

**A IMAGEM DA MÍDIA DO PAÍS COMO FERRAMENTA PARA FORMAR AS  
PREFERÊNCIAS DE VALOR DOS JOVENS RUSSOS**

***LA IMAGEN DE LOS MEDIOS DEL PAÍS COMO HERRAMIENTA PARA  
MODIFICAR LAS PREFERENCIAS DE VALOR DE LOS JÓVENES RUSOS***

***THE COUNTRY'S MEDIA IMAGE AS A TOOL FOR SHAPING THE VALUE  
PREFERENCES OF YOUNG RUSSIANS***

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**RESUMO:** Este artigo relata os resultados da pesquisa com jovens russos, realizada em maio de 2021, com o objetivo de identificar suas opiniões a respeito da imagem midiática da Rússia. O objetivo deste artigo é descrever o modelo da imagem da mídia russa, identificando áreas problemáticas na formação das imagens da mídia nacional e os níveis e modalidades de sua representação entre os jovens russos. Usamos a abordagem estrutural do questionário. Os achados foram analisados a partir das abordagens fenomenológica e hermenêutica, bem como social e construtivista. O método de modelagem conceitual revelou os níveis de percepção da imagem midiática da Rússia pelos jovens. A pesquisa revelou a motivação informacional e cognitiva dominante dos jovens em sua escolha de mídia, sua tendência a informações confiáveis em sua maioria. No entanto, mais da metade dos entrevistados não confia nos meios de comunicação, que, a seu ver, embelezam ou distorcem deliberadamente a realidade.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** Imagem midiática do estado. Rússia. Entrevistados. A ideia dos jovens sobre a Rússia. Modelando a imagem da região

***RESUMEN:** Este artículo reporta los resultados de la encuesta a los jóvenes rusos, realizada en mayo de 2021, con el fin de identificar sus opiniones sobre la imagen mediática de Rusia. El propósito de este artículo es describir el modelo de imagen mediática rusa, identificando áreas problemáticas en la formación de imágenes mediáticas nacionales y los niveles y modalidades de su representación entre la juventud rusa. Utilizamos el enfoque estructural del cuestionario. Los hallazgos fueron analizados utilizando enfoques fenomenológicos y hermenéuticos, así como sociales y constructivistas. El método de modelado conceptual reveló los niveles de percepción de la imagen mediática de Rusia por parte de los jóvenes. La encuesta reveló la motivación informativa y cognitiva dominante de los jóvenes en la elección de los medios de comunicación, su tendencia a la información mayoritariamente confiable. Sin embargo, más de la mitad de los encuestados no confía en los medios de comunicación que, en su opinión, adornan o distorsionan deliberadamente la realidad*

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** Imagen mediática del estado. Rusia. Encuestados. La idea de Rusia de los jóvenes. Modelando la imagen de la región.

***ABSTRACT:** This article reports the survey results of the young Russians, held in May 2021, in order to identify their opinions regarding the media image of Russia. The purpose of this article is to describe the model of the Russian media image, identifying problem areas in the formation of national media images and the levels and modalities of their representation among the Russian youth. We used the structural approach to the questionnaire. The findings were analyzed using the phenomenological and hermeneutical, as well as social and constructivistic approaches. The method of conceptual modeling revealed the levels of the perception of the media image of Russia by young people. The survey revealed the dominant informational and cognitive motivation of young people in their choice of media, their tendency to mostly reliable information. Nevertheless, more than half of respondents do not trust the media, which, in their view, deliberately embellish or distort the reality.*

**KEYWORDS:** Media image of the state. Russia. Respondents. Young people's idea of Russia. Modeling the image of the region.

## **Introduction**

Features of media perception in the world today are becoming one of the most important factors in the formation of human identity, which is the basis of the full human life. In the strategy of socio-economic development of Russia today, issues of national identity and spiritual consciousness of citizens acquire special importance. A range of surveys on the media image of a state are directly related to people's ideas of its identity and cultural memory. The phenomenon of identity is studied by experts, considering the specifics of different levels of human political consciousness (stereotypes, attitudes, perceptions, values (HALE, 2019; ZVEREV *et al.*, 2016). The works of domestic scientists increasingly raise the need for transition from spontaneous to purposefully formed image, in correlation with the specifics of environmental conditions, geography, history, culture, economic way of life and ethnocultural peculiarities (POSTERNYAK; BOEVA-OMELECHKO, 2018; REPINA *et al.*, 2018).

## **Target setting**

To date, we should note the "polyphony" in understanding of the concept of "image of the state" in view of specific subject of certain disciplines of scientific knowledge and the tasks that researchers have set for themselves. Different approaches to study the concept of the "image of the state" exist in the fields of political science, psychology, media psychology, journalism, sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, political communication science, political imagery, etc. (CHEREPANOVA, 2017; KOVACH, 2019). Thus, the conceptual basis for studying the image of Russia in the minds of the public is compiled using an interdisciplinary, comprehensive, systematic approaches.

