

FORMATION OF THE EXTERNAL AUTHORITARIAN COUNTRY'S IMAGE UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF MEDIA

ФОРМУВАННЯ ЗОВНІШНЬОГО ОБРАЗУ АВТОРИТАРНОЇ КРАЇНИ ПІД ВПЛИВОМ ЗМІ

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Abstract. *The formation of a country's image is a highly relevant topic in the field of social sciences and humanities. A country's positive image is increasingly seen as a crucial strategic resource, providing a competitive advantage on the global stage, enabling the promotion of ideas and concepts, and creating an attractive investment image for the international target audience. This article explores the formation of a term "country image" and the image of an authoritarian country under the influence of the media. It identifies the role of the media in shaping the image of authoritarian countries. The research also systematically investigates the pivotal roles played by media framing, agenda-setting mechanisms, and the cultivation of a collective national identity in either reinforcing or challenging prevailing perceptions of authoritarianism.*

Анотація. *Формування іміджу країни є надзвичайно актуальною темою в галузі соціально-гуманітарних наук. Позитивний імідж країни все частіше розглядається як важливий стратегічний ресурс, що забезпечує конкурентну перевагу на світовій арені, сприяє просуванню національних ідей та концепцій, а також формує привабливий інвестиційний імідж для міжнародної цільової аудиторії. У статті досліджується формування терміну "імідж країни" та іміджу авторитарної країни під впливом ЗМІ. Визначається роль ЗМІ у формуванні іміджу авторитарних країн. Дослідження також систематично вивчає ключові ролі, які відіграють медіа-фреймінг, механізми формування порядку денного та культивування колективної національної ідентичності у зміцненні або спростуванні домінуючих уявлень про авторитаризм.*

Key words. *Authoritarian countries, authoritarianism, media, mass media, country image, image formation, media influence, media framing, agenda-setting, collective identity, political narratives, governance, international relations.*

Ключові слова. *Авторитарні країни, авторитаризм, ЗМІ, мас-медіа, імідж країни, формування іміджу, вплив ЗМІ, медіафреймінг, формування порядку денного, колективна ідентичність, політичні нарративи, врядування, міжнародні відносини.*

Problem Statement. In contemporary societies, the pervasive influence of media in shaping public perceptions has become a critical aspect of political discourse. However, the specific dynamics through which media contributes to the formation of an authoritarian country's image remain inadequately understood. The existing literature, while acknowledging the impact of media on public opinion, lacks a comprehensive examination of the critical examination of the image construction of

authoritarian countries. Consequently, there is a pressing need for a systematic inquiry that employs an interdisciplinary approach to elucidate how media, through framing, agenda-setting, and narrative cultivation, actively shapes and sustains the image of authoritarian regimes, influencing societal attitudes and contributing to the broader discourse on governance and political structures.

The purpose of research is to comprehensively examine the multifaceted relationship between media influence and the formation of an authoritarian country's image. By employing an interdisciplinary approach that integrates thoughts from political science, communication studies, and psychology, the study aims to elucidate the intricate mechanisms through which media, including framing, agenda-setting, and narrative cultivation, actively contributes to the construction and perpetuation of authoritarian narratives.

Analysis of the latest publications. A limited number of studies have investigated the media's role in shaping the image of authoritarian countries, revealing a consensus among scholars that the media plays a crucial role in influencing perceptions of such nations. Existing literature primarily focuses on describing the formation of a country's image, yet there is a notable gap in understanding the specific portrayal and the media's impact on images of authoritarian countries. Recent scholarly works by V. Rozin, K. Boulding, M. Cottam, N. Khazratova, I. Didukh, O. Shchurko, A. Potseluyko, G. Pocheptsov, I. Semenenko, M. Shishkina, M. Hirshberg, and W. Lippman have made significant contributions, offering nuanced insights into the multifaceted nature of a country's image. These contributions explore psychological, cognitive, and sociological dimensions, providing a more comprehensive understanding. However, the current body of knowledge remains incomplete, highlighting the need for further research to discover the complexities of the relationship between media influence and the images of authoritarian countries.

