

Country Image Formation in Terms of the Concepts of Public Diplomacy and Soft Power

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Abstract: The study analyzes country image formation from public diplomacy and soft power perspective. The aim of this study is to explore potential relationships between public diplomacy, soft power and country image, emerging fields of studies which are increasingly being used in the same context. Despite the actuality of this topic the studies in this field are still fragmented. There is lack of comprehensive analysis of public diplomacy and soft power and their role in forming a country image. Country image is identified as an interdisciplinary study where the different disciplinary insights should be integrated. In summary, research results that the countries establishing country image through public diplomacy and soft power have established long-term and permanent relation. They have also obtained important acquisitions in the fields of economic, social, political and cultural.

Key words: Country image formation, public diplomacy, soft power, interdisciplinary study, cultural

INTRODUCTION

In the current context of globalization and constantly changing geopolitical picture of the world the problem of forming a positive image of the state as an effective instrument of foreign policy becomes increasingly relevant. Together with the traditional factors country image has become an important component of interstate relations. There are several main reasons why the positive country image formation should be one of the main strategic goals of the international policy of the state.

Firstly, the importance of a positive image of the country caused by globalization and accordingly, the expansion of international relations. In such circumstances, the negative attitude of the world community entails a country's isolation in the international arena, on the other hand a positive perception enables it to solve global problems using the help and support of other states.

Secondly, foreign policy image necessary for the formation of constructive relations with other states as a discrepancy to the political demands of developed Western countries is becoming an obstacle to integration into the international community and favorable cooperation in economic matters. Respect for democratic principles, political freedoms and human rights the basic requirement that exists today in the developed countries.

Third, the positive country image gets a certain guarantee of foreign military intervention in the internal politics of the country. The main purposes of such intervention are the "third world" countries with poor economies and authoritarian regimes rule. These countries are hard to find political allies. Thus, a positive image of the country in the international arena gives additional leverage to influence on the foreign policy of a foreign country. Also, new methods of the country image promoting in the world arena, such as public diplomacy and soft power are becoming increasingly important.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

General scientific methods: In the interest of a complete and objective presentation of the country image formation in the context of public diplomacy and soft power have been used such scientific methods of theoretical and empirical knowledge as analysis, synthesis, analogy, comparison, abstraction, theoretical generalization, description and others. The researchers appealed to such methods as the institutional, legal and regulatory, sociological, logical, historical, logical-gnoseological, systemic-functional, historical and comparative. The set of methods used provided interdisciplinary understanding of the role of the international image of the country as one of the tools to ensure its impact on international relations.

Theoretical approaches to the study of the country image:

Also in this study were investigated the basic theoretical approaches to the study of the country image. According Buhmann and Ingenhoff: “country images which are causes and effects of both social as well as psychological processes have a multitude of possible economic, cultural and political effects and that this has led to studies in a very wide range of scientific fields” (Buhmann and Ingenhoff, 2015a, b). In the modern scientific community there are several major approaches to the study of the country image.

For example, in the Russian science Graver (2012) has identified six main areas of research of the country image. Research in Political Psychology. In this approach, the political image (including country) is defined as follows “the image-an impression that is constructed purposefully and knowingly” (Shestopal, 2008). Cultural studies. This direction is represented by the works in the context of the study of film and political cartoons.

Also, Graver in this approach distinguishes a group of historic-cultural area of research. The image is defined as “the view of rational nature or emotionally colored view about the object which arose in the mind-in the sphere of consciousness and (or) the subconscious mind-a certain (or uncertain) group of people on the basis of the reflection formed intentionally or unintentionally as a result of a direct perception of those or other characteristics of the object or indirectly, to the emergence of attraction-attraction of people to the object. The image can be created under the influence of emotion or mind, consciously or unconsciously, purposefully or spontaneously” (Grinyov, 2009).

Market and economic research. The country does not act as an agent but as goods. Most market research is more devoted to branding areas and regions. Theoretical studies. One of the leaders of this trend professor E.A. Galumov. He gives the following definition of the concept of image of the country “the image of the country-a set of objective interconnected characteristics of the state system (economic, geographic, ethnic, cultural, demographic, etc.) formed in the process of evolutionary development of the Russian state as a complex multifactorial subsystem of the global device, the efficiency of interaction of units which determines the trend of socio-economic, socio-political, national, religious and other processes in the country. This-the base which determines what kind of reputation gains a country in the world public consciousness as a result of certain actions of its subjects interacting with the outside world” (Galumov, 2005).

Research in the context of the functioning of the media. The researchers this direction define the country image as the transformed media presentation about the

country, created for an audience of influence in order to change perceptions about the country. Sociological research. The research of researcher, conducting research on the basis of sociological methods use the concept of “image” broadly, without distinguishing between the concepts and often do not even give working definitions.

