SOCIAL NETWORKS IN ELECTORAL CAMPAIGNS: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE CASES OF DONALD TRUMP (USA) AND VOLODYMYR ZELENSKY (UKRAINE)

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Abstract:

This research has analysed the application of social networks in electoral campaigns in the USA and in Ukraine. It also has compared the features of the winning campaigns using social networking during the presidential elections of Donald Trump in 2016 in the United States, and Volodymyr Zelensky in 2019 in Ukraine. It is asserted that despite the differences in time between the campaigns, in the countries, in the electorate and in the circumstances under which the campaigns are held, the wide use of Internet communications has become a common basic feature of Trump's and Zelensky's campaigns. It has been moreover proved that the victory of a candidate depends upon a number of aspects. Among them are: the candidate's image, his or her personal qualities, the relevance of their election programme to the demands and expectations of the citizens, the peculiar political or socio-economic situation in the country etc. However, social networks are still considered to be an efficient tool for political racing, interacting with the electorate and amplifying the database of an electoral campaign.

Key words: *social media, social networks, electoral campaign, Ukraine, the USA.*

THE RELEVANCE OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

Intensive development of the virtual sphere and electronic communication underpins the transformation of the means of communication in the XXI century. The rapid penetration of information technologies in every sphere of social life (the political sphere, in particular) contributes to the emergence of increasingly sophisticated and effective tools for interaction between the ruling elite and the civil society. Such social networks as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Telegram, WhatsApp, and many others have already penetrated deeply into national and international political reality, and the Internet has become the most dynamic economic, cultural, social, and political phenomenon of our time, shaping new opportunities and realia of communication. There are a number of events that may prove the significant role of social networks as an innovative tool of digital policy, and which have transformed the essence of political activity in the world. Among them are: the victory of Donald Trump in the presidential elections of 2016 in the USA, the triumph of Volodymyr Zelensky in 2019 in Ukraine, Jair Bolsonaro coming to power in Brazil, the victory of "Podemos", a Spanish political party in the elections to the European Parliament, data leakage of Facebook and Cambridge Analytica during the presidential elections of 2016 in the USA, and the US Twitter-campaign in Venezuela etc.

As a result, politics is transforming, and social media technologies are gradually penetrating into separate political processes. Today, one can observe heads of states and political elites featuring in almost every social network. Citizens of many countries have the opportunity to instantly learn about political events and communicate with other citizens, commenting on these events thanks to the use of social media by politicians not only for personal communication but also for professional activity. An analysis of the social networking of the world's leaders makes it possible to single out their strategies for the implementation of social media in electoral campaigns. The campaigns of 2016 in the USA and 2019 in Ukraine can be considered especially indicative. The analysis of the most effective and efficient mechanisms of political engagement through social networks allows us to follow the trends of digital political activity and to adapt public policy to the challenges of the XXI century.

Therefore, it is relevant to research the influence of social networks on the formation and development of political (including electoral) communications due to the increasing role of digital technologies in the modern world. In this case, the point is that established formal political communication channels are ineffective today. Hence, responding to the challenges of the time, most of the ruling elite have implemented social media in their professional activities to increase their effectiveness. This growth in social media use makes it imperative to intensify research activity into social networks as a tool for political communications in general, and for electoral campaigns in particular.

Thus, this study aims to compare the features of social networking during the presidential election campaigns by Donald Trump and Volodymyr Zelensky and to identify

the determinants of successful election strategies by focussing on the example of the activity of the candidates in social media. The accounts of Trump and Zelensky in social networks have been analysed, comparative analysis of the technologies of social networking used by the politicians during the presidential election campaigns has been conducted and the rating of the accounts by the number of subscribers has been compiled.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Due to the dynamics of social networks and their continually updating information content, such activities are gradually reflected in scientific sources. In this case, the key sources of our investigation are the official webpages of the political leaders and the political parties of the USA and Ukraine in such social networks as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Telegram [Donald J. Trump *Twitter*; Hillary Clinton *Twitter*; Volodymyr Zelenskyi *Facebook*; Volodymyr Zelenskyi *Instagram*; Petro Poroshenko *Facebook*; Petro Poroshenko *Twitter*; Sluha Narodu *Facebook*]. The posts contain information published by politicians themselves or by their teams, which could be considered a reliable information resource, and unbiased news by the media campaigns, as they reflect political leaders' points of view and even the official position of the state towards a particular event taking place in the international arena. Furthermore their messages may provoke a reaction of social networks users in the form of comments and re-posts, the number of which provides a way to evaluate the social attitudes of the target audience and the influence of a particular politician or government body.

Separate attention is paid to the research of the conceptual and applied aspects of social media functioning as a component of modern political communication and digital activity; to their role in the election and to the opportunities and the advantages of their usage [Bradshaw, Howard 2017]. According to some scholars, the Internet is said to be the key element of a multifunctional system of political communication. The trends and new forms of network interaction, namely: interactivity, hypertextuality, multimedia, packet communication and synchronicity are considered [Karpov 2013].

