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OUTDOOR ADVERTISING IN THE 2012 UKRAINE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION

*Show me the advertisements of your country
and I will tell you its biggest problems.*

(M. McLuhan)

ABSTRACT

The so-called outdoor advertising played a crucial role in the 2012 parliamentary elections campaign in Ukraine. The parties preparing their advertising messages applied different types of such advertising. The classic image advertising was one of the most popular advertising forms and it contained such standard elements, as: the candidate's photograph, his/her last name, the party's name, the candidate's number on the electoral list, or the election slogan. In case of less known candidates ID advertising was applied. This type of advertising was chosen among others by Udar party which had Witalij Kliczko on its posters recommending candidates for the representatives of his party. The individual formations advertised themselves both by presenting their achievements and electoral promises. This campaign was not free of negative advertising, including its comparative and comic forms. The 2012 Ukrainian parliamentary elections did not differ from any European parliamentary elections both in terms of the applied advertising forms and the richness of such forms.

Key words

Ukraine, Parliamentary Election Campaign, Election Advertising

1. Introduction

Election advertising constitutes on the one hand, the form of political communication, and on the other hand, it is one of the most popular marketing tools applied during any electoral campaign. It is commonly assumed that election advertising is nothing more than political advertising, which is applied during an election campaign.

Different types of electoral advertisements are used throughout the whole electoral contest: audiovisual (most often TV), auditive (most often radio), or visual (newspapers, magazines, posters, leaflets). It is the objective of this paper to present the outdoor advertising applied during the parliamentary election campaign in the Ukraine in 2012.

Outdoor advertising does not frequently attract researchers' attention. TV, newspaper, or even radio advertising seems to be a more attractive research topic. This happens despite the fact, as Bogusława Dobek-Ostrowska points out, that outdoor advertising cannot remain unnoticed due to its specific character. The author defines it as importunate and oppressive for a recipient in any big city, practically in any place.¹ This is also the source of many advantages of outdoor advertising, such as the aforementioned visibility and extensive attainment, as well as high geographic selectiveness and low attainment costs to a single recipient.² Despite its drawbacks, including the possibility to apply only a simple message, high production costs and low geographic selectiveness,³ outdoor advertising is applied generally in all electoral campaigns.

This paper presents different types of outdoor advertising used during the parliamentary election campaign in the Ukraine in 2012.

2. Classic Image Campaign

It is one of the most popular types of advertising encountered in any electoral campaign, both local self-government campaigns, parliamentary and presidential campaigns. Its popularity stems from the phenomenon of politics personalization. We more often vote on persons, having at the same time in mind a given political party, and our choice is determined by an image of that person, rather than by the political offer we receive. This type of advertising consists of such standard elements, as: candidate's photograph, his/her last name, party's name, the candidate's number on the electoral list, and an electoral slogan. Outdoor advertising was one of the most popular advertising methods used in the 2012 parliamentary elections campaign in Ukraine.

¹ B. Dobek-Ostrowska, *Komunikowanie polityczne i publiczne* [Political and Public Communication], Warszawa 2007, p. 388.

² Ibidem.

³ Ibidem, p. 389.



Photo 1. Poster on a bus station in Lviv

Source: Photo by A. Łukasik-Turecka, Lviv, 26.10.2012, personal archives of the author.



Photo 2. Poster stand by the tent of Swoboda in Lviv party

Source: Photo by A. Łukasik-Turecka, Lviv, 26.10.2012, personal archives of the author.



Photo 3. Poster stand by the tent of the Ukrainian Communist Party in Lviv

Source: Photo by A. Łukasik-Turecka, Lviv, 26.10.2012, personal archives of the author.

