POLITICAL PROPAGANDA AND POWER OVER OPINION IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS: CONCEPTS, METHODOLOGY AND EMPIRICAL BASE

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Theoretical assumptions of this work are closely related to The *Reality of Mass Media*, a book by a German sociologist and media theorist N. Luhmann. The point made in his work is referred to the mass media dividing our world into two parallel realities. One of them – the reality of mass media itself – consists of the items representing the process of news’ creation, for instance, the reality of printing machines, magazines, journalists, and etc. Another reality is the embodiment of all the information represented in the mass media as a result of the news production and perception by the audience. In the nutshell, the phenomenon that has never been mentioned in media, – had never happened. Therefore, the mass media has the function of determining «what happens and what should be considered as real» – constructing the agenda and influencing and manipulating reality. [8, p.8 – 21]

International relations might be considered as a «double reality» too. To take at least psychological theory of the IR: e.g., study of perception and misperception in foreign policy was a landmark in the application of cognitive psychology to political decision making. [See: 4] Projecting the media’s influence on agenda in the global scale, the manipulation of the «international agenda» – the topics and problems, discussed in international organizations (first of all, in the United Nations) and the world media space - is recognized in the term of propaganda or disinformation. Nevertheless, in the academic discourse we examine the lack of understanding of the methods and concepts suitable for the analysis of the propaganda on international arena, and that’s *the problem of the future research.*

The research is intended to be multidisciplinary mixing together the sphere of public opinion formation theories and IR. Neoclassical realism maintains the idea that states act just in order to fulfil their *national interest* and follow the idea of the «balance of power» concept. Thus, states use not only military or economic power but «power over opinion» – the term coined by E.H. Carr in his book *The twenty year’s crisis, 1919 – 1939. An introduction to study International Relations* [Cit.ex.: 1, p.1]. Power over opinion is, basically, tool using the information in international relations. Such paradigm is appropriate to assess role of the media in international affairs.

In order to attain the goal of defining the appropriate concepts, methodology and empirical base we have to fulfil following steps:

1. Define the correct terms in which analyze political propaganda and power over opinion in international relations;
2. Introduce methodological approach in order to devise valid analytical instruments (both quantitative and qualitative methods);
3. Provide empirical base for the pilot research project: anticipated empirical base will consist of two parts (mass media covering international agenda and white papers archive) [See: 5; 7].
4. Conduct the pilot research on the relevant cases: Rhodesian Bush War (1964 –1979), Rwanda genocide (1994), War in Darfur and the current civil war in South Sudan [2, p.2 – 3; 3; 6].

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