There are a growing number of studies examining the cases of implementation of social networks in election campaigns (for example, in Spain, Mexico and Chile) [Cárdenas, Ballesteros, Jara 2017; Samanta, Dubey, Sarkar 2020]. Research has identified similarities and differences in a widespread implementation of the use of diverse and changing digital platforms, as well as a superficial application of the social communication tools. Furthermore, there are studies where the examples of one or another social network usage by some politicians in the US and Ukraine are provided and the impact of this social media upon further political agitation and the transformation of the electoral process under the influence of the Internet technologies is described [Pavliuk 2019; Rosenblatt 2016; Sifry 2011; Svinin 2013; Webley

2010]. Some research papers are devoted to the analysis of the use of social media in election campaigns as a tool for communicating with the voters. The main types of Internet communications which were the most actively used by the staff of Trump, the impact of YouTube during the 2016 presidential election in Brazil, the fundraising and political advertising on the Internet, which influenced the election campaigns, the role of American IT companies which financed the presidential campaign in the USA are explained in the research [Avzalova 2017; Fisher, Taub 2019; Stepanova, Sharikov 2017].

It is necessary to highlight the analytical articles providing the features and peculiarities of the election campaigns and communication in the social networks of Donald Trump [Abdullin 2016; Atasuncev 2016; Green, Issenberg 2016; Trump On Twitter 2016; Vetrov 2016] and Volodymyr Zelensky [10 tsikavykh faktiv pro rezultaty pershoho turu mikroskopom 2019; Pekar 2019; Ridkisni Poiavy Yednaiut 2019; Verstjuk, Berdinskih 2019] in particular. For example, they analyse and identify the distinguishing characteristics of Trump's electoral campaign and the percentage of the votes for Trump and the quantity of his electorate in social networks; explain the means and methods of political propaganda and how the candidates for the post of the US President may use it; take into account the statistical data of the candidates' support in different regions of Ukraine and the US and the issue of the cost of the presidential campaign; investigate the electoral groups of Zelensky and the means of communicating with them; etc.

Taking into account the continuous data and content update of social networks, the use of online statistical platforms to update the study is becoming increasingly common. Such social networks as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube provide the facility to measure the opinion of users as well as the popular support for the world leaders in quantitative terms [Arruda 2016; Fraser, Dutta 2008; Malynka 2019; Number of active users at Facebook over the years 2013]. We used the statistical ranking lists "The Twiplomacy Study 2018" as a comprehensive analysis of the accounts of the world leaders, governments and international organisations in social networks, including Twitter, and an assessment of the impact of their political activity upon the public. The results of the research demonstrate that the implementation of social networks in politics is more beneficial to some countries than to other countries, as the degree of the technological development in some countries determines the impact of social networks on the formation of public opinion both at the national and international level [Twiplomacy Study 2018. Executive Summary 2018].

Thus, a solid theoretical background for this study is the history of the implementation of social networks in election campaigns in the United States and Ukraine; the investigation of social networks as an element of political communication; the research of the role of social networks in electoral processes; the analysis of examples and cases of certain political figures. However, given that the information content of social networks is constantly updated, and the relevant changes are not yet reflected

in research, the official webpages of political leaders on social platforms and statistics of international research institutes and private companies have become the primary basis of our study.

SOCIAL NETWORKS IN THE ELECTORAL PROCESSES

The brightest electoral campaigns that have influenced the further intensive involvement of social networks in election advertising were the election campaigns of Donald Trump [the USA elections, 2016] and Volodymyr Zelensky [Ukraine elections, 2019]. The candidates actively used social networks to communicate with their electorate. Despite some differences in the digital strategies of the candidates, namely: 4 years' distance between the campaigns, different countries, different electorate and the circumstances under which the elections were being held, we can identify a number of common and distinctive features in the techniques used and the ways of interaction with the citizens through the Internet. While researching the activity of candidates in social networks, two categories of comparison have been identified:

• common features of Trump's and Zelensky's activity,

• distinctive features of the two politicians' activity.

COMMON FEATURES OF DONALD TRUMP'S AND VOLODYMYR ZELENSKY'S ACTIVITY IN SOCIAL NETWORKS

The first common feature of the two candidates was the usage of a wide range of Internet resources. Internet communications used by the headquarters of Trump and Zelensky during their electoral campaigns most actively included communication through:

- e-mail;

- websites, blogs and social networks;

- online TV and video channels on YouTube.com.

E-mail. Despite the popularity of social networks, e-mail remains an important means of communication that allows one to create and send e-mails to one or more recipients. This type of Internet communication is available to anyone who uses the Internet, and therefore, e-mail can be called one of the most reliable ways to convey information to the target audience about the political campaign. E-mails may be used to disseminate questionaries which provide an opportunity to collect more detailed socio-demographic data about potential voters, and new programmes allow you to link the data of e-mail owners with the profiles of social networks [Rosenblatt 2016]. It is obvious that as the technology has been developing, the percentage of e-mail usage by the candidates is decreasing. Therefore, it becomes clear that Zelensky, among the two compared candidates, used e-mail technology the least, although its role in the campaign should not be minimised.

