The Voice of Social and Mass Media in Transforming Political Appointees' Reputations: Cases from Kazakhstan

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ABSTRACT

This article analyzes the role of social networks and the media in the formation of the reputations of political civil servants in Kazakhstan, and how the reputations subsequently affect their political careers. By using mass media content analysis and case studies of political civil servants, the authors demonstrate the importance of social networks and the media in the formation of a positive or negative image of political appointees, and the significant influence of these images on their career success. The study shows that social networks and mass media are an innovation in solving the issue of creating a favorable image of public servants, just as they are in the issue of motivating public servants to be committed to ethical principles and self-control.

Key words: civil service, innovation, transformation, reputation of civil servants, social networks, mass media,

Introduction

In modern state administrations, the reputation of civil servants influences the level of public confidence in the government. Adherence to or deviation from the ideal image of a civil servant, which is formed in the consciousness of the entire public, is today also a key factor in an individual's moving up the career ladder. Moreover, the image of the entire state apparatus may end up depending on the reputation of a particular civil servant.

In this respect, the covered topic of the social networks' and media's influence on the reputation concerns the latest trends in the public sector. Public sector innovation, in the broad sense of the word, may include a range of economic, social, political and legal measures to ensure the socio-economic development of the country as a whole. In the narrow sense, public sector innovation includes new ways and approaches to solving existing problems of providing public services (OECD, 2016). Hence, in the framework of this research the social networks and media are considered as the innovations to the public relations. To be precise social networks and mass media are an innovation in solving the issue of creating a favorable image of public servants, just as the issue of motivating public servants to be committed to ethical principles and self-control. Using them as a strategic instrument can provide a possibility to form a positive image, raise a trust on part of population and thus open a new dialogue between people and the government.

The year 2019 in Kazakhstan was marked by an important event. In the Message of President K. Tokayev dated September 1, 2019, "Kazakhstan in a new reality: time for action", ambitious tasks were set, which were and are currently very timely, given the public's growing excitement about the work of state bodies.

In the Message, the concept of a hearing state is of particular importance, due to the fact that every civil servant faces citizens' problems of a diverse and multidimensional nature. In most cases, problems are solved through a long dialogue that is not always constructive, when all the reasons are discussed and the norms of legislation are carefully explained. Possible solutions to the problem are developed after that. In addition, citizens to some extent need psychological support, which means the most important thing in a dialogue is to hear what people are saying and to make every effort to help them.

Another important issue concerns the image and reputation of civil servants, that often are being formed due to social networks and media as well.

In the context of the above, in the conditions of modern realities, social networks, which are already being used as the main platform for solving problems, as well as an instrument to from a positive image and reputation, are becoming essential.

The OECD (2011) emphasizes the Internet as one of the main features of the landscape of innovation. "The Internet has become a critical infrastructure that supports businesses, consumers/users and the public sector. It continues to experience remarkable growth, from 72 million hosts in 2000 to over 730 million in 2010". (p. 40) "Blogs, wikis, podcasting, tagging technologies and techniques from community and social networking sites can help to advance product development and raise the quality of interactions with users and consumers." (p. 40)

In turn, a good reputation is the most significant asset an appointed official can have in contemporary times. In fact, it is one of the important building blocks of an innovative civil service, as it is of the civil servant who requires the people's trust to exercise power, autonomy and access to important resources. Today in the public sectors of developed countries, concepts such as branding and political social media marketing (SMM) are considered, and in general the success of the public sector is measured by consumer satisfaction with the quality of the services provided. Indeed, due to the fact that the public sector is focused on the provision of high-quality public services rather than tangible products, there is a need both generally and in particular in Kazakhstan to measure the public sector's organizational success and effectiveness in creating the perception of competence and value. Thus, the reputation or image of each individual civil servant has a special meaning.

In this context, special attention should be paid to studying the influence of social networks and media in countries with authoritarian regimes or to individual features of the same. Such regimes are characterized by a vertical hierarchy of power and prevailing centralism in managing the entire society. Frequently, international organizations give negative assessments of mass media in such countries, often criticizing them for lack of freedom and independence.

This research contributes by studying the influence of social networks and the media on both society's perception of the civil service's reputation and on the solutions identified for pressing problems. The role of social networks and the media in society is growing every day, since their main distinguishing characteristic is freedom from state power. By highlighting and exposing acute problems, social networks and the media foster public attention and thus encourage governments to address the problem.

According to the World Press Freedom Index 2020, Kazakhstan holds 157th place out of 180 countries with a measure of 54.11 of 100. For comparison, the five leaders in "freedom

of the press", are and score: Norway (7.84), Finland (7.93), Denmark (8.13), Sweden (9.25) and the Netherlands (9.96), while the five countries with the worst indicators are Djibouti (76.73), China (78.48), Eritrea (83.50), Turkmenistan (85.44) and North Korea (85.82) (World Press Freedom Index, 2020). Earlier, the OECD assessed the situation in Kazakhstan in this area. According to OECD experts (OECD, 2017), despite the existing legislative framework and guarantees of freedom of speech and press, in practice these principles are not in effect and the corresponding rights of journalists are limited.

Thus, while the mass media in Kazakhstan is theoretically legally empowered to carry out an informative function, it may have difficulty doing so. Along with the mass media, however, social media should also be taken into account nowadays; in theory it can serve as a no less effective source of information. In view of the above, a reasonable question arises, despite the circumstances, whether together mass media and social media influence the formation of public opinion about senior officials in Kazakhstan.

