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SUBSTANTIVE AND INSTRUMENTAL TRANSFORMATION OF COMMUNICATIVE IMPACT IN THE PUBLIC DIPLOMACY SYSTEM

Mykola Trofymenko[1], D.Sc. in Political Science

[1] *Mariupol State University, Ukraine*

E-mail: m.trofymenko@mu.edu.ua

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Abstract

The article examines the substantive and instrumental transformation of communicative impact in the public diplomacy system, it demonstrates the effectiveness of the latest tools and the need to revise the content of the communicative component of public diplomacy to optimise existing diplomatic strategies. The main directions of transformation of communicative impact in the public diplomacy system have been categorised, covering both positive consequences and potential challenges and threats. The mechanisms of influence of the unilateral and bilateral communication process on the effectiveness of diplomatic messages have been compared and potential opportunities offered by the digitalisation process of the communicative space have been identified. The importance of digital channels and instruments of influence has been highlighted in the example of the prevalence of the diplomatic presence of key political actors and agencies in social networks, specialised platforms, and interactive mobile applications. The practice of using communicative impact in the public diplomacy system of Ukraine since the beginning of the active phase of the war has been examined and analysed. The effectiveness of the governmental and non-governmental media utilities, digital media channels, personal pages of political persons and organisations, and individual subjects of diplomatic influence has been determined. Particular attention has been paid to analysing social networks and other digital platforms' usage as key communicative tools that allow quick and effective communication of important messages to the international audience, increasing the level of support and understanding of Ukraine's position on the world stage. The structure and possible content of the basic messages of Ukraine's public diplomacy, aimed at ensuring the conversion of information awareness, have been developed. Additional tools that enhance the communicative impact of Ukraine's public diplomacy in the media and digital spaceб which can be implemented in the wartime and post-war periods, have been substantiated. The emphasis has been placed on the need to develop and implement comprehensive strategies that combine traditional methods of diplomacy with innovative digital tools to achieve a higher level of interaction with the worldwide community and ensure reliable protection of information resources.

Keywords: communicative impact, public diplomacy, transformation, digital technologies, social networks, diplomatic messages, target audience, communication process, content, tools of communicative impact

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Introduction

Public diplomacy in a multi-level diplomatic environment allows for a comprehensive approach to solving global problems by expanding the list of influential actors, levels and tools of influence, flexibly adapting to modern challenges and changes in the worldwide communication ecosystem. With the development of digital technologies and social media, approaches to communications are changing significantly, and new ways, tools, and channels for broadcasting diplomatic messages are emerging. Traditional channels of information influence are being supplemented and often replaced by new digital platforms that allow direct interaction with the international audience, significantly scaling up the scope, topics and tone of targeted communications. This change requires investigating new tools and methods used in public diplomacy to achieve its goals effectively and in the context of the growing interdependence of states in a globalized environment. The substantive aspect of communicative impact deserves special attention in terms of identifying the basic archetypes of the target audience, the peculiarities of their information field and the issues that, if addressed together, will help to create a positive image, promote cultural values and establish long-term partnerships. The research on the substantive transformation of communication strategies allows us to identify how states adapt their messages to changes in the international environment.

In the context of growing competition for the attention of the global audience, the instrumental transformation of communicative impact ensures flexibility and adaptability of diplomatic efforts in response to rapid changes in world politics and society. The use of the latest technologies, analysis of the effectiveness of various communication channels and development of integrated approaches to interaction with diverse audiences admit to enhancing the quality of the public diplomacy system, finding consonant narratives in a differentiated society, and intersection points beyond basic diplomatic messages and institutional levels. Modernization of the content and tools of communicative impact in the public diplomacy system is of particular importance given current geopolitical challenges, such as disinformation and information wars, hybrid aggression using digital tools, behavioral and psychological manipulation, negative information campaigns and other threats to national security, which require the development of specialized strategies to build trust in state institutions at the international level.

Most scholars of political science theory and international relations agree that digital communications have largely contributed to the revival of public diplomacy and its acquisition of a sufficient ‘voice’ to ensure the desired impact on the target audience. At the same time, the conceptual dimension of the concept and the scientific discourse around the category and components of public diplomacy are widely covered in the scientific literature (Plavsak, 2002; Beck, 2008; Anholt, 2013; Duke, 2013; Gregory, 2016; Cao, 2020; Snow, Cull, 2020; etc.), as well as the role of digitalization in the processes of forming a positive image of the state and national security (Cull, 2013; Chernenko, 2016; Colins, Bekenova, 2019; Bjola et al., 2019; Kormych et al., 2024; Manor, Huang, 2022, etc.), a comprehensive research of the transformation of the substantive and instrumental content of communicative impact in the system of public diplomacy has not been carried out. Some attempts, such as those made by Spies, 2018; Pipchenko, Dovbenko, 2019; Hutchings, Suri, 2020; Tsivatii, 2023, indicate the need for further study and a more accurate determination of the effectiveness of the latest tools of communicative impact in the public diplomacy system, the possibilities of scaling it to different audiences, choosing the most appropriate content of the broadcast messages, and the optimal topics of communication with the international community. Thus, the given area of research is relevant and important for understanding current trends and challenges in the field of international relations, aimed at improving the communication strategies of states and increasing the effectiveness of public diplomacy in achieving its goals.