Websites, blogs and social networks. Websites are sets of web pages that are on the same server and contain elements of different types: text, images, sound. Social net-

works are Internet resources that provide the organisation and support of network communications. Blogs and microblogs are Internet services, the main content of which are records (in the form of texts, images or multimedia), which allow for public controversy with the author.

Social networks and blogs (microblogs–Twitter) allow sharing information interesting for a potential reader, expressing readers' political positions and attitudes towards current political events, showing political solidarity and uniting in groups "by interests". Twitter's microblogging service and the candidate's personal Facebook account were most actively used to inform the electorate about the election campaign. Trump's campaign arsenal included the social network MySpace, which is popular in the countries of the American continent, as well as the YouTube video channel. Social networking platforms and blogs allow candidates to directly reach the Internet users and increase the number of their followers. The subscribers of the candidates' personal pages on social networks are potential voters, therefore politicians seek to use all types of Internet communications and register on the sites of the most popular social networks.

Despite the use of various Internet resources and the presence of many social networks, each candidate had one main communication channel, and each preferred a different social network: Donald Trump chose Twitter as the main channel for interaction, and Volodymyr Zelensky tried to be closer to his citizens through the social network Instagram. The choice of one or another network could be caused by the emergence of technology and the concentration of the electorate on various social networks.

The most popular social networks in Ukraine are Instagram and Facebook. Given this fact, the candidates for the presidency focused their attention on them, however they chose polar opposite different channels of conveying information to their constituents. Volodymyr Zelenskyi communicated with his constituents through Instagram, while Petro Poroshenko mainly used Facebook. This choice of the candidates might be justified, first of all, by the age difference of the electorate, or by the different level of involvement in political processes and "interest" in politics in general.

The social network Facebook is considered to be a specific platform due to its fairly high age audience by the standards of social networks: most Facebook users are people over 36 years old, the percentage of which is 48%. Another feature of Facebook is the territorial differentiation: this social platform covers almost 80% of the users in western Ukraine and, at the same time, less than 68-69% of the users in the east and south. The picture of Facebook users is a mirror image of the portrait of a voter supporting Petro Poroshenko, in addition given the results shown by the candidate in the first round of elections: the senior audience voted for him, in addition he became the leader in only two western regions – Lviv and Ternopil. The other 19 regions of the country and Kyiv supported Volodymyr Zelensky, who is an active member of another network – Instagram with coverage of the age group 18-24 at 91%, and the age group

25-35 at 54%. Those were the voters who formed the core of Volodymyr Zelensky's electorate.

The chief digital strategist of Zelensky's election campaign, Myhajlo Fedorov, explained the fact why a "bet" was made on the social network Instagram: "Due to the specifics of the social network Instagram, Volodymyr Zelensky has a fairly large number of subscribers. You know, there's a joke: if you want to quarrel, you go to Facebook, if you want to cheer yourself up, you go to Instagram. Facebook has an atmosphere of criticism, thus pushing away young people: on this social platform one positive review has an average of thirty negative ones. Facebook has become a territory of fights between middle-aged citizens of Ukraine. In addition, young people began to use Instagram more and more, where Volodymyr Zelensky and our team communicated with them. Instagram is a social platform that has generated many followers of Zelensky due to the fact that he is a positive person, therefore the choice of a social network was quite logical. Initially, Instagram had less politics. Well, it still contains less politics, in fact. That is why the audience is growing faster there" [Verstjuk, Berdinskih 2019a].

Another feature of Zelensky's presidential campaign was that they used every resource to communicate with their electorate; one of them was Telegram, a messenger service that allows users to share text messages and various files. Zelensky's team created a Telegram channel in early January, and today it has more than 160,000 subscribers. On March 31, on the day of the first round of the presidential elections, with 130,000 subscribers, the coverage of Zelensky team's Telegram channel amounted to 1 million. The team's telegram channel was more like one-way communication, as users received brief messages about Volodymyr Zelensky's meetings, the election programme, and information about his team members. It should be noted that the team did not abandon the database of electronic mailboxes and communicated with citizens on e-mail platforms, but we can conclude that the telegram channel has become an alternative to e-mail on mobile devices.

Fedorov commented on the use of the Telegram channel as a resource to promote the image of Volodymyr Zelensky among Ukrainian citizens: "Telegram is the way of thinking of the socially active young people of intellectual professions. This is a fairly socially active audience. That is why we lay so much emphasis on them in the campaign. We have already had more than 130,000 Telegram subscribers. We are considered to be the fourth information channel in Ukraine" [Verstjuk, Berdinskih 2019a].

However, the promotion strategy with the help of Telegram differed from other social networks as a result of the fact that one of the distinguishing features of the Telegram platform is the absence of any paid advertising channels. To attract the audience, the team held various contests, used the opportunity to comment in Telegram, in addition applied various widgets to do that. At the same time, the advantage of Telegram is the coverage of existing subscribers. For instance, in Facebook or Instagram only from 5 to 20 per cent of people can see the news, whereas in Telegram the news cov-

erage is available for 100 per cent of the audience at once through the phone.

