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INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE IN ORGANIZING PUBLIC RELATIONS OF POLITICAL PARTIES

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Abstract
This research paper analyzes the mechanisms through which political parties communicate with the public in an era of rapidly developing digital technologies. It examines the transformation of contemporary political communication, the influence of digital platforms on political processes, and innovative communication models employed in developed countries. The findings demonstrate the growing importance of digital technologies, interactive communication, and public participation in the activities of political parties.

Keywords: Digital democracy, political parties, political communication, public relations, digital PR, social networks, electronic participation.

Introduction

In recent years, the rapid development of information and communication technologies has significantly influenced the system of political relations. The Internet, social media platforms, and digital communication tools are changing the ways citizens participate in political processes. These developments also impose new requirements on the activities of political parties.

Whereas in the twentieth century the principal task of political parties was to attract voters and win elections, today they are increasingly becoming institutions

expected to maintain continuous and interactive relationships with the public. Modern voters are not merely recipients of political information; they also evaluate, discuss, and help shape it.[1]

From this perspective, analyzing new forms of relationships between political parties and the public is of considerable scholarly importance.

A New Paradigm of Political Communication

Contemporary political communication differs significantly from the traditional model of propaganda. In the past, political parties were regarded as the principal actors disseminating information to the population. In today's digital environment, citizens have also become producers and distributors of information.

These changes have created several new tasks for political parties: maintaining continuous dialogue with the population; regularly monitoring public opinion; ensuring the rapid exchange of information through digital platforms; and functioning as trustworthy sources in a competitive information environment.

Consequently, the one-way model of political communication is gradually being replaced by a dialogue-based model.

Public Trust and Political Legitimacy

The success of any political party depends to a considerable extent on the level of public trust. Trust is an important factor in ensuring the legitimacy of political institutions.

Research indicates that citizens develop trust in political parties primarily through openness, accountability, the reliability of information, responsiveness to public opinion, and active involvement in addressing social problems.

For this reason, public relations services within political parties in developed countries are responsible not only for disseminating information but also for building and maintaining public trust.

Digital Political Communication Practices in the United States

The United States is considered one of the most developed countries in the field of digital political communication. Political parties extensively use modern information technologies, digital platforms, and data analytics to organize their relationships with the public. The digitalization of political communication is important not only for organizing election campaigns but also for maintaining continuous dialogue with citizens, studying public opinion, and shaping political decisions.

One of the main characteristics of digital political communication in the United States is the widespread application of data-driven politics. Under this approach, political parties and campaign teams analyze large volumes of data on voters' sociodemographic characteristics, places of residence, education levels, occupations, political views, and online activities. On the basis of these findings, separate communication strategies are developed for different population groups. This makes it possible to deliver political messages tailored to the needs and interests of particular audiences.[2]

In the United States, social networks occupy a central position in the relationship between political parties and the public. Through platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, X (Twitter), YouTube, and TikTok, parties can communicate directly with millions of citizens. These platforms serve not only to disseminate information but also to study public responses, analyze public opinion, and establish interactive contact with the electorate. In this respect, digital

communication offers a faster and more effective mechanism than traditional mass media.

The extensive use of digital technologies in American political practice became particularly evident during the 2008 presidential election. During that campaign, social networks, email marketing, and online fundraising mechanisms were used on a large scale. This experience subsequently exerted a strong influence on the development of digital political communication both in the United States and in other countries. Today, artificial intelligence technologies, automated analytical systems, and digital monitoring tools are becoming integral components of political communication.

The United States has also developed practices for engaging citizens in political processes through digital communication tools. Online surveys, virtual meetings, digital discussions, and electronic donation platforms help increase civic and political participation. This, in turn, strengthens relationships between parties and voters and contributes to greater openness and participation in political processes. Overall, the American experience is regarded as one of the most advanced models for organizing digital political communication through innovative approaches, data-driven management, effective use of social networks, and interactive engagement with the public. This experience is important for contemporary political parties seeking to establish effective mechanisms for operating in a digital environment.

Experience of European Countries

The experience of European countries demonstrates the central importance of participatory democracy, openness, and responsiveness to public opinion in organizing political parties' public relations. In most European countries, political parties function not only as institutions participating in elections but also as

important intermediaries maintaining continuous dialogue between the state and citizens. Therefore, their relationships with the public are not limited to election campaigns but continue throughout their political activities.

In countries such as Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, Finland, and Denmark, involving citizens in the development and discussion of political decisions is considered an important condition of democratic governance. Political parties in these countries organize regular public discussions, open days, online forums, and expert consultations to understand public opinion. This approach enables parties to gain a deeper understanding of citizens' needs and attitudes while allowing citizens to participate directly in political processes.

In Germany, internal party democracy and open communication with the public play important roles in party activities. Parties regularly consult citizens, experts, and civil society institutions on major political initiatives. Legislative initiatives and policy documents are also made available for discussion through official party websites, where public suggestions and comments are collected. This process is intended to align political decisions with social interests.[3]

The experience of Scandinavian countries is particularly significant in developing relationships of trust between political parties and the public. In Sweden and Finland, parties regularly inform citizens about their activities, sources of financing, and political decisions. Given the well-developed culture of information openness and accountability, public trust in political institutions in these countries is considered relatively high. Parties regard prompt responses to citizens' questions and requests as an important part of their work.

The widespread use of digital communication tools in European countries has also brought relations between political parties and the public to a new stage. Electronic petitions, online consultation platforms, digital discussion forums, and social networks enable citizens to discuss political initiatives, submit proposals,

and evaluate party activities. Thus, political communication is evolving from a one-way process of information transmission into a system of interaction and dialogue.

Another important aspect of the European experience is that political parties do not work with citizens exclusively for electoral purposes. They also discuss pressing social issues, promote political awareness, and encourage civic engagement. Accordingly, parties cooperate closely with youth organizations, nongovernmental organizations, trade unions, and local communities.

Overall, the experience of European countries illustrates the importance of participatory democracy, transparency, accountability, and continuous dialogue in organizing relations between political parties and the public. This approach not only improves the effectiveness of party activities but also contributes to strengthening citizens' trust in political processes and developing democratic institutions.

Social Networks and Political Participation

Over the past decade, social networks have become central arenas of political communication. Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, X, YouTube, and Telegram have created new opportunities for political parties.

First, the speed of information dissemination has increased. Second, opportunities for direct communication with citizens have emerged. Third, it has become possible to monitor public opinion in real time.

However, these developments also introduce certain risks. Information manipulation, the spread of false news, and digital influence technologies may undermine the quality of political communication.



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Priority Trends in the Activities of Contemporary Political Parties

The analysis identifies the following emerging trends in political party activities: the expansion of digital communication; the strengthening of interactive dialogue with the public; increased citizen participation in political decision-making; the improvement of political marketing tools; and the widespread use of data-driven management methods.

These trends are bringing relations between political parties and society to a new stage.

Conclusion

In the context of digital democracy, relations between political parties and the public are shifting from traditional forms of propaganda toward interactive models of communication. The experiences of the United States and European countries indicate that openness, accountability, and digital communication have become important strategic resources in the activities of contemporary political parties.

In the future, the competitiveness of political parties will depend to a considerable extent on their ability to establish relationships of trust with the public, use digital technologies effectively, and ensure citizen participation.

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9. Source footnotes: [1] Bernays (1923); [2] Grunig and Hunt (1984); [3] McNair (2011).