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Specifics of Ukraine's Image Formation as a Resource for National Development

The article examines the image of the state as a set of emotional and rational ideas resulting from a comparison of all the features of the country, one's own experience and rumors that influence the creation of a certain image. It has been proven that the image of the state in the international arena is one of the main factors in the formation of the country's international relations. All of the listed factors make it possible to immediately build a whole chain of associations in relation to a certain country when the name is mentioned. The formation of this state's relations with others and the prospects of its economic development depend to a considerable extent on how the image is formed and how it is promoted on the foreign market. The need to strengthen the potential of the state, purposeful interaction with mass communication means for the correct formation and presentation of information about the country was noted. The change in the interests of individuals in the modern world, the development of civil society, the improvement of political institutions, as well as the growing importance of individual ideas of groups in the era of the information society causes increased attention to the problem of image in general and the image of countries in particular.

The author of the article examines the problem of forming the image of Ukraine both within the country and in the perception of the world community. The search for ways to improve the image of Ukraine in the world and within the state, by projecting the best foreign experience in successfully constructing the country's image, increasing funding, improving legal regulation, and increasing the level of public understanding on the part of the government, business, and the public, of the importance of creating a positive image of Ukraine in the world will contribute to the implementation of a number of specific theoretical and applied political steps, which determine the elements of scientific novelty of the conducted research. It is substantiated that a mandatory condition for a positive perception of the country, the successful development of internal public relations is the formation of a single, common, acceptable for the majority of the population, various strata and social groups of the value basis of the national consciousness and the formation of the national idea of the country. Improving the image of our state and raising the prestige of Ukraine in the international arena and in the eyes of Ukrainians depends not only on the state, but also on the average citizen. A country's positive image is the most important resource for its national development.

Keywords: image of the state, brand, world community, information society.

Особливості формування іміджу України як ресурс національного розвитку

У статті досліджено імідж держави як сукупності емоційних і раціональних уявлень, що впливають із зіставлення всіх ознак країни, власного досвіду та чуток, що впливають на створення певного образу. Доведено, що імідж держави на міжнародній арені є одним з основних факторів формування міжнародних відносин країни. Усі перераховані фактори дозволяють при згадуванні назви відразу ж вибудувати цілий ланцюг асоціацій стосовно певної країни. Від того, яким чином сформований і як просувається на зовнішньому ринку імідж, чималою мірою залежить становлення відносин цієї держави з іншими й перспективи її економічного розвитку. Зазначено про необхідність посиленні потенціалу держави, цілеспрямованої взаємодії із засо-

¹ Graduate student of the Department of Political Science and Law, Taras Shevchenko Luhansk National University in Poltava, Ukraine. E-mail: stefashka888ua@gmail.com; <https://orcid.org/0009-0002-0461-4264>.

бами масової комунікації задля коректного формування та подачі інформації про країну. Зміна інтересів індивідів у сучасному світі, розвиток громадянського суспільства, вдосконалення політичних інститутів, а також зростання значущості індивідуальних уявлень груп в епоху інформаційного суспільства зумовлює посилення уваги до проблеми іміджу загалом та іміджу країн зокрема. Авторка статті розглядає проблему формування образу України як усередині країни, так і у сприйнятті світової спільноти. Пошук шляхів покращення образу України у світі та усередині держави, шляхом проектування кращого зарубіжного досвіду успішного конструювання іміджу країни, збільшення фінансування, вдосконалення правового регулювання та підвищення рівня суспільного розуміння з боку влади, бізнесу, громадськості, важливості створення позитивного іміджу України у світі сприятиме реалізації ряду конкретних теоретичних та прикладних політичних кроків, чим і визначаються елементи наукової новизни проведеного дослідження. Обґрунтовано, що обов'язковою умовою позитивного сприйняття країни, успішного розвитку внутрішніх громадських зв'язків є формування єдиної, загальної, прийнятної для переважної частини населення, різних верств і соціальних груп ціннісної основи народної свідомості та формування національної ідеї країни. Покращення іміджу нашої держави та підняття престижу України на міжнародній арені та в очах українців залежить не тільки від держави, а і від пересічного громадянина. В умовах глобального інформаційного суспільства кожній країні необхідно позиціонувати себе, бути цікавою для інших держав і народів у плані культурної своєрідності, розвитку бізнесу, збереження соціального миру. Позитивний імідж країни виступає найважливішим ресурсом її національного розвитку.

