LEGAL AND POLITICAL SCIENCE

THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA IN SHAPING THE IMAGE OF A POLITICIAN

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses the ability of the media to influence the political culture and consciousness of society, in particular through the creation of stereotypical symbolic constructs such as political images and political myths. The features and the role of each type of media in the formation of the images of political leaders and parties are presented, as well as some techniques that the media use in the process of updating political images are presented. It is known that the main goal of the media in the process of constructing political images is the creation and dissemination of political myths. The article discusses in detail four main topics from all possible plots of political myths: "the myth of the conspiracy", "the myth of the golden age", "the myth of the hero-savior", "the myth of unity".

Introduction. Currently, in the context of building a civil society, the issue related to the formation, use and promotion of the image of a political leader in modern society is gaining the greatest relevance.

It is this fact that determines the need to comprehend the basic approaches to the definition of the phenomenon of "image".

So, in the newest dictionary of foreign words and expressions, the image is understood as: 1) a set of representations of others about a given person, his psychological portrait visible from the side, coupled with appearance and manners; 2) a purposefully formed image of a person, phenomenon or object, designed to have an emotional and psychological impact on someone in order to popularize, advertise, etc. [1, p. 330]

It is worth noting that the originally studied definition was taken from the conceptual apparatus of psychological science. Therefore, it is advisable to start the study by considering the psychological approach to determining the image of a leader. General psychology identifies the phenomenon studied by us with the related concept of "image".

Image is not only a stereotype, it is also a certain psychological attitude, a call to action. Possessing a powerful motivating potential, an "image" (or image) is capable of setting a vector of human behavior within a certain framework. Indeed, like any installation, it performs the function of directing, distorting, or blocking human behavior. [2, p. 71-73]

According to the sociological approach, the image (or image) is also a material construct, and not just a mental image in the human mind or a set of typical types (methods) of the life of an individual, social group. This means that the image or its components may well be materially expressed. [3, p. 56]

As noted earlier, the problem of creating and promoting an ideal image and introducing it into the mass consciousness has become of paramount importance with the strengthening of democratic institutions in Russia and the main task of political leaders is to be able to maintain their competitiveness in constantly changing political conditions.

Therefore, how a politician is perceived by the public consciousness is of great importance. It is the above condition that determines the need for the politician to create his own image, which includes a set of such personal and professional qualities that could arouse the confidence of the masses.

In order to earn recognition and ensure the victory of a political leader in elections, as well as to stay in power, a political leader needs to create an attractive reputation and public opinion. He must convince voters that their opinion is above the privileges that it affords him to belong to the powerful elite. [4, p.146-152]

Since in modern society in the communicative environment the personality factor dominates, the problem of choosing a political leader is solved by the majority of the electorate under the influence of the impression of their image in the media. The image of a politician in the media includes a complex combination of qualities and characteristics formed on the basis of stereotypes of mass consciousness, as well as under the direct influence of informational, analytical television and radio programs, print articles and political advertising. Thus, media entities are actively involved in shaping the image of the politician's image and reputation. [5, p.45]

The image created by a politician can, as a rule, be not so much the result of his own efforts, but the result of the efforts of his competitors. We can say that the image is a set of conflicting components that consist of a "positive" image created by a politician and a team of his supporters, everyday reality and a "negative" image created by competitors.

Often the image formed in the public mind of the media does not always correspond to the real qualities of a political leader. Moreover, supporters and opponents of a political leader differently prioritize his characteristics. Political images created by PR-specialists with the aim of discrediting this or that leader are endowed with excessive expression and emotional color. The most vulnerable qualities of a leader are actively criticized, while the least attractive are publicized. Words, gestures, actions, decisions, choice of friends, affection - everything becomes available to the public "search".

Various influential circles, "staff" persons make peculiar political bets on the leader and strive to form, in their opinion, the most competitive image. At the same time, the basis of the image is the real qualities and characteristics of a political leader. It is simply impossible to give a leader a set of traits and characteristics to which he does not respond.

Today, the role of the media has grown so much that real actions and events become meaningful only when they are presented in the media. According to G. Pocheptsov, "the modern world is subject to the following rule: a real event is only significant when the media told about it to the general public" 9]. If a politician falls out of sight of the press, the media ceases to cover his activities, he runs the risk of being quickly forgotten by voters. The development of the media and, above all, television, for example, led to the emergence of the possibility of almost instantly, by the standards of political communication, "promotion" of a new leader, which was simply technically impossible at the beginning of the century. New political leaders can emerge from nowhere and, thanks to the media, become national heroes. "Media candidates" include, for example, political leaders of the highest level, such as J. Carter, B. Clinton, and V. Putin.

There is a special type of leadership that the American psychologist W. Stone defined as "distant leadership" [8]. It is understood that the "leader-follower" interaction is carried out indirectly through various mass media. At the same time, such an intermediate element appears as the image of a political leader. It is the latter that performs leadership functions and inspires people to heroism, creation, destruction, etc. In this case, the leadership function is performed not by a real person, but by the image of a leader, leader. Those. a citizen is faced not with the event itself, but with its coverage in the media. And the image is the unit of this symbolic world.

