

International Conference on Research Paradigms Transformation in Social Sciences 2014

Modeling of the future in the programs of political parties

A. Sentsov^a*, O. Aleksandrov^b, Yu. Bolsunovskaya^b, M. Kuimova^b

^a National Research Tomsk State University, 36 Lenin Av., Tomsk 634050, Russia

^b National Research Tomsk Polytechnic University, 30 Lenin Av., Tomsk 634050, Russia

Abstract

The paper addresses the problem of modeling and planning of the future. It presents the problems of developing a model of the future due to the ideologies and strategies of some ruling political parties. The authors deal with the means of expression of the model of the future as one of the most important elements of the lingvo-mental image of political world in the context of program documents of the parties. The authors examine a program of a party as a part of political communication system and characterize the model of the future. On the basis of comparative study the authors determine common and specific features of the model of the future expression. A comparative study of the model of the future expression on the material of ruling parties of Russia and a variety of foreign countries (the United States, Great Britain, France, and Italy) is extremely relevant in the current period of global economic crisis. Such a research provides the basis for the optimal model of the future determination that can become a universal one for the electorate of different countries. Thus, the authors reveal the most advanced model of the future representation.

© 2015 The Authors. Published by Elsevier Ltd. This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/>).

Peer-review under responsibility of Tomsk Polytechnic University.

Keywords: Political modeling, model of the political future, programs of political parties, concept of the future;

1. Introduction

The sense of the future is organically inherent in a man as a thinking, living being. This sense is located on the basic axis of coordinates on which a person is oriented in the world. It is included in individual, social, and therefore in political time. The temporal horizon of the modern society is determined by the future (Sentsov A.E., 2012). That is why the planning and the programming of the future are so important for our modern social structures.

The constructivist approach to social reality supposes that in the consciousness of a human being this reality is completed by projects. The future can be defined as a projective completion of a present reality. Therefore the individual's temporal dimension is determined not only by the sense of social time and also by culture. So this

* Sentsov. Tel.: +7-903-961-6199
E-mail address: 134-43@mail.ru

temporal dimension is in turn a part of that culture. The question is about the political culture as well as about the culture in general. A model of the future has a key position in contemporary communication and in formation of a modern dynamic society.

2. Analysis of the programs of political parties

Analysis of the programs of political parties is extremely relevant to a modern political science. Program of a party is an independent type of text functioning as a part of a political discourse. As the central document conditioning activities of the whole party and its members, the program has a fundamental nature of the text on the basis of which articles, press releases, leaflets, public presentation texts etc. are created. Voters usually perceive the goals and the objectives declared in the parties programs as a kind of obligations of the parties presenting themselves for the elections. In addition, it is almost impossible to determine an exact author of a party program. The collective addresser of the message is represented by numerous politicians and citizens who support the ideas of the party.

In addition, the conceptual side of the programs of political parties is nowadays an important component of politics. It is associated with the activities of political parties, the incorporation of ideologies in the practice of political struggle, electoral competition and inter-party communication, and finally, with the development strategy of political system and the society at large.

Contemporary political parties are a relatively new phenomenon, and therefore scientific interest in their programs is extremely relevant today. At the same time, the works on semiotic picture of the political world that is reflected in the programs of parties are extremely rare.

It is necessary to note the connection between ideology and the text of program, its discourse nature. Programs of political parties “perform the following communicative functions: information, evaluation, impact, cognition, and regulation” (Loginova I.Yu., 2004). Model of the political future is included into almost all of these functions, but in addition, it represents an essential integrative function performed by the program – that of orientation. Exactly the program aims to convert goals, basic guidelines, and values in a text format that can attract supporters and motivate them to action.

Also, the topic of the future in political texts, and in the programs of political parties namely, leads directly to the ideological and political features of the text, and the basic components of the programs. But the programs themselves with their structure, links with ideologies, and parties still remain on the periphery of research field.

Similarly, the researchers of ideological problems, political parties, and electoral process are more interested in the problems of the current situation: actual findings, political statements during electoral campaigns. However, it would be logical at first to trace the evolution of the programs of political parties, doctrines, and changes of ideology.

According to the typology of British scientist Peter Laslett (Laslett P., 1983), there are four types of changes in society categorized according to their speed:

- fast, e.g. political changes, fashion or judgment changes, changes in international relationships;
- medium, e.g. economic, communication, technical, demographic, and institutional changes;
- slow, e.g. constitutional, religious changes; and
- very slow, e.g. normative changes, changes of productive relations and social structure.

The problem is that the future belongs to the category of slow and very slow changes while the political transformations and events (elections, regional conflicts etc.) belong to the fast ones. So this situation provokes discordance of political cycles and problems in understanding of the future.

3. Model of the future and its place in the program of political party

In the studies of a number of researches it is pointed out that the model is, first of all, a goal-oriented image of the original, as a goal itself is already a model of the desired state (Greenberger M., 1976; Madsen, P.K., 1991). In the context of political modeling it should be noted that the goal of a political party is the basis, the core of an image of the desired future that it offers to society.

