

SCTMG 2020**International Scientific Conference «Social and Cultural Transformations in the Context of Modern Globalism»****PERCEPTION OF THE STATE FEATURES IN THE GLOBALIZATION CONTEXT (RUSSIA, BULGARIA, VENEZUELA)**

Anton Pavlovich Shmelev (a)*, Olga Yuryevna Shmeleva (b), Alina Evgenievna Blokhina (c),
Dmitry Igorevich Kaminchenko (d), Liliya Nailevna Ulmaeva (e)

*Corresponding author

- (a) Institute of International Relations and World History of Nizhny Novgorod State University N.I. Lobachevsky, 2, Ulyanov street, N. Novgorod, Russia, a.shmelev1975@gmail.com,
(b) Institute of International Relations and World History of Nizhny Novgorod State University N.I. Lobachevsky, 2, Ulyanov street, N. Novgorod, Russia,
(c) Institute of International Relations and World History of Nizhny Novgorod State University N.I. Lobachevsky, 2, Ulyanov street, N. Novgorod, Russia,
(d) Institute of International Relations and World History of Nizhny Novgorod State University N.I. Lobachevsky, 2, Ulyanov street, N. Novgorod, Russia,
(e) Institute of International Relations and World History of Nizhny Novgorod State University N.I. Lobachevsky, 2, Ulyanov street, N. Novgorod, Russia

Abstract

Modern political processes taking place in countries are subject to the transformation of political regimes. This circumstance leads to the need to address the problem of perception by citizens of the national state. Accounting for subjective policy elements can minimize potential risks in the public administration system. Such individual aspects of politics are general moods, expectations, requests, political and cultural specifics. The geography of the study covers countries experiencing the process of modernization of socio-economic and socio-political systems. The research interest of this work is directed to Russia, Bulgaria, and Venezuela. Concerning Venezuela, it is worth noting the opposite direction of the process vector. The article is based on the method of associative testing, which allows studying the deep layers of political consciousness of representatives of the three states. The conducted comparative study made it possible to carry out a comparative analysis of the image of the state in the political consciousness of representatives of these countries, identify fundamental values, claims, isolate the political, cultural, national, and regional specifics of perception. The obtained empirical data allow identifying the main trends and patterns of understanding of the state in a changing world. In the practical plane of this kind of research, it is possible to highlight conflictogenic aspects in the socio-political space. Moreover, this study allows taking into account potentially risky moments in the planning and implementation of domestic policy in all spheres of life of the state and society.

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Keywords: Image of the state, associative test, political consciousness.



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1. Introduction

Modern political processes taking place in states that have embarked on the path of political modernization are associated mainly with the conflict of traditional heritage and innovation. Political elites face certain inertia of the population when realizing their own goals. Such goals are the expansion of public space, the development of a feedback system, democratic practices through the involvement of society in the process of developing and making political decisions and delegating part of the functional to civil society.

The other crucial global process that affects the transformation of political regimes, in general, is globalization. First of all, we are talking about the development of supranational institutions, integration entities, to which sovereign states transfer certain powers in the areas of both foreign and domestic politics. The flip side of this practice is the acquisition by the state of certain obligations that represent general/uniform conditions/requirements for all members of integrated education. The development process of integration interaction associated with globalization, according to many researchers (Hosseini, 2015; Jotia, 2011; Suter, 2018; Wolf, 2001), causes a conflict between the perception of globalization trends and trends, on the one hand, the growth of nationalism with the actualization of the topic of national sovereignty state, on the other. Of particular importance in the context of the functioning of modern states, it is also the revision of the principles of the Westphalian system in the new global world order, primarily the principle of sovereignty of national states.

The study of the population's perception of the state as a phenomenon, a subject of the socio-political process, becomes relevant. It is necessary to take into account the fact that the subjective side of politics traditionally has a significant impact on the entire political process. The subjective side of politics will determine the logic of its development, the nature of the relationship between government and society, the direction of political communication. The image as a form of reflection in the minds of citizens of various states of political reality is one of the leading indicators of public moods, expectations, requests, emotional states of the subject. Monitoring public sentiment is becoming an essential and necessary component of political governance as a preventive measure to prevent domestic political tensions in society and minimize risks. Also, the analysis of the image of the state, the study of its substantial characteristics, dynamics, formation and functioning trends seem relevant to build an optimal model of public administration, the interaction of the state and society, determine the path of political modernization.