For the image, symbolic constructs, a verbal, communicative representation of the event are essential. The mechanism of image formation through the media is widely used in the election campaign. An external role picture is created that allows the media to reproduce in the mind an image that, to one degree or another, differs from the real person. However, what matters is not what the candidate offers, but what the audience perceives, reacting to the image, and not to the person. The impression of the audience on the image depends more on the media than on the candidate himself.

Research results. The central problem of the topic is the correlation in the image of real qualities and those that endow it with the media, PR-specialists. [5, pp. 102–109]

It is the reflection of the real merits of the leader, the successful presentation of these qualities and the adjustment of few attractive features that is the main task of image formation. That is why the image is not always the case - this is an artificially created product designed to attract the largest number of supporters. A vivid example is the emergence of well-known political leaders who already have a vivid image that was only completed in the course of the political struggle with those characteristics that give the leader additional, attractive features. [6, p. 35]

The image of a politician, as a constructed image, can possess practically any characteristics corresponding to the desires of the masses. The audience can have a very distant direct idea of the real activities of the leader, and form their idea of him mainly from the stories about the leader, specially prepared with the help of PR specialists, media messages in order to influence the recipient of this information.

Such a situation opens up good opportunities for the formation of precisely the desired image of a political leader. However, we note that a successfully formed image does not guarantee subsequent support from society. The leader will have to take action and demonstrate his true capabilities.

An important component in creating an image is the position taken by the media in relation to a particular political figure. And this is exactly the position that a regular audience expects from "their" media. When choosing media of a certain social orientation, the audience is already ready to agree with the proposed point of view about the political leader. [7, p. 73]

It is the authority of the media that can have a significant impact on the credibility of a particular information. In the context of the implementation of the institutions of a democratic society, even a recognized leader at a certain stage has difficulties with covering his activities in the media, whose political orientation does not fully coincide with his view on how to solve the problems facing society.

In these conditions, it is important that the image created by PR-specialists should have a certain ability to change, if required by the current socio-political situation. The image must be directedly formed, refined or redone by modifying the activities, actions and statements of the social subject.

Thus, the image is a reflection of real personal qualities, beliefs, practical experience, professional competence of a political leader, and its formation requires serious, thoughtful work with the media.

In 1963, B. Cohen formulated the classic definition of such an effect of mass communication as "setting agenda items". This effect has become the subject of modern research. Its essence lies in the fact that "the press cannot make people think in a certain way, but it can tell its readers what to think about" [11].

• Frank lies. This method consists in combining the actual occurring believable, the real occurring implausible and the invented believable facts. As soon as the audience's doubts about the facts of the second category are debunked, she will not hesitate to believe the facts of the third category. In addition, it should be borne in mind that facts can be created in the most literal sense. The American researcher D. Burstin in the book "Image: A catalog of pseudo-events in America" introduced the concept of "pseudo-event", which occurs not by itself, but because someone planned, rigged, or provoked it in order to switch public opinion.

• Repeat information. If you repeat the message with sufficient frequency, it will eventually be accepted by the audience and strengthened in the mass consciousness. A variant of the "repetition" technique is the use of slogans and keywords such as "Equal rights for all", "People and the party are one," etc. Such phrases, often meaningless, play a large role in politics and advertising. Especially often the media use repetitions in news reports, where in each subsequent issue the most significant information - whether it is a report (television) or a text message (radio) - is repeated without any corrections or changes. Using this technique, the method of creating political myths is built, the essence of which is reduced to the systematic, methodical repetition of extremely simplified slogans and assessments. A method well known to many leaders and social psychologists. Gustave Lebon considered: "The statement, the shorter it is, the more it is devoid of any evidence, the more it influences the crowd" [10].

• Statement. The peculiarity of this technique is that the media often prefer to dispute bare statements in support of their thesis, thereby limiting the pluralism of opinions and presenting only one side of the coin that is most advantageous to them.

• Indication of the enemy. The message is put forward not only for something, but also against some real or imaginary enemy ("The blame for the AOD!"). Here you can use two methods: the method of "throwing mud" and the method of "ridicule" and "cloning a competitor."

The method of "throwing mud" consists in the selection of such epithets and such terminology that give the subject of conversation a strictly negative ethical assessment. This method is ranked among the most crude, however, it is most often used in the current political struggle.

"Mockery" seems to be the most interesting for study and often used in the media by the method of information-psychological impact on the mass consciousness. The essence of this method is to ridicule both specific individuals and the views, ideas, programs of various organizations and associations. The effect of this technique is based on the fact that when ridiculing individual statements and elements of a person's behavior, a playful and frivolous attitude is initiated towards him, which later extends to his other statements and views. This ultimately leads to the consolidation of the image of a "frivolous and incompetent person" whose proposals and ideas do not deserve attention.

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