Table 1: Internet users, Percent of total Kazakhstan population aged 6-74

	2011	**2019**
The Republic of Kazakhstan	50.6	84.2
Akmola	53.0	79.4
Aktobe	58.9	85.7
Almaty	47.6	85.4
Atyrau	62.4	80,7
West Kazakhstan	59.9	80.4
Zhambyl	33.9	81.6
Karaganda	56.3	80.5
Kostanay	49.0	86.9
Kyzylordinskaya	36.3	77.9
Mangystau	50.7	82.3
South Kazakhstan	44.0	-
Pavlodar	60.8	85.7
North Kazakhstan	50.8	81.2
Turkestan		89.6
East Kazakhstan	44.9	81,7
Nur-Sultan	54.3	91.7
Almaty city	63.7	87.7
Shymkent		80.1

Source: Data from Bureau of National Statistics Agency on strategic planning and reforms of the Republic of Kazakhstan (https://gender.stat.gov.kz/page/frontend/detail?id=103&slug=6-74&cat_id=11&lang=ru)

According to the Ministry of Digital Development, Innovation and Aerospace Industry of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the number of Internet users in Kazakhstan is 84.2% of the total population of 18 million people: these are residents of all 118 cities and 4,235 rural settlements that have the opportunity to use 3G / 4G networks. The largest proportion of Internet users was recorded in Nur-Sultan (91.7%), the capital, Turkestan region (89.6%), Almaty city (87.7%) and Kostanay (86.9%) region. This represents rapid and significant growth; by comparison, in 2011 the same indicator of Internet users aged 6 to 74 years measured only 50.6% (Kursiv.kz, April 28, 2020) (Table 1).

In addition, according to the Ministry of Information and Social Development of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 3432 periodicals, 660 online media and 249 electronic media were registered in Kazakhstan as of October 19, 2020 (Ministry of Information and Social Development of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Report on Mass Media, 2020).

As for social media, according to the annual reports of Datareportal's "Digital Reports", in general, more than 50% of the population of Kazakhstan is currently an active user of social networks, with 100% of active users of social networks able to obtain access via mobile Internet ("Digital 2020: Kazakhstan — Datareportal – Global Digital Insights" 2020). While that is the share of active users, it should be noted that only 10.6% of Kazakhstanis do not have accounts in any of the social networks according to 2018 data, with the proportion likely further decreased since (Kp.kz, August 26, 2019).

Thus, almost the entire population uses the Internet as a source of information, and almost 90% of Kazakhstanis are registered in social networks. In turn, this means that online news is available to essentially everyone. It is logical that the most frequently raised issues online will attract the greatest attention of the population.

At the same time, there are no official and regular annual statistics on the number of users of social networks according to gender and age in Kazakhstan. In this regard, data on individual social networks in Kazakhstan are summarized in Table 2. The data was obtained from various open sources (as of 2019-2020).

Table 2: Quantitative indicators in the context of social networks

Social network	Number of users	Dominant age of users	Gender indicators	
			Male	Female
Facebook *	9.2 million	25 - 34	44.3%	55.7%
Instagram *	8.2 million	25 - 34	42.3%	57.7%
VKontakte**	7.2 million	25-34	-	-
Twitter ***	187 K *(number of people who can be contacted via Twitter ads)*	-	63.8%	36.2%
Odnoklassniki ****	2.5 million	26-45 women/36-45 men	-	-

* Source: Data collected by NapoleonCat Social Media Management Software [https://napoleoncat.com/stats/instagram-users-in-kazakhstan/2020/02#:~:text=There%20were%208%20207%20000,group%20(3%20300%20000)]
** Source: Data from Information of the official representative of the Russian social network in the Republic of Kazakhstan, Olzhas Salmurza[https://tengrinews.kz/article/myi-nablyudaem-rost-kazahoyazyichnogo-kontenta-vkontakte-1394/]
*** Source: Data from DATAREPORTAL [https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2020-kazakhstan?rq=Kazakhstan]
**** Source: Data from OK [https://insideok.ru/blog/itogi-goda-odnoklassnikov-v-belarusi-uzbekistane-i-kazahstane/]

As can be seen from the above data, despite the low ratings of international experts and their comments on the lack of freedom of the press, there are a large number of popular print publications, online media portals and electronic media in Kazakhstan (4341 in total). Kazakhstanis actively use Internet and the country has free access to all global social networks, including Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter, VKontakte, etc. There is therefore reason to believe that at least some civil servants could be discussed on such platforms and that their reputations could have been affected as a result (Table 3).

Table 3: Social Media Rating in Kazakhstan

No.	Social network	Percentage of Users
1	Pinterest	25, 18%
2	Youtube	23.26%
3	Vkontakte	14.7%
4	Facebook	14.39%
5	Twitter	13.66%
6	Instagram	6.33%

* *Source*: Data from 24.kz [https://24.kz/ru/news/social/item/458691-nazvany-populyarnye-sotsialnye-seti-v-kazakhstane#:~:text=%D0%A1%D0%BB%D0%B5%D0 % B4% D0% BE% D0% BC% 20% D0% B8% D0% B4% D1% 83% D1% 82% 20Pinterest% 20 (11% 2C9, Twitter% 20 (11% 2C3% 25) ..]

