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**THE PROBLEM OF IMAGE BUILDING OF  
POLITICAL ACTORS:  
THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL ASPECTS**

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**Esmira Gasim kizi Niftili**

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**ABSTRACT**

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The thesis was prepared at the Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Academic supervisor: Doctor of Political Science, Associate Prof.  
**Sevil Imamverdi kizi Mammedova**

Doctor of Psychology, Prof.  
**Gulnara Kazim kizi Gurbanova**

Official opponents: Doctor of Political Sciences, Prof.  
**Agiye Habib kizi Nakhchivanli**

Ph.D of Political Sciences, Associate Prof.  
**Eldar Ikram oglu Aslanov**

Ph.D of Political Sciences, Associate Prof.  
**Jahangir Khanoglan oglu Jahangirli**

Thesis Council FD2.30 acting under the Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan under the Higher Attestation Commission under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan

Chief of Thesis Council: Full member of ANAS,  
Doctor of Biology, Prof.  
\_\_\_\_\_ **Urhan Kazim oglu Alekberov**

Academic secretar  
of Thesis Council: Doctor of Political Sciences, Prof.  
\_\_\_\_\_ **Ziyafet Ziya kizi Habibova**

Chief of academic  
seminar: Doctor of Philosophy, Prof.  
\_\_\_\_\_ **Alikram Zakir oglu Abdullayev**

## GENERAL CONTENT OF THE DISSERTATION

**Relevance and degree of scientific development of the topic.** The implementation of power, the image of a political actor playing an important role in this process, its formation and actualization is one of the most important problems of political science. In the conditions of information abundance of the global world, as in all spheres, there are also dynamic changes in the relations of subjects and objects in politics, image and the problem of its formation is becoming increasingly important.

The image of politicians spread in the media is beginning to play the basis of communication with the masses. As well as another trend observed everywhere, increasing personification in politics, increasing interest in the personality of political actors, and this increases the relevance of the political image. Brilliant personalities in difficult political conditions, taking responsibility for the country and for their people, create an optimal model of statehood. From this point of view, it can be said that the political image of the owner of innate talent and world-famous wise politician, our national leader Heydar Aliyev is of great interest to politicians and researchers. The words uttered by national leader Heydar Aliyev at the first congress of Azerbaijanis of the world "*I have always been proud and am proud now that I am an Azerbaijani*"<sup>1</sup> express that he has always taken care of the interests of the Azerbaijani people.

Thus, if we summarize the relevance of the problem of forming the image of a political actor and the benefits of dissertation research, we can note the following conclusions:

- modern political processes pose more and more challenges to politicians, with the development of democratic institutions, with the increase of political culture of society, the role of the political image of a politician also increases, the

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<sup>1</sup> Əliyev, H.Ə. Müstəqilliyimiz əbədidir [Our independence is eternal]: [46 cilddə] / H.Əliyev. – Bakı: Azər nəşr, – c. 3. – 2013. – s. 45.

need for studying the features of the formation of a political image is created;

- the formation of the political image is a wide spread of technologies and forces, and this is the demand of modern times, and no state can stay out of this process;

- coverage of the political leader's activities in the media is the most important element of his existence in the political space;

- strengthening of political image factors in the modern political sphere through visualization and virtualization;

- it is quite natural that Azerbaijan is associated with the names of its leaders in the world, as personification trends are characteristic of modern politics. From this point of view, the study of the characteristic features of the political image of national leader Heydar Aliyev, his political successor, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, victorious Supreme Commander-in-Chief Ilham Aliyev and First Vice President, First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva are important tasks facing the political science of Azerbaijan.

Practically until the beginning of the 90s of the last century, the problem of forming a political image as an object of scientific and theoretical research was investigated only within the framework of Public Relations of political projects implemented by Western European and American Scientists. The problems of political image formation in modern Western political science have been studied mainly within the framework of political marketing and electoral processes. It can be said that Western researchers have demonstrated a pragmatic and utilitarian position on the problem of political image.<sup>2</sup>

A particular direction that Western scientists consider in the study of the political image is gender studies. So, D.Campus, L Davidson-Schmich, F.Fukuyama, I.M. Latu, D. Rhode's works

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<sup>2</sup> Bruce, B. Images of power: How the image makers shape our leaders / B.Bruce. – London: Kogan Page, – 1992. – 192 p.

include an analysis of political women's images, a comparative analysis of the different expectations of society towards male and female political leaders in different countries<sup>3</sup>. E.Noelle-Neumann linked the success of the political image with the political conformism of voters with the help of the theory of the “spiral of silence”<sup>4</sup>. Richard Harris's book "Psychology of mass communication" talks about the impact of mass media: television, radio, newspapers, magazines and other electronic and print materials on people<sup>5</sup>.

The dissertation analyzes R. Sobhani's articles published in the influential newspaper “The Washington Times” on the activities of the First Vice President and First Lady of Azerbaijan Mehriban Aliyeva. An article published in 2017 says that the appointment of Mehriban Aliyeva to the post of vice president improves the image of Azerbaijan and this is associated with three areas of her activity: 1) tolerant religious policy; 2) charity; 3) the fight against climate change<sup>6</sup>.

Among the Russian-speaking scientific circles, the study of political image can be divided into the following directions: 1. Creation of the theory of individual image of the political leader and the introduction of legal provisions. 2. The second direction,

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<sup>3</sup> Campus, D. Women political leaders and the media / D.Campus. – New York: Palgrave Macmillan, – 2013. – 147 p. Davidson-Schmich, L.K. Gender, intersectionality, and the executive branch: The case of Angela Merkel // German Politics. – 2011. 20 (3), – p. 325-341. Latu, I.M. Successful female leaders empower women’s behavior in leadership tasks / Ioana M.Latu, Marianne Schmid Mast, Joris Lammers, Doris Bombaris [et al.] // Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, – 2013, № 49, – p. 444-448. Rhode, L.D. Women and leadership / L.D.Rhode. – Oxford University Press. – 2017. – 256 p.

