

THE NEW NATURE OF CULTURAL DIPLOMACY IN THE AGE OF ONLINE COMMUNICATION

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ABSTRACT

Countries undertake different actions to improve international image in order to benefit politically, economically, culturally, etc. This is made through actions of public diplomacy, where cultural diplomacy is an important dimension. It doesn't use media as mediating channel, but communication with foreign public is carried through different exchanges, visits, tourism, diaspora, etc. This makes communication more reliable than information and influencing foreign public through media. However, lately, online communication through different platforms, where people from different cultures and countries exchange messages, has also changed the nature of traditional cultural diplomacy. This enables creating an image for their country or receiving an image for another country, whereas on the other hand and simultaneously this makes communication with the foreign public more complex and unmanageable.

Keywords: Culture, cultural diplomacy, intercultural communication, image, online communication.

INTRODUCTION

21st century world has never seemed more united within us regarding communication and globalisation, but at the same time it remains rather divided. On one side we have terrorist attacks, uncertainty, military interventions, strong movements crashing authoritarian systems, and refugees in some parts of the world. At the same time, on the other side, fast distribution of the means of massive communication technology, multilateral economic and market institutions, and also global nature of the war supported on terror, are only several actualities which underline that socio-politic actualities on one side of the globe have large consequences for those living on the other side of the globe (Fouts, 2006, p. 7). This shows that for multiple dividing developments, and simultaneously, the other part of the world is increasingly connecting and communicating while being informed also about the troubled part of the world. Different conflicts, terrorist attacks, uncertainties, etc. have pushed citizens and political actors to asking question: "Why do they hate us" (Arndt, 2006, p.xviii), which hate disrupts communication and increases the risk, weakens prosperity, strains wellbeing. Many countries have increased their

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communicating activities by organizing advertising campaigns, programs that go towards cultural, touristic commercials, etc., and up to developing projects of assistance. Through these activities is intended to contact a wider audience for creating better impressions to the external audience. The purpose of this communication is political and economic, but also cultural and of merits as well. Through these external communications, state and non-state stakeholders, aim for political alliances to achieve external politics, as well for trading, touristic benefits, increase of investments, cultural benefits and distribution of their values. As would Hoggart say: the idea of the value should be protected; otherwise democracy is open to abuse (Owen, 2008. p.2).

However, in modern society the flow of information has become redundant, but one cannot live without information, exchanges and interactions (Wolton, 2009, p.31) because human nature seeks to coexist. There is a wider growing consensus that communication with the public abroad has particular importance for every country's internal interest. But there is no consensus on what would be the best way to achieve these goals (Fouts, 2006, p.7). What is widely accepted is that communication without media mediation, i.e. direct communication, leads more towards creating of long-term relations.

CULTURAL DIPLOMACY AS PART OF PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

Public diplomacy is the discipline that aims to achieve these goals, which includes communication of state and non-state actors with the audience abroad in order to inform, influence and achieve overall interest a state has. Researchers of public diplomacy are primarily focused in three dimensions, accepted as action measures of public diplomacy (Leonard, 2002; Nye, 2004; Waller, 2007, Melissen, 2005; Snow, 2009, Tuch, 1990, Jonsson&Hall, 2005; Saliu, 2017):

- Managing news and daily dissemination of information to foreign audiences through media;
- Strategic communication events, provided through the media;
- Cultural diplomacy or establishing and promoting long-term relations.

Unlike managing information and strategic communication developed through media, the third dimension, cultural diplomacy, uses more direct communication without media as mediating channel, and requires higher level of trust between the parties; the impact of this dimension is more protracted, but stronger and more sustainable than that of the other two dimensions. Communication taking place in this dimension, is primarily intercultural, and involves communication between individuals of different cultures, communities, ethnicities; interreligious communication, and communication of different genders, languages, identity groups; communication through their values, prejudices, personalities, behaviours, styles, identities, etc. (Martin&Nakayama, 2010). Hall (1959), meanwhile considers non-verbal communication between individuals from different ethnic communities as a form of intercultural communication, inter-alia describing distances that people of different cultures and genders keep during the conversation.