The other common feature of the candidates is the quantitative advantage of the sub-scribers over the opponent. The Internet and social networks were not new for them. Trump and Zelensky had their accounts in social networks long before the elections, in addition a fairly large audience, which outnumbered the audience of their rivals in the elections, was there. In terms of social media presence and the number of sub-scribers and posts on the eve of the elections, Donald Trump was ahead of Hillary Clinton, and Volodymyr Zelensky had more subscribers in Instagram and Telegram than Petro Poroshenko (Table 1, Table 2) [Arruda 2016; Donald J. Trump *Twitter*; Hillary Clinton *Twitter*; Malynka 2019; Number of active users at Facebook over the years 2013; Petro Poroshenko *Facebook*; Petro Poroshenko *Twitter*; Sluha Narodu *Facebook*; Volodymyr Zelenskyi *Facebook*; Volodymyr Zelenskyi *Instagram*].

Table 1. The number of subscribers of Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton in social networks in 2016

The number of sub-scribers	Facebook	Instagram	Twitter
Donald Trump	11 678 079	2 200 000	10 600 000
Hillary Clinton	7 419 877	1 800 000	8 100 000

Source: Arruda 2016; Donald J. Trump Twitter*; Hillary Clinton* Twitter*, adapted by the authors.*

Table 2. The number of subscribers of Zelensky and Poroshenko in social networks in 2019

The number of sub-scribers	Facebook	Instagram	Twitter
Volodymyr Zelensky	1 023 385	8 400 000	161 589
Petro Poroshenko	2 452 431	314 297	40 511

Source: Malynka 2019; Volodymyr Zelenskyi Facebook*; Volodymyr Zelenskyi* Instagram*; Petro Poroshenko* Facebook*; Petro Poroshenko* Twitter*, adapted by the authors.*

Thus, the advantage of Trump and Zelensky in social networks and blogs, undoubt-edly, influenced the result of the political struggle. As for Ukrainian politicians, Poroshenko had more followers in Facebook than Zelensky. Therefore, the digital specialists of the President's team created a strategy to use Instagram and Telegram as the strategic resources of the campaign.

The next feature common to Trump's and Zelensky's activity is positioning them-selves as part of the electorate. There were no such statements in their rhetoric as "When I come to power, I promise.....". Their images of candidates created by political technologists made them part of the society.

One more detail to be mentioned is that Trump and Zelensky opposed the current political power of that time. For example, in the main political slogans by Zelensky "Let's defeat them together!" and Trump's "Make America Great Again", the candi-dates identified themselves with society and that together they would be ready to cooperate to improve the living standards and well-being of the country. Considering

the strategy of Zelensky at the domestic level, it is another feature that distinguished him from his opponents.

The president's team used "child-to-child" communication tactics. The book "Games played by people" by the famous psychologist Eric Bern identifies three "I-states" of personality: Father, Adult and Child [Berne 1973]. The candidates running in the 2019 presidential elections created a political image of mother or father and addressed the voter as a child ("I will provide for you, protect you, take care of you", etc.). Zelensky, unlike others, was the first to address people from the position of a child to a child ("Let's do them together!", "We will write my programme of action together" and other similar slogans), and this turned out to be a new approach in Ukrainian political advertising, distinguishing such a message from others, familiar and boring [Pekar 2019].

Another common feature of Trump's and Zelensky's electoral campaigns is using a "maximum discussion of the candidate" strategy. According to the statistics, the number of positive comments in social networks concerning Obama prevailed over the number of negative comments, unlike his successor Donald Trump. "The more people talk about the candidate, the more they are interested in him", said Trump's digital adviser Brad Parscal. The team of experts did not stop Trump from posting on the social network Twitter to express his opinion, spreading various nonsensical jokes or commenting on various rumours or unreliable data. Therefore, Internet users called Donald Trump a "twittering president" [Baynes 2017]. In contrast to Trump, all the posts of his opponent, Hillary Clinton, were carefully thought over containing the right words and maintaining the interval between their distribution. The manner of communication, personal information and discussion of the country's development with the users of Internet platforms, regardless of the outcome of the election campaign, made Trump at the beginning of the election campaign the owner of a powerful political tool: this data allowed him to address people in different parts of the country motivating them to take political actions [Stern 2008].

