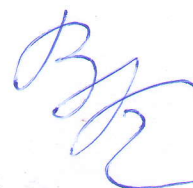**RUSSIAN PRESIDENTAL ACADEMY OF NATIONAL ECONOMY
AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

Povolzhsky Institute of Management named after P.A. Stolypin

As a manuscript

KOSYAKOV VLADIMIR EVGENEVICH

TECNOLOGIES OF CREATION
OF IMAGE OF POLITICAL LEADER
(DONALD TRUMPS' CASE)

Speciality: 5.5.2 – Political institutes, processes, technologies

Annotation dissertations for a degree Candidate of political

Supervisor:
Doctor of political Sciences,
Professor Korobov A.A.

Saratov 2023

Elections are integral part of democracy as they are highest representation of the peoples will and a mechanism of legitimization of government. Democratic elections in Russia have a long and complicated history. However, relatively modern characteristics of electoral system were achieved during Soviet Union, although it can be said, that even at that time elections could be considered nominal as elections were held during C.P.S.U monopoly and it can be said, that results were predetermined. Creation of institute of democracy made possible for political leaders of different parties to participate in elections.

Modern elections in Russian Federation propose competition among political leaders for office. Nowadays, success or failure of any candidate depends not on decision of political elite, but on strategy of electoral campaign, that should be focused on mobilization of maximum number of voters. Effectiveness of such strategy depends on number of psychological factors, primary on image of political leader and political environment, during which elections are held.

The actuality of dissertation is dictated by necessity of scientific analysis of problem of perception of image of political leader by different social groups that allows predicting the way political environment of country and the world will change.

The theme of study is connected with the factor of high levels of political cynicism in Western and Post-soviet countries, where citizen's distrust to government institutes has been rising for the last years. In such conditions the voters' opinion is usually on the side of those politicians that propose something different to traditional promises of current politicians. Usually such "different promises" that proclaim change in the name of change are caused by desperation are not well thought enough so after elections they cause roll back of popularity of new elected political leader. For example, the election of 45 President of United States, Donald Trump, famous for his aggressive rhetoric and unpredictability causes rejection and complaints by huge part of US society to this day. And it can't be said, that this rejection is baseless, as during his rule foreign policy of USA can be characterized by increased pressure toward Europe and economic confrontation

with China, that caused negative consequences with Europe and distrust with traditional American partners. It should be noted, that during his presidency Angela Merkel claimed that «Europe can't rely on U.S. [1]»

Rise of publicly declared dissatisfaction with active government in general and with political leaders specifically led to Brexit, what, according to specialists had negative economic effects. It should be noted, that sailing of this process led to even bigger distrust to government institutes, cabinet of ministers and resulted in resignation of Prime Minister of the United Kingdom Theresa May, which proves weakness of her political image.

Another significant example of rise of political cynicism of people are results of parliament elections in European Union in France and Italy, where most of parliament seats were taken by nationalists[2]. Of course it is too early to say how this will end, however judging by the example of Donald Trump, it can be proposed, that even if some political leaders do not poses all the power in their country, they can cause significant damage in economics and foreign relations.

This dissertation draws parallels between Western countries that suffered from different social and economic challenges that made people loose their trust to government and created opportunities for different political leaders in opposition or quasi opposition to create their image. In mid terms, Russia can face the same problems in nearest future at 2024 elections, especially as trust to government among Russian citizens is also declining[3]. This dissertation is also actual as it studies mechanisms of creation of public opinion, especially in conditions of high levels of political cynicism.

---

[1] Carrel P., Merkel says Europe can't rely on U.S. to impose world order // Reuters, July 20, 2018 [Электронный ресурс]. URL: https://www.reuters.com/article/us-germany-merkel-usa/merkel-says-europe-cant-rely-on-u-s-to-impose-world-order-idUSKBN1KA1F9.
[2] Voce A., Gutiérrez P., Kommenda N., Clarke S., EU election results 2019: across Europe // The Guardian, May 26, 2019 [Электронный ресурс]. URL: https://www.theguardian.com/world/ng-interactive/2019/may/26/eu-election-results-2019-across-europe
[3] Рейтинги доверия политикам, одобрения работы государственных институтов, рейтинги партий // Всероссийский центр изучения общественного мнения, 18 Января 2019 [Электронный ресурс]. URL: https://wciom.ru/index.php?id=236&uid=9518

Analysis of images of different political leaders, the reasons why they were formed in particular way and means they function allows developing the most significant methods of influencing the mass mind of modern Russia, which will elevate democratic process to new level. As a result the necessity of studying of technologies of achieving the leading positions, distinctive features of creation of images of political leader, whose character becomes the face of political movement or party, is especially relevant.

The most representative example in this context is not ideologies rivalry but rivalry of images of political leaders of two opposing parties during presidential elections in United States of America in 2016, that took place in conditions of social tension, political cynicism, that characterizes both Russian and American societies confirms the relevance of this study once again.

Study of new ways of communications as innovative instrument of translation of political massage and political image is important aspect of dissertation.

Problems of cooperation of politician and Mass Media were studied for decades while internet left the walls of Universities and Academies and became part of average American relatively recently. In Russia, the growth of regular internet users happened only in 2010[4]. Internet has great potential for political campaigns as it allows communicating with electorate directly. In 2008, Barack Obama used internet as secondary platform for his political campaign, while in 2016 Donald Trump used twitter as his main instrument of communication.

Due to factors, mentioned before, Donald Trump's campaign is especially relevant material to study technologies of creation of political image in conditions of constantly rising political cynicism, people's distrust to government and high tech society.

---

[4] Meeker M., Devitt S., Wu L., Ten Questions Internet Execs Should Ask & Answer – Presentation from Web 2.0 Summit // Morgan Stanley November 16, 2010 [Электронный ресурс].   URL:
http://www.morganstanley.com/institutional/techresearch/tenquestions_web2.html

Methodology of dissertation contains systems analysis, structural-functional analysis, comparative analysis, content analysis, discourse analysis, semantic analysis, semiotic analysis, classification method, participant observation method, case study method. With the help of systems analysis main characteristics of political image were studied. Structural-functional analysis was used to observe main strategies and technologies of creation of political image, reveal its correlation with escalation of social tension and growth political cynicism. Contest analysis was used to examine mass media articles aimed at creating or destroying image of Donald Trump, television debates between 2016 Presidential candidates and their online activity at social networks. Comparative analysis was used to compare images of Donald Trump, Hillary Clinton and Volodimir Zelensky in order to find similarities and differences between strategies and technologies of creation of political image and promotion of political ideas.

Theoretic basis of dissertation is hypothesis of influence of high levels of political cynicism on creation image of political leader that opposes the current one. Works of R. Dawkins about replication of ideas present and works of Gimnez and Schwartz about usage of social networks in promotion of idea are special interest.

Scientific novelty:

– in case of holding presidential campaign in conditions of critical levels of political cynicism, characteristics that differ opposing political leader are should be prioritized;

– conception of carrying out campaign oriented on image political leader not image of political party or its ideology;

– discovered positive impact of negative news coverage of political leader ob building communications between political leaders and electorate;

– proved meme as element of social-psyhological mechanism of influencing voter in conditions of high levels of political cynicism. Meme can be used as an instrument of destruction of image of opponent or as instrument of mug slinging of strengthening elements of political image.

Theoretical significance is that the dissertation promotes the idea about holding election campaign by social media. Comparative analysis of trends of political campaigns in USA

Practical significance is usage of dissertation data for optimization methods of creation of political image during presidential campaign.