



Protest Communication as the Instrument of Political Priority Building for Achieving Qualitatively New National Goals

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Abstract. Purpose: The purpose of the article is to analyze Internet technologies (in particular, the political blogosphere) used by specialists to express protest in the Internet communication for destabilizing political situation and introducing new political stereotypes into the public consciousness.

Design/methodology/approach: The authors analyze modern information technologies in protest communication as a manipulative instrument to achieve political goals according to the concept of digital democracy. The researchers consider political protest to be one of the directions of social activity of citizens. They pay special attention to the characteristics of the online blog as a genre of protest communication, investigate its possibilities and risks in the election campaign, determined the distinctive features of the political blogosphere.

Findings: The article presents the results of the study of the relevant use of the blog as a platform for protest statements during election campaigns, which have a huge potential for the formation of opposite, protest models of worldview. The authors conclude that the political blog today is an alternative and independent information resource, which is a place of creating various institutional intentions where political protest intentions get the greatest activity. The paper identifies discursive peculiarities of the protest in the named genre of electronic democracy.

Originality/value: The stated problem is the subject of lively discussions in the modern scientific world. A comparative method of researching the determined issue represents the analysis of protest communication as a modern form of online participation of citizens in political public life. The conducted research paper reflects a controversial assessment as an actual communication form between the government bodies and citizens imposed by the new possibilities and jeopardy of digital democracy.

Keywords: Internet-technologies · Information resources · Protest communication · Political blogosphere · Digital democracy · Election campaign

JEL Code: B50 · B52 · I18 · I28 · I38 · Z18

1 Introduction

In recent decades, in modern society, the technologies of political Internet communication have become a powerful lever of influence on political regimes and are actively used by both politicians and states in the processes of their foreign and domestic policy. We are talking, first of all, about the latest forms and opportunities that modern Internet technologies provide for destabilization of the political situation and change of political regimes in those countries that become the target of information invasion (which is clearly demonstrated by examples from Eastern Europe, Africa, Arab States).

Today the Internet performs not only informative, communicative, entertaining functions, but also is a global platform with unlimited resources for information and freedom, for political expressiveness of citizens, their active participation in matters of state and public life, as well as for the confrontation of various political forces.

“Since public opinion in modern societies is largely an opinion created by the media, changes in the media environment, namely the introduction of digital technologies, are critical to the success of political protests” (Baringhorst 2009). The Internet opportunities do not only increase the chances of subjects with limited resources for publicity but also contribute to raising public awareness, promoting social and political participation through interactive means of communication, promoting democratization.

The latest information technologies are actively used to break up traditional national values, symbols, culture, to form and introduce new political myths and stereotypes that have a direct impact on the stability of existing political regimes into the public consciousness. “The Internet is a means of communication for the protest movement, for their preparation and coordination, for the study of discussion material, the exchange of strategies, opinions, goals and information” (Fuchs 2007).

A large percentage of all protests are political protests in which citizens protest against negative social or political circumstances. During political protests they actively participate in political events to be heard at a higher level. A common practice of modern protest communication is a combination of online and offline communications. Protesters apply not only to peaceful forms of protest – the creation of petitions, blogs, etc., but also to non – traditional forms of participation – demonstrations, boycotts, blockades.

Political protests occur most often when parliamentary parties do not hear protest requests and do not support them. The protesters, trying to attract like-minded people to their cause, apply to non-traditional forms of participation, because they do not see the possibility in the current system of government that their demands will be heard.

Being in opposition to institutional policies protesters seek to address issues or interests in the political process that often go unnoticed by the general public and require attention.

But the main purpose of political protest is criticism and contradiction which ultimately lead to resonance between the political, economic or social establishment. Since the protesters themselves are not involved in the political decision-making process they need more than representatives of the “political class” to talk about their problems, achieve certain goals and win demands. Therefore, protest is always a communicative action aimed at the political community.

In this case the Internet technology is a “time bomb” which is the main component of modern political governance in the processes of retention, conquest and redistribution of political power and is actively used to influence the structure of the political order.

If in the previously entrenched political space the expression of opposition sentiments was usually realized in the form of street actions and informal communications, with the advent of the Internet there have been huge opportunities for expressing opposition political interests, values and ideas in the public space leading to the emergence of new mechanisms of public pressure on the state and the national political system.

2 Materials and Methods

The authors conducted the research on the material of political blogs posted on Russian and German platforms. The analyzed genre of protest communication is a modern form of political online participation of citizens in public life having high media resources; it causes a controversial assessment as an actual format of communication between the authorities and citizens dictated by the new opportunities and risks of digital democracy.

3 Results

The study of the principle of interactive online political communication showed that, in general, it is still in its infancy but it is already possible to distinguish two main participants who adhere to the purposeful communication of the parties – “from above” promises come from politicians, as well as effective political online activity of citizens “from below”. For both parties, external communication via the Internet plays an important role in achieving their campaign goals. Especially as during election campaigns it became a fashionable tendency to hold regular chats with participation of politicians.

If you look at the online discussion proposals from government agencies, it is clear that the demand and the reality of political and institutional action for e-democracy often diverge. Despite the fact that civil discussion of political issues has increased and the intensification of mutual political communication between politicians and citizens, the desired development of events is still far away and many online discussions on websites seem politically counterproductive.