<sup>4</sup> Ноэль-Нойман, Э. Общественное мнение. Открытие спирали молчания [Public opinion. Opening the spiral of silence] / Э.Ноэль-Нойман. – Москва: Прогресс-Академия, – 1996. – 352 с.

<sup>5</sup> Харрис, Р. Психология массовых коммуникаций [Psychology of mass communication] / Р.Харрис. – Санкт-Петербург: Прайм – ЕВРОЗНАК, – 2003. – 448 с.

<sup>6</sup> Sobhani, S.R. The 'kind lady' of Azerbaijan // The Washington Times. Daily newspaper. – 2017, March 6.

more widely represented in scientific literature, is devoted to the problems of application of political image formation. Electoral technologies, PR-Communication and advertising applied in the process of forming and promoting the image of a political leader constitute the main trend of this direction. 3. Scientific works of a psychological nature. A large part of the scientific works devoted to political imagology was written in this genre. Among the bright representatives of this direction, we can draw the names of the Y.B.Shestopal, Q.Q.Pochepsov, A.A.Derkach, K.S.Jukov, and Y.V.Zazikina<sup>7</sup>.

Turkish political image researchers are most interested in the practical side of the issue and consider it important to study the factors that determine the behavior of voters. Thus, according to S. Şahan, since the middle of the twentieth century, relations in the political sphere have undergone a significant change and, compared with the previous period, the political image has become more influential on the behavior of voters<sup>8</sup>. According to Z.Damlapınar and S.Balji, among the factors influencing behavior as group pressure, family and party affiliation, economic conditions and political image play an important role<sup>9</sup>. S.Balji,

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<sup>7</sup> Шестопап, Е.Б. Политическая психология [Political psychology] / Е.Б.Шестопап. – Москва: ИНФРА-М, – 2002. – 304 с. Почепцов, Г.Г. Имиджелогия [Imagelogy] / Г.Г.Почепцов. – Москва: Рефл-бук, – 2006. – 766 с. Политическая имиджелогия [Political imagelogy] / А.А. Деркач, Е.Б.Перельгина [и др.] – Москва: Аспект Пресс, – 2006. – 400 с. В.И.Жуков, Л.Г.Лаптева. – Москва: Академический Проект, – 2003. – 858 с. 131. Жуков, К.С. Албука избирательной кампании [The ABC of the election campaign] / К.С.Жуков, А.Д.Карнышев. – Москва: ИМА-Пресс, – 2001. – 328 с. Зазыкина, Е.В. Политический PR: Символы [Political PR:Symbols] / Е.В.Зазыкина. – Москва: ЮрИнфор-Пресс, – 2003. – 125 с.

<sup>8</sup> Şahan, S. Siyasal liderlik imaj ve seçmen davranışları üzerine bir değerlendirme [Political leadership as an assessment of the image and voter behavior] / S.Şahan. – Konya: Literatürkademia, – 2020, – 192 s.

<sup>9</sup> Damlapınar, Z. Seçmenin zihnindeki aday imajını belirleyen etkenler: 28 mart 2004 yerel seçimleri alan araştırması [Factors determining the candidate image in the voter's mind: March 28, 2004 local elections field survey] / Z.Damlapınar, Ş.Balci // Journal of Selcuk Communication, – 2005. № 4 (1), – p. 58-79.

E.Kaya, B.Karadeniz and H.Abayli conducted a survey in municipal elections and managed to determine empirically the most important element of the political image for voters<sup>10</sup>.

Scientific researches are being carried out in the field of political image-making in Azerbaijan, scientific articles and books are being written. Among local researchers who addressed various aspects of the political image are R.Mehdiyev, A.Nakhchivanli, N.Alekberova, E.Nasirov, E.Akhundova, S.Yagizarov, S.Hasanova, S.Huseynov, U.Mehdiyeva, etc. There are also a number of valuable scientific works in the political science of Azerbaijan devoted to the political portraits of national leader Heydar Aliyev, his worthy successor Ilham Aliyev and first vice-president Mehriban Aliyeva.

R.Mehdiyev is one of the local researchers who most analyze the political image of the modern state leaders of Azerbaijan. He repeatedly appealed to the political heritage of national leader Heydar Aliyev<sup>11</sup> and political image of President Ilham Aliyev, analyzed them in the context of the ideology of azerbaijanism<sup>12</sup>. In 2012, under the editorship of A.Nakhchivanli, the book “The power of the personality” dedicated to the multifaceted activities of great leader Heydar Aliyev was published. An article by public figures, scientists, MPs, as well as the author's own eponymous article about national leader Heydar Aliyev was published here<sup>13</sup>. In N.Alakbarova's book “Political image making”, the phenomenon of political image was thoroughly analyzed, the

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<sup>10</sup> Balcı, Ş. Aday imajı oluşumunda etkili faktörler: “31 mart 2019 yerel seçimleri örneği” / Ş.Balcı, E.Kaya, B.Karadeniz, H.Abaylı // İletişim, kuram ve araştırma dergisi, – 2020. № 1 (50), – p. 1-27.

<sup>11</sup> Mehdiyev, R. Heydər Əliyevin siyasi portretinin cizgiləri [Features of Heydar Aliyev's political portrait] [Elektron resurs]. 23 aprel, 2004. URL: [https://azertag.az/xeber/HEYDAR\\_ALIYEVIN\\_SIYASI\\_PORTRETININ\\_CIZGI\\_LARI-310656](https://azertag.az/xeber/HEYDAR_ALIYEVIN_SIYASI_PORTRETININ_CIZGI_LARI-310656)

<sup>12</sup> Mehdiyev, R. Yeni dünya nizamı və milli ideya [New world order and national idea] / R.Mehdiyev. – Bakı: Şərq-Qərb, – 2016, – 280 s.