Materials and methods

The research is based on a comprehensive analysis of theoretical provisions and the practice of employing communicative impact in the system of public diplomacy within the Ukrainian case. The theoretical component of the methodology is aimed at determining the transformation of the content of communicative impact, in particular the nature and features of modern diplomatic messages, which are differentiated depending on the type of international audience, its requests, expectations, understandable narratives, and cover broader topics, levels of interaction and opportunities for cooperation. The practical component of the research methodology is intended to identify and justify changes in the tools of communicative impact, which, along with the use of traditional means and communication channels, through the development of digital technologies, the rise of social networks, new digitalized media, a breakthrough in the analysis of user behavior, etc. form a new ecosystem of communication, potentially more powerful and

large-scale. By focusing on these perceptual shifts, the study seeks to reveal the new potential of communicative impact in the public diplomacy system, to substantiate strategic mechanisms for its application in practice to navigate the complex ecosystem of diplomatic communications using the entire available range of tools and content.

Results and Discussion

Today, it is no longer possible to deny that the development of breakthrough technologies and digitalization processes have significantly changed public diplomacy, on the one hand, providing it with wider tools and platforms for communicating with a global audience, and on the other hand, increasing the threat of distortions, manipulations, deliberate information chaos as a means of hybrid warfare or international pressure in the absence of diplomatic authority. All of this requires a response from the international community and the development of a coordinated or controlled strategy to enhance the positive and offset the negative consequences and threats. The analysis of the available theoretical works and sound scientific conclusions of political science theory allowed us to categorize the following main directions of transformation of communicative impact in the system of public diplomacy:

– the emergence and rapid spread of social networks (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Tik-Tok, etc.) have turned them into open platforms for interaction with the public around the world, used by diplomats, government agencies, individual political and public figures, and other influential actors; they have allowed to bypass flexibly traditional media channels, provide faster reactive feedback (diplomatic, social, economic, and other events tuned with the selected audience), disseminate information, and conduct a permanent dialogue with citizens of foreign countries;

– the development of personal website technologies, blogs and video platforms, along with the acceleration of digitalization of communication networks and Internet access, the availability of portable (smart) devices for a larger number of people have formed a new segment of public diplomacy tools, which provides entry to official information, government positions, substantiated analysis of important international issues, cultural and social achievements of the country, broadcasting of national events, in particular in a more understandable video format;

– the mobile applications and interactive platforms further enhance the accessibility of the international audience by providing quality services, information, and interactive opportunities to engage users, for example, for virtual participation in global events, conducting polls, voting, collecting feedback on decisions from the worldwide audience, assessing the level of support and adapting diplomatic strategies in an operational mode;

– the informational and cybersecurity, which raises the issue of protecting diplomatic messages from unauthorized disinformation influences, combating fake news or personal broadcast channels, DDoS and other types of cyberattacks on official resources of diplomatic institutions, ‘bot’ attacks aimed at creating a destructive perception and misleading the target audience, etc.

The first three areas outline the positive side of the transformation of communication tools, whilst the last one describes the key challenges and threats that should be considered when building communication strategies for public diplomacy to make it more adaptive, interactive, transparent and effective.

Outlining the transformation of content with the development of digital technologies, it should be noted that their proliferation allows more and more citizens worldwide to be heard, and this desire also contains opportunities and threats. On the one hand, scaling up communication channels and methods allows the public diplomacy system to offer the international audience the most effective way to conduct bilateral dialogue when simple single messages can be transformed into a joint narrative amplified several times, which will have much greater significance and impact. The dialogue environment enables, invites and engages feedback processes, which are aligned with the ultimate goal of public diplomacy i.e. to engage another audience, to hear it and let it listen to us providing feedback on the information received. Active audience involvement allows for discussion, acceptance, and modification of the message thus, this process is ongoing (Trofymenko, 2023).

The process of information transfer is not pure communication, as it requires critically considered and identified feedback, called consubstantiation by J. Beck (2008). For this to happen, actors entering into communication must have a confident knowledge of true intentions, be very careful and attentive to the fact that words are symbols with different meanings based on experience and be willing to listen actively and respect the other’s point of view. For relationships to continue to develop and flourish, the parties involved must be adaptable and work to keep the communication process moving forward. Let’s illustrate this vision in Fig. 1.