Also in our research seems interesting Buhmann and Ingenhoff’s systematization of approaches to the study of the country image (Buhmann and Ingenhoff, 2015a, b). They distinguishes a literature of country image study between four basic approaches: of business studies, social psychology, political science communication science. The most interesting for us is the approach of political science. This field of study investigates the country image in the framework of the concepts of public diplomacy and soft power.

At the same time it should be noted that no one of the approaches alone is not able to reflect a complete picture of the problem area. In further studies seems possible an alternative to the combination of certain provisions of these approaches for building a comprehensive model of the country image.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Public diplomacy and country image formation: Public diplomacy has long been regarded as an instrument of foreign policy. In today’s world, creating a positive international image is one of the most important tasks of international relations actors. The favorable image serves as an important capital, contributing to the promotion of national interests. Public diplomacy plays an important role in the formation of a positive image of the state.

The widespread category of “public diplomacy” still remains one of the most controversial and contradictory in modern social sciences. In the evolution of public diplomacy four basic historical stages can be distinguished. First, the so-called “pre-Guillon” phase, associated with the birth of the term public diplomacy. The second, or “post- Guillon” stage reveals the nature and characteristics of public diplomacy since the mid-1960s until 1989. The third phase includes the period from the end of the “cold war” before the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 and the fourth, the modern stage which covers the period after the known events of September in the United States for the present time.

Classical modern concept of public diplomacy developed by Edward Guillon the Dean of Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, a former diplomat which founded the Edward R. Murrow Center of Public Diplomacy the

first of its kind in 1965. In brochure of the Center provides the following definition of public diplomacy: "Public diplomacy deals with the influence of public attitudes on the formation and execution of foreign policies. It encompasses dimensions of international relations beyond traditional diplomacy the cultivation by governments of public opinion in other countries the interaction of private groups and interests in one country with those of another the reporting of foreign affairs and its impact on policy communication between those whose job is communication, as between diplomats and foreign correspondents and the processes of inter-cultural communications" (PDAA).

E. Guillon was the first but not the last who tried to give a definition of public diplomacy in its modern sense. For example, in the work of Michael (Egner, 2009), it was found about twenty different definitions of public diplomacy, appeared between 1965 and 2008. Nevertheless, there is still not developed accepted definition of the term. Within the framework of our research is interesting definition of the concept of public diplomacy of the Dzhevanyan In his thesis the author concludes that "the term "public diplomacy" can be used as the basic broad term to describe the activities of countries in world politics in the field of information, culture, education, sports, etc., aimed at improving its country image, as well as strengthening positions on the international arena" (Jivanyan, 2016).

Talking about the nature of public diplomacy, it is advisable to refer to the work of the British scientist Mark Leonard "Public diplomacy" (Leonard, 2002) in which the author identifies three dimensions of public diplomacy reactive, proactive and establish a relationship. Reactive dimension involves reacting to the occurred events, explaining the policies and commenting on those or other political steps. Moreover, the special role played by balanced and well thought-out reaction to crisis situations. Proactive measurement, conversely is aimed at purposeful formation of public opinion through the transfer of certain messages and signs. In this case, must be pay special attention to the development of long-term strategy which implies the identification of the most important goals and planning appropriate activities to achieve them. Finally, building relationships aimed at finding mutually acceptable solutions and compromises that benefit all participants in relationships. This implies the involvement of foreign audiences in dialogue and establishing close ties which would become the basis for the formation of public opinion in this country (an example of such cooperation: training of young professionals from other countries). Continuing his reasoning, Leonard believes that in its essence,

public diplomacy can be competitive (aimed at improving self-image often due to discredit the opponent) and cooperative (aimed at the development of mutually beneficial relations).

Public diplomacy involves not only the targeted distribution of information and the imposition of ideas, but whole range of activities to build the image of the state. In this case, a public diplomacy is understood not only delivering information but also building a constructive dialogue with the international audience. Trust relationships with the public are based on argumentative statements and explanation of internal and external policy of the state, i.e., the open dialogue. Accordingly, public diplomacy is a tool for delivering information which the government prefers open to the international community. Public diplomacy includes initiatives that are intended to explain the actions of a foreign government in order to artificially create some representation of the country. Such actions can serve several purposes such as to be interested to the public and not to allow the foreign policy intervention or conversely to make the public lose interest in this country.

Public diplomacy in order to achieve its goal (i.e., to spread positive information about the country) makes information materials which are distributed through printed product, audio and video materials through diplomatic channels or through the Internet. For successful public diplomacy it is necessary serious understanding of the political culture of the country in which are directed the counteragent's actions. In other words it becomes important knowledge about the country's political processes of political decision-making, political communications. Also, of course, important relationships in the community, cultural and social attitudes of society.

Thus, we can conclude that public diplomacy is one of the main channels of communication in the formation of the image of the state. One of the main aims of public diplomacy is the pressure on the existing country's foreign policy. On the other hand the aim may be to get a foreign public lose interest in a particular state. In this case, the counterparty state will be able to carry out the desired course in respect of this country without attracting the attention of the public. Public diplomacy makes possibility, by the "peaceful" way (the performances, the constructive dialogue between the heads of state, advertising communication) to create a positive image for a foreign country. It gives additional leverages on those issues where there is a clash of interests between the two countries.

