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## **THE COMMUNICATIVE MEANS FOR SETTING THE CONNECTION BETWEEN POLITICAL ACTORS AND MASS AUDIENCE**

The article examines communicative means for setting connection between political leaders and the public. The concepts of “political image” and “image politics” are analyzed. The political actor image as one of the components of the political advertising process is defined. The main theoretical approaches of the political image formation and the features of the political actor image as communicative means for achieving this goal.

**Key words:** image, political image, image politics, political advertising, political actors image, political communication, communication technology, political activity.

The formation of political image as a part of political advertising is studied in an interdisciplinary perspective from the standpoint of social and political psychology, political and social science, economic theory. The research of the image as a component of a political advertising is devoted the fundamental works of foreign and domestic authors, among which should be mentioned V. Bebik, M. Holovaty, A. Hrehova, A. Ermolaeva, I. Lukomska, G. Pocheptsov, S. Tymoshenko and other.

The actuality of researching image of political actors forming process, as one of the important components of political advertising, is stipulated by practical importance of communication technologies in contemporary political space. Communication technologies, among which should be mentioned political advertising, promotion and PR, are widely used by political actors during the election campaigns and in the period between elections to obtain the support of social groups and society as a whole.

It should be noted that today the image is one of the central concepts not only in politics but also in business, culture, management, journalism, medicine, tourism and others.

Such definitions as “image power institutions”, “image diplomacy”, “political image making”, “political imageology” and others acquired its distribution in the political and even in a standard vocabulary.<sup>1</sup>

Among the studies of the political image there should be noted the works of such authors as W. Buhrym, A. Voznesenska, D. Vydrin, V. Gorbatenko, V. Grishchenko, A. Gutsal, T. Gigha, O. Zayarna, O. Zernetska, V. Korolko, L. Kochubey, L. Klymanska, V. Lisnichy, N. Lutko, S. Naumkina, D. Narizhnyi, V. Polianskaya, O. Radchenko, I. Starikov, T. Smirnova, N. Homa, A. Chechel, I. Shovkun, M. Shkolar, I. Shkurat, S. Yurchenko and others.

In the modern circumstances, image of a political actor as a part of the political advertising acts as an intermediary in communicative interaction process between government, political actors and society. In the industrial society development the trends of forming political leader’s image gradually moved away from the mythologized concepts and heroization, to secularization, democratization and rationalization of the public relations.

In the industrial and postindustrial period the political actors’ image has been studying from the standpoint of leadership relevant theories. The transforming ideas about the political actors’ image are associated with the following theories:

– “Figure theory”, based on Weber scientific vision about the charismatic leadership phenomenon acts as one of the sources. The representatives of this approach emphasize the importance of merit and psychological factors of political actor;

– “Situational theory” that links the activities of a political actor with the corresponding situation. That means, the image of the political actor must match the time, place and circumstances of political life;

– “Personal-situational theory”, which combines the basic provisions of the previous theories and explains that creating of the political actor image dues as the interaction of individual and situational

<sup>1</sup> Вдовичин, І.Я., Угрин, Л.Я., Шипунов, Г.В. та ін. (2015). *Новітня політична лексика (неологізм, оказіоналізми та інші новотворення)*. Львів: «Новий Світ – 2000», 146–148.

causes;

– “Follower theory” which emphasizes the connection of the political actor and his belonging to a particular group. It is believed that the activity of an actor based by psychology and requests of his followers;

– “Humanistic leadership theory” argue that the political actor has to empower the members of organization and to involve them in decision-making;

– “Exchange theory” interprets the political interaction between the leader and the followers in the form of mutually beneficial exchange.

In the post-communion societies the area of “institutional” advertising activates, which directs to the promotion of the collective political actors – political parties, government institutions, public policy in general. One of the tasks of the modern state is formation and supporting of a certain “world view” in the public mind, the implementation of symbolic domination. The last manifests itself in the power to impose category thinking “nomination right” (P. Bourdieu) with the help of symbolic matrices which determine the historical perspective, symbolization of informational-communicational exchanges, such as myth, religion, ideology, political advertising (A. Solovyov).

