

# Social Network as a Tool of Political Power

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## Article Info

Volume 83

Page Number: 3063 - 3068

Publication Issue:

March - April 2020

## Article History

Article Received: 24 July 2019

Revised: 12 September 2019

Accepted: 15 February 2020

Publication: 21 March 2020

## Abstract:

The article is focusing to public policy formation in social network. The author analyses the necessity of the formation and promotion of the image of political leaders, their goals and objectives pursued. Particular examples of politicians who have their accounts on various Internet portals, and the nature of their virtual activity are analyzed.

**Keywords:** blog, audience, social networking, democracy, trust, public policy, information, support, political power, political image, communication, virtualization, community, social media, supporters, elite.

## I. PROBLEMATIZATION

What is the power of virtual networks? Despite the banality of this question, the answer is very important for political science and management practice. Below, provide the summary of obtained information during the study.

Firstly, the ability to use modern information technology allows experienced web-users to use social networks to shape their political careers. As an example, let us look the election of the President of the United States (B. Obama had the most friends on social network), the activities of the famous Russian blogger A. Navalny.

Secondly, social network has a number of undeniable advantages, one of them is the ease with which you can always communicate in real time with any person, wherever he is. This allows the politician / government official to keep an eye of the latest news and people's reactions to current events in the world and in our around. For instance, the Russian social network [www.regionalochka.ru](http://www.regionalochka.ru), or the Virtual Reception Room of the President of Uzbekistan, the website "Mening Fikrim" (My opinion), the Portal for discussing draft regulatory documents of the Republic of Uzbekistan ([regulation.gov.uz](http://regulation.gov.uz)), the goals and objectives of which are:

1. Improving the quality of life of citizens and improving the conditions for business development.
2. E-government, improving the efficiency of public administration.
3. Development of the ICT market and technologies, ensuring the transition to a digital economy.
4. Overcoming the digital divide and creating the basic infrastructure of the information society.
5. Security in the information society.
6. Development of digital content and its conversion to electronic form.

Thirdly, social networks are mostly used by young people. Initially, the developers of social networks represented young people as their target audience. The reason for this approach is that young people are much more active in contact with unfamiliar people, always ready for new acquaintance, for the assimilation of new information. Social network in this regard are an ideal platform. Approximately, 2 billion Internet users use social networks, and this figure continues to grow. Leading social networks are available in several languages, and this allows users from all over the world to communicate with their contacts, regardless of geographical, political or economic boundaries. The most popular social networks are distinguished by a large number of user accounts and strong interaction between users. For example, Facebook was the first social network to exceed 1 billion active users per month. Pinterest

was the fastest growing independently launched site - it reached 10 million unique visitors every month. The growth of Internet users in the regions of Uzbekistan continues - 59% of Uzbekistan's adult population use, (about 19.7 million people). Telegram occupies the first place in the popularity of social networks, the attendance of which grew rapidly, the second place is occupied by the Facebook with a monthly audience of about one million people (Half of which considered active accounts).

Fourth, in social networks creative and socially significant decisions accumulates very quickly. There is no power vertical governing and network resource is involved. For example, social networks allow you to effectively use the crowdsourcing method.

Fifth, social networks accelerate the process of interpersonal and social communication. Videoconferencing today is an integral part of effective work, which allows solving online interstate and international issues, providing training for citizens and staff, and many other issues.

## II. THE ESSENCE OF SOCIAL NETWORKING

Most of the definitions of social networks come down to indicating their interactive function (communication and / or exchange of information in real time). Synthesizing these definitions in the book "Modern PR-technologies for working on the Internet" the authors (A. N. Chumikov and others) suggest using the following definition: social networks are websites and Internet tools, the main feature of which is to enable users to interact with each other and exchange various types of information. The construction of social networks includes the organization of online communities that contribute expanding the participation of the existing public and attracting additional users interested in discussing the circle of issues of interest to them. To be clear, in our opinion, political feature of the social network: with a daily multimillion stream of

messages, none of them is significant, and influential. However, as soon as a critical mass of quantitative attention (citation, discussion) gathers around particular message, it develops within a few hours into a qualitative result of socio-political life, which cannot be resisted by traditional administrative mechanisms. As an example, we can see the current situation in Eastern Ukraine, when news about it dominates the Russian information and political space, in other countries it is located on the periphery of this space.