Ключові слова: імідж держави, бренд, світова спільнота, інформаційне суспільство.

Problem statement. At the present time, along with the development of economic and military power of the country, its ability to influence the external and internal public through the power of ideas and tailored information flows is becoming increasingly important. A positive image of the state in the eyes of its citizens can become a powerful force in consolidating the nation, strengthening the identity of the people, ensuring its support for domestic and foreign policy, and being one of its social security factors. A favorable image of the state on the international scene is essential to the successful protection of the interests of the country and its citizens, effective negotiations, and the conclusion of beneficial business agreements.

Recent research and publications analysis. The analysis of modern academic studies of image components shows that Ukrainian and foreign scholars pay attention to the study of the concepts of “image”, “image of the state”, “image attractiveness”, functions, methods, mechanisms of image formation. S. Anholt, M. Kopiika, V. Kryvoshein, O. Polishchuk, O. Chechel, O. Shchurko, and others analyze the problems of image formation and development, and identify ways to improve the work in this area. The structural components of the image are analyzed by V. Varenko, H. Verbytska, N. Kachynska, H. Piskorska, V. Rybachenko, and N. Yakovenko. The academic works contain thorough studies of the essence and peculiarities of the country image formation and promotion of the same on a global scale. The components of the country image require further research, specifically in the globalized world, when the positive image of the country is a driving force behind its development.

The purpose of the study is to substantiate the formation and implementation of a positive image of the state in the international arena as an essential component of achieving goals that serve national interests. To realize this goal, the following tasks were defined, namely, to investigate theoretical approaches to studying the essence of the concept of “state image” in the international arena; characterize the role of individual factors in the formation of the international image of the state; to determine the actual problems of forming a positive image of Ukraine in the international arena.

Basic material of the research. In the ever-increasing globalized world, in the age of diversification of the spectrum of global environmental, social, humanitarian, and economic problems, as well as new challenges and threats, a single state isolated from the world community is no longer able to uphold its interests and, by and large, to ensure its viability. For this reason, the multidimensional nature, intensity, and dynamism of international relations are increasing. Many processes and phenomena that previously belonged mainly to the internal affairs of the state, such as science and education, employment, combating crime, development of certain economic realms, health care, are now increasingly reaching the international level, becoming an integral part of interstate relations, thereby significantly expanding and complicating them.

At the same time, the progress of means of communication and information transfer has led to a significant expansion of the media space, availability of information, thereby impeding control over information. The abundant information on almost any issue makes any object in the media space multidimensional. This has made the process of forming and maintaining an image, including on the international scene, way more complicated. On the other hand, the development of information technologies has its advantages. The availability of means of communication, high and ever-growing informatization of society, and virtualization facilitate the creation and functioning of the image in general and the image of the state in particular, providing fertile ground for the activities of image makers.

The formation of modern domestic and foreign policy of a country is a very complex matter that requires versatile knowledge. When making decisions on various issues, political actors, one way or another, take into account the impression that their own or foreign country makes, and how it is seen in their eyes. The perception of any political space is largely related to its image.

The English word “image” means “idea”. Reference books interpret this concept as a purposefully formed idea; as an emotionally loaded idea formed in the public mind and the nature of a stereotype; as a set of certain qualities that people associate with a certain individual; as a notion of something previously encountered with, concrete or abstract, and something very reminiscent in the view of the other². It should be noted that the category of “image” today differs significantly from the traditional interpretation of “idea” as such and correlates with the branch of social cognition. As a phenomenon of the individual, group or public mind, image functions as an idea and notion that combines the external and internal characteristics of the object in a complex interaction.

