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Forming the image of powerful structures through political advertising in Russia

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Abstract

The purpose of this article is to substantiate components of the image of powerful structures in Russia as objects of political advertising. Using a terminological analysis, this study outlines the essence of political advertising and image. As a result, the program and ideological component of the political image is the main one, since it reflects the meaning of the creation and

activities of powerful structures. In conclusion, the reflection of all components of the image ensures the effectiveness of political advertising.

Keywords: Political, advertising, image, powerful, structures.

Formando la imagen de estructuras poderosas a través de la publicidad política en Rusia

Resumen

El propósito de este artículo es justificar los componentes de la imagen de las estructuras poderosas en Rusia como objetos de publicidad política. Utilizando un análisis terminológico, este estudio describe la esencia de la imagen y la publicidad política. Como resultado, el programa y el componente ideológico de la imagen política es el principal, ya que refleja el significado de la creación y las actividades de estructuras poderosas. En conclusión, el reflejo de todos los componentes de la imagen garantiza la efectividad de la publicidad política.

Palabras clave: política, publicidad, imagen, potencia, estructuras.

1. INTRODUCTION

The issue of creating and managing image modules of power structures and, their influence on the public consciousness of Russians, has gained relevance like never before at present (Spain, 2019). There are several reasons for this: the introduction of anti-Russian economic sanctions and the population's undulating reaction to the economic crisis; the improvement of electoral and PR technologies in promoting interests of various political actors; the change of political actors in general and of media policy in particular (Lee et al., 2019); and changes in the political behavior of mass media and communication media. All these factors have enhanced the manipulative component of the political process. Researcher's state:

In the political system the specifics of the interaction between the state and interest groups plays the key role. Norms and rules that have been established to regulate this relationship directly affect the development of all spheres of the public life (Dospan, 2013: 20).

However, the connection between members of politics and the state can be lost. Scientists thus pay attention to this issue by examining the decrease in the level of society's participation in making political decisions. Russia in 2014 was rich in outstanding events, each of which forced the ruling elite to go through a kind of a certain diverging point and make a choice to determine the nearest and possibly the distant future of the country. Russian society did not take a direct part in decision-making since the political system does not provide for this (Coleman, 2018). Still, the ruling elite, developing a political decision, expects, at least, to maintain their current level of legitimacy and, at the most, to strengthen it (Hartmann, 2015).

The state and dynamics of public opinion play a significant role in this situation. We agree with the above statement: in many respects, the formation of the public opinion regarding current political events is a priority to forward politics into a manageable, regulated direction. The public opinion is formed in the virtual information space:

The information component is not just inherent in the modern political process, but determines its direction, behavior characteristics, the intensity of the confrontation between actors involved in the political process (Temel & Karimov, 2019: 18).

Given that reality often shows that the process of creating public opinion is not objective, political advertising is taking a leading position in political media interactions. The current situation is complicated by the fact that it is impossible to find a solution to the stated problem within the framework of a single scientific field. It is necessary to comprehend not only the mechanism of creating the power image through political advertising but also to address the issue of the essence of political advertising itself since such a concept is absent today in the legislative framework and often even in the mass communication theory. In this regard, the purpose of the research is to substantiate components of the image of powerful structures in Russia formed by means of advertising. In the course of the research the following scientific tasks have been solved: the essence of the concepts political advertising and a political image is substantiated; technologies of Russian political marketing in modern conditions are analyzed; a structural and functional model of the political image components has been developed; and qualitative characteristics of the image components, formed by means of political advertising, are substantiated.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The concepts of political advertising and image making are often used in modern literature and in practice. This is a large section of the psychology of advertising activity that is developing very intensively both abroad and in Russia. One of the most well-known

scientists dealing with issues of studying the influence of mass media, communication and advertising on the opinion of social masses is traditionally considered to be McLuhan. His works are based on a cybernetic approach. He tried to prove that the development of society occurs under the influence of one or more types of communication (Gillies, 2014). In this case, some special attention was paid not to the content of the information transferred in the communication process but to means of its transfer.