3. ID Advertising

ID advertising is mentioned by Dobek-Ostrowska quoting after Lawrence Devlin, as a type of political advertising having two forms: the man-in-the-street and evidence forms. She considers the evidence form as the most frequently applied, “which engages recognized and respectable political, business, culture, sports and show business figures, etc.”⁴ It is a well tested idea to give evidence to an unknown candidate by a more popular politician, e.g., party’s leader. The irradiation technique consisting in the “cross-radiation” of a party leader’s feelings to the less known candidates is willingly applied in different types of advertisements, starting from the TV ads,⁵ radio spots,⁶ including outdoor

⁴ Ibidem, p. 406.

⁵ See more: M. Adamik-Szysiak, *Telewizyjna reklama polityczna w Polsce w latach 2005–2010* [Political TV Advertising in Poland in Years 2005–2010], Lublin 2012, pp. 206–208.

⁶ See more: A. Łukasik-Turecka, *Audytywna reklama wyborcza na przykładzie nieodpłatnych audycji komitetów wyborczych w Polskim Radiu Lublin (wybory parlamen-*

advertisements. A photograph with the head of the party allows an unknown candidate to reflect the light of his/her leader. This was the case in Poland in the 1989 elections for the Contract Sejm, when a photograph with Wałęsa opening the gate to parliament for a Solidarity candidate. The Solidarity Citizens' Committees won everything they could at that time, i.e. all the seats ensured to them by the Round Table – 35% of seats in the Sejm, and in the free elections to the Senate, 99 seats out of 100.

Barbara Szczepuła quotes Jerzy Urban, who commented in this way on the effectiveness of the photographs with Wałęsa: “Even a cow would get into the Sejm if it had a photograph with Wałęsa.”⁷ The author explains the prodigy of such photos: “In fact, the photograph was an earmark and a pass, since very few people knew at that time who for example Jan Krzysztof Bielecki was – the driver of a truck transporting timber from the forest to the harbour, and at the same time the economist sent deep undercover and operating under the nickname »Little-black«, or Lech Kaczyński, PhD running for a seat in the Senate, who was lecturing labour law to the workers. And there was no time for the electoral campaign at that time.”⁸

Photo 4. Banner displayed on the tent of Udar party in Lviv

Source: Photo by A. Łukasik-Turecka, Lviv, 26.10.2012, personal archives of the author.



tarne 2011 roku) [Auditive Election Advertising on the Example of Gratuitous Election Committees Broadcast on Polish Radio Lublin (Parliamentary Election, 2011)] [in:] *Współczesne uwarunkowania promocji i reklamy* [Contemporary Conditions of Promotion and Advertising], A.J. Kukuła (ed.), Warszawa 2013, pp. 174–175.

⁷ B. Szczepuła, *Wybory do Sejmu w 1989 roku – drużyna Lecha Wałęsy* [Elections to the Sejm in 1989 – Lech Walesa Team], <http://www.dziennikbaltycki.pl/artukul/438460,wybory-do-sejmu-w-1989-roku-druzyna-lecha-walesy,1,id,t,sa.html> [access: 03.03.2013].

⁸ Ibidem.

This type of advertising was also applied during the parliamentary elections campaign in Ukraine in 2012. Less recognized candidates of Udar party were shown on the election posters next to the leader Witalij Kliczko. In this way, the party leader recommended the candidates as the representatives of his party.

The application of the evidence technique in the election advertising also relies on the popularity of the recognized and respectable persons from the domain of sport and show business. The examples here are the billboards of the Party of Regions with the singer Alla Pugaczowa, or the gymnast Anna Rizatdinova. It is the objective of this effort to transfer the popularity of well known persons to the party which they advertise.



Photo 5. Billboard with the singer Alla Pugaczowa supporting the Party of Regions
Source: <http://ru.tsn.ua/politika/v-krymu-za-partiyu-regionov-agitiruet-alla-pugacheva-foto.html>
[access: 03.03.2013].



Photo 6. Billboard with the gymnast Anna Rizatdinova supporting the Party of Regions
Source: <http://www.kianews.com.ua/node/46679>
[access of 3.03.2013].