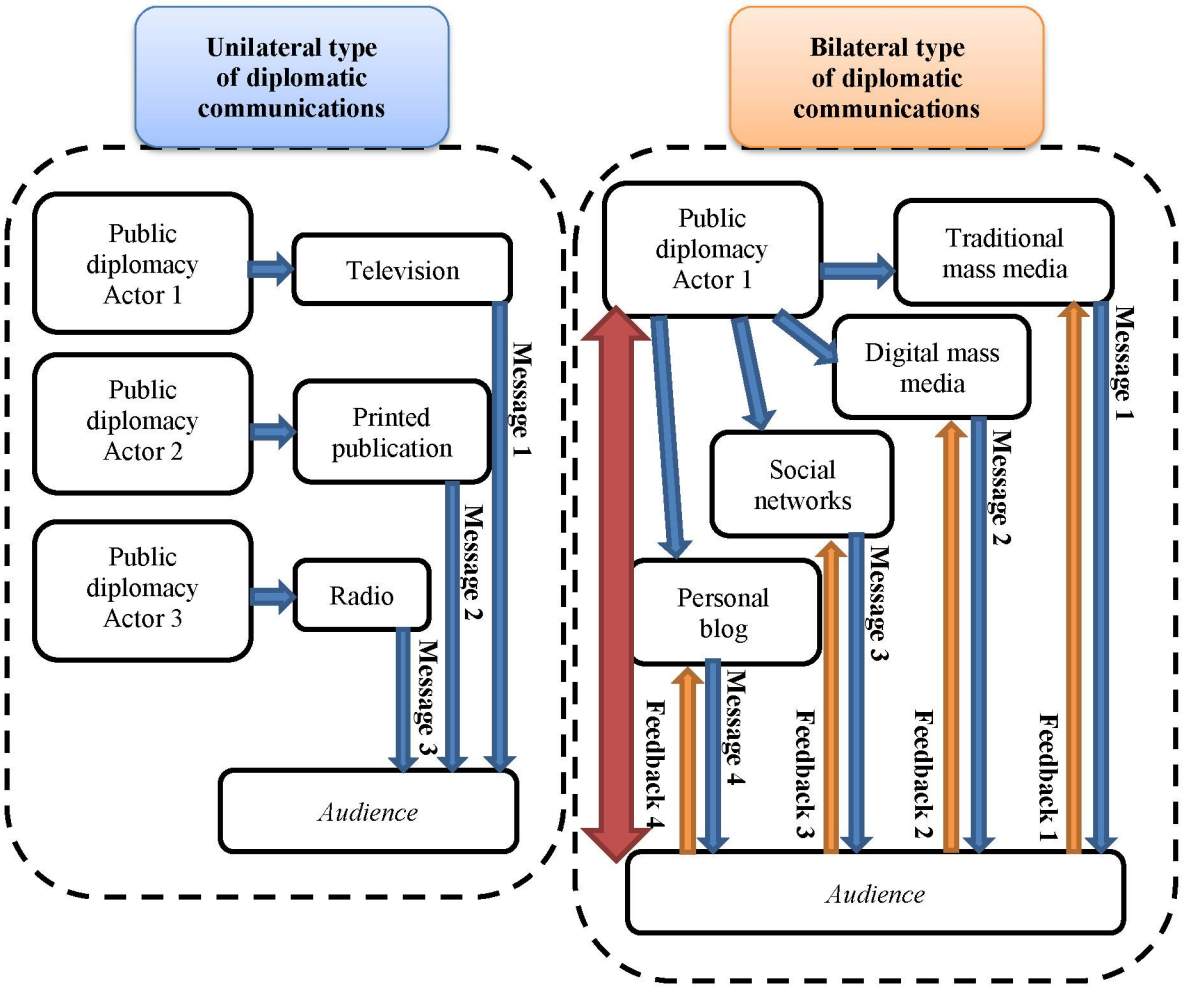

Fig. 1. Comparison of the mechanisms of influence of unilateral and bilateral communication on the effectiveness of diplomatic messages

Source: compiled by the author

The digitalization of the diplomatic space allows a diplomatic actor to use a bilateral type of communication (with quick feedback) and rely on unlimited communication channels accessible for controlled and effective broadcasting. If the reaction to events that concern the international community and are within the responsibility of a diplomatic actor (subject matter of publications and discussions) is quick, has no proven refutations, is structured and clear to the audience, contains elements of interactivity (call for discussion, polls, active commenting), the trust in this diplomatic actor can be much higher than in official sources of diplomatic communications, which, due to a complex system of bureaucratic procedures and approvals, are often late in reacting, informing or refuting rumors, fakes, and disinformation.

Gaining trust is not easy for professional diplomats, who are limited by the instructions of their agency. Non-governmental public diplomacy actors are in a better position. They can cover the entire spectrum of political life in their country, broadcasting not only official but also oppositional sentiments. Strategic listening and the ability to understand and decipher words and messages at the appropriate moment, non-verbal body language and cultural artefacts, historical, religious, political overtones and other relevant factors allow for dialogue to continue and build trust so that any differences or disagreements can be explored openly and honestly.

According to Payne et. al. (2011), public diplomacy communication aims to find common ground (certain shared beliefs and values) and thus create a trusting context in which conflicts and disagreements can be discussed openly without damaging the relationship. This approach, which also uses digital technologies, can increase the effectiveness of public diplomacy.

Thus, from the perspective of transforming the instrumental content and communication channels used to transmit messages, public diplomacy can be *traditional* (information propaganda through radio, television, cinema; training of certain social and professional groups of the population to form a loyal elite, dissemination of political culture through exhibitions, cinema, etc.) and *digital* (posting radio and television programs on the Internet, distributing literature in digital format, monitoring discussions in the blog space of foreign countries; creating pages of government agencies, embassies, and other organizations, as well as personalized pages of government members and ambassadors on social media; sending information via mobile phones, etc.).

To understand the significance of digital channels of influence, let us consider the development of social media and their transformation into one of the leading voices of public diplomacy. Generally, the most popular social media platform in the world is Facebook. The second most popular platform is YouTube (2.05 billion), then Instagram and WhatsApp follow (2.0 billion users each). Twitter (X), which is quite popular among politicians, currently has about 611 million users worldwide. The number of network users reached 3.06 billion people at the beginning of 2024 (for comparison, as of mid-2014, this figure was 1.32 billion), more than half of whom check their Facebook accounts every day. Let's consider Fig. 2.