Predicting such kind of development of events today, is impossible, it is possible to manage it, but so far it is difficult. To prevent the growth of interest in the information platform, which can lead to a change in political events, constant monitoring of the information space is required with the aim of promptly taking countermeasures. Back to the example, the untimely reaction of the Ministry of Defense of Russian Federation on the blame of the destruction of the "Malaysian Boeing" over the airspace of Ukraine pushed the EU countries to make an unbiased decision regarding this catastrophe. It is possible that this catastrophe served as the final argument for the Russian Ministry of Defense to enter social networks and create pages in leading world networks.

Thus, a new type of public policy arises, different from its well-known forms: television appearances, publications in traditional print media. Everyone (the state, society and citizens) needs to prepare for this "new public type" of politics, and everyone will have to reckon with it. "With the growth of public networks, public policy is born. The bureaucracy and political parties will follow the agenda where network will propose ..."

## III. WHY SHOULD POLITICIANS BE ON SOCIAL NETWORKS?

The most popular social networks like Telegram, Facebook, Twitter have a tremendous impact on the development of different aspects of society - politics,

journalism, advertising. Regularly looking through news and commentary feeds, one can observe what moods prevail in society, what topics they care about, and what problematic moments they pay special attention to. Indeed, often the national political elite does not imagine the range of issues that are topical for most citizens of the country (rising prices for food products, utilities, etc.).

It seems that it would not be out of place to recall the banal assertion that the one who has the information has power. After all, every politician always strives to have the degree of public support that will give him the opportunity to promote his ideas at the highest managerial level, that is, in power and in society. Possession of power is the main goal of every politician, but they strive for it in different ways. It is no coincidence that today any political leader explains his actions to the general public and various governing bodies through press conferences, through communication with journalists, direct bridges, meetings with citizens (including voters), etc.

It becomes quite natural that politicians for their purposes often use communication on the Internet.. Social communication on the Internet is constantly evolving, and politicians discover all the conveniences of the Internet to communicate with voters, and many of them post their profiles on different social platforms. According to TechPresident's political blog ([www.techpresident.com](http://www.techpresident.com)), which tracks the use of the Internet by candidates for the 2008 US presidential election, H. Clinton and B. Obama had the most "friends" on Facebook. Senator (at that time) B. Obama was in the lead: he had 88,706 supporters on Facebook and 97847 on MySpace. Senator H. Clinton has 21,477 on Facebook and 88,492 supporters on MySpace.

There are also Russian examples of the active use of social networks by politicians. So, in the social network vk.com more than 3300 people are registered under the name "Vladimir Putin", and a

real political figure with this name has repeatedly stated that he is not going to create accounts on social networks. However, V.V. Putin has an official website that contains all the basic information about the personality of a political leader with regularly updated information: <http://putin.kremlin.ru/>.

Today, social networks are concentrated in areas where people want to influence what is happening - to connect with each other, create some kind of value, make a profit, etc. The interests of people go far beyond issues like "with whom I feel comfortable" and "with whom you can chat": we are talking about mass production and co-production of new values, about the powerful influence on each other, in essence, about democracy as such. The desire of politicians to possess the minds and hearts of millions has a modern path - through social networks.

#### IV. HOW CAN SOCIAL NETWORK HELP ACHIEVING GOALS?

In contrast to media, the Internet has a broader potential for communication, offers the possibility of direct bilateral mutual communication between the population and politicians. There is a forecast that over time, the Internet will radically transform the state and democracy to such an extent that the result will be a new wave of democratization on a global scale.

A support group or support network is a fairly new type of non-governmental organization whose members provide each other with various types of intangible, non-financial assistance. Such a group can be used to widely disseminate information to the public, which was not within the power of an individual member of the group. An example is the massive search operations to search for missing people in various regions of the country with the involvement of volunteers, including through social networks. These networks have been shown to be effective in publicizing information about abuses in various areas of public life. Let us recall the recent

story with the former CIA and US National Security Agency officer E. Snowden, who from the beginning of June 2013 passed the secret information to The Guardian and The Washington Post newspapers regarding the total surveillance of American special services for communications between citizens of many states around the world using existing information networks and communication networks. Theoretically, the Internet contributes to the creation of network and the success of political actions, facilitating the exchange of information among interested groups. The Internet is often used as a means of political mobilization, which remains poorly understood in works on support network.

