



Implementation of Party Projects as a Way to Strengthen the Image of a Public Organization*

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Abstract

The purpose of the article was to identify the population's attitude toward the Moscow Regional regional branch of the United Russia Party to improve the image of this public organization. Unique sociological methods were used, including qualitative analysis of documents, secondary analysis of research results, and survey methods. The survey results revealed that implementing party projects is an essential tool for forming the image of political organizations. An attractive image of an organization is necessary for its political success, which helps bring the electorate to its side.

Keywords: Public Organization; Political Party; Image; Elections

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Implementasi Proyek Partai sebagai Cara Memperkuat Citra Organisasi Publik

Abstrak

Tujuan artikel adalah untuk mengidentifikasi sikap penduduk terhadap cabang regional Moskow dari Partai Rusia Bersatu untuk meningkatkan citra organisasi publik ini. Metode sosiologis khusus digunakan, termasuk analisis dokumen kualitatif, analisis sekunder hasil penelitian, dan metode survei. Berdasarkan hasil survei terungkap bahwa pelaksanaan proyek partai merupakan alat yang signifikan untuk membentuk citra organisasi politik. Citra organisasi yang menarik adalah syarat terpenting untuk keberhasilan politiknya, yang membantu membawa pemilih ke sisinya.

Kata kunci: Organisasi Publik; Partai Politik; Gambar; Pemilu

Реализация Партийных Проектов Как Способ Укрепления Имиджа Общественной Организации

Аннотация:

Цель статьи - выявление отношения населения к Московскому областному региональному отделению Партии «ЕДИНАЯ РОССИЯ» для повышения имиджа данной общественной организации. Использовались специальные социологические методы, в том числе качественный анализ документов, вторичный анализ результатов исследования, методы опроса. По результатам анкетирования выявлено, что реализация партийных проектов является значимым инструментом формирования имиджа политических организаций. Привлекательный имидж организации является важнейшим условием ее политического успеха, помогающим привлечь на свою сторону электорат.

Ключевые слова: Общественная организация, политическая партия, имидж, выборы.

A. INTRODUCTION

A political party has a complex structure synthesizing political ideas, leaders, programs, and individual party members. When voting, the electorate often does not think about this complex of relationships. First, the voter bases their choice on the Party's image.

At any time, political leaders have given great importance to the image. Moreover, the volume of ideas for various elements of political institutions has increased many times in modern society since there is a need to influence large groups, considering the huge information arrays about competitors striving for victory.

The formation of the image of a political party depends on several factors. In particular, it depends on understanding their current or future supporters' attitudes, requirements, and moods. In addition to that, a voter cannot always establish personal contact with a politician.

To ensure the victory of the Party in the upcoming elections, steps to improve its image are needed. In particular, initiatives to smooth out acute socio-economic can contribute to this. It is also necessary to consider that the speed of dissemination of public opinion increases many times in the process of scientific and technological progress, which can contribute not only to an increase in the rating of a political party but also to its fall. An attractive image of an organization is essential for its political success, which helps bring the electorate to its side.

Currently, there are many points of view on forming the image of a public organization and, in particular, the appearance of a political party. Certain aspects of the analysis of public organizations, their essence, and their functions can be found in the works of such authors as A.G. Gyuldzhyan and O.Yu. Korpusova, Yu.N. Mostyaev, K.E. Rakhimzyanov ([Guljan, 2019](#); [Korpusova, 2020](#); [Mostyaev, 2010](#); [Rakhimzyanov, 2016](#)).

It should be mentioned that the collective monograph, written under the editorship of T.N. Mitrokhina and M.V. Gorbachev, "Political Projects in the Discursive Space of Contemporary Russian Politics", which proposes a model for interpreting Russian politics as a sphere of the struggle of political projects for power, world domination and world order. The specifics of political projects have been revealed, and the functionality of political projects in dynamics has been analyzed – from simple technological ones to form the image of a political party or an individual candidate to value, ideological and strategic projects ([Mitrokhina; Gorbachev, 2018](#)).