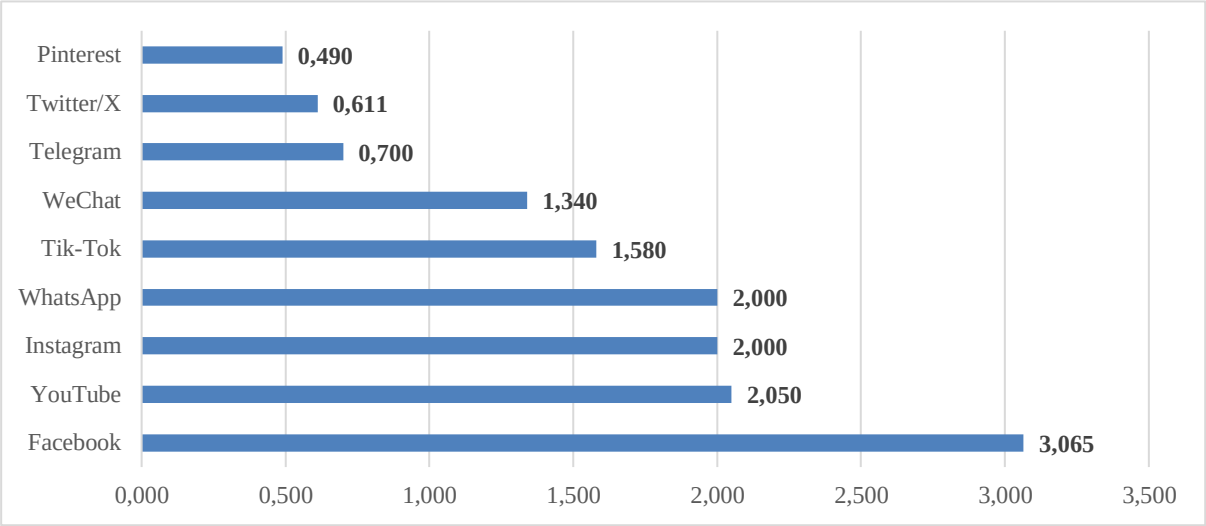

Fig. 2. Number of registered social media users in the world, 2024, billion people

Source: Statista, 2024

This means there is almost always an opportunity to directly address international users in the digital ecosystem, opening up access to the vast audience's opinions, vision and feedback. However, such a wide sphere of communicative impact easily turns into a chaos of tens of thousands of messages, opinions, and manipulative posts if it is not structured, clear, consistent, and trustworthy.

The growing popularity of personal video blogs on YouTube and Zoom, live broadcasts and Q&A sessions with audience members, short videos, informational messages, stories, and political images are new realities of diplomatic life. The Ukrainian Ministry of Foreign Affairs is no exception, as are the governments of all developed countries. Almost all governments of UN member states have official accounts on social media. Presidents, prime ministers, ministers, foreign ministers, and ambassadors are taking to social media and becoming 'tweet diplomats' and 'Facebook diplomats'. The biggest impetus for this phenomenon was the COVID-19 pandemic, which prompted world leaders to actively use Twitter (X) in 2020-2021 to communicate and urge followers to stay home, take care of themselves and be prepared by using the hashtags #StayHome, #StayAlert and #SaveLives (Shevel, 2020).

Zoom broadcasts have been added to social media diplomacy, and today this type of diplomacy is opening up new application horizons. This tool has been included in the methodology for measuring the degree of influence of the G20 countries using digital diplomacy, in particular, a special index has been developed and calculated to provide an objective, data-driven picture of the G20 countries' influence on the online scene of international relations unfolding in social media (The Digital Diplomacy Index, 2024).

The following indicators were selected to assess the level of overall influence: diplomatic network coverage; diplomatic weight; publicity; message effectiveness; global visibility of the country; format mastery; initiative; diplomatic centrality; and language diversity. The undisputed leader in terms of the scale and level of communicative impact in 2024 is traditionally the United States (8.61), followed by Russia (8.37), India (8.21), and the top five also includes Indonesia (7.87), France (7.66), and Mexico (7.44). Analyzing the dynamics of the Digital Diplomacy Index, we can see a trend that democratic countries have declined in influence over the past two years. Some indicators show category leaders. For example, India is the leader in terms of diplomatic network coverage with a total number of 86.6 million followers but the United States, despite having a smaller total number of followers, has a higher concentration of them on the accounts of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (6.41 million). The publicity calculation is another interesting statistical data, i.e. the number of tweets published by diplomatic missions monthly. Thus, the undisputed leader here is russia in terms of the number of tweets by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (approximately 776 tweets per month) while the country leader is not represented on the network at all. In the United States, which ranks third, the President's account is the most active, posting about 337 tweets per month, and the Foreign Ministry – about 156 tweets while official government offices together generate almost 1.25 thousand tweets per month. It is worth noting that the quality of communications and their effect in russia is rather low however the active information field (quantity and consistency) allows it to maintain high coverage with a relatively small audience (about 3 million people).

Despite the dynamic development and influence gained, digital diplomacy as a part of public diplomacy will not replace classical diplomacy, although if used skillfully, this tool can significantly strengthen the work of the state in the field of international relations and foreign policy. Let us consider the practice of using communicative impact in Ukraine's public diplomacy system since the beginning of the active phase of the war.

Since the full-scale invasion, numerous representatives of Ukrainian civil society have engaged in information and communication activities aimed at defending the Ukrainian resistance and conveying the unjustified nature of russia's act of aggression. On the one hand, Ukrainian civil society sought to succeed in its engagement with the russian side, rightly expecting to be heard and to make efforts to stop the aggression. However, when it became apparent that there was no possibility of a peaceful solution, the efforts of non-governmental actors were directed towards increasing the international community's support for Ukraine. This included both areas typical of public diplomacy such as foreign missions, international organizations, members of national diasporas, academic communities, cultural and scientific centers as well as representatives of business, local communities and cities, NGOs (including those dealing with local issues such as animal protection and the environment), opinion leaders and even individual citizens, regardless of status.

For example, joint efforts have reduced the presence of international companies in the russian market by at least a third of the total number (Pylypenko, 2022). Even if public pressure failed to achieve an immediate reduction in economic presence, a significant result was the dialogue between international companies and Ukrainian society, and the public rightly expressed its 'approval' or 'dissatisfaction' with management actions, causing additional feedback.