2. Problem Statement

The evolution of state perception is one of the current issues. This problem is of interest for research in connection with the expansion of the functional responsibility of states, changes in the principles and mechanisms of interaction with all actors in the socio-political space, place, and role in the system of interstate relations. Researchers are trying to determine the position and function of the state as a system of institutions and relationships in modern conditions. Currently, in the scientific space, there are various approaches to the substantiation of the phenomenon of the contemporary state. As an example of one of the newest approaches to understanding the purpose of the country in the modern political system,

we can cite the work of McLoughlin (2015). This paper analyzes the relationship between the quality of service for the provision of public services and the level of legitimacy of state institutions. According to this approach, the state is a set of institutions built based on the need for them to perform certain functions.

Such a narrow interpretation of the institutional role of services in the provision of public services in the process of state legitimation raises many difficulties. The method of state legitimization comes down solely to the perception by the population of its structures and institutions acting as public service delivery services (McLoughlin, 2015). This approach does not take into account other functions of the state, however, demanded by society. Such features of the country are, for example, the preservation of national-cultural traditions, the distribution of material and moral goods, and others. Summing up the results of the study, McLoughlin (2015) concludes that public services are a channel leading to the values and standards of the state itself.

The above example of rethinking the concept of the state, on the one hand, reflects the transformation of the state as a phenomenon in the modern world, on the other hand, it is more characteristic of the "Western" socio-political model. Meanwhile, countries transitioning to a post-industrial society are experiencing a significant impact on the socio-political process of traditionalist practices and values. Direct copying of the models of democracy already functioning in the countries of "Western democracy" in these conditions can cause a state of cognitive dissonance in transitional societies, the emergence of conflicting spaces. This circumstance can formulate challenges and threats to the state as a political and geographical entity.

The political systems transformation relates to the development of information and communication technologies, public space, the formation of civil society. In this context, the state does not lose its monocentric and functionality as it changes them. The country is striving to form useful feedback, delegates part of its powers to both supranational integration entities and society itself. At the transition stage, the state, like any other system, acquires a certain fragility. The country is becoming more susceptible to the influence of both external processes and domestic politics, coupled with the discourse about the prospects, directions, and mechanisms of its (state) transformation. A permanent monitoring of the social reactions to the ongoing process comes to the fore is in the interests of the successful completion of this process. We use monitoring methods. The perception of the state is studying by identifying and analyzing associations associated with the institution activities that are forming in the respondents' minds. An analysis of the associative series allows identifying the correlation between requests, expectations of citizens and the real situation, to improve the informational support of the process.

3. Research Questions

This work presents a study of states that, in one way or another, undergo a period of transformation of political systems and regimes. The experience of existence unites Bulgaria and Russia within the framework of the Soviet socialist system with all its socio-political specifics. At the same time, the modern ways of developing the political systems of these states differ significantly. Bulgaria has been a NATO member since 2004, and since 2007, it has been a member of the European Union. Bulgaria

turned out to be subject to the transit of institutional-value components, the so-called "western" socio-political system. Bulgaria also faced the process of delegating part of its powers to supranational structures. The Russian Federation followed the path of direct borrowing of the elements of the "Western" model in the 1990s since the beginning of the XXI century implements the model of "conservative modernization" (Biryukov, 2018; Diskin, 2015). Venezuela can be considered as a state, carrying out the reverse transition relative to Bulgaria and Russia, which is connected with the policy of U. Chávez and his successor N. Maduro, who came to power in 1998. The Venezuelan study takes into account certain historical traditions inherent in many Latin American states related to the presence of socialist ideas in the socio-political discourse.