4. The Leaders Promoting their Parties

The party leaders not only provided the evidence – they recommended less known candidates, but they also acted as the symbols of their parties. The examples are the billboards and posters with the image of Wiktor Janukowicz and Julia Tymoszenko.

Photo 7. Billboard with the image of Wiktor Janukowicz promoting the Party of Regions under the slogan: “We Build a New State”

Source: http://lb.ua/news/2012/02/27/138802_nova_ukraina_viktora_yanukovicha.html [access: 03.03.2013].



Photo 8 and 9. The poster with the image of Julia Tymoszenko, formulating the question “Have you cast your vote on Batkiwyszczyna?” referring to the famous poster and slogan “Motherland calls you!”

Source: Photo 8 by A. Łukasik-Turecka, Lviev, 26.10.2012, personal archives of the author; Photo 9: http://www.google.pl/imgres?um=1&hl=pl&client=opera&channel=suggest&tbm=isch&tbid=h7MWcxCrSxQM:&imgrefurl=http://lipetsk-city.com/var_agit.htm&docid=5BG_hMtp4g2cM&imgurl=http://lipetsk-city.com/photo/var/1111.jpg&w=300&h=442&ei=3M6eUOrJCcnJhAfdq4CYBQ&zoom=1&iact=rc&dur=93&sig=116448708145005059764&page=2&tbnh=227&tbnw=149&start=13&ndsp=21&ved=1t:429,r:8,s:20,i:156&tx=61&ty=147&biw=1366&bih=630 [access: 03.03.2013].

5. The Advertising Through the Presentation of Achievements

Only a party or formation which has already been in power can make a presentation of its own achievements. The Party of Regions applied this technique in the parliamentary elections in Ukraine in 2012 to urge its voters to support it again. Many billboards of this party presented its multiple achievements from the time when this party was in power, and at the same time they contained the figures illustrating such successes. It is worth mentioning that the presented achievements mainly included those which are useful for ordinary citizens, such as e.g. new kindergartens or airports.



Photo 10. Billboard of the Party of Regions demonstrating its success consisting in the construction of 5 new airports

Source: <http://reporter.pl.ua/novini/polityka/8615-regiony-zminjut-reklamu-ukrayintsi-ne-korystujutsja-suchasnymy-aeroportamy> [access: 03.03.2013].



Photo 11. Billboard of the Party of Regions demonstrating the success of this party consisting in the construction of 875 new kindergartens

Source: <http://www.pravda.com.ua/articles/2012/10/17/6974866/> [access: 03.03.2013].

6. Intentions Advertising

The parties promoted themselves not only through their attainments, but they also endeavoured after voters informing them about their plans and intentions to become effective after they succeed in the elections. Such advertisements were applied by the Party of Regions promising, *inter alia*, the introduction of the Russian language as the second official language in Ukraine. This slogan was

a bow to those citizens who use Russian as their first language and which they use more often than Ukrainian.

Photo 12. Billboard of the Party of Regions informing about its plans to introduce the Russian language as the second official language
 Source: http://zn.ua/POLITICS/v_partii_regionov_obeschayut_izbiratelyam_sdelat_russkiy_vtorym_gosudarstvennym_foto.html [access: 03.03.2013].



7. Election Slogans

Election slogans constitute an indispensable element of outdoor advertising. Jerzy Muszyński defines them as: “a synthetic expression of a given problem, phenomenon, programme, or a document worded in the form of a stipulation, appeal, demand, addressed to individuals or social groups in order to inspire them to a certain performance, or behaviour.”⁹ At the same time, Sergiusz Trzeciak defines them briefly, as the synthesis of the electoral campaign’s topic.¹⁰ The slogans of the parliamentary elections in Ukraine in 2012 were worded in the form of orders (“Vote for Ukrainians – vote for Michał Chmiel”), questions (“Have you voted for your Motherland?”) and statements. The latter group being the most popular at the same time contained both promises (“Decent Life for Ukrainians. Bandocracy – to Fall into Oblivion”), as well as the descriptions of the achievements (“5 Modern Airports,” “875 Kindergartens”).¹¹

Often an electoral slogan was not an element of a given advertisement, but it constituted its sole content. This was particularly visible on the advertisements of the Party of Regions:

⁹ J. Muszyński, *Leksykon marketingu politycznego* [Lexicon of Political Marketing], Wrocław 2001, p. 64.