<sup>13</sup> Naxçıvanlı, A. Şəxsiyyətin qüdrəti [The power of the personality] / A.Naxçıvanlı. Bakı: – Yazıçı, – 2012.

technologies of formation and management of the political image existing in the West were brought to the attention and the image of Azerbaijan was interpreted in detail<sup>14</sup>. In her article, Hasanova analyzed the political image of national leader Heydar Aliyev since the times of the USSR and she highlighted his positive role in the formation of positive image of Azerbaijan and Azerbaijanis in the world<sup>15</sup>. E.Akhundova's image studies were related to the analysis of the political image of President Ilham Aliyev. In her work, the decision-making style and political image features of the president against the background of individual political events are presented in a peculiar form<sup>16</sup>. One of the topics often addressed by local researchers is the analysis of the political image of the First vice-president Mehriban Aliyeva. For example, in one of his articles, E.Nasirov noted that two factors played an important role in analyzing her political activity. The first of these is genetics, the other is rich experience<sup>17</sup>.

**Object and subject of research.** The object of the study is the problem of forming the image of a political actor and its theoretical and methodological aspects, the subject of which is the features, mechanisms and technologies of formation of the image of a political actor.

**Goals and objectives of the study.** The main purpose of the study is to analyze the essence and problem of formation of political image from theoretical and methodological aspects, to

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<sup>14</sup> Ələkbərova, N. Siyasi imicmeykinq [Political image making] / N.Ələkbərova. Bakı: – Elm və təhsil, – 2019, – 248 s.

<sup>15</sup> Гасанова, Ш. PR в нашей жизни: Имя - ничто, имидж – все! [PR in our life: name is nothing, image is everything!]: [Электронный ресурс]. – 2010, 30 января. URL: <http://www.1news.az/news/pr-v-nashey-zhizni-imya---nichto-imidzh-vse>

<sup>16</sup> Ахундова, Э. Алиев Ильхам. Портрет президента на фоне перемен [Portrait of the President on the background of changes] / Э.Ахундова. – Москва: РОССПЕН, – 2016. – 333 с.

<sup>17</sup> Nəsirov, E. Mehriban Əliyeva fenomeni: ləyaqət, intellekt və xeyirxahlığın vahid simfoniyası [Phenomenon of Mehriban Aliyeva: a single symphony of dignity, intellect and kindness] // Xalq qəzeti. – 2021, 27 avqust.



create a model of complex political analysis of the image of political actor, to study the system of formation and actualization technologies of rational image, features of their application in Azerbaijan.

In order to achieve the research objectives set out, the following tasks were identified and fulfilled:

- To interpret the evolution of theoretical views on the image of a political actor;
- To analyze the complex theoretical-conceptual model of the political image;
- To conduct a political analysis of the typology of the image of the political image
- Identifying and investigating political image components;
- To determine the role played by the gender aspect in the formation of an individual image;
- To interpret the methodology of applying political image technologies;
- To identify the role of mass media and social networks in actualizing the political image;
- Coverage of political image features of national leader Heydar Aliyev;
- To examine the remarkable image characteristics of Ilham Aliyev as a XXI century political leader;
- To analyze the individual image of the First vice-president Mehriban Aliyeva.

**Research methods.** The theoretical basis of the research consists of conceptual statements voiced in the speeches of national leader Heydar Aliyev and President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, as well as fundamental works of scientists conducting research in this field and theoretical approaches and concepts, scientific statements described here.

In the framework of the systematic and complex approach to the studied problem, general methods such as analysis, synthesis, induction, deduction, generalization, institutional, structural-functional and comparative political analysis, as well as analysis

of documents directed to the analysis of empirical material, statistical analysis, content analysis and other scientific research methods were used.

The application of a systematic approach made it possible to analyze the problem of forming the image of a political actor through the prism of global, regional and national politics. The need to use institutional and structural-functional methods of analysis was associated with the need to study the role and opportunities of the image of political actors in the political mechanism. Through the method of comparative political analysis, strategies and tactics of political image formation carried out by different countries were met and generalizations on various aspects were carried out. In the course of the study, when analyzing the images of male and female political leaders, a feminist paradigm approach was used.

**The main findings of a thesis to be defended.**

1. The need to form the image of a political actor is gaining momentum thanks to the strengthening of the democratic trend in politics and the rapid development of the media.

2. In the political sphere, the tendency towards individualization of the political image is becoming stronger.

3. The political image plays a noble role in politics, creating unique conditions in which the content is conditioned by its form.

4. Actualization of women's political image has a positive impact on the establishment of gender equality in society as a whole. First vice-president Mehriban Aliyeva, being a prominent political figure in the world has made a great contribution to the formation of Azerbaijan's positive image abroad, has a positive impact on the establishment of gender equality in Azerbaijan,.

**Scientific innovation of the study.** In the dissertation work:

- For the first time in Azerbaijani political science, the problem of forming the image of a political actor was systematized at the interdisciplinary level by summarizing the data of foreign and local sources.

- When analyzing the functions of the political image, it was proposed to include an ennobling function of the political image. It was mentioned about the unique quality of the content of the form in the political image, the idea of internal development and moral growth of the political actor who underwent through external changes.

- When analyzing the classification of the image of a political actor, it was proposed to include the image of “heir” in the existing typology, its distinguishing features and historical mission were clarified.

- Political portraits of national leader Heydar Aliyev and his worthy successor, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Victorious Supreme Commander-in-chief Ilham Aliyev are presented in the context of the image components of the political actor.

- The features of the political image of First Vice-President, First Lady of Azerbaijan Mehriban Aliyeva have been systematically analyzed.