But, over time and different periods, the notion of culture itself has changed, taking on new distinct features. These in turn are a reflection of major historic, democratic, and industrial changes with an impact on political, economic and social characteristics (Williams, 1960, p. xv). Whilst in the past art meant literature, music, painting, sculpture and theatre, afterwards understanding of culture became more idiosyncratic:

an overall state of mind related with the idea and the concept of perfection; or material, intellectual and spiritual way of living. "It came also, as we know, to be a word which often provoked either hostility or embarrassment" (p. xiv).

Cultural studies indicate that our minds and our lives were shaped out of our own experiences. As argued by Williams, culture also includes exchange of aesthetic experience, religious ideas, rituals, personal values and feelings (Carey, 2009). In other words, culture in its broader meaning, implies studying another country's language, traditions, and lifestyle. But, culture goes even beyond to include literature, arts, fashion styles and traditions, human behaviour, history, music, folklore, non-verbal communication between people of cultures, gestures, social relations, and so on.

Analysing society as a form of communication, it appears as a process where reality is created, preserved, but also modified and divided. When we think about society, we are almost always constrained by our traditions which bear powerful influence on us. Even, as has also been said by Said (1977), it may often occur that scientific approaches on different societies or cultures have a perverted objectivity due to this prior and influenced concoction on our minds. And, cultural diplomacy tends to level out these "prior concoctions" through communication. It happens when diplomats, e.g. governments, in the interest of all, try to shape the flow of cultural relations between two or more countries. In this sense, there are universities today that offer courses on international politics and relations, which are using popular films as primary texts to facilitate active reading about foreign politics (Totman, 2009). But there are film industries as well, which in more occasions adhered to the political course of their country towards another country. Hollywood often followed this course, whilst in the last decade it portrayed several Arabic countries based on the State Department's assessment (p. 153).

Music is another important component of cultural diplomacy, a type of communication with the culture and tradition of foreign countries. This cultural dimension of music includes broadcasts through audio-visual media and through direct communication - by organizing concerts in foreign countries. A Russian listener describes listening to American music as a denied element of freedom and jazz as playing the role of a cultural ambassador. "Every night we would shut the doors and windows, turn on Willis Connover, and have two hours of freedom" (Shneider, 2004, p.8). The same is reiterated all over Albania when speaking about listening to Italian music during the dictatorship. To treat the music as a force of social life, one of the main exponents of this treatment, Adorno, says that music "trains subconscious to condition reflexes" (DeNora, 2000, p.1).

DIMENSIONS OF CULTURAL DIPLOMACY

Recorded since the bronze-age, cultural diplomacy became a norm to humanity within civilizations (Arnd, 2006, p.1). Later it enabled cooperation between wider groups of people, as in various rituals and ceremonies, songs, dances and language, etc. Whilst evil forces still could destroy civilisations, diplomacy tried to protect it by connecting culture with another culture. Afterwards, it developed between elites of two countries (between the crown and the ambassador), and continued with elites – with more people (between broadcasters and cinema), whereas now it has entered in its man-to-man phase, through tourism, migration and internet (Holden, 2010, p. 7).

Today, public diplomacy does is not addressed to elites, but targets a larger number of public in the foreign countries.

Cultural diplomacy means distribution of a country's culture in supporting goals of its foreign politics or diplomacy, as a practice of public diplomacy, in order to positively influence on the foreign audiences (Mark, 2009). Educational, cultural exchange, etc. means 'long journeys' that can melt prejudices through communication, keeping into consideration the fact that "communication and culture are so intertwined they cannot be separated" (Zaharna, 2012, p.8). Nowadays cultural diplomacy is the most important component of public diplomacy and a constantly increasing area of diplomatic engagement of a country (Appel et al., 2008, p.4).