Research Question

How does the reputation of political civil servants that is formed in social networks and the media affect the political career of political civil servants in Kazakhstan? According to the Law "On Civil Service" of the Republic of Kazakhstan, a political civil servant is a civil servant who is responsible for the implementation of political goals and objectives (Law "On Civil Service", 2015).

Literature review

A significant part of this scientific work is devoted directly to the study of the role of the media in political issues. Another part of the research touches on the issues related to the purposeful use of social networks in the modern civil service to establish a dialogue with the public, achieve maximum openness and involve stakeholders in the political decision-making process. At the same time, there are practically no scientific studies that comprehensively investigate the degree of influence of vehicles such as mass media and social networks directly on the formation of the reputation of senior officials and their promotion on the career ladder.

Pan (2017) reveals the functional similarity of both authoritarian and democratic countries in the issue of using the media to form a reputation in the eyes of the public. In particular, Chinese politicians deliberately use the media to advance their political careers. Moreover, they also use the power of the media to strengthen the legitimacy of their claims in the eyes of their competitors.

Public involvement in social media platforms used by government is also the subject of some empirical research. Bonsón, Royo and Ratkai (2015) measures the impact of media and content types on stakeholder engagement on the Facebook pages of local governments in Western Europe. The analysis covers 15 member states of the European Union (75 local authorities, 50 job positions from each municipality). The survey results show that cultural events, sports and marketing topics are the most widely published by Western European local governments, but these materials do not appear to be the most relevant to citizens.

Social media issues in political life are undoubtedly relevant in the United States of America. The most senior officials use social media to promote their ideas and to enlist the support of their partisans. Thus, the main purposes of social media in political life are (1) representation, (2) involvement and (3) networking (Mergel, 2013).

Some researchers analyze the role of social media through the prism of innovation (Criado et al., 2013: 319). The authors "develop three dimensions of social media in

government: tools, goals, and topics". Thus, the analysis of how to use social media in this context is being made through the whole research, and as a result "some practical lessons and suggested ideas for future research" are made. This article could be "a starting point for the development of innovation through social media in public administrations around the world". (pp. 320).

The issue of using the potential of social networks is not often raised by researchers in the context of the high importance of transparency and accountability of state officials to society. However, Stamati, Papadopoulos and Anagnostopoulos (2015) focused on this aspect using the example of Greece. The authors conducted extensive interviews with senior executives, politicians and relevant stakeholders, and examined the phenomenon of social media in public service through the lens of "affordances". According to the authors, affordances are building blocks of national policy for openness and accountability (Stamati et al., 2015).

Lampe et al. (2011: 1) emphasize that "social media has the potential to foster interactions among policy makers, government officials, and their constituencies". The authors present a case study of "an attempt to use social media to engage with stakeholders" (p. 2).

In Kazakhstan, information technology (IT) innovations in general are of special interest to researchers (Bokayev et al, 2021). In turn, it is involved in the implementation of the "Digital Kazakhstan" state program, as well as the improvement of the e-government portal".

Despite the obvious advantages of the media and the use of social media by public servants, we must not forget about the other side of the coin. While recognizing the strategic importance of social networks, there remains a real concern and even a skepticism about their use. Khan, Swar and Lee (2014) conducted an empirical study of risks by interviewing 289 public sector employees from six South Korean public research institutions. They found that both the apparent benefits and risks affect the mood of public sector employees and the desire to use social media in the future. They "found that both risks (i.e., social risk, time, psychological risks, and privacy concern) and benefits (i.e., social connectivity, social involvement, information attainment, and entertainment) significantly affect public sector employees' satisfaction with and intention to use social media. However, the effect of the benefits on users' satisfaction was stronger than the risks." (pp. 606).

Some researchers have established that news publications often contain negative rather than positive episodes. The media are more likely to publish stories related to the performative measurement of reputation that are more relevant to readers. Respectively, such publications are more likely to contain a reaction (government agency response) as the word quantity increases in the message. Moreover, agencies that undergo periods of more intense media coverage are more likely to be criticized in many aspects of their functioning. Thus, the government agencies should take the potential negative effects of media coverage seriously and pay close attention to their media reputation (Boon, Salomonsen, Verhoest and Pedersen, 2019).

Researchers Browning and Sweetser (2020) also studied influence of the media, namely, the media diet and political organization-public relationship communication on the formation of the reputation of political parties. Their key result was a clear route of action,

thanks to which communications between a political organization and voters directly affect the reputations of political parties. In addition, the character traits of candidates, as well as their perceived authenticity, intersect in order to affect the party's reputation. The authors also conclude that political ideologies, in their essence, generate what individual media consume, and vice versa, different forms of consumption influence the views of both political parties and voters.

In terms of social networks and online media, in one way or another, the Internet directly affects political phenomena and the results of political events. Zhuravskaya, Petrova and Enikolopov (2020) note the minimum barriers to accessing social networks, and study the impact of the Internet on the results of political voting, protests and behavior of high-ranking officials. The researchers also analyze data on the importance of social networks in the context of spreading "fake news" and existing strategies in autocratic regimes to censor the Internet and use the social media as a surveillance tool.

Social media and reputational risks are inseparable elements in the political arena, and currently this issue is of particular interest. Ryu and Han (2021) conducted a study aimed at developing criteria for measuring the reputation of an influencer in social media. According to the study (interviews with 30 experts and empirical data from 557 adults), four main factors influence reputation on social networks: communication skills, influence, authenticity and experience. Ultimately, the researchers conclude that reputation is key for both companies looking for effective marketing and influencers looking for profitability and sustainability.