Model of the future examined in this research is an abstract language model in other words – an ideal design in natural language constructed by means of thought and consciousness. Model of the future represented in the program document of a party may be considered as a final product of thought of its authors that is ready for transfer to society. Through this model representing the expected political future the program of a political party structures the consciousness of potential voters and, at the same time, simulates reality.

Political concept of the future is a verbal expression of the model of the future presented by political parties in their program documents. This concept of the future is an important basic notion for an individual as well as for the society in general. This concept forms one of the elements of the orientation scheme “time – space”. It brings meaning and dynamics for the actions of individuals and society.

Thus, by determining the structure of the concept of the future in program of a party, it is possible to imagine the very model of the political future proposed by any party. Exactly the model of the political future structures the program of a party, provides the link between the goals, values, and ways to achieve them offered to the public by a political party. This phenomenon can be explained by the very nature of the program of political party that is initially focused on the representation of the future proposed by a party.

In addition, the central meaning of the word “program” is “a planned series of future events, items, or performances; a set of related measures, events, or activities with a particular long-term aim” (Oxford Dictionaries definitions, 2004). This word is borrowed “from Late Latin *programma* "proclamation, edict" from Greek *programma* "a written public notice" from stem of *prographein* "to write publicly," from *pro-* "forth" + *graphein* "to write"” (Weekley E., 1967, p. 308). The above mentioned “prefix *pro-* is from cognate Greek *pro* "before, in front of, sooner", which also was used in Greek as a prefix (as in *problem*)” (Weekley E., 1967). So, the program itself implies this definite orientation to the future.

4. Representation of the future in the programs of ruling political parties

The planning and modeling of the future are inextricably connected with the models of the future proposed by the official ideology of the countries. Planning of the future depends on the strategies and the programs of the countries. Additionally, the dominant party determines to a large extent the official ideology and national doctrine of a country. So when speaking of strategies for the future, we examine the ideologies of the dominant parties that are reflected in their official program documents. In this work we will examine the following programs:

- for Russia – the Electoral program of the “United Russia” Party (Party program proclamation, 2005);
- for the United States – the Democratic Party platform “Renewing America’s Promise” (Democratic Party Platform, 2008);
- for Great Britain – the Conservative Manifesto “Invitation to Join the Government of Britain” (The Conservative Manifesto, 2010);
- for France – the Electoral program “Nos valeurs” (“Our values”) of the UMP (“Union for a Popular Movement”) (Nos valeurs, 2007); and
- for Italy – the Electoral program “Carta dei valori” (“Values Charter”) of the PdL (“People of Freedom”) (Carta dei valori, 2009).

The selection of countries is due to the language competence of the authors and the global significance of the political culture of these states. The examined parties are central in the political life of the countries concerned, as they hold a majority in the parliamentary structures, their leaders hold key positions in the nation's leadership (president, prime minister etc.).

Following the comparative analysis of the concept of the future expression in the programs of political parties, it is possible to note that “on the level of representation of the base layer of the concept of the future of the “United Russia”, the Democratic Party of the U.S., and the “People of Freedom” of Italy, in the center of verbal expression of the concept the images of “Motherland” and “country” are fixed. In the program of the “Union for a Popular Movement” of France the image of “state” is in the center of the basic layer, while in the program of the Conservative Party of Great Britain it is the image of “the people”” (Sentsov A.E., 2012).

On the basis of the analysis of representation of cognitive segments of the concept of the future, the considered programs of political parties can be divided into two groups. The first group “consists of “the programs of Russian and British parties, in which the concept segments are represented by fairly similar tasks in social, economic fields and in public administration. The only difference is that in the “United Russia” program the economic issues predominate, while in the Conservative Party program – the social ones. The second group includes the programs of dominant parties of the United States, France and Italy, in which the segments of the cognitive concept of the future are represented by the basic national values (from 4 in the Democratic Party platform to 8 in the Italian “People of Freedom” program)” (Sentsov A.E., 2012). Thus, in this second group there is an idea that the ultimate goal should be achieved not by solving of definite problems but through the approval and the revival of the basic values of a nation.

The periphery of the concept of the future in the programs of political parties varies considerably in size (from 10 slots in the “Union for a Popular Movement” program to 34 slots in the Democratic Party platform). According to the content, “which is represented by measures of social, economic and political nature aimed at protecting the country from the effects of the global economic crisis, the similarities can be observed in the program documents of Russian, U.S., and British parties (especially in the last two ones). At the same time, the programs of French and Italian ruling political parties do not contain any specific measures to bring the country out of the crisis or to prevent it. The periphery of the concept of the future in these programs is represented by predications of general and declarative character, such as “respect for compatriots”, “opportunities for all”, “human dignity”, etc.” (Sentsov A.E., 2012).