This area has been interesting for a long time in foreign practice. For example, T. Parsons wrote that voting for a candidate can be viewed as a "generalized concession to power", which puts the victorious politician in a position similar to that of a banker ([Parsons, 1956](#)). P. Bourdieu considered the political field as a place where, in the competitive struggle between the agents involved in it, political products, problems, programs, analyses, comments, concepts, and events are born, from which ordinary citizens ("consumers") should choose, especially riskers, the more they are removed from the place of production ("political field" in this case is a euphemism for the concept of "political market") ([Bourdieu, 1993](#)).

M. Scammel compared the image of a political leader and a party with branding. He argues that branding is a new form of political marketing. If marketing research and advertising were the key features of parties and candidates in the 1980s and 1990s, branding is now a distinctive feature of political life. This is not just a convenient and fashionable term for the image; it is a demonstration that we are moving from the mass media model to the consumer model of political communication ([Scammel, 2007](#)). In addition, the branding of the Party and the political leader is distinguished since there are different associations for them in voters' minds ([Speed; Butler, 2015](#)).

The practical significance of the article lies in the fact that the United Russia political party can use the results of the study to form and strengthen its image, which will contribute to achieving victory in political elections.

B. METHODS

The removal of state authorities from the population is currently one of the most acute problems in the interaction of state bodies with civil society ([Vetrova et al., 2018](#)). There had been a drop in confidence in the regional branch of the United Russia Party in 2018-20. The image of the Party becomes less attractive since United Russia is a public representative of the authorities. In an interview given to Novaya Gazeta, political strategist V. Perevozchikov spoke about this as follows: "Taking into account the fact that the deputies from United Russia are in the majority in the State Duma, the Party takes on a negative reaction to any new laws. We can see how the voter treats pension reform, garbage reform, educational reform, and medical reform" ([Kozlova, 2020](#)).

To determine how to improve the image of the Moscow regional branch of the United Russia Party, it is necessary to find out what the organization's image is at a given moment in time. For this purpose, a sociological survey was

conducted to identify a public organization's vision. This survey aimed to determine the population's attitude toward the Moscow regional branch of the United Russia Party. The survey date was February 15, 2020 – March 20, 2020. The number of respondents is 1000 people. The method of conducting the survey is interviewing.

The information basis of the research was federal and regional regulatory legal acts, statistical data and information and analytical materials of the Moscow regional branch of the United Russia Party, articles from leading periodicals, materials from scientific conferences and seminars, and thematic pages of the Internet.

The methodological basis was based on modern general scientific research methods (dialectical method, methods of analogies, comparative analysis) and general sociological (expert methods, system analysis, structural-functional and normative approaches). Unique sociological methods were also used, including qualitative analysis of documents, secondary analysis of research results, and survey methods (semi-structured interviews). We used a combination of formal and substantive approaches to analyze the studied phenomena.

C. RESULTS

To win the elections, any political party, together with its regional branches, shall participate in activities that can contribute to strengthening its image. One of these activities is the implementation of party projects.

The implementation of party projects on the Moscow region's territory is a foundation on which all the activities of the Party's regional branch are built. It is precisely the improvement of the quality and standard of living of citizens of the Moscow region that is recognized as one of the priorities of the Party's regional branch.

By 2017, the Moscow regional branch of the United Russia Party accepted 15 federal projects for execution, due to which the Party's project course was chosen until the end of 2025. In addition, the number of projects formed at the regional level is much more modest – their number has amounted to only two projects over the past five years ([UNITED RUSSIA PARTY, 2021](#)).

Let us consider some party projects implemented by the Moscow regional branch of the United Russia Party:

1. **The party project "Children's Sports"**. Goal: to introduce children and adolescents to systematic physical culture and sports to form healthy lifestyle skills among the younger generation.

Tasks:

* Improvement of the physical education system at school and development of the school sports system in the Russian Federation.

* Improvement of the sports material and technical base in general education organizations and yard territories.

2. **The party project "United Country – an accessible Environment"**. Goal: support and integration of people with disabilities into society.