The role of soft power in country image formation:

Besides the concept of “public diplomacy” in country image formation also addresses the issue of “soft power”. The basic concept of the notion of “soft power” is to promote the cultural values abroad. In 2004, Nye has offered a detailed study of “soft power” in the monograph “Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics” (Nye, 2004a). Nye has not opened a new phenomenon in world politics but only gave to this phenomenon the academic definition which in a short time has become generally accepted. According to J. Nye, “soft power” is not just the effect but the attractiveness of “the ability of a country to attract others arises from its culture, its values and domestic practices and the perceived legitimacy of its foreign policies” (Nye, 2004b). Thus, the policy of “soft power” can mean the following: the state reaches certain aims in world politics by using respected ideals and values on the international scene.

Then we can conclude that the use of “soft power” allows achieve aims in a peaceful way with the least expenses. Many large countries (e.g., China, USA, France) is used precisely this policy. Another American scientist M. Leonard, continuing the ideological line of J.Nye, describes the era of “hard power” as a period of force projection and the era of “soft power” the partnership (Leonard, 2002). In new era governments should support quality communication with its non-traditional partners in the face of global activist groups and citizens of other countries.

“Soft power” is quite a broad concept that includes a set of different components. For example, George McClory identifies a set of 13 components which are calculated on the basis of the index of states “soft power” These components are divided into three groups:

- The level of the global state of honesty which includes components such as the index of the rule of law, freedoms, electoral participation and the level of carbon dioxide emissions into the atmosphere
- Global integration which includes the following components: immigration, tourism, level of English proficiency, ranking universities
- Country image in the global space. In this group are such components, as the media products, the level of distribution of the state language, conduct or participate in the Olympic Games, ranking influential companies and journal ranking «Time»

Despite the fact that today a variety of indices are key instruments in determining the image of the state, it should be noted that they do not reflect the objective reality as the ambiguity of their components allows to manipulate public opinion. As noted by Ivanov and Ivanova (2015) “the ability to manipulate the data in compiling the index allows to improve the image of the

country, artificially underestimating or conversely, increasing the value of certain statistical indicators.” The researchers identify two path of increasing “soft power”, “natural” and “artificial”. The natural way involves conducting a domestic and foreign policy which itself is the approval and sympathy of the international community: it can be to improve the quality of life of its citizens, creating a promising economic model, active participation in solving global problems. In this case, state authority in the world arena is steadily rising, its value system and the activities are starting to be seen as a successful model, approval and adaptation which does not cause dissatisfaction of other participants in international relations.

“Artificial” way of increasing “soft power” just involves targeted event to inform foreign audiences a detailed explanation of the country policy, an active introduction to its cultural values, tracking and responding to negative assessments, carrying out activities to enhance information influence on other countries. “Artificial” way as opposed to “natural” is more active and allows the state to control the process of building “soft power”, guiding and correcting it if necessary.

Some researchers argue that the international image and “soft power” are inextricably linked. But, the concept of “international image” and “soft power” should be distinguished. Thus certain States having international image is not have a “soft power”, by which is understood the creation, cultivation of certain values and norms, their own political and economic models and distribution, promotion of them across national borders. On this basis, must assume that “soft power” possess those states that are able to offer their own system of social and political values (or normative ideological complex) and apply for a leading role in world politics, have the status of power center. Examples of such countries are the United States, France, Great Britain and China. The success of image building technologies and their effective use as an instrument of “soft power” is determined by how well the mechanisms and destinations were.

CONCLUSION

The transformation of the world system, changes in international communication encouraged the rethinking of the role of state image in implementation of their national interests. In connection with this increased the role of public diplomacy of soft power in foreign policy activities of the states. To sum up we can conclude that since its emergence the concept of “public diplomacy” has undergone a significant evolution at the time of its inception it just replaced an unpopular word “propaganda”, nowadays public diplomacy tools include the programs, various by the nature aimed at formation of

a foreign public opinion: mass media activity cultural, scientific and educational exchanges assistance program for poor countries (to improve health and education, infrastructure, relief from natural disasters) and other measures to increase the prestige in the world (carrying out large-scale activities). At the same time an important component of successful public diplomacy is the ability to perceive the response of the public and taken it into account in strategy adjustment in country image formation.

In the age of globalization and the spread of information technology the protection and promotion of national image allows countries by gaining the “soft power” increase its geopolitical influence in the global arena. Despite some blur categorical concept of soft power, its conceptual and strategic importance is growing. The reason is that the concept of soft power logically meets the problem of strategic formation of country image. Currently, in many countries there are government programs that “soft power” is considered as an effective instrument for strengthening the attractiveness of country image resulting the increase of its international and domestic influences. In general, the countries that form the image of the country through public diplomacy and soft power have established long-term and permanent relationships. They also received an important acquisition in the field of economic, social, political and cultural.

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