In modern academic studies, the concept of “image” is considered as an idea, a concept of a leader, candidate, product, institution, state, party, and country in the minds of people. This image can be created or applied deliberately through advertising and propaganda. The importance of representation in public policy of ideas about the subjects of the political process resulted in the emergence of imageology as a special standalone area in the system of political knowledge. Image formation is considered as a special political technology, “the art of purposeful impression management in the system of power connections and relations”³. The perception of the country in the world has always been one of the resources of the state, long before the concept of “image” appeared in academic discourse. The formation of a positive image of the country was purposefully used by its power elite for ideological support of the domestic and foreign policy. In the conditions of information society, when information exchange is the main resource for development, the image of the country has become especially relevant for the promotion of national interests and intercultural communication.

Images and ideas are becoming increasingly significant participants of political processes, as they reflect certain perceptions of political institutions and participants of political interactions. Political image is formed by correlating the perceptions of the image bearer with its real vision. Images are an important tool for managing public sentiment, as mass public consciousness attaches the status of “really existing” to the image. “The symbolic embodiment of the object is identified with the object itself, sensory perception merges with rational perception, and the individual characteristics of image bearers are transferred to the structures (authorities, parties, non-profit organizations, corporations, and firms) they represent”⁴.

Positive self-identification of citizens with their country is crucial for the formation of a positive image of the country in the world community. The positive internal image is transferred to the perception of this country by “others”, to its external image. Positive internal perception of the country is based on the well-being of the national community, available favorable environment for life and opportunities to fulfill the creative and social potential of citizens. According to foreign researchers, the ability to create social conditions favorable for creative practices becomes crucial in the formation of modern living environment. To create a recognizable national face, technologies for maintaining local cultural traditions are a well-established practice. They are embedded in long-term programs of creative economy development. Creative industries include architecture, advertising, design, fashion, pub-

² Чечель, О. (2016). Формування іміджу держави на міжнародній арені. *Інвестиції: практика та досвід*, 10 (травень), 82 – 86.

³ Кривошеїн, В. (2002). Іміджова складова політичного світосприйняття: структура елементарного рівня. *Грані*. № 4, 117–121.

⁴ Копійка, М. (2017). Особливості формування іміджу України в міжнародному інформаційному просторі. *Гілея: історичні науки, філософські науки, політичні науки*, Вип. 124 (№9), 266–269.

lishing, television and radio, music, visual and performing arts, computer games, and software production⁵.

The dynamic development of the creative economy shapes an image of a social environment that is open to the new and attractive for fulfilling creative potential. It is a community that people want to belong to, affirming a positive image of the country, territory, city, and nation. There is a good reason why the center of attraction is, for example, innovative universities in small American cities⁶.

The integral images of the state as a political community, the country as a nation-state community, and the people have a special place among political images. These images are often ambiguous and do not always correspond to the real situation. One can distinguish the internal image of the country as a set of its inhabitants' perceptions of themselves and their place in the world and the external image as the perception of the country beyond its borders. In today's globalizing world, the formation of a positive image of the country is highly sought-after by the state and business to attract foreign investment, establish business contacts, and sell products. In a number of countries, serious political efforts are invested to form a common identity and values shared by citizens. The Ukrainian state unites young people, scientists, artists, sportspeople, entrepreneurs, and representatives of new professions. The country is positioned as a center where interaction between the state and business and civil society structures is built up.

The creative development in the context of image policy implies the formation of identity reference points common for its citizens, national values, positioning Ukraine as a dynamic country, open to new things. The image of Ukraine as a country geographically located in the center of Europe, with traditions of European culture, with a rich cultural heritage is created. As a transit country, a bridge between Europe and Asia, Ukraine seeks to appear as a stable country, responsible for the fulfillment of its international obligations. In line with these reference points, tools are being developed to implement the state strategy, including the development of education, innovative economic strategies, job creation in creative spheres, and ensuring the growth of innovative business. Ukraine is taking a number of proactive steps to enhance and expand cooperation with business and civil society structures within the partnership of public and private sectors.

The media act as the providers of the most stable perceptions that are implanted deeply in the country and abroad. It is important that the proposed image reference points are universal and easily perceived in the world. The most preferable strategies include propaganda of the country's culture and changing the place and role of business in creating the image of modern Ukraine.