5. Interpretation of the results

The structure of a political party program represents the programming image of the future. Analysis of goals, values, and objectives declared in the political party platforms allows us to conclude that the governing parties of the U.S., France, and Italy propose the future on the basis of the principles and values of the past, while the “United Russia” and the British Conservative Party create an image of the future mostly by reference to the prospects viewed in the present situation. Nevertheless, the “United Russia” political program contains some measures of the restoration kind, in regard to Soviet ideology. In this way the party is trying to spark the interest of a wide range of voters.

Over the years the ruling political parties pretended to possess total control of the future. But nowadays, in our postmodern society the political parties have to renounce their claim to this control. Citizens are free to choose the definitive model of the future represented in one of the programs. Thus today the most important goal of a party is to create a model of the future that will be the most popular with the masses.

Ideology and doctrine remain in the programs of political parties. But each party tends to create and to propose to the citizens goals and values that will combine as high as possible a vision of a personal future for the majority of the population with the vision of their country’s future.

All the considered parties formally declare their ideology to be centrist. However, detailed examination of their platforms leads us to the conclusion that these parties are both of the conservative type. Such a political orientation is rather natural for the dominant parties that rule their countries during a period of economic crisis when the demand for a liberal model of the future is almost zero.

In spite of the fact that changes in ideologies and doctrines are slow and even very slow, modern political reality shows that during a period of serious economic and social shocks, the goals and the values of the parties are subject to accelerated changes. And the voters appreciate these changes.

6. Conclusion

Model of the political future is a goal-oriented representation of the future proposed by a political party to society in order to achieve its own goals as a political institution. Through this model the program of a political party structures the consciousness of electorate, performs the task of party positioning, promoting of its interests. So, the program becomes an essential element of modern political technologies.

That exactly the model of the future, the idea of how parties understand the future is of the most importance in the programs of parties. The structure of each program is a representation of the programmed future.

The analysis of program documents of the dominant political parties and the results of the elections suggest that there is a strong need for a political model of the future. At this stage the political parties cannot fully satisfy this need. Modern society stands in need of long-term prospects of the future.

In the global world of our times the most successful political concepts are those offering not only a close relationship between the future of each individual and the future of his or her region and country, but also a further link with the future of the world and humanity in general.

References

- Sentsov, A.E. (2012). Concept of the future in ruling political parties programs: comparative aspect. *Historical, Philosophical, Political and Law Sciences, Culturology and Study of Art. Issues of Theory and Practice*, № 6 (20), Part I, 167–9.
- Loginova I.Yu. Lingvopragmaticheskie osobennosti teksta programmy politicheskoi partii na materiale angliiskogo yazyka : abstract of a candidate thesis. – Electronic data. – Saint-Petersburg, 2004. – URL: <http://www.dissercat.com/content/lingvopragmaticheskie-osobennosti-teksta-programmy-politicheskoi-partii-na-materiale-angliis> (access date: 16.10.14).
- Laslett, P. (1983). *The world we have lost* (pp. 57–69). Methuen: Routledge.
- Greenberger, M., Crenson, M.A., Crissey, B.L. (1976). Modeling and the political process. *Computers and Society*, Vol. 7 (1), 3–14.
- Madsen, P.K. (1991). *The politics of economic modelling* (pp. 24–9). Copenhagen: Institute of political science.
- Oxford Dictionaries definitions // Oxford University Press. – Electronic data. – Oxford, 2014. – URL: <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/> (access date: 16.10.14).
- Weekley, E. (1967). *Etymological dictionary of modern English: in two volumes. With a new biographical memoir of the author by Montague Weekley. Volume 2* (pp. 304–8). Mineola, New York: Dover Publications Inc.
- Party program proclamation // United Russia : party official site. – Electronic data. – Moscow, 2005–2014. – URL: <http://er.ru/party/program> (access date: 12.04.14).
- Democratic Party Platform 2008 “Renewing America’s Promise” // Democratic Party. – Electronic data. – Washington, 1995–2012. – URL: http://www.democrats.org/about/party_platform (access date: 25.02.14).
- Invitation to Join the Government of Britain. *The Conservative Manifesto 2010*. (2010). Uckfield: Pureprint Group, 120 p.
- Nos valeurs – 2007 // Union pour un mouvement populaire : party official site. – Electronic data. – Paris, 2013. – URL: <http://www.u-m-p.org/notre-parti/nos-valeurs> (access date: 12.04.2014).
- Carta dei valori - 2009 // Il popolo della Libertà: party official site. – Electronic data. – Roma, 2014. – URL: <http://www.ilpopolodellaliberta.it/notizie/15346/carta-dei-valori> (дата обращения: 12.05.2014).
- Sentsov, A.E. (2012). “Future” concept representation features in “United Russia” party policy documents. *Historical, Philosophical, Political and Law Sciences, Culturology and Study of Art. Issues of Theory and Practice*, № 12 (26), Part III, 172–4.