Originally conceived concept of digital democracy was indirectly focused on the deliberative “theory of democracy”, a prominent representative of which was the German philosopher and sociologist Habermas (1992, 1996).

The normatively assessed theory assumed that rational public discussion of political issues in which the pros and cons of certain positions are specified with arguments, would be crucial for digital democracy. Close attention to the discussion of state and political problems should have a positive effect on the central problems of modern democracy. In practice, everything was much more prosaic.

On the one hand, high expectations and hopes for a favorable outcome of events are in the balance, on the other hand – disappointments from the practical implementation of policy statements since citizens' questions about the problems of social and political life are often ignored as the moderator filters political chats based on the needs and interests of a certain politician (Eltanskaya et al. 2019).

Nevertheless, we believe that effective competition in today's global network space, as well as effective confrontation with political opponents in the information struggle is impossible without appropriate systematic work in the Internet space and the development of appropriate online instruments (Shamne et al. 2019).

Having a reputation as "independent" sources of information, these instruments have a potential for a broad and effective impact on public consciousness and their graduated nature allows to achieve the desired effect in the manipulation of propaganda content and therefore traditional approaches to blocking the dissemination of information become useless and ineffective (Kuznetsov 2002).

In our opinion, blogs are now such an information medium for online dialogue between politicians and citizens due to their socio-technical and cultural characteristics.

We consider blogs powerful alternative and independent information resources, a platform for the expression and formation of public opinion, which, due to the absence of strict limits on the published material has sufficient potential to generate internal information and generate their own discourses or public opinion.

The blogosphere (as a concrete network culture) promotes interactive dialogue between politicians and citizens. The key to understanding the advantages that a blog offers over other Internet practices lies in the specific form of personalization of communication that is characteristic of political blogs. The main characteristic of the political blogosphere is a high degree of internal structuring and growing importance for the political life of the country.

The role of blogs in the election campaign, their impact on changing the political situation in the state is very high. The main goal of any election campaign is to maximize the vote and all goals are good for that. Thematic campaigns try to convey key messages from parties; to present candidates in the right light, to influence in the short term an unbiased attitude to voters. At the same time, a politician faces the problem of forming an opinion in a more unsophisticated audience, which is sometimes skeptical about his election program. Because publicly advertised, stereotypical postulates of the program can interest voters only to a limited extent.

This approach has several advantages in terms of pre-election campaigning: it allows a personalized election campaign to assess the facts and candidates of the party objectively.

The use of political blogs in the election campaign, thus, gives a number of advantages as blogs provide an opportunity to react very quickly to dynamically changing topics and events, to answer questions of a flexible election campaign. In voting with daily campaign planning a politician-blogger can directly respond to comments and statements of the opposition, give links to events, participate in public discourse.

For active bloggers links to other online sources must be included so that users can work interactively. Blog commentators are politically interested in a fairly high involvement of the user base.

Blogs should have a huge potential and a large empirical base for the presentation of the party's program, its leadership qualities, to form an opinion about themselves throughout the blogosphere and at the same time stimulate political debate outside the Internet.

As part of a negative campaign blogs can do a disservice by using direct quotes or explicit links to "opponent" material. It should be borne in mind that criticism in relatively clear, accessible and credible language contributes to the credibility of the facts and reduces the risk of a reputation for dishonest propaganda. In this case, the blogosphere will create a favorable basis for negative campaigning in the election.

In addition to these opportunities the spread of the topic in the blogosphere also carries risks. From the perspective of the electoral strategist fighting for control, the formation of opinion depends, because, expressing a certain intention, the author of the message always proceeds from his own goals to effectively influence the addressee and get the expected effect. The critic may act at risk without the necessary investigation and lack of scientific analysis. This trend is especially true of blogs of opposition politicians.

4 Conclusion

Our analysis of the political blogosphere allowed us to draw the following conclusions.

It is an indisputable fact that political blogs are an important innovative instrument in the context of election campaigns. They promise to be in interpersonal contact with the political leader, to provide motivated information on the Internet, to publish pluralism of opinions on various issues. In addition, with more appropriate personal and therefore more interesting published content the blog gains a wider readership. Blogs, as a rule, in some popular search systems also attract the attention of users who search the Internet for suitable political content.

It is necessary to explore the possibilities and challenges of blog proposals for politicians. The current practice of online political communication between the state and its citizens can be qualitatively changed, especially compared to those formats that have already been used for a long time (especially online forum and chat). So it's about the relevance of a blog to a particular practice – an online dialogue between a politician and citizens within a particular field of application.

The formation of alternative protest models of worldview and behavior, the substitution of moral and social values show pressure on the existing political regimes in the States breaking up the stability of their functioning, which is one of the main challenges to the system of modern political governance.

As a result of such influence and in the absence of adequate counteraction in most cases the initiators of information and communication aggression achieve their goals.

As Ponomareva notes in her article, today "the organization and conduct of a coup d'état do not require the direct presence of interested parties in any country: the overthrow of the regime is possible remotely, through the transmission of information through various networks" (Ponomareva 2012)

Thus, the Internet as a space of political communications will continue to have an increasing influence on the modern political world, determining the parameters of the

functioning of political regimes, and therefore, to minimize the dangerous consequences and effective counteraction requires the creation of its own management and analytical infrastructure.

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