**Theoretical and practical significance of the study.** The provisions put forward in the dissertation, theoretical ideas and obtained results can serve as a basis for future research within the framework of political image-a fairly new field of research for the political science of Azerbaijan. The practical significance of the research is that the research materials can be used in lectures and seminars at Bachelor's and master's degrees in political science of higher education institutions, as well as in the teaching of “Political image making” and “organization and management of Public Relations”, preparation of lectures and teaching aids, as well as in relevant practical activities.

**Theoretical and practical significance of the study.** Statements, theoretical ideas, results obtained in the course of the study are quite a new direction for the political science of Azerbaijan. Its practical significance is that the research materials can be used in lectures and seminars on Bachelor's and Master's degrees in the specialty of Political science of higher education

institutions, in particular in the teaching of “Political image-building” and “Organization and management of Public Relations”, in the preparation of lectures and teaching aids, as well as in the relevant activities.

**Approbation and application of the study.** Approbation and implementation of the study. The results and main provisions of the study were reported at Republican and international scientific and practical conferences, published in the form of abstracts and articles. The dissertation was approbated at the preliminary discussion and scientific seminar held at the Academy of Public Administration under the president of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

**Organization in which the thesis is carried out.** The thesis was carried out at the Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

**Total volume of thesis.** The thesis consists of introduction, three chapters, ten paragraphs, conclusion and list of used literature. Introduction – 21528, Chapter I – 81125, Chapter II – 120687, Chapter III – 71773, Conclusion – 14205, total volume – 336167 characters.

## **THE MAIN CONTENT OF THE WORK**

In the **Introduction** to the thesis, the relevance of the research topic is substantiated, the degree of elaboration of the problem is analyzed, extensive information is given about the object, subject, goals and objectives of the study, the theoretical-methodological foundations, scientific novelty, statements submitted for defense, the theoretical and practical significance of the work is indicated.

The first chapter of the dissertation “**Theoretical-conceptual approaches to the interpretation and formulation of the image of a political actor**” consists of three paragraphs. In the first paragraph of this chapter “**The essence and evolution of theoretical views on the formation of the image of a political actor**”, it is shown on the basis of an analysis of the literature and a generalization of the results obtained from the course of the study, that the political image has historically existed, but political actors began to purposefully use it in the twentieth century. In this

chapter, the concept of the image of a political actor is analyzed comparatively with the concepts of a political image and stereotype, spontaneous and organized types of political image are distinguished, and it is highlighted that the thesis is dedicated to an organized, formalized type of political image.

One of the important points of attention here is the ethics of forming the image of a political actor. Thus, considered the first realistic political science work "The Sovereign" by Machiavelli' the principle "the end justifies the means" was put forward and ethics was sacrificed for political purposes. It is of particular interest that one of the most successful image creators in the XX century was totalitarian states. Former director of communications for the Conservative Party of Great Britain B. Bruce noted: "*Of course, it is not good to mention Gebbels as the first image maker in a cultural society*"<sup>18</sup>. However, it is especially important to note the main postulate of political image - "*Forming a political image is not a substitute for the political process, but an addition to it*"<sup>19</sup>.

The country in which political image technologies are most actively developed and used is the United States, which is considered the cradle of modern democracy. Political technologists and public relations specialists enrich their practical and theoretical knowledge after each election in the midst of a fierce struggle for voice of voters.

People often make decisions in conditions of information and time deficit. Sometimes they refer to the image of a person or another object, instead of creating a complex, deep and comprehensive portrait, simply because they do not want to think. When forming a political image, it is precisely this feature of the human psyche that is taken into account. The problem of forming

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<sup>18</sup> Bruce, B. Images of power: How the image makers shape our leaders / B. Bruce. – London: Kogan Page, – 1992. – p. 24.

<sup>19</sup> Гринберг, Т.Э. Политические технологии: ПР и реклама [Political technologies: PR and advertising] / Т.Э.Гринберг. – Москва: Аспект Пресс, – 2012. – с. 78.

the image of a political actor is determined by the specificity of politics – the abundance of information that does not allow to distinguish a “good” politician from a “bad” politician, and the lack of time and competence to process it. It is this factor that modern communication technologies and certain methods of Information Presentation allow image-makers to create the necessary public opinion about the political actor. In the conditions of information abundance, people need simple, understandable images, which allows them to easily perceive the world, various objects, feel themselves in security.

The results obtained in this paragraph were published in the article “Interpretation of the image of the political actor”<sup>20</sup>

In the second paragraph of Chapter I, “**Theoretical model of the complex analysis of political image characteristics**”, the theoretical model of the political image was analyzed in the light of the objectives of the image of the political actor and the functions necessary for their implementation. First of all, the objectives of the image of the political actor were considered. The image of a political actor can follow the mission of attracting the target audience, on the contrary, discrediting the opponent, pursuing the goal of negative attraction. If we summarize the formalization goals of the political image, we can say that it serves to create a whole image that has a social effect, focuses on the emotional sphere, is individualized, corresponds to existing stereotypes in society, is focused on positivity, is realistic and relevant, that is, is not inwardly contradictory.

In order to achieve these goals, the political image performs a large number of functions. Among these, we can list the functions of value, technological, central and management-system-forming, psychological protection, social training, socio-symbolic

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<sup>20</sup> Нифтили, Э.Г. Интерпретация имиджа политического актора [Interpretation of the image of the political actor ] // Сборник статей по материалам XV Международной научно-практической конференции «Общественные науки в современном мире: политология, социология, философия, история», – Москва: Интернаука, – 2018. № 9(11). – с. 54-57.

recognition, illusory compensation, communicative, nominative, aesthetic, address, existential, socio-cultural, identification, idealization, conflict, promotion and education. A number of similar features and parallels were found in the classification of the functions of the political image mentioned in the scientific literature. In fact we can observe a discussion of the same functions under different names.