Tasks:

* Assistance in improving Russian legislation following the provisions of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

* Promoting the development of the potential and highlighting the contribution of persons with disabilities to the country's socio-economic life.

3. **The party project "Healthy Future"**. Goal: To promote the provision of high-quality medical care to citizens of the Russian Federation and to strengthen their health.

Tasks:

* Assistance in improving the quality and accessibility of medical care.

* Development of the system of outpatient and inpatient children's medical organizations.

4. **The party project "Historical memory"**. Goal: preservation of the historical and cultural heritage of Russia.

Tasks:

* Public control over the adoption of architectural and urban planning decisions that affect the formation of the urban environment.

* Combining the efforts of the state, public institutions, and individuals to restore federal, regional, and local monuments.

5. **The party project "Strong family"**. Goal: assistance in supporting and strengthening the institution of the family.

Tasks:

- * Assistance in developing support measures for families with children, young, foster, and substitute families.

- * Assistance in improving the conditions for raising children in institutions for orphaned children, fulfilling such institutions' requirements for the organization of family educational groups.

6. **The party project "Locomotives of growth"**. Goals: to create conditions for the progressive development of the modern Russian economy in cooperation with national companies – the locomotives of growth.

Tasks:

- * Support for new forms of industrial organization (development of engineering, industrial design, and virtual design centres), effective interaction between the public and private sectors of the economy, and the introduction of public-private partnership mechanisms.

- * Creating healthy and safe working conditions, ensuring decent wages, observing the labor rights of citizens, and providing modern social insurance.

7. **The party project "Russian village"**. Goals: sustainable development of rural areas, which makes life in rural areas attractive and contributes to the growth of agricultural production to ensure food security and increase the country's export potential.

Tasks:

- * Assistance in developing state and regional targeted programs to support the agro-industrial complex and the export of agricultural products, the development of horticulture, and horticulture.

8. **The party project "Clean Country"**. Goal: to unite the efforts of the Party, federal and regional authorities, professional environmentalists, social activists, eco-activists, and volunteers for the most effective solution to environmental problems voters face in everyday life.

Tasks:

* Formation of a stable network of regional and municipal specialists in the field of waste management of production and consumption, the functioning of centralized water supply systems and systems for improving the environmental atmosphere around production facilities, conducting educational activities based on regional and local branches, public reception offices of the Party.

Defining the directions of projects implemented by the regional branch of the Party, we will point to such areas as the development of children's sports, the construction of safe roads, projects in the field of education, the lot of strengthening family values, an accessible environment, the development of villages, etc. In this regard, we can say that the coverage of the population by projects implemented by the Party's regional branches is significant, affecting both different age groups and geographically diverse territories.

Let us look at the main results that became known during the survey.

The first question was as follows: "Are you interested in the activities of the Moscow regional branch of the United Russia Party?"

The survey showed that interest in the Moscow regional branch of the United Russia Party is not very clearly manifested. Thus, during the survey, it became clear that only 260 out of 1000 people showed interest in the activities of the regional office, which cannot be considered a good result (Figure 1).

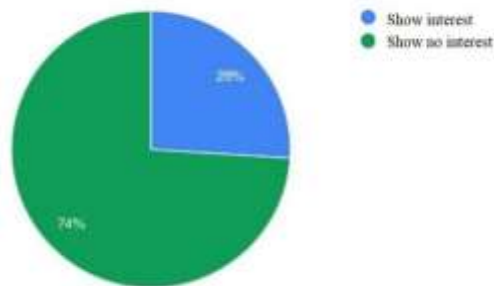


Figure 1. The level of interest in the Moscow regional branch of the United Russia Party

This indicator cannot be considered high, which tells us about the need to adjust the existing image.

Then the respondents were asked: "From what sources would it be most convenient for you to learn about the activities of the Moscow regional branch of the United Russia Party? In addition to that, it was assumed that this question

was quite broad, i.e. it was addressed not only to those respondents who are interested in the activities of the Party regularly.