In the context of this scientific article, the views of McCombs and Reynolds (2002) are also very appropriate. They discuss how the special influence of the media on the formation of a political agenda is manifested in many aspects of public opinion and behavior. This influence is expressed in the growing importance of consensus on the most pressing issues facing the state, itself a consequence of the strong influence of the media. The authors conclude that if any situation or news is the object of close attention from the media, then it becomes the most exciting issue for society.

Thus, a parallel can be drawn with the issue of shaping the reputation of political civil servants through social networks and the media. An event related to the activities or behavior of a political civil servant, that is emphasized by social networks and the media, can generate heightened public interest and, accordingly, affect the life of the designated official.

Methodology

For the purposes of this research, content analysis and case studies were used. In particular, content analysis consisted of quantitative and qualitative analysis of publications on social networks and in the media.

The Monitoring System for Media, Social Networks, Blogs and Web Resources iMAS, was identified as a platform suitable for conducting the content analysis.

Monitoring by the aforementioned system covers all media publishers in Kazakhstan (3100+), the world's leading media outlets from 150 countries (23,500+) and 9 major international social networks (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Odnoklassniki, VKontakte, MailRU, GooglePlus, YouTube, Telegram).

The analysis was carried out on three selected cases related to the behavior of political civil servants. Geographic coverage involved all mass media on the territory of Kazakhstan, and the nine above-mentioned social networks. The languages used in the analysis of publications were Kazakh and Russian. The analysis of mentions and the sharing of the context of sources made it possible to track the developing situational dynamics for each case. It also made the study of the properties and consequences of social reality, as presented in the indicated cases, possible to conduct more fully.

In the first two cases, the assessment of the emotional coloring (tone of the message) was not taken into account, since the events surrounding the attention carried a more obviously negative connotation. As for the third case, where no specific events were attached to the media attention, in addition to the number of references and the share in the context of sources, the emotional coloring of the publications (sentiment of the messages) was analyzed.

In turn, the case study method allowed us to analyze the problem and find a solution to the issue under study of the phenomenon within its real-life context. In addition, the case study method allowed us to preserve the holistic characteristics of real events, such as the life cycles of an individual and behavioral culture. To identify specific subjects of the case study, purposeful sampling was used.
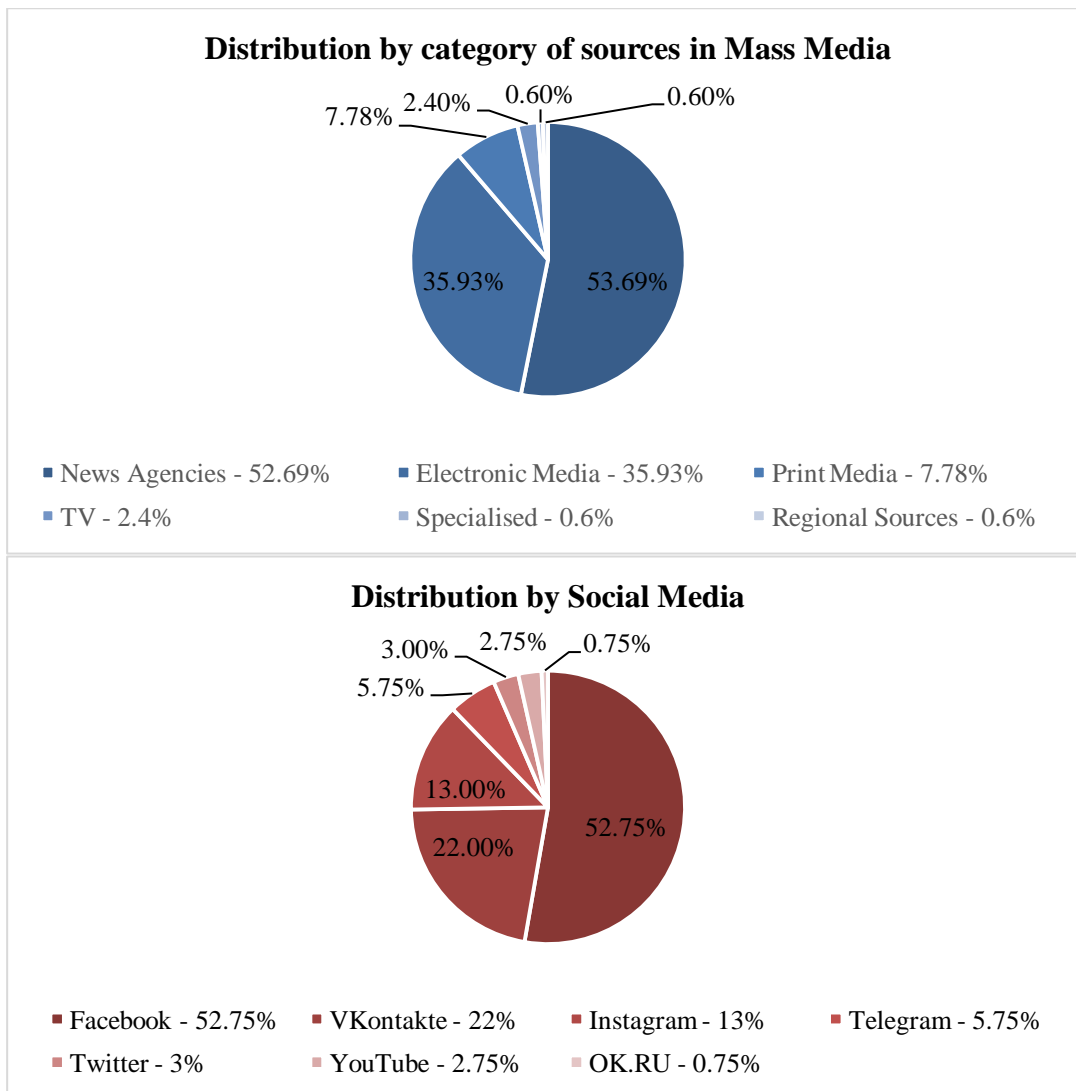
Findings