As a result of the analysis of political functions, we proposed to include the ennobling function of the political image. Political image is a powerful phenomenon whose form determines its content. We have come to the conclusion that while developing and gaining positive qualities political figures who are struggling to win the sympathy of the modern audience, this is useful not only for them themselves, but also for their immediate surroundings and the people that surrounds them.

It should be noted that the results obtained in this paragraph are reflected in the applicant's article "Image of state institutions and civil servant"<sup>21</sup>.

The third paragraph of Chapter I "**Systematic political analysis of the classification of the image of a political leader**" reviewed various classification models of the image of a political actor. It was noted that the internal and external images, respectively, target the citizens and the world community. Considering that both have different expectations and different political culture, it is natural that the political image transmitted to them is quite different. The classification of F.Jefkins was improved, offering subjective - real - ideal types of image. The subjective image is the image that the political party thinks about itself, the real image is the way the public perceives it, and the ideal image is the image that the political actor wants to achieve. As can be seen from the model, the successful image of the

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<sup>21</sup> Niftili, E.Q. Dövlət qurumlarının və dövlət qulluqçusunun imici [Image of state institutions and civil servant ] // – Bakı: Dövlət idarəçiliyi: nəzəriyyə və təcrübə jurnalı, – 2015. № 2, – s. 253-260.

political actor is directly proportional to the closeness between these types.

Although the social role approach of a fairly widespread political image gives researchers great opportunities in terms of science and creativity, this method should be used with caution. Because it involves serious risk as distorting reality in itself. At the same time, we proposed the role of “successor” in the context of the social role approach of the image. This role applies to the consistent followers of the political course and ideology of the previous leader.

It also offers physical, political and mixed forms of succession. Physical succession is more typical for states with a monarchical form of government. In both constitutional and absolute monarchies, power is inherited from a parent to a child or from a close relative, and here the reproduction form of power is formed precisely by kinship ties. The disadvantage of this form is that the physical heir does not always share the political ideas of his predecessor or, even if he agrees with him, is not in the power to carry this heavy mission. In the political form of succession, it is not necessary to have kinship relations between the predecessor and the successor, where the successor is considered to be the bearer and follower of the political ideas of the leader before him. The mixed form of succession is a synthesis of physical and political forms. The heir, as well as being the direct heir of the previous leader, is also the most ardent defender of his political ideas. This form can be considered the strongest and most enduring among other forms of succession. Thus, it combines both family values and political-ideological elements. The strongest aspect of this type of succession is the sense of tradition and responsibility.

In the first paragraph of Chapter II **“Components of the political image and methodology of their analysis”** of the thesis **“Components of political image and their analysis methodology”**, the components of an individual image of a political actor were considered. To begin with, all the necessary



components of a successful image must be intact, for example, the image, which is strong in terms of intellect, but whose moral qualities are enigmatic, can not be considered successful. Additional areas of activity of the political actor are considered one of the most flexible components of the image, and here the expression “*The image of the politician is his non-political image*”<sup>22</sup> is absolutely true. Information about the political actor's social ties, his biography and his family are important issues that interest the target audience. These ties build confidence in the politician, serve to strengthen the element of trust in concrete and socially acceptable information about him, as it is impossible to believe an abstract person. At the same time, this applies to religious views. The religious views of the political leader must be concrete, otherwise it is not clear how he will behave in an uncertain situation. The most important component of the individual image of a political actor is the visual component. The fact is that most people are more sensitive to visualization. For this reason, image makers should pay special attention to the visual component of the image.

The most important constituent element of the personal image of a political actor is the visual component. This claim is due to the fact that most people are more sensitive to visual information. For this reason, image makers attach great importance to the visual component of the image.

The personality of a politician is the basis and core of his image. Image formation operations are carried out on it. This is the primary condition. There are such features that it is impossible to form and instill them. One phrase of national leader Heydar Aliyev once said confirms the reality of life: “*Whoever makes claims more than his knowledge and skills always loses*”<sup>23</sup>.

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<sup>22</sup> Почепцов, Г.Г. Имиджелогия [Imagelogy] / Г.Г.Почепцов. – Москва: Рефл-бук, – 2006. – с. 258.

<sup>23</sup> Naхçivan Muxtar Respublikası Ali Məclisinin üzvləri ilə görüşdə Azərbaycan Respublikasının Prezidenti Heydər Əliyevin nitqi [Speech by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Heydar Aliyev at the meeting with the members of the

Chapter II **“The role of gender aspect in shaping the image of a political actor”** explains the political domination of male leaders by patriarchal theory on the origin of the state. The natural power of the “father” in the family is spread over the whole state and receives a large scale. While male power ambitions are consistent with their gender roles, women's desire to pursue a political career is not unequivocally met. This also affects the formation of their images.

In modern times, women cooperate together with men in all socio-economic spheres of society. Although, politics has traditionally been a sphere of activity of men, the number of women in politics is constantly growing. However, since Social Psychology has a conservative nature, self-realization of female politicians has its own specific features. According to image makers, since power and competence are associated with men in society women who dream of a political career must have certain masculine characteristics. The formalization of the female image of a politician is considered a difficult task for the image maker. They are faced with a contradictory character: on the one hand, she must combine in herself a tough male character, on the other hand, delicate female characters. This contrast makes it difficult for a politician to be perceived by the audience. It always has the effect of unpredictability in itself.

It should be noted that the results of the applicant on this topic are reflected in her article “Political image of leading women and motivation for achievement of Azerbaijani women”<sup>24</sup>.

