Beata Ociepka

Global communication - a revision of the notion[1]

KEY WORDS:

global communication, internet, television, public sphere, public diplomacy

ABSTRACT

The objective of the paper is to verify the understanding of global communication in literature and to confront it with results of the author's research on soft power and public diplomacy. The latter domain belongs to one of the schools in contemporary research in global communication. According to the author, communication is global when it is universally accessible and decodable despite cultural differences. The understanding of communication in terms of networks links the studies on soft power and public diplomacy with global communication research.

Both in media science and international relations, global communication is an ambiguous and insufficiently defined notion. Yet the concept is worth looking at more closely since it has already entered the lexicon of social sciences although, as I will demonstrate below, it is not frequently invoked by the authors concerned with international information flow. The need to redefine global communication stems from the attempts to understand the notion better. The lack of unambiguous definitions is attributable, among other things, to the wide spectrum of phenomena that the notion describes.

The redefinition represents also an attempt to summarise more than two decades of influence exercised by the internet on the information flow around the world, and to confront

---

the optimistic forecasts concerning its significance for public communication with the post-2001 reality which is associated with constraints on information exchange on a global scale. The initial turning point was set by the World Trade Center attacks, their intended media impact and the fact that they resulted in the revival of many forms of international communication, including the creation of radio and television stations broadcasting their content abroad, which were intended to serve as the tools of soft power in times of the "global war against terror". After 2001, the same information media that were supposed to secure an unprecedented freedom of speech and acquisition of information for the humanity, as well as creating new social bonds, have been used to control and restrict the citizens 'freedoms. Moreover, armies used them successfully . They contribute to blurring the boundaries between war and peace and have become an important tool of hybrid wars. At the same time, the military conflicts of the recent period revealed a great renaissance of television in international communication. The war in Ukraine in 2014 once more highlighted the importance of television in state propaganda. The aim of the article is to revise the existing understanding of global communication taking into account the technological and political changes after 2001.

Global network

Today, the global flow of communication has the structure of a network in which the different countries and their governments play the role of nodes, and which potentially connects (thanks to digital technology) the inhabitants of the entire globe. Governments do not have full control over communication and its flow. Due to the use of technologies, such as satellite transmission and online broadcasting, administrative state borders are less important in global communication than in classic international communication whose main feature is the flow of information between the communities divided by those borders. Despite its network structure, global communication does not eliminate the inequalities that are also typical of international communication. They still arise from unequal development of the infrastructure which manifests itself in poor access to television and the internet in many parts of the world; from illiteracy; low level of economic development, as well as from political reasons connected with the international roles fulfilled by countries - nodes - which lead to political constraints on the freedom of transmission and reception of information. Global communication continues to be dominated by the countries of the North, but one of its features is the strive to

reduce this dominance. Beside countries and governments, the actors of global communication also include big media companies and worldwide media, such as News Corporation, Time Warner, Facebook and Google, as well as BBC World, CNN, Al Jazeera. Their position may be linked to a particular country, or they may be perceived as the representatives of the wealthy North (except Al Jazeera) that still holds symbolic power on a global scale. The notion of the actor of political communication is different in global communication compared with international communication. This is because countries are not the exclusive actors in the network structure. Popular culture plays an important role in this form of communication, while the former passive recipients of foreign propaganda become users - both the senders and recipients of information - in accordance with Manuel Castells's idea of *mass self-communication*[2]. Thus, the transmission model that reflects the hierarchical structure of international communication changes into a network model that takes into account the network structure and the emergence of new actors - nodes.

Although social media and mobile carriers provide the basis for the development of network structure of global communication, this does not mean that the network is universal. The processes of exclusion from global communication are still taking place. Taking into account those simultaneously occurring phenomena, it can be concluded that the processes of international and global communication are parallel in various parts of the world. However, with respect to highly-developed countries, global communication can be regarded as a paradigm that follows international communication. Hardly geographically universal, it excludes entire national systems from the global media ecology due to political reasons, by means censorship, often justifying this exclusion with the threat of cultural imperialism. The "global war against terror "put an end to the era of idealistic freedom of the internet. Restrictions on access, as has been the case in China, became the tool of authoritarian regimes, excluding the citizens of many countries from the global network. The control of online content exercised by certain companies, e.g. Google, is a separate issue.

The focus on the importance of the internet, social media and the new role of television in redefining global communication shows that this attempt to summarise the changes taking place is mainly based on the functioning of the societies whose level of development and wealth enables their citizens to use radio and television, also via online broadcasting. Still, the dominating position of television in political communication is

---

[2] M. Castells, *Communication power*, Oxford 2011; Polish edition: *Władza i komunikowanie* [Power and communication], Warszawa 2013.

questionable as for example in Africa. However, the development of mobile telephony in that continent shows that its inhabitants may gain fast access to global information, including television broadcasts in a mobile version, by means of mobile phones and wireless internet access. Moreover, television is not a dominant medium of political communication in certain age groups in developed countries.

The access and use of the infrastructure are therefore varied - as has been the case in history - in geographical and generational terms. In global communication, the local has changed its meaning.

Definitions

By global character of communication I understand the accessibility of infrastructure, the universal use of means of communication, irrespective of the place of residence, and decodability, regardless of the cultural context.

Media landscapes of global communication are varied not only in technological terms (access to media and dominant media), but also in terms of content. