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ПОТЕНЦІАЛ ГРОМАДСЬКОЇ ДИПЛОМАТІЇ ДЛЯ ПОДОЛАННЯ ПРОБЛЕМ ДЕМОКРАТИЧНОГО ТРАНЗИТУ

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POTENTIAL OF PUBLIC DIPLOMACY IN ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES OF DEMOCRATIC TRANSITION

The article defines the place and role of public diplomacy in the process of democratic transition. To this end, the main peculiarities of democratic transition concept were considered, internal and external factors affecting democratization process were analyzed. It was concluded that the enhancement of public diplomacy leads to a higher effectiveness of the democracy promotion strategies implemented by Western powers together with international organizations. In particular, public diplomacy looks more attractive compared with other types of assistance in building democracy, in terms of interference with the sovereignty of independent states. It helps to create a density of ties between particular country and Western democracies, as well as promotes democratic transformation of society, getting the public involved in addressing internal issues and in the international dialogue.

Key words: public diplomacy, democratic transition, promoting democracy, democratization, public participation.

A dramatic growth in the number of democratic states around the world during the last quarter of the 20th century has resulted in a concept of democratization as a one-way process in the global dimension won popularity and recognition in the West. The number of democratic states saw an increase up from 33 in 1976 to 89 in 2005, whilst that of autocracies went down from 82 in 1976 to 23 in 2005, according to the authoritative Polity IV Project¹. Building on this trend, Fukuyama in 1989 claimed a final triumph of liberal democracy and the end of history. Huntington, instead, viewed these processes as a third wave of democratization brought forth by political, economic, and religious factors². The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 marked its natural, although unexpected for many politicians, end. After this, a long-held view of communism as the main opponent of liberal democracy has become irrelevant. Instead, it became obvious that the communist regime had long been disintegrating from within, according to an apt definition by Plattner³. The bankruptcy and downfall of the Soviet version of communism have not however led to an automatic establishment of democracy in the republics once integrated into the USSR. Most of them (except of Baltic states) saw a failure in implementing projects of gradual transition to democracy through reforms. A slow, however consistent, degradation of Russia to authoritarianism that started together with the advent to rule of Vladimir Putin, became a milestone event for ex-USSR European states, and it naturally resulted in an aggravation of the conflict between totalitarian Russia and its neighbors that, despite numerous challenges of post-communism transformation, are demonstrating preference for a democratic scenario of development.

Difficulties that countries on different continents face in building democracy make the studies into the factors and tools impacting these processes even more topical. Information technologies and globalization realities begot a new approach to these issues and offered novel adequate solutions. In this study, we attempt to prove that public diplomacy as a tool, used by international actors in foreign policy-

¹ Marshall, M.G., Gurr, T.R. *Polity IV Project: Political Regime Characteristics and Transitions, 1800-2013*. <<http://www.systemicpeace.org/polity/polity4.htm>> (2015, July, 21).

² Huntington, S.P. (1993). *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 85-100.

³ Plattner, M.F. (1991). The Democratic Moment. *Journal of Democracy*, 2 (4), 34-35.

making to address foreign public audience, can be quite instrumental in promoting democratization and, inter alia, when used within a strategy of bringing in democracy from the outsides. To this end, we shall first discuss the main traits of democratic transition concept, basic patterns of criticism of this concept, as well as internal and external factors affecting the democratization process.

Democratic transformations in many countries around the world in the end of the 20th century stirred up close interest in them from scholars seeking to establish regularities in these processes. As a result, a new branch of political science emerged, i.e. the democratic transition studies, or transitology. Its main traits include: a view of democratization as a self-contained political phenomenon, focus on institutional changes, and attempts to create theoretically substantiated recommendations to improve the effectiveness of democratic transformations¹. A classic model of democratic transition usually comprises three stages, i.e. liberalization of authoritarian regime, establishment of democratic rule, and consolidation of democracy². The realities of the past decades have however highlighted a number of soft spots in the transition theory, pointing to a crisis in this area of study. This above all concerns Latin America and post-Soviet space, with events in these countries deviating from the transition theory, democracy looked upon as 'defective' and democratic transition taking an endless pattern. Carothers, one of the most noted critics of transitology, points out two groups of countries that are neither dictatorial nor clearly headed toward democracy, and that instead have entered the so-called 'political grey zone' for a long period. The first group of such countries feature feckless pluralism, and their democracy remains unstable and to a great extent illusory. Ukraine is a bright illustration of this type of countries. The countries in the second group suffer from the dominant-power politics syndrome characterized by a concentration of political and other power, together with resources and media, within a single clique leaving minor possibilities to change this situation. Nevertheless, definite democratic scenery and procedures still remain here, such as regular elections, elements of political freedom, and existence of opposition³. Other studies also include a 'dead zone' stage in their democratic transition model. This is a stable instability period following to formal democratization⁴. Next come the stages of essential democracy and democracy consolidation; however, any country may experience a setback to authoritarianism or be stuck for a long period in the 'dead zone'.