The first lady institute is the element that strengthens and complements the image of the male leader. This socio-political role, which is associated with a humanitarian mission, has great

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Supreme Assembly of the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic] - 21 oktyabr 1996-cı il. URL: <https://lib.aliyevheritage.org/az/4520300.html>

<sup>24</sup> Niftili, E.Q. Lider qadınların siyasi imici və Azərbaycan qadınlarında nailiyyət motivi [Political image of leading women and motivation for achievement of Azerbaijani women] // – Bakı: Odlar Yurdu Universitetinin Elmi və Pedaqoji Xəbərlər Jurnalı, – 2019. № 52, – s. 194-200.

potential. Promotes the idea of instilling the idea of gender equality in society and active role of women in social life. The mission of the first lady is to protect national interests, strengthen the positive image of the country, support people's diplomacy, strengthen the humanitarian aspects of international political relations.

The results of the applicant's scientific research on the Institute of the first lady were published in the article “The influence of the institute of the first lady on the image of the political leader”<sup>25</sup>.

The third paragraph of Chapter II “**Application methodology of political image shaping technologies**” talks about the changes in the political sphere due to the rapid development of Information Technologies.

One of the key technologies used in shaping the political image is positioning or unique political proposition. The basis of this idea comes from the fact that the political leader manifests himself as someone close to certain ideology, movement, person or events, positioning himself with something. A unique political proposal was taken from marketing, where the buyer prefers a certain product in the conditions that there are many products with the same name in the market. That is the features that make political leaders superior and different from others should be promoted.

During the formation of the political image, often elements of manipulation are encountered. This is the technique of consciously directing attention from one object to another. Political manipulation is the act of people against their own interests by secretly influencing their political consciousness and behavior in order to achieve certain activities and inactivity.

Another important method is mythization. Myths are deeply rooted in the public consciousness of each people. Imagemakers

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<sup>25</sup> Niftili, E.Q. Birinci xanım institutunun siyasi liderin imicinə təsiri [The influence of the institute of the first lady on the image of the political leader ] // – Bakı: Sivilizasiya jurnalı, – 2014. № 4, – s. 182-190.

can associate the image of a certain political leader with the image of heroism deeply rooted in the imagination of the people and present him as a simple, self-sufficient and worthy of empathy.

Emotionalization is the most actively used method of shaping the political image. At this time, they turn not to the rationality of people, but to their empathic and emotional characteristics. The idea that there is a strong personification in politics, when people give preference to one or another political leader, that guided not by his political program, platform and promises, but by his human side, by his attractive image that wins the sympathy of voters.

The idea of moving away from the negative is connected with the fact that politics is always a sphere of activity aimed at the future. A politician who can attract voters with brighter images and visions of the future is one step ahead of other candidates.

The fourth paragraph of Chapter II **“The role of mass media and social networks in the process of political image actualization”** talks about the different demands from politicians put forward by different media channels before politicians. In the 20th century, the use of radio as a means of political communication first required politicians to be excellent speakers, and after a short period of time television broadcasts to be telegenistic. Television debates, which are an integral part of the elections, put the policy on a visual scale. Currently, the growing popularity of social media networks has prompted politicians to be both informal, witty and extremely flexible. Social and political conditions changing in the blink of an eye in social networks provide incredible opportunities for politicians, as well as contain great threats. It requires politicians to know deeply the basics of public relations and image building.

Public opinion poll is an exceptional tool that allows imagemakers to measure public sentiment. The introduction of public opinion provides great opportunities for the formation of an effective political image based on expectations, when the relationship with the population plays an extremely important role. One of the important phenomena mentioned about is the

“spiral of silence”. Using the tendency to follow imaginary multiplicity in the face of fear of isolation, the mass media have the ability to simulate the effect of multiplicity and direct society in the direction they want. This technology can also be used to create a certain political image.

According to imagemakers, the current political leader has an advantage over the leader of the opposition. Thus, his activities are constantly covered in the media, at the same time, if during his rule there was no special disaster, if the population had an opinion on his competence, this could not be said about the opposition leader. For this reason, opposition leaders are more determined and generous when making promises. Because the population is unaware of what they are capable of.

It should be noted that the results obtained in this paragraph were published in the articles “The role that the media plays in the formation of the political image” and “The role that the media and social networks play in the process of actualizing the political image”<sup>26</sup>.

The third chapter of the thesis is called “**The political analysis of the political image of the Presidents and the First Vice-president of Azerbaijan since 1993**”, and it contains three paragraphs.

The first paragraph of this chapter entitled “**Features of the political image of national leader Heydar Aliyev**” reveals the features of the political image of national leader Heydar Aliyev, who returned to power at the insistence of the people in a difficult period for the country, the savior and founder of the modern state of Azerbaijan. It is shown that the people's confidence in great

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<sup>26</sup> Нифтили, Э.Г. Роль СМИ в формировании политического имиджа [The role that the media plays in the formation of the political image ] // Hileya: Scientific Bulletin. – Kyiv : Publishing house «Hileya», – 2019. – Volume 142 (№ 3). Part 3. Political Sciences. – p. 84-87. Niftili, E.Q. KİV və sosial şəbəkələrin siyasi imicin aktuallaşdırılması prosesində oynadığı rol [The role that the media and social networks play in the process of actualizing the political image ] // Milli Azərbaycan Tarixi Muzeyi. – Bakı: Aspoliqraf, – 2020, – s. 213-223.

leader Heydar Aliyev is primarily based on strong faith, his political portrait is depicted in the context of the components of the political actor's image, and he always attaches great importance to the preservation and development of national values, including family and religious values.

It is emphasized that during his life outstanding statesman Heydar Aliyev managed to play leading roles in various historical epochs. He had bright personal qualities and did a great job in raising the image of Azerbaijan and the Azerbaijani people in Soviet times. Heydar Aliyev returned to power in the period of crisis caused by incompetent leadership in the first years of independence and skillfully removed the country from this severe recession, achieved a cease-fire in the first Karabakh War, focused his attention on economic revival and improvement of the well-being of the population.