In addition, the activity of political leaders and individual actors was and remains high, and they have been able to win the favor of foreign audiences at an unexpected level, now they are being compared to the figures of presidents of the United States or other influential countries with prominent leaders. President Zelenskyy, Prime Minister Shmyhal, Foreign Minister Kuleba, Ukrainian diplomats, government officials, and parliamentarians in general have been extremely active in the first months of the war, with positive results. In some cases, foreign partners considered this to be pressure on their governments and parliaments, as they are used to making and implementing decisions in a state of measured discussion and unhurried implementation. However, due to the real threat of destruction and annihilation, the Ukrainian government and its representatives were aware and still understand well that it is about the existence of the state and the physical survival of the people, as the practice of russian troops has all the signs of genocide.

Outlining the government's communication activities, it is worth noting the President's efforts and unique experience in working with internal audiences (daily addresses, publications in social media, media tools to create a sense of unity and support for his people) and external audiences (public appeals to governments and parliaments of countries, the desire to interact with anyone who can help). The Foreign Minister coordinated the work of the accountable agencies, making numerous visits to convey the need to support Ukraine at their level, persuading partners and gathering feedback from the international community.

Additionally, the diplomatic sector has formed a vision of the need to change the tone of the messages about assistance to a broader range i.e. appealing to common democratic values, preserving the European space, emphasizing russia's hostility not to Ukraine, but to global norms of peace and humanism. This helped transform Ukraine from a victim to a defender in the eyes of the international community.

Relying on the efforts of Ukraine's sincere allies namely the United States, the United Kingdom, Poland, the Czech Republic, Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia we managed to resolve the issue of supplying active defense and offensive equipment to protect and recapture the temporarily occupied territories, including those occupied in 2014. Furthermore, mainly through the use of soft instruments of public diplomacy by informing, persuading, and communicating values, it was possible to change the minds of other European governments and representatives of Eastern democracies. Resistance to russian aggression has changed and continues to change the world's attitude to Ukraine as an uncertain part of the democratic space, but as an established Ukrainian nation, an effective political actor, equally valuable to both citizens and the international community. The persistent efforts of Ukraine's diplomatic bloc and the public have helped to convey to the worldwide community the danger of energy dependence on russia (the latest current result is the regulation of oil price caps), which turns the strength of a hostile country into a weakness in the strategic perspective. Bipartisan support in the US Congress and the UK Parliament has also been achieved, along with the de facto equation of Ukrainians with Poles in Poland, and many others.

The use of news media and digital diplomacy tools played an important role in shaping the level of influence of Ukraine's public diplomacy. In general, the peak of publications about events in Ukraine in the news media occurred in late February – early March 2022 (11.34 million publications) and then gradually decreased, and during the summer and autumn months, it remained at the level of 3.0-3.6 million publications. This figure is twice as high as in the pre-war period when the escalation was just gaining publicity in the world media. The main topics covered by the Ukrainian monitoring agency LOOQME were: the Russian invasion and the flow of IDPs, the battle for Mariupol, the fighting in eastern Ukraine, inflation and other economic consequences of the war, Russian missile attacks, the threat of an energy crisis and nuclear danger, the Ukrainian Armed Forces counter-offensive in Kherson region, and the energy crisis caused by missile attacks on Ukraine's energy infrastructure.

In general, most publications contained coverage of hostilities (41%), support for Ukraine in the world (16%), the energy crisis (14%), migration of internally displaced people (8%), and the nuclear threat (5%). Let's consider Fig. 3.

Fig. 3. Popularity of themes about Ukraine in international news media, 2022

Source: Brand Ukraine, 2022

The dynamics of publications on social media roughly coincide with the dynamics of publications in the mass media, with Twitter, Reddit, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Tumblr, various blogs and forums being the main platforms. Thus, the peak of publications on social media also occurred in March (≈126.9 million publications) and October 2022 (≈ 35.7 million publications). The ranking of the publication

topics is similarly distributed – most posts cover messages about the conduct of hostilities (63%), support for Ukraine (10%), migration of internally displaced people (6%), and the nuclear threat (4%).

Search activity for Ukraine in Google's search engine also crossed a historical record, 20 times higher than in 2012, when the European Football Championship took place here, and 7 times higher than in 2014, when russia's hybrid aggression began. In addition to the most popular queries about why russia attacked Ukraine, whether Ukraine won the war, whether russia lost, and others, search engine users submitted the most queries about the person of President Zelenskyy. Publications on the President's official and personal pages, his addresses and messages allowed the relevant information space to be broadcast and disseminated in the international community, the main content of which is to jointly ensure a tough rebuff to russian aggression and promote Ukraine's national interests in the world. In almost a year of the full-scale invasion, the President of Ukraine has already made more than 563 addresses (Official website of the President of Ukraine, 2024). Let's consider Fig. 4.

Fig. 4. Popularity of themes about Ukraine in Ukrainian media, 2022

Source: Brand Ukraine, 2022

An important feature of these messages is a deviation from classic soft diplomatic language: the President is very direct and tough, asking the international community questions about overly flexible behavior towards the aggressor, the lack of arms deliveries as promised, and other important issues. The most striking examples are the criticism of Germany for insufficient assistance to Ukraine and softness towards russia by Ukrainian Ambassador A. Melnyk, the refusal to grant a visit to German President F.-W. Steinmeier, V. Zelenskyy's statements in his addresses to international organizations and governments, and his speech to the Bundestag (RBK Ukraine, 2022).