Presentation of the main research results. The contemporary significance of image formation for nations is underscored by its role as a strategic resource, offering a competitive edge on the global stage. This positive image not only characterizes a country but also facilitates the promotion of its ideas, concepts, and fosters an appealing investment image for the international audience.

In today's interconnected world, the image of a country is not solely determined by its own actions and policies but is also significantly shaped by global media coverage. This is particularly true for authoritarian countries, which often face negative portrayals in the international press. It is important to discover the genesis of the terms "image" and "country image" to understand the concept of an image of an authoritarian country.

The term "image" in the context of international relations encapsulates a form fixed in the mind of a recipient regarding a specific object (Martin & Eroglu, 1993). The inception of the concept of "country image" dates back to 1959 when K. Boulding first employed it to explain the origins of hostility between states, highlighting the existence of national images of "other" states within the international system (Boulding, 2017). Initially centered on the image of the "enemy," subsequent interpretations broadened the scope, incorporating the "other" state's image into the context of the self-image of the state.

Psychological studies by M. and R. Cottam revealed that the country's image comprises intricate dimensions such as "enemy," "barbarian," "empire," "colony," "degenerate," and "pariah" within the social and political perception of the state, extending beyond the simplistic dichotomy of allies and enemies (Cottam & Shih, 1992).

In response, the theory of international relations introduced the self-concept, embodying the subject's ideas about themselves. D. Bleny employs the metaphor of state self-awareness to illustrate the logical correlation between a nation's identity and its international standing (Blaney, 1992).

The image of a country is a complex construct that is shaped by a variety of factors, including its political, economic, and cultural characteristics. However, recent research has also identified other important characteristics that contribute to the image of a country.

One such characteristic is the associative link between the country's image and the products it produces. For example, R. Desborde argues that the country-of-origin image refers to the overall impression of a country that is present in the consumer's mind. This impression is supplemented by the country's culture, political system, and level of economic and technological development (Desborde, 1991).

Another important characteristic is the impact of stereotypes on the image of a country. For example, J. Steenkamp notes that the image of a country consists of mental representations of the country's people, products, culture, and national symbols. The image of a country also contains widely held cultural stereotypes (Steenkamp & Baumgartner, 1998).

N. Khazratova's scientific school presents the image of the state as a multi-level concept in the recipient's subconscious and conscious, manifested through attributes representing certain features of a state (Khazratova, 2006). The concept of "Sense-Absurd" explores individual constructs and bipolar reference axes characterizing the socio-political interaction with a state (Khazratova, 2004).

Building on cognitive theory, I. Didukh confirms the individual factor's presence in the perception of a state's image, emphasizing that the image is a dynamic, not a stable construct (Didukh, 2014).

O. Shchurko's model introduces multiple levels of the state's image, including sensory-emotional, rational-thinking, and sign system levels, revealing primary factors such as territory and historical context, and secondary factors like values, historical memory, archetypes, and myths (Shchurko, 2017).

In the realm of social constructivism and structural functionalism, A. Potseluiko's analysis of the term "state image" introduces a paradigm shift, considering the country's image not as a mere representation but as a product of unconscious societal ideas that intricately shape behavioral scenarios. This innovative perspective posits the country's image as a dynamic manifestation of mass consciousness, effectively transforming abstract notions into tangible realities (Potseluiko, 2015).

An additional dimension in the formation of the state's image, explored by Yu. Romanenko and A. Potseluiko, revolves around historical myths and stereotypes. The societal construction of prognostic ideas about a country's life is intimately connected to the existence and perpetuation of specific historical myths. These myths, deeply embedded in societal narratives, contribute significantly to the formulation of the state's image (Potseluiko, 2015).

This study endeavors to delineate the fundamental components constituting the country's image, with a particular emphasis on unraveling the intricate influence of mass communication as a primary shaping force. Mass media, as a pivotal element within the broader communication system, emerges as a critical source in the dynamic construction of a country's image. The process of shaping a country's image within mass media is portrayed as not guided by purposeful creation or specific technologies. Instead, it is an intricate interplay of unintended contributions, where the media, bound by the responsibility to disseminate reliable and objective information, aligns with the democratic values underpinning societal governance structures (Semenenko, 2008).