Heydar Aliyev has always successfully maintained relations with the public. The reason for this was that he was a simple man who came out of the people and the care and feelings of the people were never alien and incomprehensible to him. From this point of view, it should be noted that the great leader treats young with great care and love, attaches special importance to the role of youth in the development of our country. He thought that every Azerbaijani youth should first all think about the present and future of our independent country. The state youth policy began to be implemented under the leadership of our national leader Heydar Aliyev, and Youth Day was introduced on his initiative. In order to ensure the active participation of young people in the life of the country, The Ministry of Youth was established in accordance with the presidential decree in 1994.

The political image of Heydar Aliyev reflects the continuous qualities of Azerbaijani statehood consciousness, a whole school of Management, The New Azerbaijan Party, the ruling team, and the modern Azerbaijani public-political idea.

The set of effective and unusual personal qualities, emotionally colorful and at the same time balanced actions

became an integral part of his political image and formed the image of father of the nation, defender, savior and national leader. The motto of the national leader *“I have always been proud and today I am proud that I am Azerbaijani”*, which is full of national pride has formed the basis of the idea of azerbaijanism. As a result of the political course carried out by our great leader Heydar Aliyev, the independent state of Azerbaijan has successfully developed in all areas and strengthened its international position.

It should be noted that the thesis “Heydar Aliyev's political image” was published in the conference materials entitled “Heydar Aliyev's statehood heritage and development model of independent Azerbaijan”<sup>27</sup>.

In the second paragraph of the above-mentioned Chapter **“The distinctive image characteristics of Ilham Aliyev as a politician of the 21st century”**, the political image of the president of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev is characterized as a leader loved by the people, backed by his support, as well as enjoying great authority at the international level. It is emphasized that Ilham Aliyev had a great advantage in directly observing the experience of the most prominent political figure of his time, the national leader Heydar Aliyev. Heydar Aliyev declared his son his “political heir”. In his speeches, Ilham Aliyev too has repeatedly noted that he is a follower of the ideas of national leader Heydar Aliyev.

The core of President Ilham Aliyev's political image is his respect for Heydar Aliyev's memory and a sense of responsibility for the people who showed him high confidence. Being a worthy political successor of great leader Heydar Aliyev, the successful continuation of the path he started and the usage of available opportunities for the benefit of the state and people are the main values of Ilham Aliyev. National leader Heydar Aliyev expressed

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<sup>27</sup> Niftili, E.Q. Heydər Əliyevin siyasi imici [Heydar Aliyev's political image] // “Heydər Əliyevin dövlətçilik irsi və müstəqil Azərbaycanın inkişaf modeli” mövzusunda doktorant və dissertantların elmi konfransının materialları. – Bakı: Mütərcim, – 2012, – s. 3-8.

his confidence in Ilham Aliyev as follows: “He is a highly intelligent, pragmatic-minded person, well aware of modern world policy and economy, energetic and enterprising person”<sup>28</sup>.

It is noted that in the early years of his reign, Ilham Aliyev's political image was perceived as a worthy successor and a guarantor of political stability. Today, when Azerbaijan has established itself as a reliable partner in the international arena, independently solved the issues of domestic and foreign policy with great achievements and became an actor of international relations, the image of President Ilham Aliyev was established in public consciousness and in the international arena as a strong and progressive leader of XXI century. His love for his people, his aim to serve them, his principled and decisive approach to solving issues, his unshakable will, his inexhaustible energy, his new model of management, his professional diplomat's skill, his revolutionary management style are important features that make this image relevant. The personal line of Ilham Aliyev, who promised to be the president of every Azerbaijani while coming to power, is evident in all reconstruction and construction works carried out in Azerbaijan.

Giving special attention and care to the education of young people according to the national spirit, their comprehensive development, President Ilham Aliyev successfully continues the youth policy of the Great leader. It is the result of this policy that the Azerbaijani youth responds with great pleasure to all the calls of the head of the state. The liberation of the occupied lands in the Patriotic War under the leadership of Supreme Commander-in-Chief President Ilham Aliyev proved it again.

The words of great leader Heydar Aliyev, “*I believe in him as much as myself and have great hopes for his future*”<sup>29</sup>, gained a

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<sup>28</sup> Əliyev, H.Ə. Müstəqilliyimiz əbədidir [Our independence is eternal]: [46 cilddə] / H.Əliyev. – Bakı: Azərnaşr, – c. 15. – 2013. – s. 182.

<sup>29</sup> H. Əliyev. Azərbaycan xalqına müraciət [Appeal to the Azerbaijani people]: [Elektron resurs]. – 2003, 1 oktyabr. URL: <https://lib.aliyevheritage.org/az/6077283.html>



second breath after the brilliant victory of Supreme Commander-in-chief President İlham Aliyev in the II Karabakh War. President İlham Aliyev words: *“Today I visited the grave of great leader Heydar Aliyev and bowed before him. I said in my heart that I am a happy person that I have fulfilled my father's will. We liberated Shusha! This is a great victory! Today, the spirit of our martyrs and great leader is glad!”*<sup>30</sup> proved once again that the liberation of lands was the mission entrusted to him by the national leader.

Thus, one of the most important factors strengthening the political image of President İlham Aliyev, who resolutely defends national interests, is his brilliant victory in the II Karabakh War. The Patriotic War, which lasted only 44 days, turned into the legacy of President İlham Aliyev and gave the Azerbaijani people historical justice and the image of a victorious people among the world community. Currently, an important part of the internal policy pursued by President İlham Aliyev is the issue of restoration of the liberated territories and return of the citizens displaced from their native lands during the first Karabakh War. Laying the foundation for a Great Return, President İlham Aliyev first of all began to restore the road and energy infrastructure in the liberated territories, in a very short time the Fuzuli International Airport was put into operation, the foundation of the second airport in Zangilan was laid. President İlham Aliyev also instructed the “Smart” village project in three villages of zangilan district and the restoration of the zangilan mosque.