Today, the influence of business structures and corporate sector on various spheres of society has increased so much that scholars have begun to talk about the "corporate millennium". Taking into account the need for structural and technological reorganization of the national economic complex, the import of modern effective business practices is essential for Ukraine. There has been a powerful economic expansion of transnational corporations and the growth of their political influence on decision-making processes in the world. It is important for Ukraine to be involved in this global process, to be actively engaged in global economic ties, in the process of using cutting-edge technologies in the national economy. At the same time, companies successfully operating in the markets of third countries are perceived as a symbol of success of their country of origin. Therefore, it is also important to promote the products of domestic enterprises in the world market, to form a consistent image of Ukraine through those firms and enterprises that represent it. Stable high quality of Ukrainian products and services constantly helps to strengthen the positive image of the country and the nation. Successful implementation of the innovative model of social and economic development of the country brings about matching of positive perception of its external and internal image.

Transparency and stability of the rules of the game, clearly expressed aspiration of the country to be integrated into the world economy are the most important factors for foreign capital. The language of private enterprise is understandable and universal in the West and the East. When Ukrainian enterprises become full-fledged transnational corporations, it will be not only a demonstration of the Ukrainian flag abroad, but also a contribution to the creation of the image of a country with a success-

⁵ Максак, Г. (2020). Просування іміджу України закордоном. Available from: <http://fpp.com.ua/topic/prosuвання-imidzhu-ukrayiny-za-kordonom/> (Accessed: 23 September 2023).

⁶ Завгородня І. (2013). «Позитивні» публікації про Україну: покращення іміджу чи «джинса»? Available from: <https://www.pravda.com.ua/inozmi/deutsche-welle/2013/08/23/6996551/> (Accessed: 23 September 2023).

ful and efficient economy. To achieve this, the companies capable of competing with the world's leading manufacturers are to be created. The state is interested in increasing the share of large corporations in the global market; a purely centralized approach in the times of transnationalization looks obsolete⁷.

In line with this approach, it is necessary to redistribute resources in favor of high-tech industries and development of small and medium-sized businesses. According to experts, the focus on brand aspects of life makes people perceive the whole country as a colossal trademark. The economy, improvement of legal regulation and increasing the level of public understanding by the authorities, business, science, natural resource potential, social and psychological attitude of the people, and stability of the economy become the subjects of branding⁸.

The formation of an attractive image of Ukraine in the eyes of the international community and foreign investors are of particular importance. Experts note positive results of the efforts undertaken in that process. Recently, Ukraine's rating as a market-oriented, innovative, and dynamic country that seeks cooperation with advanced foreign companies has increased significantly. It is expected to use such advantages of the country as favorable geographical position, mild climate, and preserved natural and cultural diversity to attract foreign tourists to learn more about the country. A favorable image of the Ukrainian state in the world is formed due to the availability of an educated and skilled workforce, good English proficiency level among the people as one of the world's languages, and a fairly high level of computerization.

Culture provides the massive opportunities for image-making due to its stereotypicality. Music, theater, fine arts, national holidays and ideas have brand qualities. Cultural brands are designed to enhance the prestige of the country on the international scene, to support the original foundations of the nation's existence, and to form basic symbols. Cultural image should have different sources, including computer industries, design, etc. In the modern world, the intellectual and creative potential of not only cultural heritage, but also young and modern culture is highly sought.

The geographical centerpiece with its territorial and regional structure, namely Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra, vyshyvanka, rushnyk, varenyky, borshch, etc. remain an important component of the Ukrainian national image. They lay the coordinate system in which the country as a whole is cognized. To attract the attention of foreigners to the regions, the improvement of regional infrastructure, development of tourism business, rediscovery and creation of large-scale entertainment events are required. Fairs in Lviv, Odesa, Kyiv, Chernivtsi, and Kharkiv, which are often organized and dedicated to certain topics interesting for the public, are in massive demand in Ukraine.

Comprehending ourselves as a nation-state community makes it possible to identify resources for strengthening the Ukrainian multi-ethnic nation and to use the intercomplementary cultural heritage of ethnic groups of Ukraine. We are talking about further development and strengthening of cultural and economic ties with countries where ethnic groups living in Ukraine are the majority, titular nations, and compatriots working and living abroad. In the course of interaction of national cultures as a set of values, orientations, preferences, assessments of the efficiency of the public system are shaped. Such assessments are the source of perceptions of an open or closed state. The external image of the country is formed on the basis of these perceptions, taking into account the assessments of the country's role and influence in the world. The developed external and internal stereotypes of perception may not coincide and may be contradictory.