Below we analyze how strongly social networks and the media influence the formation of the reputation of a particular senior state official in specific situational examples. Next, we analyze to what extent the images formed of political civil servants in the eyes of the public influenced their political careers.

Case No. 1. In 2019, a high-ranking official B., having gone abroad on a business trip, posted a short video on social networks against the backdrop of luxurious buildings. In fact, no personally immoral act was depicted in this video; the civil servant was not in a state of alcoholic or drug intoxication, accosted no one and did not violate public order. The luxurious buildings in the background and the atmosphere of being in a prosperous foreign country, however, aroused the anger of many compatriots. Moreover, this video went beyond the personal account of a civil servant and spread across social networks and news portals.

According to the Analytical Report of the Monitoring System of Mass Media, Social Networks, Blogs and Web Resources iMAS, the total number of news items about official B.'s visit abroad, up to the time of their dismissal (from 07/23/2019 to 07/31/2019), is 567. If we look at the types of information sources, we can notice the following. The share of these news items was 29.45% among mass media outlets, and 70.55% in social networks. Among mass media, the prevalence of messages in news agencies was 52.69%, with 35.93% in electronic media. In addition, among social networks, the largest distribution was observed in Facebook (52.75%), Vkontakte (22%) and Instagram (13%). The rest occurred on Telegram (5.75%), Twitter (3%), YouTube (2.75%) and Odnoklassniki (0.75%). If we observe the level of activity by region, the most active were the Republic of Kazakhstan-wide sources (54.53 %), followed by sources specific to Almaty (18.05%) and Nur-Sultan (7.43%) (Information Monitoring and Analysis Software IMAS, Report 2019) (Figure 1).

Thus, in this case, social networks had an obvious impact on public opinion with a 70.55% share of distribution. It is also worth noting the following in the course of data analysis. Even in the news and posts with a neutral coloring on this topic, there were provocative words like "a civil servant abroad says hello". Moreover, under almost every news item in the media and under every post on social networks, hundreds of citizens expressed their indignation with comments possessing negative connotations. In the end, it was the public that raised the issue bluntly with its reaction.

Figure 1: Share of distribution in Mass Media and Social Media, Case No.1

Distribution by category of sources in Mass Media

7.78% 2.40% 0.60% 0.60% 35.93% 53.69%

■ News Agencies - 52.69%   ■ Electronic Media - 35.93%   ■ Print Media - 7.78%
■ TV - 2.4%   ■ Specialised - 0.6%   ■ Regional Sources - 0.6%

Distribution by Social Media

3.00% 2.75% 0.75% 5.75% 13.00% 22.00% 52.75%

■ Facebook - 52.75%   ■ VKontakte - 22%   ■ Instagram - 13%   ■ Telegram - 5.75%
■ Twitter - 3%   ■ YouTube - 2.75%   ■ OK.RU - 0.75%

Source: Analytical data from iMAS [imas.kz]

The situation with B.'s public reputation was aggravated by the fact that the head of the presidential administration called out the behavior of this political civil servant as undermining the population's confidence in the president.

So, what were the consequences of a high-profile incident involving a senior official? It should be noted that B.'s negative reputation, once formed in the eyes of the public, entailed the most negative consequences for the official, namely, dismissal from their post.

However, even after the dismissal of the civil servant, social networks and media, in fact, continued further discussion of this event. Thus, the number of reports on the above incidents for the period from 01.08.2019 to 02.09.2019 was 179, with the share in the mass media 39.66%, and on social networks 60.34%. Facebook (47.22%), Vkontakte (22.22%) and Instagram (13.89%) were again the most active social networks (Information Monitoring and Analysis Software IMAS, Report 2019).

In the context of this case, the behavior of a political civil servant was emphasized in the public sphere by social networks and the media. 567 publications about this incident directly influenced the formation of a negative reputation in the eyes of the public and caused a wave of criticism from both the population and top management. As a result, B.'s political career was undermined.

Within the framework of this case, the comments under three posts on the social network Facebook, Instagram and Vkontakte were analyzed by random sampling. The comments were examined for the emotional coloring and gender of the commentator. It should be noted that the conclusions were made solely on the basis of the subjective assessment of the researchers, as well as on the basis of the indicated data of commentators and the nature of their comments. The same will be done for the remaining two cases.

