

BINARISM OF STRUCTURAL ELEMENTS OF COMMUNICATION STRATEGY AS A FACTOR IN WINNING RUSSIAN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN 2012

БИНАРИЗМ СТРУКТУРНЫХ ЭЛЕМЕНТОВ КОММУНИКАЦИОННОЙ СТРАТЕГИИ КАК ФАКТОР ПОБЕДЫ НА ВЫБОРАХ ПРЕЗИДЕНТА РОССИИ-2012

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The article analyzes the nature of communications technology of the campaign headquarters of Russia presidential candidate Vladimir Putin. For the research and analysis the author has used the method of schematic modeling, the main theory of a binary opposition as a feature of the human mind. There is a description of its nature and structural elements. This article reconstructed the management scheme and communication stream and flows, provided analysis and general characteristics of Communication Management of the campaign of Russia presidential candidate Vladimir Putin.

Key words: *political communication; campaign; political technologists; media; binary.*

В статье анализируется коммуникационная сущность технологии предвыборного штаба кандидата в президенты России

В. В. Путина. При анализе системы коммуникаций политической технологии используются: метод схематического моделирования, главное положение теории бинарности – структура бинарных оппозиций является одной из характеристик человеческого разума, дается описание ее сущности и структурных элементов. В статье реконструирована схема управления коммуникационным потоком, дается ее анализ и общая характеристика коммуникационного менеджмента предвыборного штаба кандидата в президенты России В. В. Путина.

Ключевые слова: политическая коммуникация; предвыборная кампания; политическая технологи; СМИ; бинарность.

General information

The Russian presidential election campaign of 2012 is widely discussed by experts in different fields and in mass media as well. In this article the attention is paid to the results the author obtained using the technology of “Binary Communication” described in his monograph “Glasnost as political technology” (Ushanov, 2012).

Binary communication: essence and structural elements

The meaning of “Glasnost” is emphasized in many research works and memoirs devoted to “Perestroika” (especially estimated in a critical way (Boldin, 1995; Burbulis, 2001; Geller, 1997; Kara-Murza, 2003)).

The research of social and political processes characterizing the modern society obviously makes us appeal to mass media as they are the most active form of their expression. The functional characteristics of mass media are not limited as the means of communication serving relations in society. Attention is attracted to techniques of involving communication into deep structures of political life and as a result of it not

only the intensive political process and development of mass media can be changed but also the quality of their mutual influence. But still mass media cannot change the political and social situation; they operate as means of a more complicated process.

Taking “Glasnost” as a phenomenon we systemized and put the following trends into table chronologically: from 1986 till 1990 – distinguished power over the communication process in the USSR which is characterized by mutual influence of mass media and the complex of art of communication such as literature and cinematograph aiming to introduce new themes and knowledge about the country and the world and also new approaches to estimation and interpretation can be observed. According to our point of view, the real things are being converted into objects of compassion and, therefore, they are penetrating into social consciousness only when they obtain an esthetic form, when the matters of real life turn into art emotional images system. In our opinion, the changing of the whole system of knowledge and perception of the Soviet society across the world was the goal of “Glasnost”, but it could be obtained using not only the possibilities of mass media but also the complex of art communications. They turn out to be involved in one process; it makes us consider “Glasnost” in two ways: in the narrow and broad senses which are regarded as the General and the Particular.

In the narrow sense Glasnost is supposed to be information policy being initiated by Communist Party Central Committee to support society changes, to fight the opposition side within Party Politburo. According to the Soviet tradition, mass media were utilized as means to achieve some goals. During the social changes period, communist-reformists were doing it the same way, at that time some mass media companies were extracted from the Soviet common Glasnost only by such boundaries, therefore there are many non-understandable things in this case, that is why within a very short period of time alien to socialism ideology of liberalism became so entrenched in social consciousness and was able to change not only political orientations, but make citizens be involved into political process as its performers. That is the reason to investigate

Glasnost in a broad sense as communication front, which deals with the society aiming to change society political consciousness. Such kind of attitude to Glasnost explains the Communist Party information policy failures. Controlling of information front turned to be impossible anyway (it became clear at the end of 1990), since it cannot be regarded as administrative body, it had no division to bring together or to rule; furthermore, information dispersal depends on customers' interests.