Among the most comprehensive definitions is that of Cummings (2003, p.1), who sees cultural diplomacy as an "exchange of ideas, information, arts and other aspects of culture between countries and their people in a way that promotes mutual understanding". In a way, cultural activities of diplomacy are closer to the new trends of the new diplomacy, rather than the previous activities, which offered a one-way message. "In cultural relations, as much as in the new public diplomacy, the accent is increasingly on engaging with foreign audiences rather than selling messages..." (Melissen, 2005, p.21). Cultural diplomacy puts emphasis on long-lasting relations, unlike the previous politically motivated propaganda, or the current commercially motivated promotion of national brand. Cultural expansion should be very broad, not only with arts, but as well with folk culture, politics, science and academic cathedra (Leonard, 2002, p.107). Public diplomacy researchers consider cultural diplomacy as the most important dimension, through which long-lasting friendships with foreign public are established to enhance the image of the country as a means of accomplishing foreign policy goals and state interest. Cultural diplomacy should be an important element of an inclusive program and adapted with its foreign policy in search of a boost in reputation (Rosendorf, 2009, p.173).

So far, we have noticed that international communication techniques are imbued with a purpose for political and economic benefits. This shows another dimension worth specifying, which is the aim of cultural influence that also affects the increase of political and economic-commercial dimension's benefit. Importance of culture was always known under diplomatic profile and it was used by different countries as a foreign policy instrument. With music and film people in the world love American culture more than anything else. (US Department of State, 2005, p.4, 9).

Even though born as a governmental activity, cultural activity is also implemented by non-state actors with the purpose of designing a favourable state image in the eyes of the public in foreign countries. Skills for speaking, writing and reading in a foreign language are among the main prerequisites for effective communication (Report, 2003).

But, cultural diplomacy of non-state actors can often be more effective than that of state actors. In presenting national image outside the country cultural diplomacy can overcome audiences' suspicion from official messages and serves to offer better substance of national reputation (Mark, 2009, p.1). Its main purpose is to provide a country with alliances and influences through culture by promoting its cultural life. Cultural diplomacy is increasingly being transformed into an instrument of dialogue and strengthening of relations through culture as the main medium.

The function and purpose of cultural diplomacy is to establish and strengthen bilateral relations beyond borders, including economy, trade, politics, culture and the

diplomatic element; to get in touch with groups across borders, like diaspora, and assist in maintaining relations amid tensions (p. 9). In achieving the dimension of cultural diplomacy, a large number of stakeholders are involved, including state authorities that mediate and assist communications and exchanges, as well as non-state actors, such as different non-governmental organizations. According to the historian of diplomacy from Harvard, Akira Iriye, "international relations are as intercultural communications" (Rosendorf, 2009, p.173).

All these interactions or exchanges between people are included in cultural diplomacy. It is not simply about teaching them from distance, but personal acquaintances established through exchange of students, visitors, researchers, different excursions, etc. Moreover, another dimension is built up through communication with foreign publics via cultural products like literature, music, and so on; the latter is very important in today's world of global communication.

THE DIFFERENCE FROM RELATED CONCEPTS

Cultural diplomacy and international cultural relations are often used interchangeably, but aren't the same, although the line is frequently undetermined (Mark, 2009, p.17). Not all international cultural relations include the government of a country, just as public diplomacy isn't carried out just by state stakeholders. Every day, somewhere in the world, such cultural relations, like school choir tours abroad and international commercial art exhibitions are taking place without any involvement of the government (p. 17); however, these are not intended to address a massive international audience, but to benefit interests of artistic groups. For Mitchell (1986, p.4) the difference is quite complex because, with cultural diplomacy, a diplomat seeks to achieve political and economic objectives, whilst Highman (2001, p.136) assessed that the difference is at the objective. International cultural relations established by countries are encouraged by governments with the final purpose of developing culture with artists or cultural professionals. In other words, international cultural relations, often carried out by cultural attaches within embassies, aim at improving and making the field of culture more professional, whereas public diplomacy often exchanges not only individuals of cultural elites but folk culture as well, always aiming at the wider audience.