Table 4: Analysis of Comments on Case No. 1

No.	Social network	Characteristics of the publication					
		Emotional coloring			Commentator gender		
		Negative	Neutral	Positive	Male	Female	Undefined
1	**Facebook** 466 likes, 184 comments, 27 reposts	50%% (92)	41.8% (77)	8.1% (15)	42.9% (79)	57.1% (105)	-
2	**Instagram** 719 likes, 112 comments, 7113 views	75% (84)	18.75% (21)	6.2% (7)	5.3% (6)	87.5% (98)	7.2% (8)
3	**VKontakte** 137 likes, 90 comments, 28 K views	41% (37)	38.8% (35)	20% (18)	72.2% (65)	7.8% (7)	20% (18)

Based on the analysis of the above data, it follows that out of 386 comments on three publications, 55% are negative, 34.4% are neutral, and only 10.4% are positive. This demonstrates the negative attitude of the public, which reacted mostly with outrage and reluctance. Another interesting fact is that the largest share of commentators is female - 54.4%, while identified male commentators were 38.9%, and undefined commentators were 6.7% (Table 4).

Case No. 2. In 2019, a high-ranking official under the pseudonym K. was targeted by the media and social networks after plagiarism was alleged in their dissertation work. This charge was not completely clear-cut; during the period when the official defended their dissertation, automatic plagiarism detection systems did not function, and in any case, completely different rules were in effect. In defense of the integrity of their work, the civil servant K. presented a certificate from the National Center for State Scientific and Technical Expertise. Despite these points, the news became the most talked about and popular item at that time, and the public vehemently expressed its outrage.

In accordance with the Analytical Report of the Monitoring System for Media, Social Networks, Blogs and Web Resources iMAS, the total number of news items on this issue, up to the resignation of that civil servant (from 09/01/2019 to 11/13/2019), was 529. Looking at the types of information sources, the share of this news amounted to 60.3% mass media and 39.7% social networks. Among the media, the prevalence of messages in news agencies was 42.64%, with 36.99% in electronic media (Table 5). In addition, among social networks, the largest occurrences were observed on Facebook (55.25%), Vkontakte (20.95%) and Instagram (11.9%). Sources in Almaty (42.53%), all-Republic sources (34.59%), and Nur-Sultan (11.34%) distinguished themselves as the highest levels of activity according to region (Information Monitoring and Analysis Software IMAS, Report 2019).

Table 5: The most active sources in Mass Media, case No. 2

No.	Media	Number of references
1	Kazakhstan zhanalyktary (News Reader)	21
2	Nur.kz	19
3	7news.kz	12
4	Yandex.News	12
5	Aqparat.info	10
6	Tengrinews	9
7	ALLINFO portal	8
8	Time	8
9	Arnapress	8
10	Today.kz	6
11	Zan gazeti	6
12	Holanews.kz	6
13	Matrica.kz	6
14	Delovoy Kazakhstan (dknews.kz)	5
15	Ult portaly	5
16	BNews.kz	5
17	Republican educational socio-political newspaper	4
18	KazTAG	4
19	Turkistan	4
20	KazTAG: Kazakh Telegraph Agency	4

Source: Analytical data of iMAS [imas.kz]

As can be seen from the above, mass media played a special role in the dissemination of this news (60.3%), followed by social networks (39.7%). The news spread in the media attracted the attention of a large number of people, a bad reputation was superimposed on the political civil servant, and a stable negative image was then formed in the public consciousness.

After the aforementioned scandal, the civil servant was dismissed from their post following a request for their resignation. Thus, the resignation was forced upon the political civil servant. It should be emphasized that this situation arose directly due to the influence of the media and social networks. A very significant number of Candidate and Doctor of Science degrees were defended during the same period in the absence of modern plagiarism technologies, however no other dissertation work has attracted any attention.

Similar to the previous case, the comments under three posts on the social networks Facebook, Instagram, and Vkontakte were analyzed by random sampling.

After analyzing the above indicators, we can conclude that this case generally elicited a negative response from the population. The number of comments with a negative coloring in percentage terms was 53.2%, which was expected in principle. 44.5% reacted neutrally, and only 2.3% of the public supported the servant in this situation. It should be noted that the gender of the commentators was not defined in 11.6% of the comments, and the rest was relatively evenly divided by 44.5% male and 43.9% female (Table 6).

Table 6: Analysis of comments on case No. 2

No.	Social network	Characteristics of the publication					
		Emotional coloring			Commentator gender		
		Negative	Neutral	Positive	Male	Female	Undefined
1	**Facebook** 144 likes, repost 87, 73 comments	50.7% (37)	47.9% (35)	1.4% (1)	50.7% (37)	50.3% (36)	-
2	**Instagram** 1003 likes, 61 comments	49.1% (thirty)	46% (28)	4.9% (3)	19.7% (12)	59% (36)	21.3% (13)
3	**VKontakte** 98 likes, 4 repost, 22 K views, 39 comments	64.1% (25)	35.9% (14)	-	71.8% (28)	10.3% (4)	17.9% (7)

Case No. 3. The third case chosen for this study differs from the previous two. First, a positive example in the career advancement of a high-ranking official G. was analyzed. To be precise, this case involved the transfer by President of the Republic of Kazakhstan from the position of a mayor of regional significance to the position of mayor of the capital of Kazakhstan, Nur-Sultan, in June 2019. Secondly, a specific event was not taken as the object of the study, but publications in the media and social networks were analyzed for the period of six months preceding this promotion in the official's political career.