In the context of the political regime transformation, as a rule, a certain tension is formed in the socio-political space. Anxiety is associated with a different assessment of the changes taking place by various segments of society. In these conditions, the issue of forming a positive image of the state in the eyes of its population is being updated to obtain support for the current policy, minimizing the risks associated with the growth of protest moods and non-conventional behavior of public groups and individuals. The topic of public perception of the state, maintaining its image is of considerable interest in the scientific community. This issue is often analyzed through the prism of studying the actions of state and public communication agencies aimed at maintaining the organizational reputation of the state and its institutions. This problem is also significant in the context of delegating part of the powers to supranational structures (Rimkute, 2019). The object of study of researchers is both approaches and methods for forming a positive image/image of the state, and the tools used in this. For example, these are state symbols, national achievements, and historical images, geopolitical moments (Gangl et al., 2016; Kemmelmeier & Winter, 2008).

Meanwhile, the state image forming is also associated with the variability and dynamism of the psychological phenomenon. And the significant role belongs to the transformation of its structural and substantial components under the influence of various endogenous and exogenous factors. Under the conditions of virtualization and mediatization of politics, the image of the state becomes "unstable, stereotyped, irrational (Shestopal et al., 2016). The process of perceiving the state is becoming more complex. The image of the state can be considered as a psychological reaction, built based on emotional perception, archetypal structures, elements from the sphere of the unconscious.

Accordingly, the perception of the state in the format of fixing its image, which is formed on a combination of conscious and unconscious, real assessment and reflection, rational and emotional, can be considered as a tool for analyzing the conformity of the implemented political practices and approaches to the needs of society.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to study the characteristics of the mechanism of perception of the state by citizens of Russia, Bulgaria, Venezuela through the use of psychosemantic methods, analysis of the totality of linguistic units (tokens), verbal associations to the stimulus words "state" and "modern state" in the context of taking into account the totality of exogenously endogenous factors.

5. Research Methods

The goal and specificity of the subject of research determined the choice of its methodological basis. The methodological basis of the study is the concept of categorization of perception of Bruner (Bruner & Goodman, 1947). The application of this concept allowed revealing the structural and functional features of the image of the state. To a certain extent, the theory of activity of Leontiev (1975). Leontiev's concept allows representing the image of the state as the result of a subject-object, that is, bilateral interaction. Bilateral interaction is expressed in the presence of a "counter," active on the part of the subject of the process, endowing the image with personal meanings, emotional coloring, contributing to its "detailing" as a result of mastering individual experience (Shestopal et al., 2016).

The presented study is based on an analysis of the results of associative testing implemented among residents of the Russian Federation, Venezuela, and Bulgaria. The geography of the study is due to the specifics of political processes in the designated states, associated with the transformation of some aspects of political systems, changing approaches and technologies in organizing the relationship between government and society.

The purpose of associative testing is to study the image's verbal aspects of the state through the prism of a variety of social meanings, the semantic closeness of words. Linguistic-semantic analysis of verbal associations to the stimulus words "state" and "modern state" allowed concluding the national, political, and cultural features of the perception of the object. In the analysis of associations, a qualitative/quantitative approach was applied to stimulus words, within the framework of which, on the one hand, a wide range of respondents' assessments was formed, reflecting their perception of the state as a phenomenon, a subject of a socio-political system. Associative rows of lexical units were distinguished and formed: emotionally coloured (positive and negative), stylistically neutral, built based on the pejorative, expressive vocabulary that conveys subjective opinions, relationships, moods. The quantitative component of the application of the method of associative testing was reflected in the relative comparison of the number of ratings of various associative series. Associative series is presented for analyzing the assessments of respondents of one state, and for comparing the response to stimulus words by representatives of all the subjects of the system of international relations that we have chosen.

The data obtained as a result of generalization and systematization made it possible to compose a lexical-semantic space for the stimulus words "state" and "modern state" for all selected groups of respondents. The lexico-semantic area is a combination of linguistic units (lexemes), united by a collective semantic meaning and representing the objective, conceptual, and functional similarity of the designated phenomena. When rendering empirical data, the methodology for compiling associative dictionaries was used, for example, in the framework of Leontiev and Klimenko (1977). According to this approach, to the stimulus word, the total number of reactions to the stimulus, the number of semantically close tokens (in decreasing order of frequency of use), the number of single answers are fixed. Determine the specific gravity of the encountered lexemes and lexical-semantic fields; the K. Noble coefficient was used, calculated by the formula $K = (n-1) / N$ (where n is the total number of matching reactions, and N is the total number of all responses). For clarity, as well as to compactify materials, the results were presented in a tabular form.