According to the concept of agenda-setting or agenda Mccombs (2015) developed in the USA after 1968, media resources and advertising have a significant influence on the public (Sheng & Lan, 2019), directly by the selection of what becomes the subject of their consideration. At the heart of the concept of agenda-setting there is the statement that media resources set the world view and affect the social structure of reality; it is in line with the theoretical model of political communication, that was formulated in 1922 in Lippmann's book Public Opinion, which has remained in the mainstream of theoretical research up to the present time (Lippmann, 2018). The influence of media sources on political processes, political views and political behavior is the core of political communication, in the process of which the formation of two different realities – a political and media reality, - inevitably takes place (Mccombs, 2015).

The traditional confirmation of this thesis is the reference to differences in the approach to organizing the state communication activity to form its own foreign policy image of the country or the

image of a foreign state created for the internal national audience by means of political advertising (Lee & Chang, 2011). Also, it should be noted that political advertising has become one of the brightest and most ambiguous phenomena of the hectic political life in modern Russia in recent decades. And a new stage in the development of political advertising in the country began with the onset of democratic changes. It became possible to have different political parties and organizations. This encouraged political actors to use political advertising in a slightly different way. So, today in Russia new technologies are actively developing in the field of political advertising and the formation of the image of powerful structures (Coleman, 2018).

Political advertising is one of the main communication forms of modern society and is defined in modern literature in different ways. First of all, political advertising is associated with a general definition of advertising. In modern theories, there are more than a dozen definitions of advertising. The definition that seems to be the most perfect for us today is:

> Advertising is a paid, unidirectional and non-personal address made by means of mass media and other types of communication campaigning in favor of a product, brand, company, enterprise, candidate, or government (Ansolabehere, 2015: 10).

2.1. The analysis of the current state of forming the image of a political leader in Russia by means of political advertising

The reputational component is created in accordance with various strategies: "There are several types of image creation strategies in terms of positioning, namely: political positioning, image positioning, problem positioning" (Vatoropin & Semina, 2015: 18). At the same time, the authors of the research state that, for example, to create the Governor image the problem positioning is the priority. The strategy – problem positioning - is associated with identifying the central problem in the region and creating the governor image as a manager capable of solving this problem (Vatoropin & Semina, 2015).

The idea of the import substitution proclaimed by the Russian power and replicated as the main message in the difficult current economic situation, no doubt stays within a problem approach in forming the power image. "First of all, the country political and geographical image is projected into public consciousness. Then, an attractive natural resource image is applied to the political and geographical image" (Solovyeva, 2014: 20).

3. METHODS AND MATERIALS

The methodological basis of the research was the structural and functional analysis allowing to consider the political image as an integral structure, individual elements of which interpenetrate and thus perform a service (functional) role in relation to each other and to the system as a whole within the framework of political advertising. To

create the structural and functional model of the political image in Russia, SADT method was used with the implementation in the software Ramus. This method allows describing the process under study in the form of stages interconnected with information and functional flows. The process is represented as a set of components. Information and functional flows are grouped into blocks. The use of the structural and functional simulation allowed to systematize the process of the improvement of political advertising on the basis of systemizing its main structural components as a playing value. On the basis of the structural-functional analysis the political image is described as the integral quantity of its components:

$$II_{pa} = \sum w_i \times y_i, \text{(1)}$$

Where I is the integral index of political advertising;

w_i is the weight number of the i-th indicator;

yi is the value of the i-th indicator.

4. RESULTS

Based on the performed analysis it is possible to determine the following components of the political image as an integral quantity on which modern political advertising in Russia is based: the program and

ideological component; activity component; personal component; external image component (Fig. 1).
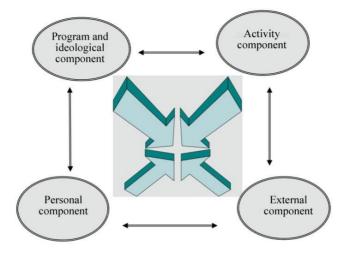

Fig. 1: The structural and functional model of the political image in Russia

Taking into account that components of the integral index of political advertising are the program and ideological, activity, personal, external image components, having an equal importance, the integral index is rearranged as:

$$II_{pa} = PIC + AC + PC + EIC \quad (2)$$

PIC is the program and ideological component;

AC is the activity component;

PC is the personal component;

EIC is the external image component.