The President delivers his addresses to national parliaments mainly via online broadcasts organized by specialists from the relevant embassy, the Office of the President, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other services, and the messages are adapted to each country, drawing parallels that are understandable to the external audience (mention of the Nazi bombing of Rotterdam in an address to the Dutch Parliament, the Guernica tragedy in an address to the Spanish Parliament). Having addressed virtually all European countries and some Asian countries, the President continued to speak to students, expert communities, and participants in large-scale cultural events (film festivals). Totally, in 2022, the President delivered speeches 35 times in the legislatures of Europe, Asia, and North America, along with Israel, Australia and New Zealand, and participated in expert forums. In 2023, this practice was somewhat less frequent but continued due to the coverage of countries that had not been ready previously for the Ukrainian leader's speech. This practice was complemented by interviews in the global media, invitations to visit politicians at various levels, and a stronger strategic focus on communications in all possible areas of interaction.

The formation of a coalition against russian aggression, advocacy of Ukrainian interests, and intensive dialogue on strengthening defense capabilities were the key message of public diplomacy during the active

phase of the war (Shelest and Maksak, 2023). When discussing security issues, the precision of statements works well, because vague and unclear messages do not have the necessary result when assistance and decisions have to be made as of yesterday and the results of negotiations are immediately covered in the media and official accounts of the participants of the negotiating groups in an acceptable format.

The entire apparatus of the Foreign Service of Ukraine is working to develop the information sphere. The Ministry prepares packages of operational narratives for use and sends them to embassies 1-2 times a week. Ambassadors use these narratives in their communication with local authorities, media, and opinion leaders in target countries, and actively use them in their posts on social media (Sukhorolska, Klymchuk, 2022). Based on the communication results, an operational information picture of the feedback is collected and sent to Kyiv for processing. An important difference is the tone and high adaptability of the messages broadcast by Ukraine to its target audiences. While russia mostly uses the same internal and external messages, Ukraine tries to work from the local context, but official diplomatic missions often lack resources. In addition, the aggressor effectively uses a network of various private foundations and organizations with significant budgets to work with local elites and opinion leaders. Ukraine has to rely on the help of foreign partners and more actively rely on the role of non-state actors, whose activities are unfortunately not yet structured and have a chaotic nature of application (Khorishko, 2022). Since russia's aggression is primarily aimed at eradicating cultural heritage and denying the existence of Ukrainian culture, Ukraine has also made significant efforts in the direction of cultural diplomacy as part of the cultural war (Pipchenko, Dovbenko, 2019). Within a few months of the start of the full-scale invasion, the Ukrainian Institute held more than 30 hours of discussions, lectures, and expert speeches on the decolonization of institutions, gaps in cultural history, and the role of art during the war. Representatives of Central, Southern, and Eastern Europe were involved in the discussions, where the main goal was to form a common decolonial (post-soviet) narrative.

However, the attention to Ukraine caused by russia's full-scale invasion and its political and economic significance has already reached its peak and will continue to decline naturally. In order not to lose the moment, to consolidate and multiply the potential of public diplomacy, the work on the development of the national brand, the formation of a branding strategy, and the conversion of increased awareness of Ukrainian culture, history, economic and human potential should be more structured and clearer and reflected in the communication field of diplomatic actors of various types. The result should be the creation of a modern and holistic image of Ukraine that will be of interest to potential partners not only in terms of restoring destroyed territories, cultural and historical monuments, and helping the population affected by the war, but also in terms of producing Ukrainian messages to the world aimed at developing and communicating partnerships, developing mechanisms for translating Ukrainian values not only to the European community and the United States, but also to the entire civilized world.

In a certain sense, Ukraine today serves as an example and inspiration for the struggle of peoples enslaved by autocracies and tyranny and, of course, the results of this struggle will determine the further development of conflicts in the world and their consequences. Thus, a systematic approach, strategic planning, coordination of actions, correlation of the context and key narratives to protect national interests are the features that will contribute to Ukraine's effective governance in the field of international activities.

Let us structure the content of the basic messages of Ukrainian public diplomacy considering globalization challenges, national strategic goals, and the presence of Ukraine's brand attributes in the media environment (Table 1).

Today, a fairly stable association of Ukraine with the struggle for freedom and democratic values has been formed but, without appropriate support, the task of maintaining and expanding this perception in the future will be quite difficult. On the other hand, an understanding of the modern features of the latest concept of public diplomacy and the transformation of the content and tools of communicative impact allows us to significantly expand the public diplomacy scope defined by the MFA of Ukraine. In particular, the MFA took as a basis the principles of the EU public diplomacy and other modern world practices, clearly defining strategic, tactical, and operational goals and criteria for measuring the results of coordinated activities of diplomatic actors, by expanding the network of effective public diplomacy actors among non-governmental structures and ensuring coherence and coordination of their joint activities.

Based on the reviewed experience of communication influence in the public diplomacy system of Ukraine, we note the emergence of new trends and tendencies of interaction with the target audience, both internal and external. In order to find additional ways to convey information about the war in Ukraine

Table 1

Basic messages of Ukraine's public diplomacy aimed at ensuring the conversion of awareness about Ukraine