Such trends of social development are reflected in scientific discourse. Thus, the conceptualization of political activity in scientific discourse can take place via the concept of “legal-symbolic sphere”, which serves as a part of a symbolic universe and regulatory-symbolic structures “form all the ruling components and political space organizations”.

It is necessary to distinguish the concept of “image of politician” and “political image”. The last concept is general; it absorbs an image of a politician, a party and a state, if it’s classified by the carrier. According to L. Uhryn “image of a politician” – is his public image, the imagination about him, his perception in the public and individual consciousness. This image is created according to the requirements, expectations of the audience to which it is directed. The image combines real and expected (desired) policy features those appear in various forms – virtual, verbal, context-role, and so on. These features deliberately lead to the mass consciousness manipulation<sup>1</sup>.

As S. Denysyuk defines “political image” is an image of a subject of politics, which is purposefully formed and designed to make emotional-psychological and cognitive (perceptive) effect on certain individuals for the promotion, political advertising, positioning in the electoral field, etc. This kind of idea of the perfect embodiment of a certain social role; that’s why, the political image is socially conditioned, and its essence is explained by the nature of the social stereotype and its impact on public consciousness; that’s why it is created on the basis of specific information plexus, emotional-communicational and activity factors<sup>2</sup>.

In the conditions of the sharpness of competition between the political actors, the need to form a positive image of political actors increases, that promotes development of the political advertising. The scope of political advertising strictly depends on the democratization processes, marketization of political space, information technology, information society and e-democracy.

The features of the leader image forming in the modern Ukrainian society, as an urgent and an important problem of political theory and political practice, have many components – from the analysis of the political actors image in the broader context of democratization, public opinion forming to the studying of political technologies (especially advertising) national and regional election campaigns.

In modern terms the phenomenon of political image cannot be considered outside the scope of political advertising. Researchers of political image regard the image of not only to the leader (a separate politician), but also the political forces (parties, groups, movements, associations), some political institutions and officials (parliament, president, government, prime minister and so on.), the country image on the international arena.

In the process of image formation political advertising stands one of the areas of promotional activities (hence the discussion about the possibility of promoting political actors as a kind of goods on a political market); an informational message which encourages the individuals to specific action with the desired and programmed result; a paid and deliberate appeal to a mass audience through the mass media; a

<sup>1</sup> Угрин, Л. (2014). Імідж політика. *Політологія навчальний енциклопедичний словник-довідник*. Львів: «Новий Світ – 2000», 245.

<sup>2</sup> Денисюк, С. (2014). Імідж політичний. *Політологія навчальний енциклопедичний словник-довідник*. Львів: «Новий Світ – 2000», 245–247.

communicative mean of communication between political actors and mass audience.

In the modern political environment the advertising appears as a complex of marketing communications, characterized by the variety of forms and methods of advertising. The purpose of political advertising lies in building of the political actor image (collective and individual) using the mass media to influence on the mass audience. Image as a component of a political advertising is characterized by some contradictions: on the one hand, a politician must be as his voters (be one of them). On the other hand, voters elect a leader for certain parameters he is different from the public.

Political actors which are presented to the society with the help of political advertising, has symbolic dimension of image. In political advertising the symbols appear as a visualization of the political image.

In political advertising “image” appears as an actor for the environment, purposefully shaped in mass consciousness. Image has considerable influence (both rational and emotional-psychological) on the target audience with the purpose of political promoting of an actor. Specific of a political image, as a complex social phenomenon, determines by the characteristics of a political activity, perceptions of political reality and attitude to political actors from the social groups.

There were distinguished three main components in the political image – portrait (relates to an individual qualities of a political actor), professional (competence of an actor, his business skills), social (concern for voters, focus of policy action to meet the interests of broad social groups).

- Image, which operates a politician during the election campaign and through which he must win, entitled “strategic character”.