We can suggest the following communication chain of the information agenda's creation during the period of perestroika, it happened to be the penetration of liberal dogmas into social consciousness within communication frames as below:

1. Literature journals by publishing unknown before or forbidden documents, memoirs made the society be aware of the new details of well-known events, which consequently led to the re-estimation of these events;
2. Mass media using published materials raised topical questions of real life. Exactly at that period of time the method of considering historical facts as the main argument in political discussion was widely used;
3. The literature developing the same themes became focused on mass media information agenda. At that time books that had been published before were re-issued, and forbidden works or samizdat books became legally admissible. In the long run, new ones written in the tradition of popular literature were published. Cinematograph became involved in this process a little bit later due to its production complications to follow literature and mass media. However, films demonstrated the key problems to larger audiences etching them in the public mind. According to our point of view, the role of cinematograph is very important, as it creates communication binary amplifying ideas, matters, events reflected in mass media, in esthetics images.

We suppose that the core of communication binary is in dual aspects of information mainstream: documental-relational part sug-

gested by mass media and art-emotional aspect belonging to cultural objects. This phenomenon was not obviously foreseen by M. S. Gorbachev's supporters while launching the Glasnost policy. They made use of many years' experience of using Soviet-communist regime's mass media and didn't expect the forthcoming problems. However, for the Communist Party of the USSR it turned out to be the so-called binary gas: harmless elements joining together brought about a fatal explosion.

Binary communication: 2012, a new version

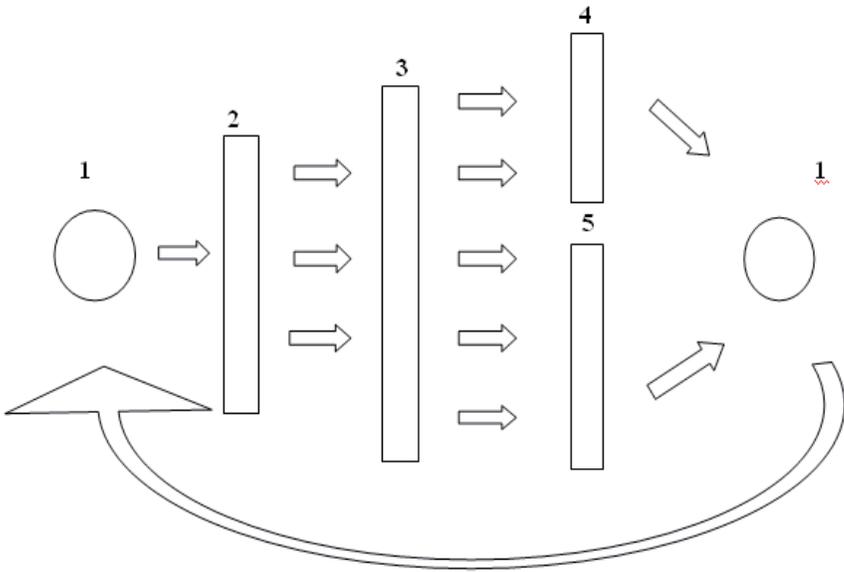
The Russian presidential campaign of 2012 is still being actively discussed by experts in various fields, including mass communications. In this article we would like to scrutinize the results using the method described above.

Post factum it is possible to outline the model, which consists of a set of interrelated and interdependent *tasks* stated by the election headquarters of V. V. Putin in order to achieve the main goal – winning in the first round:

1. Creation of information and emotional background for the coming victory;
2. Creation and implementation to the mass consciousness dystopia of a possible collapse of Russia in case of Putin's defeat;
3. Neutralization of the Communist Party and its leader Zyuganov, who presented the potential risks for Putin's strategy mentioned above;
4. Neutralization of the liberal-democratic protest movement.

In our opinion, it is possible to designate the applied technology as «model of the closed communication cycle». It can be illustrated by the following figure:

Figure 1



Now we can start analyzing the structural elements of the technology.

Element 1 (the election promotional items and advertising). It played the role of a trigger mechanism, which did not only solve the problem of traditional advertising such as suggesting the competitive advantages of the candidate, broadcast and air slogans, etc., but also introduced V. V. Putin’s main subject of the information agenda – the election of the president.

