ІНФОРМАЦІЙНЕ СУСПІЛЬСТВО:
СВІТОВИЙ ДОСВІД ТА УКРАЇНСЬКІ РЕАЛІЇ

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DIGITAL DIPLOMACY AS A CORE VECTOR
OF A COUNTRY'S IMAGE MAKING

У статті висвітлюється проблема створення іміджу країни як багатогранного та багатовекторного процесу, який вимагає активного залучення політичних, соціальних, культурних та комунікативних аспектів дієвої політики держави. Внаслідок стрімких технологічних, політичних, економічних і культурно-лінгвістичних змін, що призвели до турбулентності сучасного світового порядку, зрештою, усієї системи міжнародних відносин, змінилися і традиційні форми дипломатії. Глобалізація світових політичних процесів спричинила появу іміджевого феномену, його вплив на ефективність зовнішньої та внутрішньої політики, позиціонування держави у міжнародному інформаційному просторі. Інтернет - це концептуальна основа цифрової дипломатії, яка передбачає використання можливостей соцмереж та інформаційно-комунікаційних технологій для розв'язання дипломатичних завдань, які сприяють формуванню та просуванню позитивного іміджу нації. Отже, важливим засобом впровадження іміджевої стратегії є інформаційні технології, що на сучасному етапі світового розвитку проникають в усі сфери людської діяльності, здійснюють істотний вплив на формування світогляду людини, спосіб життя, систему міжособистісних відносин. Ключовими позиціями у реалізації іміджевої стратегії з забезпечення позитивного іміджу держави є налагодження конструктивної взаємодії із громадськістю, забезпечення зворотного зв'язку за допомогою різних засобів масової комунікації.

Ключові слова: *формування іміджу країни (іміджмейкінг), цифрова дипломатія, міжнародний інформаційний простір, соцмережі, дипломатична робота, національний брендинг.*

В данной статье рассматривается проблема создания имиджа страны как многогранного и многовекторного процесса, требующего активного привлечения политических, социальных, культурных и коммуникативных аспектов для реализации действенной полити-

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ки государства. Вследствие стремительных технологических, политических, экономических и культурно-лингвистических изменений, которые привели к турбулентности современного мирового порядка и всей системы международных отношений, изменились и традиционные формы дипломатии. Глобализация мировых политических процессов привела к появлению имиджевого феномена, его влияние на эффективность внешней и внутренней политики, позиционирование государства в международном информационном пространстве. Интернет – это концептуальная основа цифровой дипломатии, предусматривающая использование возможностей соцсетей и информационно-коммуникационных технологий для решения дипломатических задач, способствующих формированию и продвижению положительного имиджа страны. Таким образом, важным средством внедрения имиджевой стратегии являются технологии, которые на современном этапе мирового развития проникают во все сферы человеческой деятельности, осуществляют значимое влияние на формирование мировоззрения человека, его образ жизни, систему межличностных отношений. Ключевые позиции в реализации имиджевой стратегии в рамках формирования позитивного имиджа государства – это налаживание конструктивного взаимодействия с общественностью, обеспечение обратной связи с помощью различных средств массовой коммуникации.

Ключевые слова: *формирование имиджа страны (имиджмейкинг), цифровая дипломатия, международное информационное пространство, соцсети, дипломатическая работа, национальный брендинг.*

The body of the article goes on to discuss the problem of a country's image making as a very multifaceted process, which takes into consideration different political, social, cultural and communicational aspects of the country. Drastic technological, political, economic, cultural and linguistic changes enhanced the turbulence of the modern world order, and with all human endeavors, transformed the whole system of international relations, and consequently, traditional forms of diplomacy. The globalization of world political processes has led to the emergence of an 'image' phenomenon, its impact on foreign and domestic policies' effectiveness, positioning the state in the international arena. The Internet – the core of 'digital diplomacy' – communicating ideas, promoting policies and fostering debate and

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discussion, aims at advancing positive image of the nation. Consequently, important tools of implementing a country's image making strategies are digital communication technologies, currently involved in all walks of human life, produce significant influence on the formation of a person's world, life, system of interpersonal relations Digital diplomacy's top priorities are to develop strategies, to influence public opinion, organize human and material resources in ways that might help resolve their conflicts.

Worldwide competitiveness of the 21st century has made every country strive for its paragon branding and for its being favorably perceived and recognized all over the world. Besides, under such circumstances, the concept of a country's image has become the pivotal focus of heads of states, foreign policies, diplomats, political elite, scientists, grass-roots activists and universal citizens' activities since globalization has made the world more interdependent and all nations are in rivalry for investment, tourists, products, and education, whatever. A country's image making is a very multifaceted process, which takes into consideration different political, social, cultural and communicational aspects of the country.