6. Findings

Analyzing the results obtained during the study, we note the fact that a wide range of exogenous and endogenous factors influence the process of forming the image of the state. Such factors are the challenges of post-industrial society and the changing role and place of the country in the modern world; situational factors, including foreign policy conditions; information coverage and accompaniment of domestic and international political events; the nature and results of the given political institution at different levels of its functioning; political and cultural specifics; socio-economic situation in the state. On the other hand, the process of forming the image of the state is also influenced by archetypal designs, traditional values, and cultural and everyday life specifics. The folding and functioning of the image of the state are based on the action of psychological, cognitive and social mechanisms, due to a combination of factors – "object, subjective, spatial, temporal, communicative" (Zverev et al., 2016).

As part of the study of the state image, the following two essential points that are reflected in the results of the study should also be taken into account. Firstly, the state itself should be considered as a multidimensional and multifunctional entity, representing both the institution and space for applying a wide range of power tools and a particular area of life. It is necessary to take into account its "industry asymmetry and dynamic disequilibrium of its various abilities and competencies on various social platforms" (Soloviev, 2016, p. 95). Secondly, with respect to modern society, its complexity, fragmentation, heterogeneity of cultural elements, shifts in the value picture of the world during the transition to post-industrial society are of particular importance. The changes determine the population's requests to the state, ideas about its functional responsibility, and other issues. This specificity determines the perception of political power and its institutions, establishes the concept of an ideal image. Without an idea of the perfect image, the process of perceiving the study of a political institution is impossible. Together with the political culture, the above aspects contribute to the dichotomous perception of the state with outwardly paradoxical judgments. For example, among Russians, such social expectations of the state's activities as "justice, morality, conscience" are adjacent to "readiness to put up with the arbitrariness of officials, patience" (Kirkin, 2006, p. 15).

For visualization convenience, the results are shown in the table in which verbal associations are grouped (their K. Noble coefficient is shown in brackets). In Venezuela, the colleagues who conducted the study used only the word stimulus "state." Table 01 shows the most common associations, as well as emphasizing national specificity.

Table 01. Distribution of verbal associations by value groups to the stimulus words "state" and "modern state"

Value groups	Russia		Bulgaria		Bulgaria
	"State"	"Modern state"	"State"	"Modern state"	"State"
Socio-economic values	No corruption – 5 (0.013)	Corruption 43 (0.056)	Good Health – 11 (0.056)	Corruption – 8 (0.083)	An institution (institutional structure) that makes people work, provides order, guarantees rights – 4 (0, 125) Violence, hunger, disappointment (1
	Rich – 4 (0.011)	Taxes – 11 (0.014)	Good free education – (0.056)	Bad roads – 3 (0.031)	
	Where they do not steal – 3 (0.008)	Poverty – 5 (0.006)	Infrastructure – 6 (0.031)	Good education – 11 (0.11)	
	Effective economy – 3	Theft – 5 (0.006)		Free medicine – 11 (0.11)	
		Unemployment – 5 (0.006)		Good Health –	