Thus, in accordance with the analytical data of the Monitoring System for Media, Social Networks, Blogs and Web Resources iMAS, the total number of publications on activities and events related to G. (from 01.01.2019 to 10.06.2019) was 3182. The share of this news published in mass media was 41.95%, and in social networks - 58.05%. Among the mass media, the prevalence of messages in print media and news agencies was 65.47% and 17% respectively, with 15% in electronic media. In addition, among social networks, the greatest distribution was observed in Vkontakte (28.93%), Instagram (26.2%) and Facebook (23.66%). The rest was accounted for by Odnoklassniki (6.98%), Telegram (5.68%), Twitter (5.25%) and YouTube (3.3%) (Information Monitoring and Analysis Software IMAS, Report 2019).

At the same time, the most important factor in the context of this case is the emotional coloring of the publications (message tone). The objective of the analysis was to study how much such publications in mass media and on social networks influence the formation of the reputation of a civil servant and advancement in their political career in general, without reference to any negative or positive incident. In this specific case study, a high-ranking

person G. was appointed to the prestigious position of mayor of the capital of Kazakhstan. The question arises: did G. move up the career ladder as a result of a positive image formed thanks to prevailing positive publications in the mass media and on social networks?

Let us consider the results of the analysis from this point of view in more detail. According to the iMAS Analytical Report, the message sentiment was 56.95% (1812 messages) positive, 35.7% (1136 messages), negative and 7.35% (234 messages) neutral. Similarly to the previous two cases, the comments under three posts on the social network Facebook, Instagram, Vkontakte were analyzed by random sampling (Table 7).

Table 7: Analysis of comments on case No. 3

No.	Social network	Characteristics of the publication					
		Emotional coloring			Commentator gender		
		Negative	Neutral	Positive	Male	Female	Undefined
1	**Facebook** 57 likes, repost 8, comments 42	31% (13)	57.1% (24)	11.9% (5)	45.2% (19)	54.8% (23)	-
2	**Instagram** 7269 Likes, 124 Comments	2.4% (3)	4.8% (6)	92.7% (115)	17.7% (22)	66.1% (82)	16.2% (20)
3	**VKontakte** 95 likes, 75 comments, 12 K views	13.3% (10)	60% (45)	26.7% (20)	48% (36)	44% (33)	8% (6)

In this case demonstrating the advancement of an official on the career ladder, the following can be observed: According to the indicators found in the table, 58.1% of comments on three publications were positive in their coloring. 31.1% of comments were neutral and only 10.8% of comments were negative. In addition, the majority of commentators were women - 57.3%, the rest were men - 31.9%, and those whose gender was not determined were 10.8%.

In the context of this case, among the most popular publications were messages with headlines such as "Over 30 billion tenge of investments attracted to the region", "500 million tenge will be directed to support mothers with many children", "A Telegram channel for mothers with many children has appeared", "Multi-children mothers will be supported by trade unions", "Infrastructural breakthrough: construction of the road has begun", "Capsules have been laid for the construction of a plant and a hotel", "84% of yards have been improved", "The region has attracted investments worth 69 billion", "Yerzhan Maxim received a gift from mayor", "Mayor of the region helped to send the young singer to the competition in Moscow", "The head of the region arrived at the presidential elections with his whole family", "The program "Family Business" was launched", "The ceremonial descent of the 30th ship", "The President of Kazakhstan received mayor of the region" and others. Most of the messages during the six-month period leading up to the appointment of the political civil servant to this high position were very positive and sometimes frankly laudatory (Figure 2).

Thus, the quantitative and qualitative indicators of publications demonstrate a direct impact on the formed positive reputation of G. In this regard, we presume that the appointment to a high position of G. was perceived by the public naturally and appropriately.

Figure 2: Emotional coloring in Mass Media and Social Media, case No. 2
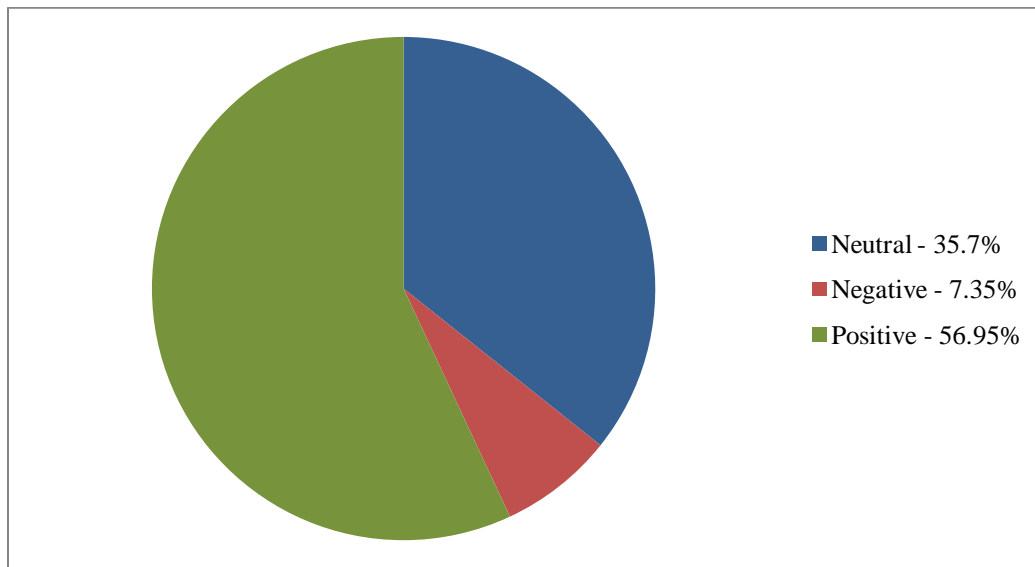
Source: Analytical data from iMAS [imas.kz]