A range of works is devoted to the study of the media image of cities as a part of the regions branding practice (CHAN; MARAFA, 2013; DINNY, 2013; KAVARATSI; HATCH, 2013; KLAUDOU *et al.*, 2017; WU, 2017) where the brand reproduces the national identity (MEZHUYEV, 2019; PAMMENT, 2016) and is expressed in recognizable bright images, ideas, symbols and (AVRAHAM, 2020).

In political science, the image of the state is often seen as a political behavior arrangement factor or in the light of activities of political institutions and organizations, and the government institution as a whole. So, the researcher E. B. Shestopal defines the political image of the state as a reflection, on the one hand, of genuine characteristics of the percept, i.e. political authority, and, on the other hand, as a projection of expectations of the subject of perception, i.e. citizens of the Russian Federation (SHESTOPAL; SMULKINA, 2018). The image of the state depends on how the activity of authorities and the country's role are given publicity. Following the hybrid wars and manipulation of images of global politics (RIDDERVOLD; ROSEN, 2018), it is important to create new forms of evidence-based promotion and counter-narrative (MISONZHNIKOV, 2018).

The media image of the state is one of the national security factors, and thus, the major patterns to form the Russian media image are defined amid the implementation of the National Security Strategy (KROPATCHEVA, 2016). In recent years, domestic science has been actively developing the media surveys based on socio-cultural influence on the world image, and the foundations of the cultural and linguistic model of the world have been developed as part of the linguistic and cognitive approach. The studies are promising which are based on linguacultural analysis of media texts devoted to Russia.

Political psychology considers the image of the state as an important element of public and individual political consciousness. In Western and American media discourse, the Russian state is seen as a poorly arranged environment, and designated as an evil empire with great-power ambitions (RUBTSOVA; DEVDARIANI, 2019), while the media of the CIS countries and China give a more positive image of Russia.

The theory and methodology of the psychological basis of the national media image formation include the definition of psychological content of the media image, identifying the features of mental (cognitive) and discursive representation, the procedures of media image formation and psychological impact on individual and public consciousness. For the purposes of national security, intergeneration and regional differences were revealed in the image of the Russian state, due to the pattern of socialization and social adaptation (BAKULEVA; SAMUILOVA, 2019). The image of the state is too fast-moving and depends on the economic and political situation in the country, on the efficacy and timeliness of activities by the authorities in particular situations, and on how these actions are covered in the media (NIKOLENKO; SHEVCHENKO, 2021). The studies of the last decade show that a positive image of the state becomes especially vulnerable during the transition or crisis period.

In the scope of processes described in the scientific discourse, the survey problems reported in this research are mainstream: a) potential of current information platforms, the Russian and foreign media to influence the formation of the image of the state; b) factors influencing the experience, understanding and awareness of Russian youth identity under the current conditions.

### **Purposes of the research**

The purpose of this article is to reveal the contradictions and problems in formation of the media image of Russia based on the survey results among the young Russian citizens, and to evaluate the Russian media image in terms of levels and tonalities of its representation in the minds of the Russian youth.

### **Materials and methods**

The survey results are based on the questionnaire, held on May 2021, among 127 young people, aged 16 to 35, residing in different regions of the Russian Federation: the Far East and Transbaikalia, the Northwestern Federal District. When compiling the questionnaire, a structural approach was used, which proposes to study the composition

(subsystems) and structures of the object under study. The study of the semantic field of the all-Russian identity was based of the phenomenological and hermeneutic and social and constructivistic approaches. The method of conceptual modeling helped to consider the levels and tonalities of the Russian media image perceived by young people as a kind of unified system.

## Results

The principal content of survey respondents are people born and living in Russia (96.9%) with an average income. The overwhelming majority of respondents daily address to different types of media. Most respondents refer to the media to stay informed, to gain knowledge, as well as to obtain information for work and study purposes. 25% of respondents only use the media "to kill time." The determinant to choose the media is authenticity (58.9%), which determines the level of confidence in information sources. More than 54.8% believe that the media deliberately embellish the context. And only 16.1% of respondents trust the mass media. Almost all respondents are concerned about the development of Russia (94.5%). The majority (66.1%) agreed that it is necessary to cover the negative events taking place in Russia, while 45% stated that "they might be covered in mass media, but not as much." They commented like: *"I want less details of criminality, but more critical material on the reality in the country and the life (survival) of ordinary Russians."* In view of 69% respondents there should be an equal proportion of negative and positive news (50x50).

