About three generations of techniques working with public conscience and activity in the political framework

Vladimir Matskevich

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, political analytics and especially international political practice had to rebuild and look for new guidelines, concepts, practices, techniques in the new unipolar world. Nevertheless, the competition of different ideas and the operation of democratization programs in 2013-2014 faced a new reality and confrontation. This refers to the fact that Russia moved to proactive actions claiming to be the center of power and the confrontation has resumed. An important factor in this round of political confrontation was the new practice of political struggles. They can be called consciental war or practices of the struggle for consciousness. Their influence is gaining strength with the development of information technologies and telecommunications. However, the media is only the material or the environment where these practices are successfully launched. The essence (substance) of these practices can be seen only by examining the dynamics of changes in political practices, primarily in the post-Soviet countries.

Below we will describe *3 generations of techniques working with public conscience and activity in the political framework*. These generations differ in the following parameters:
- role and place of the candidate for an elected position in the team and political campaign
- functions and nature of the team
- ways and sources of funding
- civil society participation in the campaign
- functioning of social and political institutions: mass media, state institutions, local authorities, financial institutions, etc.

The First "romantic" generation

The era of democratic changes and the development of the new ways of work with citizens and new techniques of political struggle. Most likely, the candidate for an elected position occupied by himself the central place in the team. He was a member of the team, most often he led both the team and the campaign. The political teams were drawn from a variety of professionals, experts in different fields and activists. They were formed by parties or political entities. The teams did not perceive themselves as employees, but as a support team for a political leader whose ideology, goals and values they shared.
The fundraising for campaigns was based on "gray" schemes that were the only opportunity in the conditions of destroyed economy and not yet established institutions. Civil society structures had just emerged and didn`t play a significant role in political campaigns.

Political campaign techniques and practices are focused on competing for the sympathies of free voters. They are efficient and effective in a situation where state institutions, laws, media, financial system do not take part in the political struggle on the side of one of the competing parties. They remain neutral and are the infrastructure for political struggle.

The main strategy of the campaigns of the first generation is the coordination of the positions (statements and declarations) of the candidate with the public opinion of the majority of voters, with the mood and expectations of the electorate. The candidate's program is built taking into account the mood and values of the voters. The success of the campaigns is reflected in the increase of the candidate's rating. Secrecy. Political competitors are trying to hide their plans and actions from each other.

The Second "market" generation

In the first half of the 1990s, managers appeared who knew where and how to get money to finance the election campaigns. They began to gather teams of professionals and looking for a suitable candidate for an elected position to organize his campaign and use the money. The market of the aspirants for candidates appeared. The market of the successful teams that could effectively work in political campaigns began to develop. There were also customers for campaigns who were ready to invest in order to get a dependent and controlled politician in an elected position (their own person).

In the second generation of political campaigning practices, the candidate for the elected office was not part and leader of the team. More often he was hired or the "right" person. The team has become a servile company that does not have to share ideas and values, but works on demand. A figure of customer emerges who invests in a campaign to gain indirect political influence.

Public and state institutions as well as civil society structures are partially included in the campaigns on the side of single candidates. This is primarily the media, as well as structures such as the police, the prosecution service and the administrative authority. At the same time, there is a part of the free institutions and structures.

The main strategy of the campaigns of the second generation is to make the candidate who has to be elected to be liked by the electorate. The tactic of action is to "sell" the positive image of the right candidate and to denigrate the opponent. The precondition for the operation of these political practices is the preservation of the procedure for the real vote count.

An additional mystery appears: the customer (oligarch, business) remains the most influential but invisible figure for society and voters, as well as for competitors. This mystery can be solved by the still remaining independent media and not corrupted state structures.

The Third generation

The main role in the new political campaigning practices is played by the customer, whose place is taken by the ruling elite (junta), politician and/or power group that won its place in the previous elections. Candidates for an elected position are irrelevant, provided that they are completely subordinate to or controlled by the customer. The goal of the customer is to maintain the status quo in the political and social situation of the country. And the object of such practices is the whole country.
The main strategy of such a campaign is to preserve the visibility of all formal procedures, with full control over the result. Maintaining the appearance of democratic procedures remains a value for some active citizens and international relations.

The work of the candidate's teams loses completely its meaning, since the main object of political practice is not the votes of the electorate, but control over the final result (the status quo) and the elimination of political competition as such. For this task solution, all public and state institutions are involved - media, education systems, local administrations, police, as well as big business in the country. All of them cease to be free and independent.