As a result, the following answers were named: - Through the official website of the department, social networks – 580 people. - Through local media (newspapers, television) – 410 people. - From friends – 10 people.

Residents often learn about the Moscow regional branch of the United Russia Party through the Internet. Also, the mass media are a popular way to promote disseminating information about the department's activities under consideration. Notably, publications in the press about the Moscow regional branch of United Russia occur after its intense action. For example, after deciding on the implementation of a social project, or after a report on its performance or interim results.

The respondents were also asked: "Do you know about the projects the Moscow regional branch of the United Russia Party implemented? As a result, it became clear that the projects implemented by the Moscow regional branch of the United Russia Party, despite the importance of the projects being implemented for society, are not known to the general population – only 190 people provided an affirmative answer.

Based on the above, we can say that at the moment, the image of the regional branch of the United Russia Party does not allow speaking about the broad interest in the activities of the department among the local population. Therefore, it is necessary to develop tools and mechanisms to solve this problem.

The following question is important in the survey: "What can you say about the image of the Moscow regional branch of the United Russia Party?"

The results were as follows:

- The image of the largest Party in the Russian Federation – 620 people.
- The image of bureaucrats, accomplices of oligarchs – 110 people.
- The image of the supporters of the current president of the Russian Federation – 200 people.
- The image of the implementers of national projects of the Russian Federation – 70 people. Graphically, the above information is shown in Figure 2.

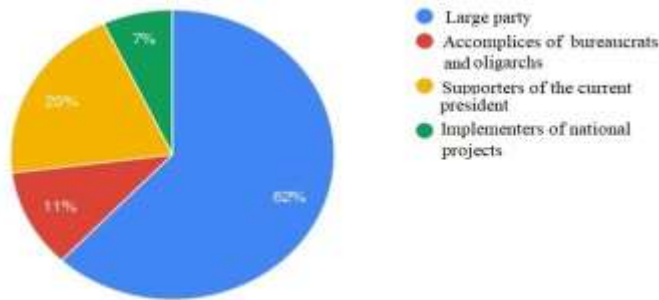


Figure 2. The image of the Moscow regional branch of the United Russia Party

The answers received from the respondents allow concluding that the opinion about the image of the Moscow regional branch of the United Russia Party is formed not so much based on the activities of the branch itself, but based on the attitude to the United Russia Party as a whole. In particular, the answer about the image of the largest Party in the Russian Federation may indicate this. Therefore, it is necessary to take measures that would allow direct forming of the department's image we are considering.

The next question to the respondents was as follows: "In your opinion, what projects could improve the image of the Moscow regional branch of the United Russia Party?". As a result, the following responses were received: Projects in healthcare – 380 people. Projects in the field of education – 290 people. Projects in the field of yard improvement and construction of playgrounds – 210 people. Projects in the field of gasification of the private sector – 70 people. Projects in the field of assistance to large families – 30 people. Sports development projects – 20 people (Figure 3).

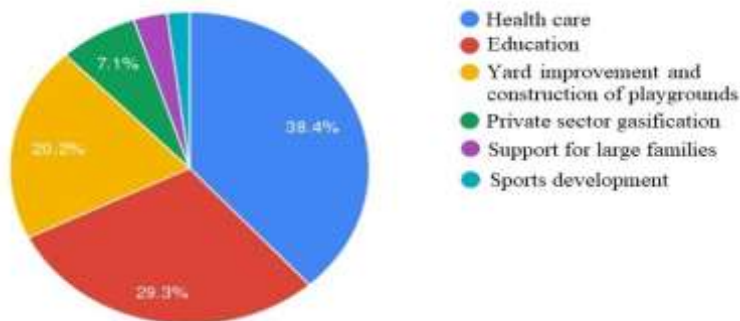


Figure 3. Areas of implementation of projects that allow improving the image of the Moscow regional branch of the United Russia Party

The answers given by the respondents show that they know very little about the projects implemented by the Moscow regional branch of the United Russia Party. This can be confirmed by the fact that the areas that the respondents chose as desirable for the implementation of party projects are already covered by the project activities of the regional office. The only exception is the gasification of the private sector.