Element 2 (information space). The prevalence of positive news made the audience estimate the work of the Russian Government and its Prime Minister Vladimir Putin as successful. Unlike the logic of this element functioning in the previous campaign (it became an integral part of the candidate’s campaign), in our opinion, this time it was not limited to broadcasting an image of “man of action”, which is not up to the “election tinsel” and played the role of a signal repeater – “Why Putin must

be chosen for president?”, – it led to the next step, the third element of technology. At this stage, unified messages coming from political advertising were scattered, refracted through interests and preferences of the society.

Element 3 (information-analytical, journalistic field of mass media). We consider it a key element for the implementation of the tasks outlined above –namely № 2, 3, 4. Propagation was a primary communication tool for the implementation of the abovementioned problems, because it was highly efficient in the conditions of total information superiority over the contenders.

Element 4 (television movies). This element solved the problem of aestheticization of propaganda, translating ideas and opinions to an emotionally-imaging sphere, creating a collective feeling of empathy for the audience... TV is the traditional channel of work with voters for the election headquarters of Vladimir Putin, but in 2012 it was filled with the new content: information, analytical and journalistic part was complemented by feature and art. The format of an article does not allow us provide a detailed review of different means of artistic communication in the pre-election period. The television series directed by Sergei Snezhkin *Belaya Gvardiya (The White Guard)*, shown on March 3, 2012 is a perfect illustration of it. It is worth mentioning that liberal mass media criticized the author’s film as an opportunistic snap and a tactical binding to “the current political moment” – the election.

However, various critics argued that screenwriters took liberties with the works of Mikhail Bulgakov. Compared with the previous film adaptation (*Dni Turbinykh (Days of the Turbins)* (1976), directed by V. Basov), they increased the number of scenes of strong emotional stress and pressure (or even rebooted and overloaded them) to the audience. The horrors of the civil war (disturbance, distemper) became the main content of the film. Here we can see relation to the first and third elements of the technology described above. The general idea of a red threat passed through all the maintenance campaign that was developed by the team of V. V. Putin.

Element 5 (special campaign events). It was most clearly manifested in meetings and flash mobs in support of Vladimir Putin. In our opinion, these special events solved a number of problems which were:

- Creating informational background of support (and short time before the election) V. V. Putin for mass media;
- Creating emotional background for participation, empathy and, ultimately, an opportunity to share the triumph of the winner;
- Neutralizing the protest of the liberal-democratic movement.

It is important to outline that this element has been organically fastened in a communication complex which was managed by V. V. Putin's campaign headquarters, so the themes of meetings were incorporated from the third element of the described technology operated, and projected it again on the first element – pre-election advertizing. It is necessary to mention that in the last piece of the pre-election campaign the quantity of advertizing output in favor of V. V. Putin increased, and thematically was connected with a communication stream which was started within the limits of the described technology.

In conclusion, we think that the strategic technology described above – the “model of a closed loop communication” – based on the concept of the main messages of the election headquarters of B. N. Yeltsin's presidential election in Russia in 1996 results of a “If not our candidate, it will get worse”. The scale of the instrumental use of the media in the election campaign of the current government's candidate in 2012 was similar and comparable to the practice of 1996. The principal difference between these campaigns lays on a bigger score of communication management from Putin's team (as reflected in the scheme, in which we described functions of spin doctors), as well as an active participation of artistic communication in the campaign information.

In favor of the thesis about qualitative management of communications during the pre-election period of headquarters of V. Putin testifies the fact that the film-making period of the film *Belaya Gvardiya* began early in 2009. If we take into consideration that contours of the political situation of 2012 were shaped after the first blow of the economic crisis

on the economy and society, it is possible to assume that work on the elaboration of the described technology began three years prior to the election.

The principle of an active interaction of documentary, rational and emotional levels of artistic and socio-political communication creates the “model of closed-loop communication” with the publicity as a political technology. The difference is in scale: in 2012, they had the task of using the tool of artistic communication during a short election campaign. It is significant that television was selected as the main tool to broadcast to an audience. There was a more fundamental problem in the adjustment period – the introduction of alien principles of liberal ideology in the Soviet society. Therefore, the form and content of artistic communication in the public communication is broader than the fifth element of our model.

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