	(0.008)	Stagnation – 4 (0.012) Inefficient economy – 4 (0.012) Instability – 5 (0.006)		10 (0.104)	ass.) Freedom, work, food (1 ass.)
Security Values	Security – 3 (0.008) Defense – 6 (0.016)		Security – 3 (0.015)		Protection of vulnerable populations (1 ass.)
Political, ideological (democratic) values	Democracy / Democratic / Democracy – 34 (0.094) Free – 17 (0.047) Legal – 13 (0.036) Social equality of all – 8 (0.022)	Democracy / Democratic State – 6 (0.007) Injustice – 9 (0.011) Bureaucracy – 4 (0.012) Authoritarian – 4 (0.012) Violation of rights – 4 (0.012) The bureaucratic state – 6 (0.007)			Center of Power (1 ass.) Country – 2 (0.062) Territory – 4 (0.125)
Spiritual, moral and sociocultural values	Fair – 13 (0.036) Social – 6 (0.016) Caring for citizens – 4 (0.011)		Order – 4 (0.020) Cleanliness – 3 (0.015)		Solidarity – 2 (0.062) The unity of people who seek happiness (1 ass.)
Political and cultural values		Putin – 24 (0.031) Force – 7 (0.009) Power – 11 (0.014)			Excellent, despite the problems – 2 (0.062) Original culture, traditions – 3 (0.093) Mother, cares and scolds – 2 (0.062)
Innovative values			Modern – 6 (0.031) Interaction on- line – 6 (0.031) Development – 5 (0.025) High-tech – 3 (0.015)	Technological – 3 (0.031) Internet – 3 (0.031)	
Not systematized, personal values	Utopia – 13 (0.036) Non-existent – 9 (0.025)				Has a sword and brain, but has no eyes (1 ass.)

By analyzing the verbal associations given in the table, many conclusions can be drawn.

First, comparing associations with stimulus words (in Russia and Bulgaria), one can notice a correlation between expectations and assessments. According to the respondents, those moments are not present in reality, they record them in the form of evaluations of the "ideal state." That is, associations for a given stimulus word can be used (in reverse format) when analyzing respondents' perceptions of the existing national model of the state-political system.

Secondly, the materialistic group of values stands out, as applied to the respondents in Bulgaria, the associations of this group noticeably prevail. Russian population, in addition to worldly values, outlined a substantial (quantitative in terms of the total number of associations, qualitative in terms of their content) request for changes in the socio-political system. A similar application is present in Venezuela, but to this state, we can talk about the significant influence of political and cultural specifics.

Thirdly, the issue of security is relevant for representatives of all countries.

Fourthly, concerning Venezuela (to a much lesser extent – to Russia), one can speak of such a fact as the population's perception of the state as a political-geographical system. This aspect is not present in the "Bulgarian" bloc, apparently due to the country's membership in the European Union.

Fifth, a sensitive approach to the assessment of the state by representatives of Venezuela is noticeable. This moment can be explained by political, cultural, and traditional every day ("carnival" Latin American) specifics.

Sixth, when analyzing the "Bulgarian" bloc, one should pay attention to the relatively large number of associations classified as "innovative values." This moment allows talking about the relative satisfaction of the respondents with the socio-economic and socio-political situation in the state, contributing to the formation of such requests and expectations that are not typical for citizens of Russia and Venezuela.

Seventhly, on the whole, the Bulgarians are characterized by a more pragmatic approach, and, on the contrary, Russians and Venezuelans, according to the verbal associations received, are more prone to idealistic assessments up to the conclusion that a just ideal state can't exist as such.

7. Conclusion

The use of psychostimantic methods can bring quite indicative results that allow evaluating the perception of the population of their state as a socio-political system. These methods also allow comparing models of the evolution of the state as a phenomenon in various conditions. It is necessary to take into account the direct influence on the formation of the image of the state of a wide range of factors, from political, cultural, and traditional to geopolitical. These factors are associated with the status of a particular country, and with the conditions in which it found itself in connection with modern international political processes.

The influence of these factors forms unique sets of verbal associations characteristic of each particular state. For example, according to the data, one can draw the ambivalence of the perception of the state by Russians. In their mass political consciousness, the image of the state as a political institution, of a theoretical concept, has excellent content and a neutral-positive coloration. At the same time, the image of the modern state as a mechanism for making political decisions is replete with emotionally-evaluative tokens. This is because Russian management structures are formed as a result of practical activities. Their

assessment is composed of pejorative vocabulary. The citizens of Bulgaria and Venezuela, as applied to Russians, form opposites with their associations. Residents of these countries are in various geopolitical and socio-economic conditions. Nevertheless, they significantly less sharply negative and critical assessments. In general, the use of such psychosemantic methods can obtain an actual empirical basis for scientific research, and the development and implementation of an effective domestic policy.

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