Researchers often do not make a distinction between cultural diplomacy and cultural exchanges. But, researcher of public diplomacy, Cull, draws a dividing line between them by pointing out that cultural diplomacy includes the work of organizations like British Council, Italian National Institute or even more, Alliance Française, which is focused in international activities for propagation of French culture and language, to understand its prestige and to influence and extend the existence of Francophonie (Cull, 2008, p.33). He sees cultural exchanges as an attempt to manage international environment by sending citizens to other countries and by hosting citizens from other countries for a period of studying and colourisation (p. 33). According to him, foreign students coming into a country see and get familiar with it, just like they can talk about the country they've visited when they return to their country. Culture plays an important role in these cases of exchange. It is the foundation of information's ownership, a grammar for organizing reality, for proclaiming and understanding the world (Cohen, 2002, p.12).

However, strengthening of these relations in cultural contexts, or establishing long-term relations between different cultures and civilisations cannot be fully identified with a single state entity. This means that many aspects of cultural diplomacy cannot be ascribed exclusively to one country or culture. Western culture, for example, should communicate with that of Arab countries but not as divided by nations, but rather as intercultural communications between civilizations, including values and cultural heritage they are imbued with. Reason of public cooperative diplomacy, according to Fisher, is that diversity extends the influencing effect on foreign public (Fisher, 2013, p.7). Public cooperative diplomacy has a large cultural and social capital, penetrates cultural barriers because a community with better foreign relations has more credibility.

DIASPORA, ARTISTS AND SPORTS DIPLOMACY

As researchers of public (massive) diplomacy highlight (Nye, 2004; Gilboa, 2008; Anholt, 2007; Melissen, 2005), a positive image of a given country, can indirectly influence government policies by making them more amicable on one hand, and can be beneficial also for tourism and foreign investments, on the other. One of the most important dimensions for increasing the image of a country in the world are also culture, education, exchange of students, academics, and so on. Through these exchanges, a country aims to establish long-term friendships with foreign publics. One of the most convenient modalities for these exchanges is undoubtedly exchange of students, since students can disseminate a friendly attitude towards the host country upon their return home and can play the role of local leaders of the public opinion, or even assume important positions in their society.

Many countries ascribed significant importance to external communications by propagating their culture, which also made an impact in the politics of different countries. Immediately after the French-Prussian war, French government in 1883 established the French Alliance through which to enhance its prestige in the world and propagate in prevalence of French language and literature (Nye, 2004, 100), whilst later, similarly British established British Council, Germans the Goethe Institute (Schneider, 2004, 157), Italians Dante Alighieri etc. Nye states that around 86 thousand foreign students stayed in American educational institutions in 2002, whilst millions of people that studied in USA over the years comprise a benevolent reservoir for the country (Nye, 2004, p.45).

Individuals spending time beyond national borders carry with them messages in the places they live, regardless if foreign actors welcome it or not. Besides communication with publics of the hosting country, it's understandable that members of diaspora preserve relations and memories with the place of origin. Wherever they go, members of communities are seeking to preserve their cultural identity and praise the respect about the country they came from (Smith, 1999, 212). "Two major groups which have been used historically for interpersonal work in public diplomacy are refugees and Diasporas" (Cull, 2009, p.51). During the Second World War, British Council worked with Polish and Czech refugees to teach them English before returning to their countries. United States have used Italian diaspora during the important elections of 1948 asking them to write to their families in Italy and tell them how good they live in capitalism (p. 52). The purpose of these letters, which were sent to Italy free of charge, was to influence their families to vote for Italian Christian-Democrats instead of the Communist Party. "The role of immigrants and migrant workers as a mechanism

of international cultural transmission should be considered in the creation of policy towards them". What can be done in this regard is related to bank costs and ease of international transfers. Other services to be offered are those of web pages. Hospitality would serve to build a positive impression by the immigrants about the host country and they would in turn express this to their relatives in the country of origin.