¹⁰ S. Trzeciak, *Marketing polityczny w Internecie* [Political Marketing on the Internet], Warszawa 2010, p. 24.

¹¹ The listed slogans come from the billboards illustrated in this paper.



Photo 13. Billboards with the electoral slogans of the Party of Regions

Source: <http://polittech.org/2012/10/28/centr-dnepropetrovska-utopaet-v-bilbordax-s-agitaciej-pr/> [access: 03.03.2013].

8. Solidification Technique in Advertising

Some of the outdoor advertisements presented during the 2012 parliamentary elections demonstrated the type of campaign strategy assumed by the party. This is illustrated by the advertisement of the Party of Regions containing the slogan “Legitimacy of Decision” and the symbol of a cast vote. This is an element of the solidification strategy addressed to the followers and supporters of this party. As Dobek-Ostrowska highlights, this type of strategy is to: “confirm the voters in their present convictions and to immune them to the persuasion of competitors by providing them with the adequate knowledge and arguments.”¹² As the author stresses, currently there are very few parties which chose such strategies. According to strategists, there is no point to waste funds and energy on those who are already convinced, as they will vote according to their preferences.¹³ The example provided below proves that this type of strategy was taken into account when the electoral campaign was planned by the Party of Regions:

The billboards, which at first glance were free of any advertising content related to a candidate of a given party, or the party itself, but still addressed to the potential electorate, and constitute a kind of a “compliment” to the voters. Theoretically, such a message did not promote any political option, but it merely reminded the voters that the power in fact belonged to them. Practically, even the colours of the advertising message allowed the voters to identify the author of this message, and thus it promoted that author. This is well illustrated by the example presented below:

¹² See more: B. Dobek-Ostrowska, *op.cit.*, p. 326.

¹³ *Ibidem.*

Photo 14. Billboard of the Party of Regions with the slogan “Legitimacy of Decision”

Source: <http://an.crimea.ua/news/crimea/politika/v-sevastopole-predlagaut-pravilnoe-reshenie-ot-kandidata-lebedeva/> [access: 03.03.2013].



Photo 15. Billboard with the slogan addressed to the voters: “Ukrainian Elections. You Govern the Country! Not the One You Choose”

Source: Photo by A. Łukasik-Turecka, Donieck, 29.10.2012, personal archives of the author.



9. Negative Advertising

The attacks on political adversaries are not the only feature of the contemporary election campaigns. According to Wojciech Cwalina, they had already been used in the 18th century American elections.¹⁴ Today, the voters in many countries receive advertising messages in which the sender tries to discredit his/her political adversary.

¹⁴ See more: W. Cwalina, *Polityczna reklama negatywna* [Negative Political Advertising] [in:] *Marketing polityczny w poszukiwaniu strategii wyborczego sukcesu* [Political Marketing in Search of Strategy of Electoral Success], M. Jeziński (ed.), Toruń 2004, p. 110.

Dorota Piontek attracts attention to the features of negative advertising which may constitute the basis for the considerable expectations of the sponsors of this type of advertisement. She believes that negative advertising is usually more creative and ingenious than positive message advertising, it is memorized better and may contribute to strong fluctuations in the polls, which is important as it provides free of charge time in the media.¹⁵

As Cwalina highlights, today the assumption that something constitutes “negative advertising” is a generalization, as it encompasses a wide range of different techniques used to deteriorate the image of the political adversary.¹⁶ The resource books contain the features which allow for the differentiation of negative advertising and its division into negative advertising in its strict sense, problem related negative advertising, image related negative advertising, attacking advertising, or comparative advertising.¹⁷



Photo 16. Poster with the slogan “No Vote for the Party of Regions”

Source: Photograph
by A. Łukasik-Turecka,
Lviev, 26.10.2012,
personal archives of the author.