Thus, the democratization process involves more complex events than just an establishment of individual political institutions and depends on broader contexts. Bearing this in mind, it is important to refer again to the modernization theory that stood at the origins of transitology and links democratization to socioeconomic development processes⁵. Concepts differentiating between procedural (formal, political) and essential (societal) democracy are also of significance⁶. The first one is characterized by the existence of democratic procedures and institutions (e.g. elections, referenda, demonstrations, multiparty system, distribution of power) that a country can introduce within a short time, also due to an external influence. However, this type of a regime (referred to as transitional, incomplete, electoral, formal, weak, or hybrid democracy) can be considered as democracy by its formal signs only and does not provide for a real influence of the authorities on the power, and their involvement in decision-making and formulating the country's agenda. As a result, the society develops a misinterpretation of democracy, people do not appreciate its values, and this situation does not promote further democratic transformations. Essential democracy features a well-developed civil society, transparency in decision making, accountability of power, diversity of free media, access to information, etc. To achieve it, much more efforts should be taken over a long period of time. In general, a success of this process depends on many aspects, including special traits of a specific country or region.

Hence, the relevance of studying the whole range of factors affecting the process of democratic

¹ Шипунов, Г. (2006). Особливості становлення транзитології як напряму політичної науки. *Українська національна ідея: реалії та перспективи розвитку*, 17, 125.

² Wise, Ch.R., Brown, T.L. (1998) The Consolidation of Democracy in Ukraine. *Democratization*, 5 (1), 116.

³ Carothers, T. (2002). The End of the Transition Paradigm. *Journal of democracy*, 13 (1), 9-12.

⁴ Новакова, О. (2009). Сучасні аспекти розвитку теорії демократичного транзиту. *Політологічні записки*, 1, 156-157.

⁵ Шабасова, М. (2009). Транзитология как научный подход и идеология. *Праці гістарычнага факультэта Беларускага дзяржаўнага ўніверсітэта*, 4, 199.

Шипунов, Г. (2006). Особливості становлення транзитології як напряму політичної науки. *Українська національна ідея: реалії та перспективи розвитку*, 17, 124.

⁶ Casier, T. (2011). The EU's Two-track Approach to Democracy Promotion: the Case of Ukraine. *Democratization*, 18 (4), 958.

transformations is growing. The above factors can be divided into internal and external. The following group of factors is referred to as internal¹:

1. Specific features of historical development include political traditions and state-building experience, together with the establishment of democratic institutions. These historical factors are referred to as structural, and they are closely linked with socio-cultural factors and are decisive for the formation of national unity².

2. Most important from among political factors are the quality of political elite and its commitment and capacity to implement democratic transformations; strategies and tactics used to bring them in place; political competition; civil society development; etc.

3. Economic factors include the equality of all types of property; protection of property rights, diversification and development of economy, fair economic competition; and the relevant class structure. A number of democratization paradigms emphasize a significant role of economic factors in securing a stable economic progress³.

4. Socio-cultural factors, such as a high level of political and legal culture, mass education, rationalist worldview are of special importance for our study, bearing in mind a need to move away from a narrow interpretation of democratization⁴. Added to these can also be other traits of the society significant for the establishment of a democratic rule in the long run, such as intellectual capabilities allowing citizens to respond the challenges to democracy; particular psychological characteristics (self-restraint that is especially important for an individual coming to power; willingness to accept compromise solutions and achieve consensus; openness for cooperation), and also the ability of society to protect democracy should it be threatened from within or the outside⁵.