Scope of application	Message content	Communication channels
Global idea	Freedom (free and unbreakable nation), struggle for democratic values, heroism (nation of heroes, courage), member of the European family, equal and reliable international partner	International and national media, social networks, direct communication, governmental and non-governmental portals, special trust entities, opinion leaders
Culture, art, sports, tourism	1000-year history, culture, traditions, values, language, creative nation (unique art, literature, audio and video works, traditional art, architecture), nation of winners, fascinating nature, rich tourist locations (cuisine, religion, entertainment, impressions), modern and comfortable space (infrastructure, logistics, inclusion)	Cultural institutions and cultural centers, departments of culture, tourism, sports of countries and international organizations, a network of personal contacts of cultural, artistic and sports figures, social networks, specialized communities
Business and economic relations	Creative people, high-tech (IT) country, reliable business partner, supplier of quality products (crafts), economic independence, investment attractiveness, competitiveness	Government agencies and departments of economic development, business associations, investment funds, independent agencies, corporate portals, social networks
Cities and communities	Active, modern, caring communities, comfortable living and working environments, technological and cultural centers, effective diplomatic actors of the world level	Public administration of twin cities, national and local media, urban development associations, project activities, social networks, personal contacts
Education and science	An educated nation, a nation of outstanding scientists, ambassadors of city and territory development, scientific and educational centers, information hubs, reliable partners, recognized experts and professionals in various fields	Contact centers of international organizations in the field of education and science, partner educational institutions, personal communication, social networks, training
Society	Political stability, security, tolerance, cooperation, implementation of human and civil rights and freedoms, openness and consistency, digital state, active citizenship	Personal contacts, joint events, conferences, meetings, expert discussions, informative and personal social media posts, activities of trusted individuals, political leaders, opinion leaders

Source: author's compilation

and to attract the attention of everyone who remains indifferent to the blatant violation of international law and all laws of peaceful coexistence of nations, the rhetoric of national and independent media resources has changed significantly. Ukrainian journalists have even identified the lack of international media coverage of events in Ukraine as a personal challenge and have set the minimum criterion for their performance as at least one such publication or coverage per day (Brand Ukraine, 2022). The media community is aware that the way information is presented on the pages of their publications will determine the perception of Ukraine in the world. However, this trend should be maintained in the future, preventing the publication of unverified data that contradicts the main messages and narratives of the Ukrainian national brand.

In terms of trends, Ukrainians have massively launched and intensified the participation trend, in which the personal media space of various structures should support the current sounding and perception of value orientations. For example, condemnation of cooperation with any entities involved in russia or having business or other types of presence on its territory, even statements in support or justification of such actions, receive a wave of rejection and repulsion in Ukrainian society. As a result, a system of mandatory involvement of Ukrainian public figures, corporate brands, and media resources in the operational course of events has been formed in Ukraine. Therefore, the nature and sequence of publishing messages are changing and gaining signs of consistency to stay in the field of view of the Ukrainian and international information space, to prevent a wave of 'hate' for silence and to confirm their involvement in the common struggle.

Ukrainians are also quick to pick up and objectify elements of the information space, turning them into symbols of struggle. 'The Ghost of Kyiv', 'Patron Dog', 'Red Forest' and other symbols of the Ukrainian resistance have become firmly entrenched in the perception of heroism, albeit they did not initially contain such meaning and existed only in the format of ordinary news. For example, Patron the Dog became a mascot for pyrotechnics, a cartoon and video character to influence the youngest audience, an inspiration for many artists, part of the brand commercialization policy, and an element of Ukraine's viral strategy, which includes drawing attention to the problems of demining the territory and conveying the overall drama of the events in the country during the war.

The phenomenon of memes and Internet humor in the communication system of the Ukrainian audience is also interesting, as it reveals the ability of Ukrainians to respond quickly to any political processes and, at the same time, effectively use soft-nudge tools. A meme is seen as a mechanism for transmitting and storing cultural information and stereotypical phenomena in normal circumstances (Sokolova, 2012), however, in the context of war, Ukrainians have managed to turn it into an effective way of indirectly criticizing political decisions, softening the reaction to developments and supporting the population in a crisis. Ukrainians have managed to turn newsworthy events, the latest trends, elements of objectification, memes and internet humor into an additional source of soft power in the public diplomacy system, and this trend should be considered in further planning and development.

At the same time, without an understanding of the associative series and additional explanations, memes will remain incomprehensible to a wider audience, so when using them, it is worth narrowing the target audience to which the meme or particular Internet humor will be directed (users of a certain resource, groups of people united by social or professional frameworks).

The formed additional tools that enhance the communicative impact of Ukraine's public diplomacy in the media and digital space are presented in Fig. 5.

In the future, the acquired change in the rhetoric of national and independent media due to the growing number of publications with high-quality and substantive content, the scale of coverage with the division of the audience according to key archetypes and the expected tone of diplomatic sound, and the strengthening of contacts with foreign media, including in countries that are neutral or still indifferent to the Ukrainian issue, should be maintained and expanded.

An important tool is the activation of the brand of consonance (participation), which is reflected in the flexibility of the communication space and its adaptability to the expectations of the target worldwide audience, the selection of topics and the content of messages on a wide range of not only political but also social, economic and environmental issues. A successful solution was to draw attention to the problems of growing hunger in African countries due to the blockade of seaports and the grain corridor. This allowed us to establish contacts with representatives of African governments and populations and engage them in discussions at the highest diplomatic level. Ensuring the inclusion of national and international brands through targeted messages, mentions, planned information campaigns, analytical reports, involvement of global media and public discussions around current issues of public concern can further strengthen the consonance.

Furthermore, the elements of the information space should be characterized by the content, clarity and quality of the messages broadcast, which will allow the target audience to keep the focus on critical issues for longer and maintain the content of the information space through the viral nature of messages, dissemination on the pages and media channels of public figures, independent media, platforms and networks. The use of memes, viral videos, and Internet humor also has a separate potential, which is expressed in the transmission and storage of cultural information, stereotypes, phenomena, and public reactions to political decisions, as well as a way to indirectly criticize the actions of the government or government officials, the political ecosystem, and the development of relationships.