Importantly, at the turn of the 20th and 21st century globalization processes immensely affected the global society as an information environment. Moreover, according to Alvin Toffler, the world humanity has been undergoing the so-called 'Future Shock' – the shattering stress and disorientation that we induce in individuals by subjecting them to too much change in too short a time." [10, p. 2].

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Symbolically, the recent spread of digital initiatives in foreign ministries is considered to be a revolution in the practice of diplomacy. [2]

The study delves into the academic underpinnings of digital (virtual) or e-diplomacy that significantly contributes to the embracing of a nation branding and its manifold implications for any statehood.

It should be stressed that most of the studies on digital diplomacy were predominantly conducted in North America and Europe; and few researches have been done in the Far East, Asia, and the Middle East.

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Scholars have attempted to illustrate the interplay between the concepts of nation branding and public diplomacy in an increasingly digitized environment. It is imperative to clarify that nations use SNS (Social Networking System) in order to promote a national image and communicate their understanding of events to foreign audiences. Such communication is one aspect of public diplomacy. Therefore, digital diplomacy may contain facets of both nation branding and public diplomacy. [5]

Specifically, the adoption of digital diplomacy (i.e., the use of social media for diplomatic purposes) has been drawn in changing practices of how diplomats involve in information controlling, public diplomacy, strategy planning, international negotiations and, more importantly, crisis management. Though, admittedly, it is rather unfolding phenomenon to be comprehended from both an analytical and a practical perspective. The globalization of world political processes has led to the emergence of an 'image' phenomenon, its impact on foreign and domestic policies' effectiveness, positioning the state in the international information space, and the development of political culture in the modern world. Though, digital diplomacy presents tremendous opportunities for global engagement, it, however, generates new problems and challenges. As interpreting Daryl Copeland, 'made of clicks rather than bricks, virtual diplomacy as a digital universe with its full potential is applied in support of wide range of organizational objectives including the advancement of a new, more public style of diplomacy. Networks and connectivity, rather than specific platforms or technologies, are the hallmarks of the globalization age [1]

The Internet – the core of 'digital diplomacy' – communicating ideas, promoting policies and fostering debate and discussion aims at advancing positive image of the nation. The positive image of the nation, to be more precise, its authorities, is defined as a significant social factor, an essential part of policymaking in the context of strategic national interests' framework, including the use of digital communication technologies. A remarkable role in addressing the problem of forming a positive image of the state worthy of emulation play foreign communication technologies, which are a conceptual paradigm of political strategies of the state and other actors in international relations, where they are a component of international influences and factors functioning state in the international information media space. Active processes of global information,

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which is the dominant of modern society, reached a new level – the problem of developing and implementing branding policy.

The e-diplomacy assumes and emphasizes the 'electronic' as a tool that should serve a state's national interests in diplomatic relations. The preponderance of digital technology in this process is collapsing walls of barrier that ever restricted interactions and relations among States, International institutions, organization (governmental and non-governmental) and leaders especially in foreign relation and in knowledge sharing. [7]

Significantly, digital diplomacy is indisputably effective as a soft power tool. The United Kingdom is taking the highest ranking in the annual Diplomacy Live ranking of how ministries for foreign affairs fare on social media. France and the U.S. follow closely behind the U.K. In France, 173 diplomats use Facebook to communicate with one another, and new hires are required to take a social web training program upon their start. And in the U.S., the State Department even has a Tumblr account. According to A.Manning – a reporter on Vocativ's visual news team, the research on 'Diplomacy. Live', conducts an in-depth annual study on how broadly foreign ministries use social media. Currently, as Digital Diplomacy Review informs, Twitter is the leading platform for foreign ministries. 83% of them use the platform for the likes of contests, breaking news alerts, and 'hashtag' campaigns. (It also allows for external affairs ministers to go viral by immediately responding to tweets. Facebook is the second most popular platform for digital diplomacy, with advantages including its new push-pull for composing posts in multiple languages. That's among the biggest issues for expanding global reach, and the reason that the Vatican (which places 6th in digital diplomacy worldwide) has five different pages in Facebook, nearly identical except for language. The review notes that "the journey from 'International' to 'Internetional' is already underway" adding that "viralpolitik" is slowly supplementing "realpolitik." Whereas diplomacy used to take place behind closed doors, governments today use social media platforms to directly communicate with citizens and the rest of the world [4].