As regards external factors, political environment in the adjacent countries and countries that are regional and world leaders, together with the overall state of the international system should be taken into account. Przeworski and others in their latest studies come to a conclusion that the probability that a democratic regime would survive in a particular country to a large extent depends upon the proportion of other democracies in the region and the world as a whole. The global effect is about twice as large as regional effect and is a totally independent factor, together with the direct influence of Western democracies⁶. In describing democratization patterns, Huntington mentions a snowballing effect, meaning the stimulation of democratization processes in an increasingly large number of countries following the establishment of democratic models in the countries that are more advanced in this respect⁷. The same effect may be observed with regard to toppling of autocratic governments, including color revolutions. In other papers these processes are referred to as a domino effect⁸.

A targeted influence by significant international actors on the political system of a particular country is another external factor. It is this activity of democratic states and their alliances that is in the focus of our interest. At the same time, one should bear in mind that an external influence can also be aimed at weakening democratic institutes, consolidating the authoritarianism or undermining the political situation. A powerful non-democratic regime that extends the sphere of its political interests to a neighboring country moving to democracy can become a serious barrier for this movement to overcome.

Thus, a state aiming to promote democracy beyond its borders has to develop and implement a relevant strategy taking into account all factors and traits of any specific country. It is evident that such

¹ Колодій, А.Ф. (ред.) (2009). *Основи демократії: підручник для студентів вищих навчальних закладів. 3-тє вид.* Львів: Астролябія, 117-118; Cohen, C. (1971). *Democracy*. Athens: University of Georgia Press;

Schmitter, Ph.C., Karl, T.L. (1991). What Democracy Is ... and Is Not. *Journal of Democracy*, 2 (3), 75-88.

² Wise, Ch.R., Brown, T.L. (1998). The Consolidation of Democracy in Ukraine. *Democratization*, 5 (1), 117.

³ Przeworski, A, Alvarez, M.E., Cheibub, J.A., Limongi, F. (1996). What Makes Democracies Endure? *Journal of Democracy*, 7 (1), 39-55.

⁴ Колодій, А.Ф. (ред.) (2009). *Основи демократії: підручник для студентів вищих навчальних закладів. 3-тє вид.* Львів: Астролябія, 55.

⁵ Cohen, C. (1971). *Democracy*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 105; Schmitter, Ph.C., Karl, T.L. (1991). What Democracy Is ... and Is Not. *Journal of Democracy*, 2 (3), 79, 83.

⁶ Przeworski A., Alvarez, M.E., Cheibub, J.A., Limongi, F. (2000). *Democracy and Development: Political Institutions and Well-Being in the World, 1950-1990*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

⁷ Huntington, S.P. (1993). *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 100-101.

⁸ Thiel, R. (2010). *Nested Games of External Democracy Promotion: The United States and the Polish Liberalization 1980-1989*. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 43.

strategies should vary considerably depending on the political regime. A positive aspect here is that a democratic facade in ‘defective democracies’ provides more tools for Western states, making the task to implement their programs easier. However, it should be remembered that prerequisites for democracy in new democratic states have only been partially formed – in contrast with old democracies where such prerequisites preceded the democracy itself – and require a great attention¹. Giddens offered an apt metaphor describing democracy as a fragile flower that needs a rich soil and favorable conditions to survive². In their absence a nation may for a long term find itself in a zone of indefiniteness between democracy and dictatorship, that is the most widespread and common political condition in the developing world and the postcommunist world, according to Carothers³. With this in mind, another view of democracy would appear more productive, i.e. looking upon it as a sturdy plant able to strike root anywhere, although requiring an adequate many-year cultivation with due regard to the local ‘soil’⁴. An omission of these aspects with a direct copying of Western democratic institutions in other regions is commonly looked upon as the main reason for a low effectiveness in promoting democracy across the world.

The USA and European Union member states have stepped up their activities in propagating democracy around the world since the third wave of democratization and break-up of the USSR. Their policy was mostly based on the transitology concept and accordingly focused on a number of individual issues, such as the electoral process, formation of political parties, transformation of law-enforcement system, and promotion of the development of civil society and independent media. The main strategies the West is using to influence the processes of democratic transformations include control, material incentives, normative suasion, and capacity-building. Control is executed in exceptional events, since it is connected with interference in the national sovereignty. Besides, even if this instrument may be deemed acceptable in such events as the need to stop massive violations of human rights or resist aggression, its effectiveness is still doubtful when it comes to the establishment of a stable democracy. Material incentives are the most common instrument and suppose a promotion of a required behavior through providing certain benefits (positive incentives) or imposing political, diplomatic, or economic sanctions (negative incentives). Normative suasion implies various types of influence used to persuade internal actors to stick to a certain behavior by proving its legitimacy, fairness, and necessity for society. Capacity-building is achieved through educational programs, provision of information, and procurement technical assistance⁵. The two last strategies are most tightly linked to public diplomacy, yet are often underestimated in the democratization policy.

