the agent uses ready-made objects that are stored in the network. Not many of them resorts to creative solutions published in the media. The purpose of this “Potlatch” is to gather the largest audience to get the most endorsements or reviews. Frugality is obvious — a “gift” is only one for all for one event, but there can be as many events as the agent can create. The quality of this gift is defined by the audience. The more original is a virtual “gift” the higher rank the agent will receive from it. Virtual “Potlatch” is safe for physical survival because “gifts” exist only in the form of digital data (photos, pictures, music, videos, etc.). But the question is whether such ritual is safe for a social life of the agent?

In the struggle for symbolic capital there is discrimination in the media up till the virtual murder [17], incitement to suicide in a way by sending messages which have discriminatory content to the recipient [22]. Virtual fighting among the agents attracts a large number of users making a confrontation mass spectacle (more details on warnings and dangers of activity on social networks and media are represented in the Ukrainian study [11] where the everyday practice of using information technology and challenges associated with them, as well as measures to safeguard against such challenges, is discussed).

The most scale wars are information wars in which technologies are becoming more sophisticated for the modern symbolic confrontation. Topical study is a research of the influence of media on audience’s consciousness and control of people’s behaviour [21]. These wars create conditions for fascination of the agents both in global and in private social fields, which in turn leads to deformation of the agents’ positions and dispositions. So stability of the agent’s habitus is

disturbed because it is a subjected suggestion of the information weapons. The boundaries of fields are blurred so the real annexation of real areas becomes available unprecedentedly. And as causal sequence of “Culture — Values — Model of success” for the agent is shifted to the sequence of “Culture — Lifestyle — Model of success” where the manifestation of the lifestyle takes a major place in the virtual space so such virtues as patriotism, self-determination and reflection attitude to life can be accepted as declarative nature in the media. The actual practice of the agents will be in the nature of the “painless” routine hyper adaptation to changing living conditions in social fields where more expansive elites are equipped with the newest IT. There is a situation owing to which the agent consumes ready clip [24] that through the media is repeated many times with different narratives creating a surplus of information to understanding of the agent. The agent is disoriented and tends to use ready-made trend of sociocultural practice which common in the social field. Only the agent who can maintain reflectivity in the data’s tsunami is capable of creative use of information and the opportunity to acquire the true knowledge about the world.

### **Conclusion**

Media as a source of contemporary sociocultural practices that ensure success in life of personality are at the forefront of socialization of the institutions operating in global and private social fields. Their technology of creation, transmission and storage of the information are super-fast changing forcing the agent to focus not on the meanings of information but on the methods of its reproducing. Rather free and affordable access to information sources provides considerable freedom in the agent’s communication practices, breaks down traditional barriers of the communication, blurring the boundaries of individual social fields. As a result, the dominant communicative side of human’s communication reduces another important side — social-perceptive that provides the perception and understanding of one person by another.

So in the fight for symbolic capital free access of the agent to self-presentation provides additional resources for his/her sociocultural practices which correspond with the worldview of the elite of the certain social field, its interpretation of reality. However interacting media is producing considerable variations in the interpretations by the audience in the agent’s message which destroy the value’s reference point in the agent’s

primary message. Its disposition in the field contains summarized style's characteristics of the perception by the audience of the agent. So we can say that in the sequence of provision of effective adaptation of the agent in the social space "Culture — Lifestyle — Model of success" appears the important link "Culture — Lifestyle — Media — Model of success."

Agent pays for free access to interacting media sources providing him/her the opportunity to self-realization success in sociocultural practices of the

limitation of real feelings, of the replacement of presentations of life's values and accordingly life's meanings on representations of screenplays of lifestyle that are focused on trends of the life's success in media. As the apologetic's remark in this not too optimistic conclusion can express the hope that through creative function of future media technology people will be allowed to get the experience of real feelings of interactive communication which themselves will be valuable for him/her.

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### Литва Людмила Андріївна, Пришва Родіон Володимирович

#### Медіа як ресурс капіталізації соціокультурних практик індивідуального успіху в житті

**Анотація:** У статті представлено евристичні можливості застосування теорії соціального поля П. Бурдьє у дослідженні медіа як ресурсу формування символічного капіталу особистості. Розглянуто механізми побудови картини світу, суб'єкта соціокультурних практик, впливу на її формування інтелектуальних еліт та ролі медіа у такому процесі. Відзначено традиційні функції медіа (інформаційна, освітня, пропагандистська, соціалізаційна, функція критики і контролю, мобілізаційна, інноваційна, оперативна, формування громадської думки), так і такі, що з'явилися досить недавно, серед яких: інтерактивна, креативна та конвергентна та їхня роль у ресурсному забезпеченні капіталізації соціокультурних практик агента у глобальних та приватних соціальних полях. Обговорено феномен віртуальної конкурентної боротьби як масового видовища та медіа як джерела трансляції сучасних соціокультурних практик, що забезпечують життєвий успіх особистості.

**Ключові слова:** мас-медіа, комунікація, соціокультурні практики, особистість, теорія соціального поля, символічний капітал, культурний капітал, картина світу, інтерактивна функція медіа, габітус, соціальна перцепція, модель успіху.

### Литва Людмила Андреевна, Пришва Родион Владимирович

#### Медиа как ресурс капитализации социокультурных практик индивидуального успеха в жизни

**Аннотация:** В статье представлены эвристические возможности применения теории социального поля П. Бурдьё в исследовании медиа как ресурса формирования символического и культурного капитала личности. Рассмотрены механизмы построения картины мира субъекта социокультурных практик, влияния на ее формирование интеллектуальных элит и роли медиа в таком процессе. Отмечены как традиционные функции медиа (информационное, образовательное, пропагандистская, социализационное, функция критики и контроля, мобилизационная, инновационная, оперативная, формирование общественного мнения), так и те, которые появились достаточно недавно, среди которых: интерактивная, креативная и конвергентная, а также их роль в ресурсном обеспечении капитализации социокультурных практик агента в глобальных и частных социальных полях. Обсуждены феномен виртуальной конкурентной борьбы как массового зрелища и медиа как источника трансляции современных социокультурных практик, обеспечивающих жизненный успех личности.

**Ключевые слова:** масс-медиа, коммуникация, социокультурные практики, личность, теория социального поля, символический капитал, культурный капитал, картина мира, интерактивная функция медиа, габитус, социальная перцепция, модель успеха.