At the beginning of the campaign, the experts on Volodymyr Zelensky's team tried to fight against negative news on all possible Internet platforms. Later, this approach was preserved only in the work with the Internet search service Google, where positive articles about Zelensky, his election campaign, his team and future events became extremely popular, whereas negative articles and comments did not win much popularity and, therefore, received fewer positive remarks from Internet users. The strategy of social networking differed and took into account the peculiarities of the social networks themselves. The specificity of Facebook is that the more comments a certain post has, the more users can see it in the news feed, and this attracts even more people to the community. These people, in turn, are allowed to see the next posts. The tactics of generating nearly positive content covered a comparatively small audience, consequently it was changed to "maximum discussion tactics". The official pages of Zelensky's team covered the daily life of the candidate, his team, in-

formation about his meetings and future plans to reform the legislature. In addition, in the comments and on their own pages, people wrote everything they wanted: expressed support or dislike for Zelensky, spoke about Zelensky's unprofessionalism, his populist statements and "public play". The head of digital communications of the candidate Fedorov commented on the use of such tactic in social networks: "As a marketer, I believe that the more we are spoken about, the more we are in the news feed of people both, in positive or negative context. It's still good for us" [Romaniuk 2019]. On the other hand, the users of the networks liked it, because they felt free to express their opinion, criticise the government and everything they did not like. Thus, Zelensky's team created an effect of openness to the citizens.

The next common feature of Zelensky's and Trump's activity is working on the crossover: on the one hand, it is popularisation of one's own image and, on the other hand, it is discrediting the opponent. The use of Internet communications by Trump's staff was carried out in two directions: they were communicating not only with his potential electorate, but moreover with the electorate of the Trump's rival, Hillary Clinton. Donald Trump's speeches criticising the opponent were supported by evidence posted on his Twitter account, which made them more confident. Marketing against Hillary Clinton voters was a part of the strategy in which, in order to lure Hillary Clinton's potential voters to his side, Trump began to position Hillary Clinton in their eyes as their common enemy to be fought with. Trump's headquarters distributed provocative Internet posts in order to persuade voters to support the opposing candidate. For example, in one of the districts of Miami, which is the cultural centre of the Haitian diaspora in Florida, fake information posted in social media contained the Clinton Foundation's refusal to participate in the aftermath of the earthquake in Haiti, which immediately provoked a strictly negative reaction from the side of the Internet users. Furthermore, in order to discredit the opponent, Trump's team used the so-called "dark posts" on the social network Facebook – paid ads that are not displayed in the general feed, but fall into the news columns of certain groups. For example, Trump's staff constantly appealed for a quote by Hillary Clinton in which, in 1996, she called all Afro-Americans "super predators". The African-American population have published posts containing video material in which Hillary Clinton characterises them in such an incorrect manner [Rassledovanie Das Magazin: kak Big Data i para uchenyh obespechili pobedu Trampu i Brexit 2016].

The situation with Zelensky was the opposite: the candidate did not disseminate any information about the actions of competitors, while opponents launched actions against them in social networks. His opponent, Petro Poroshenko, has launched at least three large-scale Internet campaigns to discredit Zelensky's image:

1. A clown.

Appealing to Zelensky's professional activity as a comedian and actor, Poroshenko's team distributed posts on the Internet. In response, Zelensky launched the #akloun flash-mob, in which he asked Ukrainians to say their names, salaries, scholarships

or pensions, which "make people clowns". Thus, citizens supported the flash-mob and generated more discussions of Zelensky on the Internet.

2. "Zelensky – a drug addict".

In his interview for the TV program "Today. Results with Oleh Paniuta" broadcast on the TV channel "Ukraine", Petro Poroshenko made harsh remarks commenting on Zelensky's candidacy for the presidency of Ukraine: "There is an extremely great threat when the candidate running for the post of the president of Ukraine is suspected of being a drug addict. The candidate's drug addiction is a direct threat to national security and the security of every Ukrainian" [Poroshenko natiaknuv na narkozalezhnist Zelenskoho 2019].

After the first round of elections, Zelensky's team released a video about the reunification of Ukraine. On April 10, the project European Future of Ukraine on the Telegram channel, which Petro Poroshenko had called for the day before, posted an edited video demonstrating a scene in which Zelensky is run over by a huge truck. At the end of the video, there is a "track" of a white substance, similar to cocaine, and an inscription reading "Everyone has his own way". This viral video occasionally appeared as an advertisement before movies or TV series on corresponding sites and video holdings. Allusions to Zelensky's drug addiction were one of three strategic steps by Poroshenko's staff to encourage Ukrainians to vote against him and allow Poroshenko to win the second round [U Poroshenka opublikuvaly video 2019].

3. "Either Me or Russia"

Political technologists of Poroshenko's team launched an agitating advertising on billboards, demonstrating the profiles of Petro Poroshenko and Vladimir Putin with the inscription "April 21 is the day of the ultimate choice". Supporters of Poroshenko spread such photos in social networks suggesting Putin had become the main threat to Ukraine and Ukrainian democracy. Zelensky was therefore treated as a weak candidate for the presidency, the one unable to resist the President of the Russian Federation. In response, a tweet about the country's reunification appeared on Zelensky's Twitter: "Volodymyr Zelensky is the one to unite the country! We do not divide people into "the left" and "the right". We do not divide people into the Ukrainian-speaking or the Russian-speaking ones. We are together: we are speaking a common language - the language of equality!".

Zelensky's supporters reacted to Poroshenko's billboards and photos on the Internet with memes and criticized the advertisement for inciting hostility among Ukrainians and, again, raising Zelensky's rating in social networks [Balachuk 2019].