Today, the Internet is a kind of hybrid forum for communication, which goes beyond traditional meetings and the print press, consolidating the possibilities of interactive communication and providing information to a large number of people. The development of information network means that public authorities can no longer make information their monopoly, as was the case recently. However, there is evidence that these types of communications provide particular benefits to organizations that have access to such technologies. The regularity with which the traditional media refer to information obtained on social networks allows us to consider that the personal profiles of politicians and statesmen of various levels are accepted as unconditional truth. Almost every television story in television news programs refers to information received from the official account of a politician posted on social networks Facebook, Twitter. That is, now it is no longer necessary to interview, you can simply refer to the post posted on your personal page.

#### V. NETWORKS AS A TOOL TO ATTRACT SUPPORTERS

It is known that the formation of the right image is very important for any political leader, and knowledge of the simple "rules" of your own presentation on social networks will help to form a correct opinion about the personality and activities

of the politician. As an example we can see Mirziyoyev's use of social media during the campaign was noteworthy. He garnered significant attention through a Facebook page that showcased some of the issues resolved by state institutions on behalf of citizens, blurring the lines between the candidate and use of state resources. Although local officials participated in all four candidates' events on the campaign trail, this was particularly true of Mirziyoyev's campaign rallies. As much as Mirziyoyev stressed open dialogue during the campaign, however, the voters were nonetheless excluded from genuine political debate, which hampered their ability to make an informed choice. Communication with the public at large has increased as well, with governmental officials at all levels making extensive use of social media.

The President himself uses Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and the mobile messenger Telegram. In addition, "Virtual Reception Rooms" have become one of the main mechanisms of dialogue between citizens and the president. Through these online, virtual "rooms," any citizen of the country has an opportunity to send a question, statement, or opinion directly to President Mirziyoyev

Consequently, social networks give the feeling that the politician is not impersonal to the people, but even more or less familiar.

Before creating a blog or a profile of a politician, it is necessary to set the task to create and maintain a certain image of a modern, communicative, energetic, responsible leader, able to make decisions quickly, without unnecessary bureaucracy, being in constant contact with the population. It should be understood that for a politician of any level, successful work on creating an image on the network often depends on the conscientiousness of his assistants who create and maintain web pages. Users and subscribers should always be contacted. Good work on social network can only be permanent,

creative and based on knowledge of the specifics of this Internet site and its audience. Unfortunately, personal experience and understanding of how to update information correctly and how often to share your thoughts, in what format, is not enough. Non-refreshing pages significantly damage the reputation of a politician and political force. That is why it is so necessary to assemble the right team of assistants.

It is important that in modern politics, social networks are considered as quasi-political (sometimes as hyper-political) communities. But how to draw the majority of citizens into these communities? So, professor of the University of California P. Collock in the book "Communities in Cyberspace" notes that users are ready to join communities for three reasons:

1. Waiting for mutually beneficial cooperation. By joining the community, people hope to receive useful information in return for their input (for example, participating in surveys).
2. Improving your own reputation. A community member shares a useful link with other members. If he does this not once, but systematically, this reflects on his reputation among other members of this community.
3. A sense of usefulness. Anyone who regularly makes some contribution to the common business of the community begins to believe that he is an indispensable member / participant.

On the Internet, as in real life, people are only interested in where they observe a lively and non-trivial reaction to what is happening. Therefore, the development strategy and content can undergo significant changes both in form and in essence. It's important to understand: what kind of reaction do you expect from subscribers? The format of the monologue and the lack of feedback is doomed to failure. People want to be heard and most of all value two things that are inter-pollinated: constructive and humor. The great difficulty is to choose the right ratio between them. For even the most constructive and useful information, submitted in too much volume and overly serious form, will

inevitably cause a wave of poisonous skepticism and frantic rejection at its addressees.

The leaders of modern social networks are giant evolving virtual information systems, where huge masses of people are involved. Moreover, they always have a choice: to form an opinion on the network, monitor it (as the special services do), hide from it or, perhaps, engage in another type of business.

## VI. CONCLUSION

1. The Internet space in general and social network in particular are an effective tool in shaping the political power of any political subject. The more social network develops, the more actively they will be used by politicians and government officials. This is a modern and very long-term political trend.
2. Social networks are most actively used during the preparation of elections of various authorities. This trend will continue in the near future, independence from anyone's desire or unwillingness.
3. Today, social networks that allow citizens and society to most effectively and quickly convey their interests to the authorities. It is possible that in the near future real politics can almost completely move into virtual space.

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