Independent civil society will seek resistance when using these campaigning techniques, leading sometimes to "color revolutions".

Techniques of total control over political (election) campaigns require maintaining the same control over the entire public life. They cannot be limited only to situations of elections, since all public and state structures are involved in them. In addition, the very possibility of total control during the election period is associated with several conditions that must be met:

- Prevent the very possibility of emergence of candidates for elected positions who could appeal to the real interests and attitudes of citizens. To do this, it`s possible to block the path of bright active leaders (arrests or other actions to restrict freedom). But it is more effective to draw the public attention of critical citizens to figures whose attractiveness and behavior are under control. Such leaders are found among the protest voters. Direct or indirect influence on them leads to the fact that they both excite and extinguish themselves the protest.
- Deprive the oppositional part of society of the opportunity to develop ideas, programs or strategies and further decision-making. To do this, the centers of intellectual development are being destroyed. The connection between citizens and these centers is being severed through the discrediting in the eyes of the protest electorate.
- Offer of bright figures as bearers of odious ideas, whose words and ideas could not be directly related to the ruling ideology. But in contrast to them a more moderate proposal of the same ideas becomes quite acceptable for public conscience. Including the "restoration of former greatness" or "holy war".

Political technologies of the 3rd generation solve the same problem that was solved in the Soviet Union. It`s the control over the political situation, but under other conditions. These are not primitive methods of control, but subtle technologies operating in conditions of mobility of information and ideas, mobility of people and mobility of money. Political technologies of the third generation work in conditions when the opposition remains an indestructible part of society. It is necessary to manage that part of society that cannot be eliminated. Humanization in post-soviet countries has led to the fact that the principle of destroying the bearers of an other view has remained in the past, now they are being fought by other means.

In addition to the direct work in the political framework for the technologies of the third generation it is important to work with the public conscience directly to increase its lability, susceptibility to certain ideas, dogmas or memes, irrational, illogical and generally arbitrary ideas and their combinations, etc. This is achieved by promoting the moral and ethical relativism – blurring of lines of what is good and what is bad through mass culture and art.

It quickly becomes clear that it was not true or false information by itself that was "working". More important are the mechanisms of recognition, processing and interpretation of information, which allow a person to select immediately the incoming information. The war in

the territory of consciousness poses tasks in the field of control and management of these mechanisms and structures for the recognition, processing and interpretation of information.

Therefore, another line of effort of technologies is the blunting of criticality and the erosion of the norms of rational, logical and scientific thinking. All sorts of pseudoscientific information attacks work here: "battles of paranormalists", "mysteries of civilization" in a progressive amount. Thus, worldview attitudes and the integrity of the picture of the world are broken. It is replaced by the relativity of the good and the evil, of the truth and the falsehood. The most fertile ground for the political technologies of the third generation is a situation when any fact can turn out to be a fake, a lie can carry a part of the truth, and decisions are made based on the voting of the audience in the studio.

These techniques are a new form of establishing authoritarian power. They become a mass destruction weapons. These technologies rely on working with consciousness. And this work includes all elements of the social and state system, each at its own level. And state structures of various orientations and the media are included in a single entity that is fighting a desperate battle. The main secret of the political technologies of the third generation is to preserve the illusion that each structure is busy with its own business and that they are not interconnected, that elections or other political events stand apart from the daily updating of attitudes and views in the media, schools and enterprises. If everything succeeds and the secret is kept, the entire political process is an imitation with the voluntary participation of different, unrelated actors. And the modern authoritarian regimes of Belarus and Russia have the resource to implement these technologies.

Where can these technologies move after their development in their completeness and control in their country:
- Sitting goals outside, to neighboring countries. As long as there is no such way out, this kind of technologies and the power-wielding subjects who implement them in their own country and do not try to extend their influence to other countries, they do not pose a serious threat and serious interest to the world community. Therefore, Belarus and its regime do not meet active resistance in Europe and America. While Putin didn`t not show his ambitions, he was also accepted.
- Consciousness. These technologies are quite expensive and require a lot of funds to maintain and control. In order to reduce the cost of this control and manipulation, so that the population continues to consider the situation as normal and competitive with all the facts of the absence of political life, a consciental war (a war for consciousness) begins.

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