Discussion

Even in the days when states were not constituted by law but rather embodied in a ruler sanctioned by a divine power, a government's legitimacy could be undermined if the people under it did not perceive it to be serving their interests or representing them. As the most visible arm of the government interacting with the people in supposed solidarity, the civil service has two major functions, both of which serve to bolster the overall perceived legitimacy of the government. The first function is to provide for the general welfare of the people – to provide services, as discussed in the introduction. The second function is to serve as an avenue for social advancement – a meritocratic space open to all citizens. In authoritarian states, these functions become subordinate to the overriding mission of maintaining a stable influence. Such states can admit the existence of failures to perform these functions but must portray these lapses as bad acts by non-representative individuals that are brought to justice by the government that has maintained its solidarity with the people. This narrative is harder to control with the advent of social media, however, and the three cases discussed here demonstrate examples of how the reputation of the state apparatus is maintained.

In the first case, official B.'s video called into question the civil service's commitment to their first function of serving the people, given that many ordinary Kazakhstani citizens could not afford to visit such a luxurious place. More than 70% of the media activity related to this incident was on social media. However, the official's leaving their post despite no actual rule being broken seems to have resulted from a publicized rebuke from the civil service.

Meanwhile, in the second case, official K's alleged plagiarism called into question whether an honest candidate could succeed in the civil service and its meritocratic ideals. Because a personal transgression was more obviously visible than in case 1, it is probably no surprise that the majority of mentions ended up being on mass media. The punishment of the official elided the fact that likely others of their generation had done similarly, and the overall

reputation of the civil service was preserved. Indeed, by taking a strong view of this issue in spite of the potential mitigating factors, the civil service was working to preserve the necessity of its reputation for fairness.

Finally, in the third case, the mayor's positive actions were heavily promoted on mass media, highlighting their ties to both the higher echelons of government and to the people. Headlines that did not mention the mayor's name sought to suborn their good reputation in the service of the reputation of the civil service overall.

While the state does not have full control over whether an official will attract a bad or good reputation with the public, it is able to react flexibly, de-emphasizing obvious failures and quickly disposing of them, while at the same time driving coverage of those with positive reputations. As Kazakhstan moves toward ever-greater reliance on mass media, the strategies of the government to accomplish the same results will have to further echo the actions of countries like Russia, the United States and China, which actively seek to drive social media trends through the creation of fake news, targeted content, and other such strategies. As this is historically a new territory, it remains to be seen whether an honest and resilient civil service and a freer media can actually withstand these types of destabilizing forces. In the meantime, individual civil servants find that their efforts to cultivate a positive reputation come with more tools than ever before, even as the risk grows.

As the results of the study show, being innovative tools in the field of public relations, mass media and social networks have become the driving force for influencing the political career of civil servants.

Conclusion

Summarizing the results of this study, we note that the reputation of a political civil servant is important on the path of career advancement.

As we can see from the results of the analysis, the role of the media and social networks is becoming more and more important. Today, the public perceives social networks as almost their main medium for receiving information, and news portals themselves often report information gathered from the posts of bloggers and public figures. In general, the media and social networks today play an important role in public policy in terms of raising urgent issues for reflection and discussion. They can identify hidden problems that affect the development of the entire country, including those possessing signs of authoritarian government. In addition, media and social networks can become a profitable platform for promoting one's ideas and attracting supporters.

Having analyzed three cases related to the activities or behavior of political civil servants, it should be noted that due to reputation images formed in the media and social networks, corresponding consequences have emerged for high-ranking officials.

Thus, we can draw the following conclusions based on the results of our content analysis:

1) Negative events related to activities or behavior in the private lives of civil servants are attracting more attention from the public. This is demonstrated by the

quantitative data – 567 (for a period of 9 days from 23.07.2019 to 31.07.2019) and 529 (for a 2-month period from 01.09.2019 to 13.11.2019) reports, respectively, for each individual episode.

In the first two cases, the population clearly knew why top officials were dismissed. In the last case, the official's promotion was preceded by a number of positive reports - 3182 about his activities (for the six-month period - from 01.01.2019 to 10.06.2019). However, such an active reaction and coverage in mass media and social networks for at least one event similar to the previous cases did not follow.

2) Negative incidents or resonant events require an "emotional release" by the audience. Accordingly, punishment in such cases is expected by the public.

3) The reputations of top officials are undoubtedly closely linked to their images in the media and social networks. However, reactions to the events are ultimately still the province of the public. This conclusion is based on the results of the analysis of comments under three random posts in social networks. In the first two cases, the negative coloring of comments prevails over the positive (55% and 53.2%, respectively), while in the third case, the share of positive comments under the three posts is 58%.

4) The cases show that reputation serves as the basis for the most effective shifts of political civil servants up or down the career ladder (Table 8).

Table 8: Consequences for a political career

No.	Case	Number of publications	Consequences in a political career
1	Civil Servant Travelling in London	567	Fired
2	Plagiarism in Research Work	529	Resigned and fired
3	Positive and Laudatory Publications in the Media and Social Networks over 6 Months	3182	Promoted up the career ladder

Summing up, we can say that reputation is an intangible, very significant asset that has an impact on the professional career of civil servants. In the context of commitment to the principle of transparency and, in particular, total digital transparency, every public servant should take into account the reputational risks of their visibility in the media.

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