Individual opportunities that different countries offer, without prejudices to foreigners, also create a good feeling for foreigners, which afterwards send this message to their country. Thus, in 1998, one fourth of engineers of high technology in Silicon Valley were Chinese or Indians. Foreigners were made to feel as Americans and they transmitted correct and positive information about the USA (Nye, 2004, 58). Although this feeling cannot be created for foreigners in Kosovo because they come from more developed countries, nevertheless, it is important for foreigners not to face unnecessary bureaucratic obstacles.

Due to an increase of migration internationally in the second half of the 20th century, direct relations were strengthened through friendships, business partnerships and strengthening of intercultural relations by learning languages of resident countries where persons migrated (Leonard, 2009). Moreover, such relations offer cultural knowledge, political knowledge and human intelligence needed for increasing the success in the foreign politics. In this regard, we consider as successful host countries of Indian diaspora in Britain or America, whereas Turkish diaspora in Germany is also an important factor, Italian one in USA. Furthermore, early Greek immigration to USA, that of Israelis, etc. extended influence in powerful American public personalities. Government should not pay attention only to improving the image of their country, but also to the image of their communities residing in diaspora.

Besides diaspora, soldiers play an important role in establishing a soft power, image of their country through exchange, training in other countries, assisting programs with other countries in times of peace (Nye, 2004, 116). But, soldiers, as well, can play a role in the image of the country they stayed after returning home, by speaking about the country they served at. Humanitarian military interventions like in Somalia, Bosnia, Kosovo practice bilateral diplomacy, like soldiers when returning to their countries play the role of the opinion leader (Katz&Lazarfeld, 2009); likewise, hosting country has a great expectancy for peacekeepers.

Artists who are successful in the international arena and are in position to address the foreign public also play a role in soft power of their country or of country of origin, but only if they do not conceal the identity of their origin. The influence grows more when these artists have media coverage, but they don't hide the country of origin or even emphasise it.

Sports diplomacy is also important dimension admired by the sports fans. Successful athletes, talents, and champions are main topics of the sports and general media. When such talents become successful, media further spreads their success among the audience - whilst the athlete is identified as a representative of a country. Cultural, natural, winter tourism, religious tourism, are other very important dimensions and part of cultural diplomacy.

CHALLENGES OF CULTURAL DIPLOMACY

On the other side, rapid development of technology and internet that has resulted in an expansion of the social media, brought a new channel of communication with

foreign publics, known as cyber-diplomacy. This mass communication is in the global level and advancement of new technologies of information and communication has brought substantial challenges to the traditional way of international relations by dispersing authority to more focal points and fields. According to Potter, such activities link the influence of novelties in communications and information technology with foreign policy and diplomacy. Furthermore, Melissen (2005, p.30) sees the development of this diplomacy mainly as a result of progress of technology of information and communication, which is seen as an opportunity to redefine public diplomacy in terms of a more active role for the public, rather than a passive objective of governmental foreign policy strategies. This has increased activities of global civil society and leads towards expansion of global finances and markets (Potter, 2002, p.3).

The world now lives deeply immersed in the technology of electronic digital telecommunication, which Deibert (2002) calls hypermedia. But, explosion of information raises the need for increasing reliability of information (Potter, 2002, p.23). This also brought democratisation of the foreign policy, because communication with foreign public has increased the transparency of the foreign politics as well and, at the same time it facilitated opportunities of attempts for manipulation. Wolton (2009, 53) says that internet holds an ocean of information, but every day a question is raised on how to easily, freely, and originally establish relations with someone, because in this versatile channel of communications everybody communicates with everything, whereas reliability leaves much to be desired. "Internet is a vast space of freedom, but also of a larger financial, criminal, mafia, propagandistic perversity, biggest storage of noise and manipulations since essential information aren't confirmed" (p. 53). Daily communication isn't any more privilege of elites (politics, military, economic etc.) of a country and of governmental structures, for which usually was thought to have more information, but a broader public is being formed with wider distribution of the transnational medial word and visuals (Hyavard, 2001).