A low effect achieved by the efforts taken by the West in promoting democracy calls for analyzing the situation in a much broader context and brings to the forefront the studies related to the establishment of essential democracy as opposed to procedural democracy in developing countries. At the same time, previously used strategies based on assistance have proved their inadequacy and should be combined with novel instruments⁶. Modern technologies bring forth opportunities and tools for influencing international actors and make us reestimate the capacity that public diplomacy has to promote democracy in this environment.

It should be noted that the concept of public diplomacy emerged and developed in the USA during the Cold War period. Subsequently it gained interest amongst other powerful states around the world, and today it is subject to transformation underpinned by globalization and information society factors. Public diplomacy is guided by national interest of a country or a vital interest of another international actor. It is carried out by an international actor working together with governmental and non-governmental structures, the latter being active too and able to pursue their own objectives. This activity is primarily aimed at not

¹ Beetham, D. (2005). *Democracy: A Beginner's Guide*. Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 84.

² Giddens, A. (2000). *Runaway World: How Globalization is Reshaping Our Lives*. New York, NY: Routledge, 100.

³ Carothers, T. (2002). The End of the Transition Paradigm. *Journal of democracy*, 13 (1), 18.

⁴ Giddens, A. (2000). *Runaway World: How Globalization is Reshaping Our Lives*. New York, NY: Routledge, 100.

⁵ Magen, A., McFaul, M.A. (2009). Introduction: American and European Strategies to Promote Democracy – Shared Values, Common Challenges, Divergent Tools? In A. Magen, T. Risse, M. A. McFaul (Eds.), *Promoting Democracy and the Rule of Law: American and European Strategies*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 12-15.

⁶ Carothers, T. (2015). Democracy Aid at 25: Time to Choose. *Journal of Democracy*, 26 (1), 59-73.

other international actors but at target audiences abroad.

Therefore, let us consider arguments testifying the ability of public diplomacy to address a number of democratization challenges. It, above all, looks more attractive compared with other types of assistance in building democracy, in terms of interference with the sovereignty of independent states. By taking democratization steps, and, inter alia, providing assistance to particular actors engaged in the internal political process, the Western powers also pursue other strategic and economic interests¹. As a result, they face accusations of applying double standards and interference in political struggle, i.e. in internal affairs of another country. The second argument becomes especially significant and is often used by autocratic powers to deface democratization efforts, where the assistance from the West is aimed at political parties and opposition movements together with their leaders. In such events, democracy is depicted as something brought in from the outside, alien, and exclusively Western, and such an image works against its establishment in the country. Public diplomacy measures, in contrast, are more transparent. Authoritarian regimes only may view them as interference in the internal affairs or assault on the sovereignty. In democracies in transition they usually do not evoke a negative response of this sort². Public diplomacy activities are also aimed at a variety of target audiences besides powerful political players, making any accusations of interference in the political struggle easily disproved.

One of the most essential arguments in the democracy promotion criticism is that democratic institutions created resulting from such activity lack sustainability and are entirely dependent on the funding from the West³. Should such assistance stop (or in the event that new sources of assistance are revealed), the political elites will find it inexpedient to maintain the course to democracy taken earlier, especially if it has not gained a considerable public support since it was taken. As regards civil society organizations, many of them may altogether cease to exist. Bearing this in mind, a landmark strategy for democratization based on the new public diplomacy seems more appropriate. This strategy should involve a creation of a maximum number of ties between a particular country on the one hand, and the USA, the EU and western-dominated multilateral institutions on the other hand. Levitsky and Way suggest possible groups of such links comprising economic (trade, investment, credit), geopolitical (participation in western-led alliances, treaties, international organizations), social (transborder flow of people, migration, tourism, educational programs in the West), communication (cross-border telecommunication, internet, Western radio and TV), and transnational civil society links (within western-based non-governmental organizations, religious groups, and party organizations)⁴. It is evident that public diplomacy is directly related to the establishment of links in the latter three groups. Another source emphasizes such types of international partnership that need a considerable attention from Western diplomats in terms of democratic transformations. These are contacts between people, especially those with pro-democratic views (students, youth, ecologists, trade unions and women's organizations, cultural groups, defenders, scholars, researchers, experts), inter-institutional partnership (with involvement of independent media, political parties, organizations concerned with the development of legal procedures, police and security agencies, international governmental and non-governmental organizations), and cooperation aimed at addressing socially important issues (such as overcoming poverty and discrimination, developing an education system, public health, local communities, environmental protection, etc.)⁵. The above list is important for realizing the variety of target audiences to be covered by public diplomacy efforts for democratization purpose. It should be noted that such links are instrumental in promoting the establishment and strengthening the position of a country's internal actors.

