

Faculti Summary

<https://faculti.net/authoritarian-propaganda-campaigns-on-foreign-affairs/>

This video discusses a debate in comparative politics regarding the purposes of authoritarian regimes' propaganda strategies. Traditionally, such propaganda was viewed as primarily aimed at persuasion. However, there is a contrasting view suggesting that its main purpose is to intimidate the public and demonstrate state power, discouraging challenges to authority.

The authors assert that authoritarian regimes, exemplified by China, often have broader ambitions for their propaganda. They utilize it not just to maintain power, but to mobilize allies, communicate with international audiences, and assert moral superiority in global disputes. A case study highlighted is the South China Sea arbitration between the Philippines and China, where the Philippine government aimed to challenge China's maritime claims through international legal frameworks. Despite declaring that it would not recognize the arbitration, China's extensive propaganda campaign perplexingly increased as the arbitration progressed, leading to numerous articles in state-run media.

The authors propose that multiple motivations can coexist during propaganda campaigns, including domestic mobilization, signaling to international audiences, and diversion from internal issues. They observed that Chinese propaganda aimed to reinforce nationalist sentiment and distract from domestic economic challenges during a period of economic instability in China. The study emphasizes the complexity of authoritarian propaganda and suggests future research could explore the life cycles and motivations behind such campaigns, not just within China but also in other regimes and contexts.