Another common feature for the candidates was the establishment of their own "rules of the game". Zelensky and Trump used a different tactic. Using personal accounts in social networks, they "dictated" news to the traditional media. Addressing voters via the Internet gave Trump an opportunity to avoid embarrassing questions from journalists. The Republican candidate made bold open statements on controversial topics, in addition TV channels "had no choice but to respond to the Trump-controlled

message", thus ensuring his presence on the central channels. Thus, Trump's skilful use of Internet communications allowed him to simultaneously control the information order of the Internet community, television and printed media [Vetrov 2016].

Following the example of Trump, Zelensky rarely gave interviews to journalists, conducting an active election campaign in social media instead. One of the tools often used by the president was video pieces on the Internet. These videos provided Zelensky with the opportunity to prepare information properly, think over every detail to avoid further undesirable questions. The videos in social networks garnered a record number of views – each of the videos was watched by more than 3 million people. The video, in which Volodymyr Zelensky invited Petro Poroshenko to a debate to take place at the NSC Olimpiysky, was watched by almost 14 million people, which is about 50% of the Ukrainian electorate. Almost 950 thousand of them liked the video, while the average number of likes for Petro Poroshenko's video fluctuates at 14 thousand [Verstjuk, Berdinskih 2019b].

Volodymyr Zelensky did not appear much on the screen, in addition his video interviews were rare. The Head of State explained the chosen strategy of his team as one that aims to unite people together. Having the opportunity to appear on TV screens every day, Zelensky kept on rejecting the invitations to various TV shows, arguing that the constant presence on the screens creates an "addictive effect". With a daily appearance on the TV screen and stories about future plans of action, the population gets used to the "screen candidate". In addition, when there is a really important piece of news to report, the population will not pay due attention to it. Zelensky's team chose the opposite strategy: "I want to be seen. It's like in the old days, back in the Soviet times, when everyone was rushing home to catch up with the series "Seventeen Moments of Spring" or "People's Servant". The series was not being streamed, it was broadcast only once, at the exact time, on the certain channel. In addition everyone knew when and where it could be watched. You could watch it on TV no matter if you have a TV set at home or not. It used to be like that - everybody sat in the yard and started watching together. People should be united" [Ridkisni poiavy yednaiut: Zelenskyi pro komunikatsiiu cherez sotsmerezhi 2019].

Analysing the tactics of Zelensky's team of infrequent interviews, a Ukrainian journalist Valerii Pekar has singled out another unexpected advantage, which he calls a "mirror technology", the lack of clear statements concerning key issues, keeping silence and evading debate, meetings or interviews. Since Zelensky combined different and often incompatible target groups, any clear statement concerning this or that issue, important for identification and differentiation, could easily fend any of them. Silence allows each voter to be sure that the candidate shares his or her values and points of view. Many voters believed that Zelensky was in favour of European integration, while others were certain of his pro-Russian position. Voters saw their own reflection in the candidate as they can see it in the mirror [Pekar 2019].

The next common feature of the two candidates is audience segmentation. Daily,

Trump's team of digital specialists posted around 50,000 times different versions of the same message in social networks checking the way the users react to them depending on the format of the platform and the chosen rhetoric. During the third debate between the candidates, the team posted 175,000 times different variations of messages, and as a result, according to the Republican Advertising Chief of Staff Gary Kobe, at least one would reach its potential addressee. It is not a coincidence that in Florida, Wisconsin, Ohio, and Pennsylvania – those states where the electorate, according to the previous exit polls, hesitated to choose, the majority still supported Donald Trump. Since September 2016 there has been a quantitative advantage of views on YouTube Republican, despite the fact that, on average, according to GoogleTrends, across America, more interest was drown by Hillary Clinton [Atasuncev 2016].

The strategy of Zelensky's team was in many respects very similar to Trump's strategy, especially with regard to audience segmentation. The number of advertising campaigns of Zelensky on Facebook exceeded the number of all the opponents. Zelensky's digital team of experts applied a deep approach to audience segmentation and chose a strategy of narrow targeting. They divided network users according to a large number of criteria: those who subscribed to "ze! Communities" but did not subscribe to other communities; and vice versa, those who subscribed to the opponents, but did not subscribe to the communities of Zelensky's team; the young; the elderly; residents of large cities; residents of small towns and villages; students; people of working professions and representatives of small and medium business.

According to the digital chief at Zelensky's headquarters, Myhajlo Fedorov, the team carefully studied social aspects, such as: what are the regions supporting Zelensky, what is the age of supporters, which representatives of which territory may come to the polls, those who do not come to the polls, those who support the current government and those who do not, and do they like Poroshenko or Tymoshenko or they do not? Fedorov noted that volunteers assisted in developing artificial intelligence software to process all the keywords and, based on the queries, divided people into 32 segments by social roles, social status and needs. For example, lawyers, people willing to help with logistics and mothers on maternity leave, etc. Based on these segments, the experts understood who the most interested stratum was and those having the desire to interact with them the most. Out of the 32 segments, the 7 key ones were identified. Among them were IT specialists, mothers, and people who support certain programme entries. The team managed to send each of these segments a clear message to make the campaign look more personalized and more responsive. Zelensky's election campaign has become the most discussed in the history of Ukraine. According to Fedorov, this happened because the digital team had carefully prepared it, dividing the program into separate categories. In general, about 40 theses were formulated and sent to different target audiences with the intention to appeal to their interests [Sakovska 2019].