¹⁵ See more: D. Piontek, *Mity reklamy politycznej* [Myths of Political Advertising] [in:] *Kulturowe instrumentarium panowania* [Cultural Instruments of Domination], R. Paradowski, P. Załęcki (eds.), Toruń 2002, pp. 164–169.

¹⁶ W. Cwalina, *Polityczna reklama...*, op.cit., p. 115.

¹⁷ See more: W. Cwalina, A. Falkowski, *Marketing polityczny. Perspektywa psychologiczna* [Political Marketing. Psychological Perspective], Gdańsk 2006, pp. 479–482.

Many authors argue based on numerous researches that one should be cautious in using negative advertising and that sometimes it is better to resign from its application. The costs incurred for its production, display, or broadcasting generate positive effects only on the part of the followers or supporters of the sponsor of such advertisements. Thus, they do not contribute to the extension of the electorate base of a given party, whilst the convincing of the undecided and abstaining and winning them is the key issue in any electoral campaign. The rebound effect²⁰ is the risk of negative advertising demonstrated by the reduced support for the sponsor of negative billboards.²¹ At the same time Agnieszka Stępińska attracts attention to the fact that the results of the research on negative political advertising are often contradictory, and thus they are not so much apparent. She also highlights the fact that this type of advertising may make the voters turn their back on both candidates: both the author of the message and the target of its attacks. In her opinion, its side effect may consist in the social cynicism and aversion to politics and elections themselves. This is, she believes, the reason for the well heard alarm raised by many researchers warning that the common application of negative political advertisements may have harmful consequences for the democratic system.²²

During the 2012 parliamentary elections in Ukraine some comic elements were applied in the negative messages. The example here would be the already famous poster with the grandmother and cat. The slogan on the poster informs: "She's found out that her grandson voted on »Regions« – and she signed the house over to the cat". The popularity of the poster has been proven by the number of its transformations displayed on the Internet.²³

²⁰ Also referred to as the boomerang effect.

²¹ See more: W. Cwalina, A. Falkowski, *Marketing polityczny...*, op.cit., pp. 490–492.

²² See more: A. Stępińska, *Skuteczność negatywnej reklamy politycznej* [The Effectiveness of Negative Political Advertising] [in:] *Kulturowe instrumentarium...*, op.cit., p. 193.

²³ <http://www.volynpost.com/news/6656-babusia-i-kit-fotozhabomaniia-tryvaie-foto> [access: 03.03.2013].

Photo 18. Poster with the slogan “She’s found out that her grandson voted on »Regions« – and she signed the house over to the cat”

Source: <http://www.unian.ua/news/521273-razom-z-babuseyu-i-kotom-pid-rozdachu-potrapili-kozel-baran-i-pokiyunik.html> [access: 03.03.2013].



11. Summary

The so-called outdoor advertising played a crucial role in the 2012 parliamentary elections campaign in Ukraine. The parties preparing their advertising messages applied different types of such advertising. The classic image advertising was one of the most popular advertising forms and it contained such standard elements, as: the candidate’s photograph, his/her last name, the party’s name, candidate’s number on the electoral list, or the election slogan. In the case of less known candidates ID advertising was applied. This type of advertising was chosen among others by the Udar party which had Witalij Kliczko on its posters recommending candidates as representatives of his party. The individual formations advertised themselves both by presenting their achievements and electoral promises. This campaign was not free of negative advertising, including its comparative and comic forms. The 2012 Ukrainian parliamentary elections did not differ from any European parliamentary elections both in terms of the applied advertising forms and the richness of such forms.