The country's image, conceived as a symbolic model that serves to unite the conceptualization of the national community and its individual members, encompasses a diverse array of elements. These include the political landscape, economic dimensions, the social sphere, cultural aspects, and geographical considerations. It is within this intricate tapestry that mass media plays a pivotal role, constrained by the specificity of its mission to objectively inform about events, yet inadvertently contributing to the ongoing formation of societal images. The triad of factors shaping media images comprises the personality of the journalist, the chosen media format and editorial policy, and the prevailing social stereotypes.

U. Lippman's conceptualization of the "reconstruction of reality" provides a lens through which the impact of media representation. It does not matter whether it is an objective reflection of reality or a one-sided modified representation of events, the created subject of discussion will in any case influence the public, changing their views and judgments (Lippmann, 2010).

Therefore, the concept of state image is complex and influenced by many elements. In fact, the image of the state is a system that combines media involvement, historical myth, geography, history, culture, political and economic aspects, and individual and group identity. However, the study of the image of authoritarian states is not sufficiently addressed in scholarship. Therefore, this article uses the method of analogy to analyze the concept of authoritarian regimes and the image of states (Lembcke, 2020).

The Ukrainian scientific school, spearheaded by V. Tomakhiv, H. Shypunov, and M. Shabanov, has delineated specific characteristics defining authoritarian regimes. V. Tomakhiv notes that such

regimes typically lack political competition, curtail human rights, and restrict freedom of speech, consolidating power in the hands of a single individual or a group (Tomakhiv, 2014).

Addressing a crucial characteristic of authoritarian states, H. Shypunov emphasizes that authoritarian leaders evade accountability to society and are inclined to alter legal frameworks to suit their needs (Shipunov, 2014).

M. Shabanov directs attention to the unique role of the ruler's image in the functioning of authoritarian states, particularly in what he terms the "patrimonial political regime." Here, power is rooted in personal relationships between the head of state and subordinates, with the leader viewed as a symbol of the nation's existence, grounded in traditions and customs (Shabanov, 2017).

Previous scholarly works identify fundamental elements associated with authoritarianism, yet often omit discussions on the potential for political competition in such countries. In contrast, V. Sukhonos contends that multipartism is possible and frequently practiced within these regimes. However, this partial pluralism is unequivocally subordinated to the ruling party, autocrat, or junta, constituting what can be described as simulated multiparty systems lacking real influence (Sukhonos, 2000).

Offering a divergent perspective, S. Kyselev posits that authoritarianism represents a form of freedom for individuals and state power. The rationalization of such a regime is contingent upon a rigorously organized society. However, when taken to an absolute extreme, this measure can transform the regime into tyranny (Kyselov, 2003).

N. Rotar and Yu. Levenets highlight that authoritarian regimes not only concentrate power in the hands of the ruler but also adapt the electoral system to the needs and objectives of the executive branch. Force structures play a significant role in controlling these authoritarian states, and constitutional principles are often entangled or overridden (Rotar, Levenets, & Shapoval, 2011).

H. Lintz delves into authoritarianism as a form of governance characterized by a substantial disconnect between the ruling elite and the populace. The electoral nature of state organs is nominal, and the ruling elite relies on bureaucracy, the church, or oligarchy for support. An essential characteristic of authoritarian regimes is the absence of power subject to restrictions and balanced by other branches of authority. The researcher identifies various legitimacy strategies employed by authoritarian regimes, each exhibiting distinct propensities for survival and development towards democratic transitions (Linz, 2000).

The notion of an authoritarian country's image is a complex construct shaped by distinct characteristics identified by the Ukrainian scientific school. In these countries, the image is marked by the absence of political pluralism, curtailment of individual rights, and restrictions on free expression, consolidating authority within a central figure or group. The image is influenced by the leader's role, especially in patrimonial political regimes, where personal relationships and traditions play a crucial role. The accountability evasion by leaders and potential manipulation of legal frameworks contribute to the overall perception of such countries. Simulated multiparty systems, as described by V. Sukhonos, underscore the controlled nature of political competition. S. Kyselov's perspective introduces the idea that authoritarianism, despite its constraints, can be viewed as a form of societal organization. N. Rotar and Yu. Levenets highlight adaptations in electoral systems to suit the needs of the executive, while H. Lintz identifies a disconnect between ruling elites and the populace, characterized by nominal electoral processes. The authoritarian country's image, therefore, encapsulates a multidimensional portrayal influenced by political, social, and governance dynamics, distinctly differentiating it from the image of democratic nations.