Hence, exchanges or individual's physical presence in another country is not anymore determinant for direct communication with foreign public, since individuals communicate with other cultures through internet. This made physical distances or necessity of physical appearance in another country disappear. In today's age of internet, communications with foreign public are developed also through social media, such are twitter-diplomacy, Facebook-diplomacy, but through YouTube-diplomacy as well. In recent years people more often talk about "YouTube effect" as a phenomenon where video-clips, often made by individuals, are distributed worldwide and they often trigger socio-political response. This can be considered as the dark side of cultural diplomacy; that of distribution of negative messages against other cultures and civilisations. In recent years there has been a vast amount of these kinds of audio-visual messages that spur intolerance against other cultures. At the time when millions of people are communicating simultaneously through internet as a mediating channel without the need of physical presence, in a world when everybody sees all and knows everything and where numerous linguistic, political, cultural, religious, and other differences make communication and tolerance even more complex. "Information became superfluous, communication infrequent" (Wolton, 2009) and this superfluous information doesn't produce diversity because people are locked in their communicating ghettos. Nonetheless, in modern society we cannot live without information, exchange and interactions, because human nature wants to coexist.

According to Wolton, this coexistence is to communicate. To attract means to share values with others, not only telling others that there are values. Human rights, affirmation of identities are the needs of a coexisting world, whilst culture and music, as universal language, are main vectors of tolerance, solidarity and integration people offer. Recognition, culture, cultural coexistence, lingual pluralism, information-journalists, are also important dimensions in organizing cultural coexistence, because "global village will be that of diversity" (p. 101, 117, 136).

CONCLUSIONS

Public diplomacy started by targeting foreign publics initially emerging as a euphemism of propaganda. Even though it changed name, public diplomacy never managed to detach itself from the propaganda of manipulation, while governments continued to remain the key agents of communication. They compiled messages addressed to the foreign audiences through media as mediating channels, with the only purpose to spread their information and influence. The situation changed when other stakeholders of communication were introduced in the game. Introduction of non-state actors in the process of communication with foreign audiences and loss of government monopoly to massively communicate abroad made for the public diplomacy to disengage from simply transmitting influencing messages. This brought about another dimension in steering of the message: from informing, carried by state stakeholders as a unidirectional activity of transmitting of message towards foreign publics, to bilateral exchanges of messages, that is cultural diplomacy. Mass communication of non-state stakeholders with the outside world induced a dialogue of individuals from different nations. Initially, individuals were exchanged in an organized way, through visits, study scholarships or cultural exchanges. Researchers of diplomacy afterwards noticed the importance of movement of people to other countries, but also their return to the home-country with the purpose of building a positive image with other countries. People that stayed in a country, subsequently, upon return home, became local leaders of the opinion. As a result of having resided in a foreign country and having been able to communicate first-hand with and in daily communication in individuals from those countries, they were able to diminish and overcome possible previously existing prejudices. Through better information about the others, individuals manage to communicate and convey to each-other different values and to exchange shared values. After the technological advents in the recent decades, physical movement of individuals is not a pre-condition for direct communication any longer. Internet has substantially facilitated communication with the world. Nevertheless, the role of state has not diminished with the progress of communication. On the contrary, its role has increased, but this time on the grounds of exchange of mutual values and preferences. Intercultural communication gives a new dimension to these exchanges not only as a result of recognising mutual values, but as a shared exchange of different values, an interface between the different. However, though these communications are massive, they should be seen as limited communications based on preferences. In the age of internet, the individual has the opportunity to select information received or to opt only for communication he/she is interested to accomplish; this is in contrast with the traditional mass media when the individual was bombarded by messages without the option of refusal or an opportunity to select information. This creates "communication pockets" or ghettoized

communicating groups, which not only refuse to share information with other ghettos or to communicate with them, but often do not consider an issue as relevant for the social life to discuss or respond and limit themselves to mere virtual reactions. The latter presents the challenge of our time regarding the passive and virtual nature of individual responses on issues of interest to the community or to the global living milieu.

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