The domestic political situation is another factor to be taken into account. A distinguishing characteristic of democracy is the ability to choose. As a result, two opposing political forces entered the second round of Ukraine's presidential elections in 2019. Americans faced the same situation in 2016 witnessing the confrontation between the traditional, sustainable development of the country (Hillary Clinton) and a new policy presupposing radical changes [Donald Trump].

This situation happened in Ukraine before the second round, which included two candidates. The first was Petro Poroshenko, an experienced politician who had been declaring stability for five years, during which he implemented health care reform, a visa-free regime, Tomos, and contributed greatly to the development of the Ukrainian army. The second was Volodymyr Zelensky, called by many citizens "a pig in a poke", a businessman and a showman with no political experience. He positioned himself as a completely new person with fresh views and the intention to remove from power those who had been exercising it for the last 25 years and, thus, give way to the younger generation.

A similar story could be observed in the United States, where the power always belonged to a democratic president who ensured the sustainable development of the country. However satisfied with the rule of Barack Obama, American people still chose another vector of development of the country and a more expressive candidate whose intention was to put a wall between the United States and Mexico, all this under the slogan "Make Great America Again". Returning to the situation in Ukraine, the main desire of voters was to get new faces and radical changes in politics. Ukrainians did not vote for Zelensky, they voted against the current government.

If to speak about the sphere of communications, the elections in Ukraine in 2019 demonstrated that the traditional methods of communication of the candidates do not work anymore. Despite the fact that Zelensky, before the first round of elections, was supported mainly by the channels of "1+1" media group, he managed to win the last round, whereas Poroshenko followed more standard methods of campaigning and received support from many media sources. However, this was not enough to occupy the first place in the rating.

The same story was with Hillary Clinton. She was supported by such high-rated publications as Fox News, The Wall Street Journal, The Washington Post and The New York Times, however it did not allow her to win the elections. At the same time, Trump used populism and deep targeting on social media, showing each target audience different ads with different messages that brought him success. Hillary Clinton launched advertising on social networks, but her team used simpler methods, without in-depth analysis of the pain points of voters and segmentation of the target audience [Povtorjaetsja li v Ukraine protivostojanie Trampa i Klinton? 2019].

In his election campaign, Zelensky shifted his focus from the traditional methods of communication to social networking using stories on Instagram and Facebook, creative commercials, Challenge and "Ze!", a widget that allowed site owners to display

information about the ZE team's election program on their platforms.

Having announced his running for the post of the president, Zelensky launched his campaign in social networks that offered to subscribe to the newsletter about Zelensky's electoral campaign, sharing one's data in return. The next step was to replace the campaign tents to support the candidate used in the previous years with social media groups for each city.

Poroshenko held an active campaign on Twitter and Facebook. The main problem was a conservative approach to communication, using a language incomprehensible for the younger generation. A person who is simply curious about how the president lives would not read the news about summits and conferences. To regular citizens, such information seems too complicated. Poroshenko's team did not have direct contact and ease of communication with the public. As a result of ill-considered presenting information, all the positive changes in the country have passed "by the ears" of young people [Povtorjaetsja li v Ukraine protivostojanie Trampa i Klinton? 2019].

Both Trump's team and Zelensky's staff used the "short run" technique while temporary planning political agitation. The teams of both candidates were able to clearly plan the election campaign: to divide it into periods, carefully consider the micro-strategy for each stage of the campaign and, as a result, make the candidate extremely popular at the time of the elections. Comparing, for example, the strategy of Zelensky and that of Tymoshenko, we may observe a considerable difference in planning and results. Tymoshenko's early start led to the depletion of rating resources: her staff lacked messages and new groups to be involved. Zelensky's team calculated the start time well, consequently he could become the most discussed candidate at the time of the elections [Pekar 2019].

DESPITE THE COMMON FEATURES OF THE ELECTORAL CAMPAIGNS OF THE TWO CANDIDATES, THEY HAVE CERTAIN DIFFERENCES

It is important to note that in the United States, Internet communications were used to raise funds and replenish the candidate's campaign fund ("Electoral Internet fundraising"). Trump's fundraising was carried out in accordance with the strategy of the "hundred-dollar revolution" (first used in Howard Dean's campaign in 2004) [Sifry 2011], which provides for competition to attract funds not from big business, but from voters who can donate no more than 100 dollars. Sending e-mails to raise funds was used successfully by Trump's staff: in the first two weeks they managed to raise $40 million [Abdullin 2016]. The concept of "small sponsor democracy" is the most effective basis for electoral online fundraising, as in the eyes of voters, a candidate who relies on the support of many supporters willing to make small donations will take greater account of the interests of ordinary citizens. Through Internet communications, Trump's staff managed to raise an additional $250 million, with Facebook being the most successful tool for achieving this goal [Atasuncev 2016]. After the elections, the new US President Donald Trump said that online services had a significant

impact on the outcome of the election race. The social network Facebook, the microblogging service Twitter, the application for sharing photos Instagram all allowed him to spend less money on the election campaign than he might have spent with the use of traditional tools and technologies of the election campaign [Mihajlova 2016].