Another important argument in favors of public diplomacy is that it reinforces the legitimacy of democracy promotion programs by involving publics and their associations in these processes as their proactive participants. Levitsky and Way have offered a model of effective influence on the state authorities in case they neglect democracy principles. This model consists of two components: a) direct influence of international actors on the government using various forms of leverage; and b) indirect influence on the

¹ Beetham, D. (2005). *Democracy: A Beginner's Guide*. Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 104.

² Gong, W. (2005). Information Sovereignty Reviewed. *Intercultural Communication Studies*, 14 (1), 133.

³ Beetham, D. (2005). *Democracy: A Beginner's Guide*. Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 107.

⁴ Levitsky, S., Way, L.A. (2006). Linkage versus Leverage. Rethinking the International Dimension of Regime Change. *Comparative Politics*, 38 (4), 379, 384.

⁵ Kinsman, J., Bassuener, K. (2010). *A Diplomat's Handbook for Democracy Development Support*, Second Edition. Washington, DC: Council for a Community of Democracies, 32-35. <http://www.diplomats-handbook.org/pdf/Diplomats_Handbook.pdf> (2015, July, 23).

government through links with domestic actors: business, technocrats, and voters¹. It can also be said that public diplomacy mechanism itself, envisaging the involvement of the source of democratic power, i.e. citizens, in the transformation processes going on in their country and reinforcing their subjectivity, is democratic by its nature and is therefore best fitted for building democracy. Indeed, thanks to such activities, external pressure related to reforms is replaced by the pressure on non-democratic elites exerted by the people inside the country, and international regulations adopted following pressure from the West obtain a basis of internal legitimacy².

A special mention should be made of the role that public diplomacy plays in the activity related not to the promotion of democracy but to the protection of democratic principles and institutions already created in the state. In the event that a political power skips a democratic path and resorts to derogation of democratic liberties, any support of opposition and financial aid would often become impossible. It is in such moments that politicians and experts have to bring into play the potential of public diplomacy. Such measures are employed as international TV- and radio broadcasting, official and non-official statements by politicians and officials targeted directly on the public of the state in question. This can be illustrated by the support from the German Chancellor Helmut Kohl and American senator Edward Kennedy of the Chilean people after Augusto Pinochet seized power in 1973, or communication established with the Ukrainian Euromaidan participants in 2013/4 by American senator John McCain and Victoria Nuland representing the US Department of State³. One more illustrative example is the response of European expert environment to Viktor Yanukovich's coming to power who was viewed by them as a pro-Russian figure. The Centre for European Reforms, a non-governmental organization based in the United Kingdom, for instance, predicted a further drift of Ukraine towards Russia, yet it called upon the European Union not to give up and redouble its attention to those measures that can be counted as public diplomacy tools, i.e. visits by high officials from the EU and its member-states with maximum communication with the public, media and opposition, expansion of programs for university and school students, and promoting contacts among people, inter alia, by lifting visa barriers⁴.

Thus, it can be concluded that the enhancement of public diplomacy leads to a higher effectiveness of the democracy promotion strategies implemented by the Western powers together with international organizations. On the other hand, public diplomacy promotes democratic transformation of the society, getting people – that is the source of any democratic power – involved in addressing the internal issues and in the international dialogue. Added here should also be yet not fully exploited potential of public diplomacy in creating a more attractive image of democracy and its elements, and also as a tool for countering anti-democratic propaganda of authoritarian regimes.

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¹ Levitsky, S., Way, L.A. (2006). Linkage versus Leverage. Rethinking the International Dimension of Regime Change. *Comparative Politics*, 38 (4), 387.

² Diamond, L. (1999). *Developing Democracy: Toward Consolidation*. Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, 277.

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³ Kinsman, J., Bassuener, K. (2010). *A Diplomat's Handbook for Democracy Development Support*, Second Edition. Washington, DC: Council for a Community of Democracies, 10-11. <http://www.diplomats-handbook.org/pdf/Diplomats_Handbook.pdf> (2015, July, 23).

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