As a result of the answer to the question, "Could you participate in the implementation of socially significant initiatives put forward by the Moscow regional branch of the United Russia Party?" the following results were obtained: - No – 820 people. - Yes – 180 people.

The answers given by the respondents allow for judging the political and social passivity of the majority of the population. Therefore, this factor should be considered when recommending to improve the image through party projects.

The following answers were received: "Due to which source would it be more convenient for you to learn about the projects implemented by the Moscow regional branch of the United Russia Party?": - Social networks – 560 people. - Newsfeeds on the Internet – 280 people. - Billboard – 60 people. - Television – 50 people. - Newspaper publications – 50 people.

The impact of the general digitalization of society is affecting. In addition to that, social networks were the most preferred for the respondents. The problem is that the Moscow regional branch of the United Russia Party does not conduct active PR campaigns on social networks. Moreover, there is no group (community) of the studied regional branch of the Party in the social network "Odnoklassniki", which is a problem for forming a positive image. In addition to that, groups of the Moscow regional branch of the United Russia Party are on other social networks (Vkontakte, Instagram, etc.).

The last question of the survey was: "How much, in your opinion, does the public image of the United Russia Party affect the appearance of the Moscow regional branch of the United Russia Party? The answers are distributed as follows: - Significantly in any case – 640 people. - Significantly in situations when the United Russia party promotes bills at the federal level that are negatively perceived by the population – 320 people. - Does not affect – 40 people.

D. DISCUSSION

The trend established during the above question is extremely negative for the image of the Moscow regional branch of United Russia, since most respondents may have a negative attitude to the regional branch of the Party in connection with the formed image of the United Russia party at the federal level.

Firstly, the Moscow regional branch of the United Russia Party implements a relatively large number of party projects to improve the quality of life of the population of the Moscow region. In addition, the projects are pretty diverse, and designed to solve various social and other problems of citizens ([Evstratova et al., 2020](#)). The vast majority of projects implemented by the Party's regional branch come from the federal level. Only a tiny part of the projects was developed directly by the Party's provincial department. For example, there was such a project as "Safe Roads" among the projects considered areas of activity of the Moscow regional branch of the United Russia Party. The main goal of this project is to increase the level of road safety. Determining the significance of this project for the formation of the image, it should be mentioned that within the framework of its implementation, members of the party branch established active communication with the population, which could contribute to forming their favourable image. However, such communication was not specified in all events. In addition, many events were not widely publicized by the media, so they were not decisive in shaping the image of the Moscow regional branch of the United Russia Party.

Secondly, when analyzing the image of the Moscow regional branch of the United Russia Party, some negative trends associated with several factors have been identified. As a result, the population often does not know that the Moscow regional branch of the United Russia Party is implementing several socially significant projects. Moreover, the image of the United Russia Party, which has developed at the federal level, can negatively affect the image of the regional branch of the Party. Therefore, there is a need to find ways to improve the image of the Moscow regional branch of the United Russia Party ([Kalinichenko, et al., 2020](#)).

E. CONCLUSION

Summarizing the above, we can conclude that strengthening the image of the Moscow regional branch of the United Russia Party should be of a comprehensive, systematic nature. First, it is necessary to take measures to distinguish the image of the regional branch of the Party from the idea of the

United Russia Party as a whole. For this purpose, it is recommended to use visual elements indicating the symbol of "UNITED Russia" and the Party's regional branch. It is also recommended to use more active characters of the Party with the indication of the regional unit on the clothes of activists who directly implement party projects. It also seems appropriate to take such a step as the development of a more significant number of projects implemented at the regional level, i.e. federal projects should not be significantly predominant. Furthermore, it seems necessary to use targeted advertising, coverage of activities on social networks, and regional news. Implementing party projects is an essential tool for forming the image of political organizations, demonstrated by the example of the Moscow regional branch of the All-Russian political party "United Russia".

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