For the purposes of creating a positive image of the country, it is important to support new socially significant ideas and to form a positive civic identity among representatives of different ethnic groups. It is a case of having common values and agreement on strategic development priorities. Competent information support of the image of an open, dynamic, democratic country, active work on attracting tourists, Ukrainian citizens from abroad, foreign students and, as a consequence, foreign investments, are of current concern.

The development potential of the Ukrainian national state has a pronounced ethnocultural dimension. It is known that the countries, which in practice implement the principles of social state, have a

⁷ Поліщук, О. (2010). Імідж держави на міжнародній арені: інформаційний аспект. *Науковий блог Національний університет «Острозька академія»*. Available from: <https://naub.oa.edu.ua/2010/imidzh-derzhavy-na-mizhnarodnij-areni-informatsijnyj-aspekt/> (Accessed: 23 September 2023).

⁸ Державна політика у сфері національного брендингу. Інформаційна довідка, підготовлена Європейським інформаційно-дослідницьким центром на запит народного депутата України. Available from: <https://infocenter.rada.gov.ua/uploads/documents/29157.pdf> (Accessed: 23 September 2023).

purely positive and attractive image not only for their own, but also for foreign citizens. It is a case of introduction of effective educational programs, successful overcoming of social inequality, calm social climate, protection of the population, implementation of cultural, sports, and social projects. “A consistent positive image requires a fundamental justification, appealing to the internal sources of existence of the country and the people. Such foundations should be ideologically “discharged” and, if possible, freed from the issues of current politics; but at the same time, as an immutable fact, they should affirm implicitly and subtly the national existence, i.e. civil unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country”⁹.

Particular attention should be given to the issue of technologies for constructing the country image; this issue is considered in the context of developing marketing strategies of national business, promoting relevant brands, and attracting foreign investment. As experts note, the competitiveness of a country extends beyond its economic potential; it includes political image, social climate, and cultural heritage. The state itself within this approach is positioned as a “brand”, conducive to the country’s competitiveness in the global world. The terminology common to marketing is used, and the positioning of the country is substantiated similarly to the promotion of goods.

The consulting structures are engaged in the technologies of constructing the image of the country, assessing their effectiveness, and ways to enhance it. Such studies are applicable, providing the development of technologies to promote positive perception. The government agencies, in particular, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, are their customers. A comparative rating of brands of the world’s states is regularly compiled. The corresponding index was developed by S. Anholt, a famous political consultant and expert in branding strategies¹⁰. The rating is compiled on the basis of assessing consumers’ perceptions of the country’s contribution to global development. It includes an assessment of the country’s exported goods and services, levels of public administration and commitment to the values of democracy, justice, fighting against poverty, environmental security, significance of cultural heritage, reputation of the people, interest in tourism, attractiveness for investment and immigration.

Conclusion. The development of communicative means has not changed the general principles on the basis of which nations form their opinions about each other. The country image is still based on stable perceptions and stereotypes, which are rooted in the depths of national consciousness. They can be positive or negative, but in any case they act as an information filter. In order to form a state brand of Ukraine, first of all, a clear branding strategy is needed, and the country’s information policy must be well-arranged to the fullest degree. When forming it, it is necessary to take into account international practices in this area. It is also important to adequately and promptly respond and convey Ukraine’s position on the main world events. It should be remembered that today such a concept as brand is considered as one of the key assets of the state.

Analyzing a brand, it is easy to draw conclusions about a state: whether it is a reliable partner or it is better to have nothing to do with it; whether a state is an aggressor or a peace-loving country. A positive state brand directly affects the economic situation in the country, the well-being of its population, and its relations with the outside world. The importance of a positive image of the state for the effective defense of its interests, progressive development, and building mutually beneficial partnerships on the international scene can hardly be doubted at the moment. At the same time, the role of image as an effective and even necessary tool for the implementation of state interests in today’s increasingly complicated world rises steadily.

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¹⁰ Anholt S. (2009). *Places: Identity, Image and Reputation*. Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke.

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