The last paragraph of the third chapter entitled **“The image of First vice-president Mehriban Aliyeva as a politician woman”** presents in detail the political portrait of the First Vice-president and First Lady of Azerbaijan, which confirms the positive image and growing authority of Mehriban Aliyeva, whose activities are aimed at increasing the power of Azerbaijan. It is noted that at

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<sup>30</sup> İlham Əliyev: "Xoşbəxt adamam ki, ata vəsiyyətimini yerinə yetirdim" [I am a happy person that I have fulfilled my father's will]: [Elektron resurs]. – 2020, 8 noyabr. URL: <https://report.az/qarabag/ilham-eliyev-xosbext-adamam-ki-ata-vesiyyetini-yerine-yetirdim/>

present, Mehriban Aliyeva's activity in Azerbaijan and abroad is quite an influential political figure aimed at further strengthening the power of Azerbaijan. Playing an important role in the development of the country's culture, health, education and sports, she is the initiator of many important projects. The establishment of the institute of the first lady in Azerbaijan is due to Mehriban Aliyeva's personal qualities and her active life position.

It is emphasized that the political image of Mehriban Aliyeva is based on the global struggle for humanism and charity Mission. Also known as the patron of culture and art in the country and in the world, Mehriban Aliyeva sincerely believes that societies can achieve consensus and harmony through them, and therefore is engaged in wide promotion of multiculturalism and tolerance.

We can say that Mehriban Aliyeva's political career is a real stimulus for the rise of the motive for women's achievement in Azerbaijan, she played a very positive role-model for women, she is a real catalyst for the improvement of gender relations. Her successful example encourages thousands of Azerbaijani women to take a more active life position, be successful both in personal life and in career. Young girls who are inspired by her, not only tend to study, work, but also take into consideration family values, constantly try to keep a balance between these two spheres. In addition, Mehriban Aliyeva is a very successful example in terms of the dynamic role a woman plays in public. Her volunteer movement, launched in Azerbaijan as a protection of nature, promotion of culture, organizer of global sports competitions, played an exceptional role in the formation of social responsibility in the younger generation.

The activity of Mehriban Aliyeva, whose aim is to serve humanity, is of an international nature. As the president of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation, she does a lot of work towards raising the international image of Azerbaijan, promoting our national culture, and works tirelessly to inform the world community about the history of Karabakh, Armenia's 30-year aggression against Azerbaijan, the Khojaly genocide, and to protect the rights of our

compatriots expelled from their native lands. Under the leadership of Mehriban Aliyeva by the Heydar Aliyev Foundation an important projects are carried out on restoration of cultural and religious monuments in our liberated territories, our cultural traditions are restored, valuable contribution and support is made to the revival of Karabakh.

In the “**Conclusion**” part of the dissertation, the scientific study is summed up, on the basis of generalizations, recommendations of a theoretical and practical nature are put forward. The candidate concluded that the formation of an organized political image is one of the important tasks facing every state in the modern period and serves to establish and strengthen the state-citizen relations on a healthy basis.

**Published scientific works reflecting the main results of the dissertation:**

1. Heydər Əliyevin siyasi imici [Political image of Heydar Aliyev] // “Heydər Əliyevin dövlətçilik irsi və müstəqil Azərbaycanın inkişaf modeli” mövzusunda doktorant və dissertantların elmi konfransının materialları. – Bakı: Mütərcim, – 2012, – s. 3-8.

2. Ölkənin imic problemi [The problem of image of country] // “Heydər Əliyev müstəqil Azərbaycan Respublikasının banisidir” mövzusunda doktorant və dissertantların elmi konfransının materialları. – Bakı: Mütərcim, – 2013, – s. 90-97.

3. Birinci xanım institutunun siyasi liderin imicinə təsiri [Impact of First Lady Institute on the image of political leader] // – Bakı: Sivilizasiya jurnalı, – 2014. № 4, – s. 182-190.

4. Dövlət qurumlarının və dövlət qulluqçusunun imici [The image of government agencies and civil servant] // – Bakı: Dövlət idarəçiliyi: nəzəriyyə və təcrübə jurnalı, – 2015. № 2, – s. 253-260.

5. Siyasi imic anlayışının tarixi təkamülü [Historical evolution of the concept of political image] // – Bakı: Sivilizasiya jurnalı, – 2018. № 4, – s. 78-84.

6. Lider qadınların siyasi imici və Azərbaycan qadınlarında nailiyyət motivi [Political image of Leader women and achievement motive in Azerbaijani women] // – Bakı: Odlar Yurdu Universitetinin Elmi və Pedaqoji Xəbərlər Jurnalı, – 2019. № 52, – s. 194-200.

7. KİV və sosial şəbəkələrin siyasi imicin aktuallaşdırılması prosesində oynadığı rol [The role of Mass Media and social networks in the process of actualization of the political image] // Milli Azərbaycan Tarixi Muzeyi. – Bakı: Aspoliqraf, – 2020, – s. 213-223.

8. Интерпретация имиджа политического актора [Interpretation of the image of a political actor] // Сборник статей по материалам XV Международной научно-практической конференции «Общественные науки в современном мире: политология, социология, философия, история», – Москва: Интернаука, – 2018. № 9(11). – с. 54-57.

9. Роль СМИ в формировании политического имиджа [The role of mass media in shaping political image] // Hileya: Scientific Bulletin. – Kyiv : Publishing house «Hileya», – 2019. – Volume 142 (№ 3). Part 3. Political Sciences. – p. 84-87.

Defense of the dissertation will be held at a meeting of the dissertation Council FD.2.30 on March 15, 2022 at 14:00 at the Academy of Public Administration under the president of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Address: AZ 1001, Baku City, Lermontov Street, 74.

The dissertation can be found in the library of the Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Electronic versions of the dissertation and abstract have been posted on the official website of the Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

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