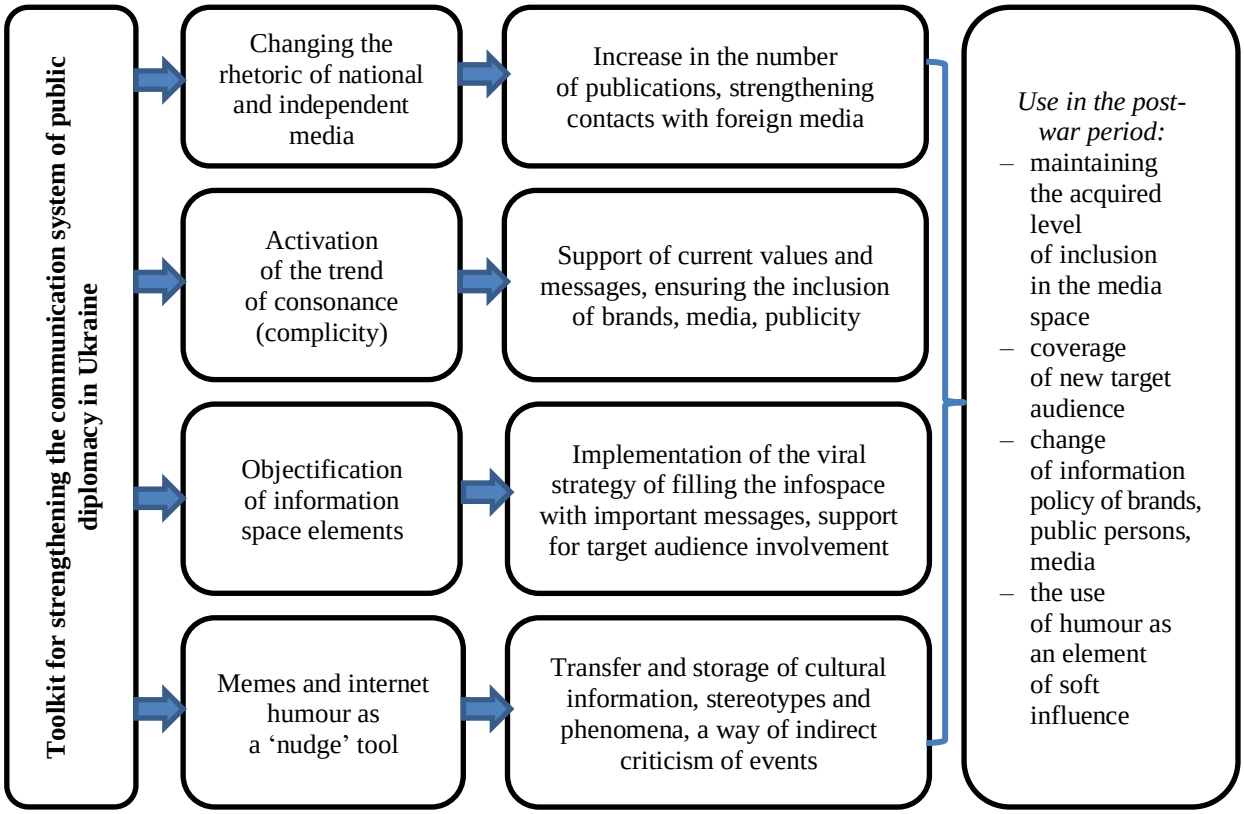

Fig. 5. Expanding the soft power tools of Ukraine's public diplomacy in the media and digital space

Source: compiled by the author

Conclusions

Thus, digital technologies and changes in the political picture of the world have significantly transformed the system of public diplomacy, shifting the emphasis from one-sided information to bilateral dialogue and active interaction in a flexible, adaptive format. The study identifies key factors in the transformation of the public diplomacy toolkit, which has expanded through social media, video content, big data analytics, mobile applications and interactive software, along with the rise of cyber threats, the proliferation of disinformation channels, fake news and other means of destructive influence. These changes are compelling countries to adapt their communication strategies to new realities, increasing transparency, accountability and effectiveness in engaging with international audiences.

In addition, the dynamics of communication processes have changed with the proliferation of digital technologies. Digital technologies have allowed governments, international organizations, diplomatic missions, as well as non-governmental diplomatic actors and individuals to engage actively with foreign audiences, easily adapting messages for different cultural and linguistic audiences, making communication more effective and personalized, public administration more transparent, and increasing the level of trust and responsibility to the worldwide community. Social media usage allows for direct interaction with the audience, dissemination of information, meaningful messages based on narratives that resonate with the target audience, and real-time response to events, establishing instant feedback. These platforms also serve as tools for monitoring sentiment and analyzing public opinion. At the same time, the utility of video platforms (YouTube, Vimeo) and interactive formats (webinars, online conferences) helps to disseminate information more effectively and engage the audience, creating a sense of unity and the opportunity to be heard.

Changes in the political picture of the world, such as the imbalance of levers of political influence and response, the growing importance of new regional centers, and social, economic, and environmental issues of sustainable development, have contributed to a greater variety of communication strategies and the need to adapt diplomatic messages to different cultural and political contexts. The war in Ukraine has proved

to be a catalyst for the development of national public diplomacy, and for expanding the boundaries of communication tools, along with the content and sounding of diplomatic messages, employing all possible platforms, scenarios, topics and influential actors. Based on the analysis results the fundamental messages of Ukraine's public diplomacy aimed at ensuring the conversion of awareness about the country from a strategic perspective have been structured. The areas of their application (society, global idea, culture, art, sports, tourism, business and economic relations, cities and communities, education and science) and key communication channels have been identified. Additionally, the limits of expanding the public diplomacy toolkit designed to strengthen Ukraine's presence in the media and digital space by changing the media rhetoric, activating the trend of consonance, objectifying elements of the information space, memes and Internet humor as soft-nudging tools have been substantiated.

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