In terms of meteoric rise of extensive discussion among both the practitioner and scholar communities on diplomacy's impact on nation branding and enhancing a country's image, our attention was drawn to CPD's (USA) joint project with the North America Advocacy division of Global Affairs (Canada). CDP researchers' focus revolves around the

findings that digital technologies like social media and big data have not only reinforced and expanded public diplomacy discourses, but also become a driving force in change management in the structure and process of diplomatic work. There is a broad consensus that digital communication is central to a nation's efforts to engage with foreign publics, and that the general goal of such public diplomacy endeavors is to bring about actions performed/ decisions made by foreign actors which are favorable to the national interest.[9] We shouldn't underscore the importance of taking a rigorous approach to studying Joseph Montville's initially coined concept of track two diplomacy in 1981 as a counterbalance to traditional or track one diplomacy, which involved the work of governments and high level international bodies such as the United Nations, Montville defined track two diplomacy as 'unofficial, informal interaction between members of adversary groups or nations that aim to develop strategies, to influence public opinion, organize human and material resources in ways that might help resolve their conflict' [6, p. 162].

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Another case-study of the Northern Ireland showed that its community's networks developed to the extent that currently are often in the vanguard, trying to prevent disorder, whereas in the past they had been limited to reacting to violence. The Northern Ireland transition from a protracted armed conflict to a sustained peace with democratically accountable institutions has been a long drawn out process, during which time recurrent outbreaks of violence and disorder associated with the highly polarized divisions of the two main communities regularly threatened to undermine progress. The antipathetic relations between nationalist and unionist working class communities and with the police only created further difficulties in managing the disorder. However, over the past decade a variety of community-based policing initiatives have helped to reduce and control the street level violence and have also helped to build and develop relationships both between the two rival communities, but also between the communities and the police. The initial basis for the development of community-based policing activities was the network of locally based groups and individual activists that had been established by the community development sector in Belfast over a period of years. After the ceasefires these networks became more openly associated with wider political and paramilitary networks across the city, particularly through the presence of former prisoners working in the field of conflict resolution. These interconnecting networks had consid-

erable social capital, more than the community or political networks had alone, and they were able to utilize this in responding to the disorder that began to break out with some regularity after 1996. Over the course of a decade the community-based policing networks were able to build and develop their activities and their capacity to intervene effectively at times of tension by extending their engagement within their own community, with members of the other communities and with the police. [3, pp.16-17]

In terms of aforesaid, of particular interest is a comparative analysis of the China coverage of the BBC World Service, CNN International and Deutsche Welle (DW). The study reveals three very different approaches to reporting the news on China. Indeed, rather than think of BBC, CNN and DW as providing similar services and thus competing with each other to reach audiences, the different approaches represented in the data and described identify three different types of news (agendas) about China, and three different means of presenting (frames) China-related stories. Whereas BBC's China emphasis is mostly related to politically important events involving China, including outlining perceived weaknesses in Chinese politics and society, CNN International tended to avoid such controversial topics. When it did report on them, CNN International largely avoided offering critical assessments of the Chinese government. Instead, CNN International's China-related news was to a large extent non-political, dealing with timely social issues of interest to a particular audience, but typically unimportant in terms of an understanding of policies and trends in international politics. DW's approach to China-related news was also very different from both BBC and CNN International, offering the most China-related stories, emphasizing China's growing role in the global economy and in international politics, while also providing the relevant information from important stakeholders on timely political issues. Each of the broadcasters provides a relevant yet very different perspective of China, each likely to appeal to very diverse international audiences and each with its own strengths and weaknesses. [8, p.41]

Consequently, important tools of implementing a country image making strategies are digital communication technologies, currently involved in all walks of human life, produce a significant influence on the formation of a person's world, life, system of interpersonal relations. A key position in the implementation of branding strategies to ensure a

positive image of the state is to establish constructive interaction with the public, providing feedback through various means of mass communication.

Overall, the integration of digital tools in the diplomatic work and their optimal use represent the prerequisites for efficiency in the 21st century. To sum it up, the peculiarities of formation and practice of digital diplomacy of the United States, China, Canada, the Northern Ireland, as a key vector of a country image making policy, present tremendous opportunities for the Ukrainian diplomatic service to follow. Currently, the Ukrainian foreign policy marks a profound gap in both enhancing Ukraine's positive image and practicing digital diplomacy. The possibilities of digital diplomacy in Ukraine are limited due to the lack of national information, computer illiteracy and communication strategy, shortage of trained professionals and a tier of risks typical for the use of Internet.

Therefore, further studies will facilitate understanding the basic principles that can be used in the long-term foreign policy of Ukraine. In other words, the given conceptual review is supposed to stir greater interest toward the problem of entwined nation branding and digital diplomacy among critical communication scholars, and to encourage further theoretical and empirical engagements with this phenomenon.

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