The findings helped us to model the current media image of Russia. More than 80% respondents say that living in Russia is difficult but tolerable, but "...it could be better". The majority considers Russia a peculiar country with centuries-old history and culture (78%), but regimental (37.8%). As an ugly trait, the respondents noted the violation of human rights (30.7%). This correlates with the studies of home scientists (NIKOLENKO; SHEVCHENKO, 2021). Assessing Russia's potential, respondents point to its abundance of natural resources (91%), but draw attention to its fragile economy. Only 39% of respondents believe the country has one of the strongest armies with unique new weapons. Quality accessible education (14%) and touring capacities in the country (31%) are rated low. When asked about a public figure associated with Russia, the majority mentioned Putin, and only a few of them recalled Lenin and Peter the Great. Certain respondents mentioned Navalniy A., the composer P.I. Chaikovsky and the writer F. M. Dostoevsky.

**Table 1 - Discipline-related space of coverage of Russia in mass media**

In mass media, Russia is portrayed as:	Answers of respondents (%)
a large and multinational country	46.5
a country with high development potential	47.2
a country with centuries-long history and culture	61.4
an authoritarian country with rich natural resources	37.8
a country where human rights are violated	30.7
a depressive territory with no growth prospects	14.2

The list of challenging issues in Russia included poverty (79%), unemployment (63%), unavailable quality medicine (55%), emergency housing (51%), and bad roads (65%). But according to respondents (81%), corruption and bribery are biggest troubles in the country. Other issues were highlighted in comments to questions: *“The desire of the authorities to make Russia a “superpower” for account of lives of ordinary people,” “intolerable bureaucracy and amateurism” “lack of responsibility for decisions made, inequality of wages in the regions,” etc.*

In the information agenda of the Russian media, the information on the working-class people is poorly presented (40% respondents), the features for children or youth are lacked (53%), the respondents wish they have more information on the environment (47%). The feedback reported on the inadequacy of *“educational materials on urgent social topics, explaining the essence of the problem to the average Russian citizen.”*

The answers to the question about the wish to leave the country turned out to be distressing. More than 53% revealed they sometimes think about leaving the country, and almost 12% plan to move shortly. Only 31% do not even think of leaving Russia. A minor percentage (4%) explain they prefer staying in the country so as not to “get this for that”.

Unfortunately, the answers about the future of Russia cannot be addressed as optimistic. Only 25% believed is a breakthrough development of the country, however 43% of respondents are sure that everything will remain the same, 23% think the things will only get worse. Some of them assumed of conditions when the things might be changed for the better: *“if the rigged top authority is replaced”* and *“new demanded laws”* are adopted. Notably, only 115 answers were received to the last question about

participation in the development of Russia. Only a small share of respondents implements their own projects, develops the science, engage in volunteering activities and takes an active part in public life.

## Discussion

Earlier researched revealed the following: the more opportunities for self-fulfillment in Russia are recognized by young citizens, the more positive is the image of the country in their mind, and the higher they assess the level of their psychological well-being, the more satisfied they are with life, the happier they are (SAMUILOVA; SAIDUTOVA, 2017). Our survey implicitly revealed a great disaffection among young people with options for self-realization in Russia today, as evidenced by low assessment of quality education, statement on the lack of comfortable living in Russia, as well as the desire to leave the country. This is troublesome symptom, since the life satisfaction, as established by S.F. Shaimukhametova (2019), is an important factor of vitality. Yet, the survey results proved the results of researches that revealed the co-relation between the assessments of psychological well-being by the Russian youth and the components of the image of Russia. According to Kumyshev (2019), the study of the national internal image must be formed on the views of residents about Russia, and based on cognitions, emotional background and axiology.

## Conclusions



In the meantime, it is the mass media that form a certain model of the image of Russia in the media scene. Our research has revealed the most vulnerable positions in the coverage of various aspects of life by the Russian media: 1) lack of interest in the information needs of the youth; 2) news blackout and biased coverage of issues of poverty, unemployment, corruption, quality and affordable education, and healthcare; 3) tendentiousness in interpretation of social and political problems; the costs of editorial policy aimed at serving a very tiny number of people; 4) lack of positive content on the Russian events. The factors are identified that prevent the youth from perceiving the image of Russia exclusively positively. On the one hand, the media helps to build a positive image of a huge country with the richest resources, with a long history and cultural and historical traditions. On the other hand, the abundance of negative information, the unidirectional and subjective nature of its presentation prevents to construct the positive context of the country's socio-economic life. Similar researches to study the feeling of citizens, especially of young people, help us to see the threats of destruction of the social community of the Russians as a factor of national security.

Under the global informational and psychological warfare, this topic requires further study, including with the stress on the social and mental image of the country based on the instinct of national self-determination.

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