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## AN INDIVIDUALISTIC APPROACH TO THE RESEARCH OF BLACK PR IN ELECTION CAMPAIGNS

*The article draws attention to the individualistic approach in the study of black PR in election campaigns, while emphasizing that black PR can be considered as a form of activity for studying the mechanisms of managing political processes and forecasting public demand for a political product, which includes the dissemination of disinformation, manipulation in the information spaces, deception and other methods to achieve certain political goals. That is why the individualistic approach, which emphasizes the role and influence of individuals in political processes and systems, is so important for the characterization of black PR. It has been proven that the individualistic approach considers political phenomena such as decision-making, the formation of political ideas, conflicts, as well as the interaction between people and political structures through the prism of the actions and influence of individuals, and can also analyze the role of leaders, political activists, voters and other participants political process in the formation and change of political systems. It is substantiated that the individualistic approach considers personal characteristics, motivations, values, interests and actions of individual people as key elements of political dynamics. It often compares different individual strategies and responses to political events and changes, helping to understand how individuals influence political processes and systems. Because of this, it can be used in the study of the influence of black PR during election battles. The article states that the study of the tools used in black PR based on an individualistic approach can help to better understand the phenomenon of black PR, its functioning mechanisms and contribute to the development of strategies to counter this phenomenon. At the same time, it is emphasized here that this approach is unethical and can have serious consequences for the participants of the election process, as well as for democratic institutions in general.*

**Keywords:** individualistic approach, black PR, manipulation, election campaigns, political processes, strategies, tools

**Statement of the problem.** The political process in modern society is aimed at the formation and development of the political system, as well as ensuring its stability. However, it is worth recognizing that in this process there may be situations when some political actors try to use black PR to achieve their goals, because today, according to many political scientists, there are contradictions between "the reality of objective reality and the reality of TV: who is who?" [1, p. 167]. It is with the help of television that you can influence the worldview of an individual for your own purposes. Black PR in political processes can be considered as a form of activity for studying the mechanisms of managing political processes and predicting public demand for a political product. It means promoting a certain political agenda.

**The purpose of the article** is to study black PR in election campaigns from the standpoint of an individualistic approach.

**Presentation of the main material.** Black PR can include disinformation, manipulation in the information space, deception and other methods to achieve certain political goals. This can take place through a variety of channels, including social media, mass media and internet forums. As John Hopkins University professor Thomas Reed (b. 1964) wrote: "...in the world, the alarmist in falsification of news and secret conspiracies is freely scattered on the left, and even the research of such measures can drown in the belief of statements and responses to them" [2, p. 345].

As we can see, this practice is harmful to democratic processes and threatens the health of the political system. It can lead to the spread of misinformation, a decrease in the level of trust in political institutions and the undermining of democratic values, which can have serious consequences for society and democratic

processes, as it will violate the principles of transparency, truthfulness and trust, which are the basis of democratic governance. Professor of the University of Murcia in Spain M. Camacho (b. 1981) wrote: "Today, the strategy used to sell products on the Internet is also used in the case of news that we are ready to consume" [3]. Therefore, it is important to identify and counter such practices, as well as to create control and regulation mechanisms in this direction. For this, society and political leaders must consciously understand the existence of such technologies and pay due attention to combating them. This may include improving the legal framework, increasing cyber security, improving citizens' media literacy, and other measures. This approach will help preserve and strengthen democratic values and the stability of the political system.

A well-known researcher in the field of the impact of technology on political communications, professor of political science and communications at the University of Georgia, Tim Wilson (born 1961), emphasizes the importance of reasoned political analysis and forecasting for the effective operation of public authorities and local governments, political leaders and other subjects of political relations [4, p. 370] Conducting an analysis helps to understand the needs, preferences and expectations of the audience, as well as to determine the optimal ways of interacting with them. Taking such factors into account makes it possible to increase the effectiveness of political strategies and measures aimed at satisfying the interests of citizens. Political analysis and forecasting also help in selecting the most optimal candidates for various positions, taking into account not only their political beliefs, but also their ability to attract support from a specific audience.