The difference in Zelensky's campaign was the training of citizens in the election legislation. In addition to promoting the image of the candidate, Zelensky's team disseminated online information about the election, the voting procedure, the rights of the citizens and the responsibilities of the members of the election commission at the polling stations. This strategic step of the team can be justified logically: social network users are young people who probably voted in the presidential elections only once or did not vote at all, therefore the experts tried to involve as many people as possible and informed the young people about the procedure in the language of social networks.

One of the most successful micro-campaigns in the network was the "change of polling station" campaign. At the beginning of the election campaign, Zelensky's team called to change the place of voting reminded those citizens who might be in another settlement on the election day and would not be able to express their will at the place of residence, to list the necessary documents to do so. Moreover, they then announced the final dates when it was possible to change the place of voting and how much time would be left for the citizens to implement the procedure. Thus, Zelensky's team trained citizens in the election law and, therefore, encouraged young people to participate in the elections.

CONCLUSIONS AND FORECASTS

Despite some differences in the digital strategies of the candidates, the 4-year time distance between each of the campaigns, the different countries, electorate and circumstances under which the election campaigns were held, the common feature of Trump and Zelensky was the widespread use of Internet communications.

The features the two candidates had in common were: 1) the use of a wide range of Internet communications: e-mail, websites, blogs and personal accounts in many social networks; 2) more intensive use of a single social network: Trump chose Twitter as the main channel for expressing his own opinion, in addition Zelensky preferred Instagram; 3) quantitative advantage of subscribers over opponents: on the eve of the election, Trump was ahead of Hillary Clinton, Zelensky had more subscribers than Petro Poroshenko; 4) positioning themselves as a part of the electorate: in the rhetoric of Trump and Zelensky there were no such statements as "When I come to power, I promise....", but the politicians called for reforms and state-building together.

Analysing the common features of the strategies of Zelensky and Trump, it is necessary to single out 1) the principle of "maximum discussion of the candidate": at the beginning of the campaigns the principle "the more they talked about the candidate, the more they were interested in him, no matter in what context"; 2) setting their own

"rules of the game": using their personal accounts in social networks, politicians "dictated" news to the traditional media. Addressing voters online provided candidates with an opportunity to avoid embarrassing questions from journalists. The teams of the two candidates moreover considered audience segmentation, singled out several groups by age, social status and interests and addressed a different message to each group; 3) common domestic political situation: in the US elections in 2016 and the Ukrainian elections in 2019, experienced politicians lost to business-engaged candidates having no or lacking political experience, professing completely different views concerning the future development of their countries; 4) clear periodisation of the election campaign: the candidates' headquarters divided it into periods, carefully thought out the micro-strategy for each stage of the campaign and, as a result, made the candidate popular at the time of the elections.

A special feature of the Trump's campaigns was the use of Internet communications to raise funds. The outstanding feature of Zelensky's election campaign was the training of citizens in election legislation. In addition to promoting the image of the candidate, Zelensky's team disseminated informational posts about the election and the voting procedure, in particular, the rights of the citizens and the responsibilities of election commission members at the polling stations.

Of course, a candidate's victory in elections involves many components. Among them are: the personal qualities and the image of the candidate, the compliance of the election programme with the requirements and expectations of the citizens and the socio-economic and foreign policy situation. However, the Internet turns out to be an extremely effective tool for interaction with the electorate. A new type of election campaign is emerging – the electronic election campaign, the main characteristic of which is the use of Internet communications and information technology as the main channel of communication with the voters and the most essential tool for political struggle. Social media communications are firmly entrenched in the set of technologies of modern election campaigns, which may necessitate further research in this area.

For the political elite, activity in social networks during their electoral campaigns allows: the popularising of their personal image, the dissemination of their ideas and points of view, being able to promptly react to the situation, interacting with the public, in addition to being able to observe public sentiment. The electorate, in their turn, may directly address the elite and influence the process of developing a plan of action and making important political decisions. However, the effect of the use of social networks should not be evaluated as completely positive due to the number of threats the government and the citizens of any country may face. Among them are: the use of social networks with the aim of mobilising and inciting the population to ethnic conflicts and terrorist acts by individuals with extremist views; the instantaneous dissemination of fake messages to mislead citizens; the misinterpretation of the messages, which may provoke conflict and manipulating public opinion to exert

pressure upon government entities or to launch riots. Following the example of the US electoral campaign in 2020, we may infer that policy makers will consider both the positive and the negative aspects related to the use of social networks to obtain competitive advantage during future electoral campaigns.

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