However, these works devote insufficient attention to the influence of the media on the image of authoritarian states as one of the core components. Global media plays a central role in shaping public perceptions of countries, both democratic and authoritarian. These perceptions are shaped by a variety of factors, including the audience's own culture, political system, and media environment. The news media, in particular, has a powerful influence on the way people understand and evaluate the events taking place in other parts of the world.

Distinguished researchers from the Ukrainian scientific school, notably I. Musiyuk and I. Panina, assert that contemporary media wield a "soft power" in shaping the images of nations. The early 1950s marked the initiation of sociological and political studies examining whether media could influence the development of traditional societies and the international system as a whole. By the

1960s, this approach evolved into quantifying the development of states based on media development indicators, encompassing factors such as the quantity, accessibility, and quality of media content. However, it proved imperfect, recognizing that media is not the sole factor influencing societal development.

It is crucial to delineate the concept of "global" media and its constituents, primarily encompassing widely circulated media outlets with established brands of trust. Leading television broadcasters such as CNN, BBC, Euronews, Al Jazeera, among others, occupy a significant place within this category (Musiuk & Panina, 2020).

In studying the influence of media on the formation of country images, a functional approach must be considered. Several interpretations of this approach exist. Firstly, global media can shape transnational identity, correlating with the concept of a country's image. Secondly, global media facilitates global public participation in international affairs, exemplified by the "CNN effect" and the "Al Jazeera effect." Both phenomena result from the increasing influence of global media on international politics and public opinion. The constant news coverage, constituting the third approach, emphasizes the need for international context and its impact on individual states.

Drawing inspiration from F. Ziblert, T. Peterson, and W. Schramm's "Four Theories of the Press," D. Hallin and P. Mancini's groundbreaking work on "Comparing Media Systems" posited that what we read in the news today is a product of the historical interaction between the press, government, and society. Their classification remains a prominent comparative foundation, though concerns about its relevance in the era of global convergence persist, underscoring the need for a political comparative analysis to account for historical and political differences among authoritarian countries (Coban, 2016).

An intriguing concept within this context is the impact of journalistic practices on the portrayal of authoritarian states. The use of derogatory terms such as "sexist," "racist," "dictator," and their equivalents evokes aversion in all democracies. Referring to Hallin and Mancini's work, it is inferred that in countries where journalistic standards favor an independent writing style, journalists are more likely to avoid such terms. Additionally, based on political science literature on authoritarian legacies, it is concluded that journalists are more inclined to negatively portray a state and its leadership when the subject is associated with historical examples of authoritarianism (Hallin & Mancini, 2004).

The influence of media on the image of authoritarian countries is a multifaceted interplay between global media dynamics, historical context, and journalistic practices. Understanding this influence requires a comprehensive examination of the media's role in shaping transnational identities and the intricate relationship between media, politics, and societal perceptions.

Conclusions. The media play a significant role in shaping the image of authoritarian countries. The image of a country is a complex concept encompassing a nation's political, economic, cultural, and social identity as perceived by the international community. It is a dynamic construct that constantly evolves in response to the country's actions and policies, as well as the narratives and perceptions shaped by global media and public discourse.

Initially introduced by K. Boulding in tandem with hostility between countries, the concept has evolved far beyond simplistic binary notions of enemies and allies. The contemporary conceptualization, epitomized by the "I-state," amalgamates three pivotal components: the identification of political leaders with shared values, an awareness of the country's status, and a comprehensive understanding of its role on the international stage. This holistic exploration serves to illuminate the intricate dynamics at play in the perpetual construction and reconstruction of a country's image within the evolving landscape of societal perceptions and global interactions.

Mass media, including television, radio, newspapers, and online platforms, plays a central role in influencing public perceptions of countries. Through selective reporting, framing of events, and the use of language, media can shape how audiences understand and evaluate a particular country. Positive media coverage can enhance a country's reputation, attracting investment, tourism, and international support. Conversely, negative media portrayals can damage a country's image, leading to isolation, sanctions.

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