Each individual component influences the formation of the image of power structures or a political leader, but the image is a complex phenomenon perceived as a whole. Political advertising is formed on this basis. In political advertising during the communication to form the positive image the interaction and interweaving of these components are taken into account, as well as the influence of communication media (including Internet communication). The personal component of the political image. Many Russian researchers have noted more than once that leadership-type political parties dominate in Russia, forming around popular charismatic personalities. But the research has shown that the image of the leader as well as of the whole political party, reflects demands of the society and the electorate mood.

The external (attributive) component of the political image is the representation of the country image. The external component is a specific set of visual means of influencing the social environment. The natural resource image of Russia provides the basis for the civilizational and cultural country image, which is a concentration of national cultural signs, symbols and features of the nation, a country in the historical and civilizational sense. The social and mental nation

image is superimposed on the natural and civilizational and cultural background as the concentration of leading social signs, symbols, and traits of the nation in the mental sense.

Further, the positive character of the social and mental image is strengthened by the results of people's work in the form of the production and economic image. The series of the above-mentioned images is completed by the national and value image - the concentration of leading laws and symbols expressing state interests, goals and aspiration in the national and ideological sense.

But it should be noted that in the political image development model the activity, program and ideological components are insufficiently interpreted in political advertising. The activity component of the party-political image is formed by means of political communication, as a result of which certain attitudes and positive ideas are developed. The increasing economic crisis and indifference to local problems on the part of Sverdlovsk authorities continue to worsen the employment situation in the region. The unemployment in the region continues to grow, and only the Urals capital can boast of the low level of unemployment and a wide list of announced vacancies (Dabrowski, 2017: 20).

5. DISCUSSION

So, we summarize our reasoning. In the current situation, the role of mas and communication media in creating the power image is

exaggerated. And the important role in this is played by political advertising which, being obviously biased, uses various manipulative technologies to create the power positive image. Private techniques of political advertising have long been applied in politics during election campaigns and continue to be used in the modern difficult situation. This is how the problem and alternative approaches to creating the power image become popular. However, it should be noted that such approaches, unfortunately, turn out to be popular if there is a negative alternative in the recent past (a loser-competitor against the background of whom a particular representative of the power looks all right in an exaggerated way). Particularly vulnerable is the information consumer, aimed at accepting the positive image of the power and country based on the political, geographical, resource, etc. basis in accordance with which a certain credit of trust to the power is provided (Nisawa, 2018).

However, this set of image characteristics assumes ideological characteristics. In this respect, public consciousness, lacking guidelines, consumes the image of the finished product, often without dividing it into objective and subjective components. This lays a great responsibility on public authorities using political advertising in order to popularize their actions. There is a regularity. The more mass media publish materials on topical specific issues of the political agenda, the more active the official PR activities of authorities become in these spheres.

6. CONCLUSION

In the framework of the research, we can draw the following conclusions. In modern conditions, political advertising in Russia is a full-scale effective mechanism of forming and maintaining the image of power structures. The creation of the political image forming strategy can be represented in the form of a structural and functional model, which includes the main characteristics of components of the image of political leaders, parties or power structures. The main components of the power image in Russia are the following: the program and ideological component; activity component; personal component; external image component. All the main components of the political image represent the integral quantity of the effectiveness of political advertising. They should be closely interconnected in order to have a synergetic effect in achieving the main goal – to form a sustainable image of a political leader. In the political process, characterized by the escalated political struggle, images of political parties and leaders compete; the success of a political strategy depends on them and they ultimately determine voting results.

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