Therefore, the implementation of reasoned political analysis and forecasting is an important element for successful management of political reality, providing support for social and economic initiatives and ensuring favorable development of society [5, p.205]. That is why the individualistic approach, which emphasizes the role and influence of individuals in political processes and systems, is so important for the characterization of black PR.

The individualistic approach in political science has its roots in the works of the English philosopher and political theorist Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679). In his major work, *Leviathan*, published in 1651, Hobbes developed ideas about the natural state of man and society, which he envisioned as a state of constant war of all against all. He believed that individual actions and motives govern social life and politics [6]. Thus, Hobbes is one of the pioneers of the individualistic approach in political science, which emphasizes the role of individual actions and motives in the formation of political processes and society as a whole.

In addition to Thomas Hobbes, the individualistic approach in political science was developed by John Locke (1632-1704), an English philosopher of the 17th century. Locke believed that society consists of individuals, each of whom has his own rights, freedoms and interests. He emphasized the role of the individual in the formation of society and political processes, emphasizing the explanation of political phenomena and processes through the interaction and influence of individual actions and decisions of actors. His work "Two Treatises on Government" (1689) became a classic work that influenced the development of an individualistic approach to politics and law. Locke developed the concept of the social contract, in which he argued that legitimate authority should be based on the consent of individuals, not on divine law [7, p.128].

In political science, the individualistic approach is considered in the context of the rational action of individuals, their interests, goals and strategies in the political process. Speaking about the individualistic approach, one cannot fail to mention one of its famous authors who developed this approach – Max Weber (1864-1920). He emphasized the importance of the individual in politics and social processes. Weber believed that individual actions, motives and character influence the formation of political structures and systems. His works on how rational and irrational motives of individuals influence political processes are classic in the context of the individualistic approach in political science. In the context of the characteristics of black PR, M. Weber's individualistic approach can be viewed from several points of view. First, he saw society as a collection of individual actions and interactions, and this can be applied to black PR if viewed as the action of individuals or groups seeking to achieve their goals through negative means. Secondly, in the context of power and control, M. Weber singled out the concept of "power" as an opportunity to change the behavior of others. This can be applied to black PR as a means of using influence and manipulation to achieve one's goals through negative influence on public opinion or the reputation of a person or organization. From these points of view, it can be said that M. Weber's individualistic approach to social activity can be used to analyze black PR as an individual strategy of influence and control in society. However, it is important to note that the concept of "black PR" as such is absent from Weber's writings, as it arose later. But we are trying to find certain ideas and concepts that can be considered in the context of negative PR or individualistic methods of influence.

For example, in his work "The Call to Politics" (1919), Weber considers the concept of "professional etiquette" and the role of individual morality in the field of professional activity. He analyzes how individualism can affect relations in society and in the context of professional behavior [8, p. 184]. Also, in his work "The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism" (1920), Weber considers the issue of ethics and responsibility in the context of the activities of professional groups, which may be related to PR and methods of manipulating public opinion [9, p. 150].

However, it should be remembered that Weber's works are mainly focused on the analysis of social and political structures, and not on specific methods of manipulation or PR. Therefore, any conclusion about his views on black PR can be somewhat speculative and based on our personal research based on the analysis of his works.