Communicative component plays an important role in the process of image formation as a part of political advertising. Political actor works in the communication field, and in the interactional process of a politic and a society a symbolic world plays a significant role. Citizens form an idea about a political actor not only based on direct contacts (as in the conventional meeting), but also on the basis of symbolic representations mediated by the media. The great value, even a domination, of a symbolic approach in the understanding of political image, can be explained by the powerful technological innovations have created an opportunity for the media to form a symbolic space which starts to influence on the real world. In terms of mediatization the epicenter of political life moves into a symbolic space which is forming by the media.

There can be noted the following characteristics of the political actor image as a part of political advertising.

Firstly, the artificial image which is different from the real reflection of a politician, directed to the achievement of certain political goals within the defined target audience. The difference of the image from a reflection lies in the fact that the image is deliberately created and consciously perceived by the mass audience, and the reflection can exist naturally. At that moment, when the need for image correction appears, we can talk about the beginning of the image formation process.

Secondly, the impact on the mass audience goes through the advertising in the media. It should be noted that the image forming means differ in the press, television, radio and the Internet.

Thirdly, the inertia of the image, which is caused by the specific of the public opinion functioning and by the inability of overcoming the existing already stereotypes in mass consciousness.

Fourthly, the realism and brightness of the image, that achieves through the advertising in the media.

On the basis of the above called characteristics, it can be argued that the image should not contain many options; it should be simple, accessible to a mass audience perception.

It should be noted that not only rational but also irrational factors play an important role in the political actor image formation. Image as a component of political advertising appeals to the mass consciousness, combines psychological and social component and it has a symbolic nature.

The structure of political image as a part of political advertising consists of such components as the individual characteristics of political actor (psychological, physical characteristics, personal style, etc.), the social characteristics (status of a political actor, relationships with various community groups, etc.), symbolic characteristics (ideological and value orientation of political actors).

The image of a political actor as a part of political advertising is linked with political ideologies and real political interests of groups and communities, economical and social problems.

In the process of political advertising, the image appears as a single reflection which consists of components, aimed at different audiences and include four fragments “moral and reliability”, “quality business”, “leader-mother”, “leader-father” (O. Egorova-Hantman).

Image as a component of political advertising is a mean of contrast positioning of political actor and makes the following functions:

- informational – image makes relevant information for a mass audience;
- symbolical – image becomes a symbol of the respective the individual and the group needs;
- nominative, where image identifies the political actor, positions and designates an actor in the political space;
- communicative – image is aimed at getting the “answers” of the audience in the form of political action (electoral choice, other forms of political participation);
- aesthetic – image should make a politician reflection noble, to meet certain aesthetic requirements for the public;
- formation of a political world view.

There are the following types of political actors image as a part of political advertising. Firstly, by a status of a political actor (here we can define the image of a politician, a party, a movement or a state). Secondly, by steps of creation (a political image as a part of advertising campaign can be initial, ongoing and final). Thirdly, by the mechanism of formation and distribution the artificial image and the spontaneous image). Fourthly, positive or negative image. Fifthly, by the socio-demographic characteristics (men – women, youth – mature, etc.).

The image of apolitical actor acts as a part of the advertising campaign, it is a process of communication in which the recipient response lies in a reaction to the advertising product. At the present stage of the political interaction development the phenomenon of image acts as “leader to the public”, the image of the political actor indirect by the system of communication technologies, among which a special place belongs to the political advertising.

The relations between political actors and citizens form with the support of the mass media, socio-political organizations (political parties, public associations), state bodies and local governments. The marketing techniques, such as political advertising, serve as conciliators, mediators between the political actors and a society.

In the process of the political actor image forming there the strategy of the ideal politician image which exist in the public consciousness are used.

The political image, as a part of political advertising is formed deliberately; it’s called to influence on a defined target audience on a rational and emotional levels. One of the main functions of the political actors’ image lies in the facilitation of the choice of citizens, informing of mass audience about the activities of political actor.

One of the main trends in the modern political process which affects on the political actors’ image, as a part of political advertising, stands theatricality of the political interaction, mediatization of the political reality and virtualization of the electoral competition. Political actors, using advertising technologies of image formation, began to remind the participants of the play – a political show. Therefore, the “reset” of a government, the need for political accountability of the political responsibility procedure is the urgent need of modern times not only de jure, but also de facto.

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