When studying black PR through the prism of an individualistic approach, one cannot fail to mention one more of its prominent representatives – Harold Lasswell (1902-1978). His works included analysis of communication, psychology of politics and political processes. Lasswell believed that understanding the actions of individuals is the key to understanding political phenomena and dynamics. As for Lasswell's individualistic approach to the characteristics of black PR, he considered this issue in the context of his research on communication and politics, namely in his works: "The Structure and Function of Communication in Society" (1948), "Politics: Who Gets What, When, How" (1936), "Propaganda Technique in World War I" (1927) and others. However, he did not use the term "black PR" directly, as the term arose much later than his time. Despite this, the researcher paid a lot of attention to negative political advertising and its derivatives. He wrote: "What comes out of the press, as if with selected water, reflects a huge range of interests... The idea is distinguished from other forms of communication that express interests, arguments and proposals, and also try to influence decision-making" [10, p. 479]. These words of Lasswell reflect his understanding of the importance of communication in politics and society, and also emphasize the powerful influence of information on people's awareness and behavior. They can be used to understand and analyze the strategies used in political black PR. As we can see, Harold Lasswell has made significant contributions to the study of political communication, including information analysis and theories of influence. "Methods of influencing opinion are not necessarily public. They can be hidden or secret. Insurance campaigns play an important role in politics and science" [11]. All this reflects some key aspects of Lasswell's approach to communication and influence, which can be interpreted in the context of public relations, in particular the individualistic approach. Today, the use of an individualistic approach to the study of the tools used by black PR is extremely important, because with their help it is possible to understand exactly how specific individuals or groups use negative manipulation techniques to achieve their goals. Such tools include motivation, strategies, communication methods, and the influence of black PR on society, politics, business, and other areas. For this, researchers can use case study methods, interviews, observations and content analysis to study specific cases of black PR and their impact on society. They can also investigate the effectiveness of countermeasures against black PR and develop strategies to prevent it [12, p.69].

**Conclusions.** The individualistic approach to the understanding of black PR means that researchers focus on understanding and analyzing the specific actions of individual actors or groups that carry out negative PR activities, for this they use the motives, methods, tools and consequences of black PR for these individuals or groups, their individual characteristics. Researching the tools used in black PR with an individualistic approach can help to better understand the phenomenon of black PR, its functioning mechanisms and contribute to the development of strategies to counteract this phenomenon. However, it is important to note that such an approach is unethical and can have serious consequences for the participants in the electoral process, as well as for democratic institutions in general. Such actions can undermine public confidence in the political process and create the impression of general bad faith on the part of political actors. Therefore, the use of black PR can have a negative impact on democracy and society as a whole.

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### **Томашів В. Я., Приймич А. П. Індивідуалістичний підхід до дослідження чорного піару у виборчих кампаніях**

*У статті звернута увага на індивідуалістичний підхід у дослідженні чорного піару у виборчих кампаніях, при цьому підкреслюється, що чорний піар може бути розглянутий як форма діяльності для вивчення механізмів управління політичними процесами та прогнозування суспільним попитом на політичний продукт, який включає розповсюдження дезінформації, маніпуляції в інформаційному просторі, обман та інші методи для досягнення певних політичних цілей. Через це таким важливим для характеристики чорного піару є індивідуалістичний підхід, який акцентує увагу на ролі та впливові індивідуальних осіб у політичних процесах і системах. Доведено, що індивідуалістичний підхід розглядає політичні явища, такі як прийняття рішень, формування політичних ідей, конфлікти, а також взаємодію між людьми та політичними структурами через призму дій та впливу окремих осіб, а також може аналізувати роль лідерів, політичних активістів, виборців та інших учасників політичного процесу у формуванні та зміні політичних систем. Обґрунтовано, що індивідуалістичний підхід розглядає особисті характеристики, мотивації, цінності, інтереси та дії окремих людей як ключові елементи політичних динамік. Він часто порівнює різні індивідуальні стратегії та реакції на політичні події та зміни, допомагаючи зрозуміти, як індивіди впливають на політичні процеси та системи. Через це його можна застосовувати у дослідженні впливу чорного піару під час виборчих баталій. У статті зазначається, що дослідження інструментарію, який використовуються у чорному піарі за індивідуалістичним підходом може допомогти краще зрозуміти феномен чорного піару, його механізми функціонування і сприяти розробці стратегій протидії цьому явищу. Одночасно тут наголошується, що такий підхід є неетичним та може мати серйозні наслідки для учасників виборчого процесу, а також для демократичних інститутів загалом.*

**Ключові слова:** індивідуалістичний підхід, чорний піар, маніпуляції, виборчі кампанії, політичні процеси, стратегії, інструментарій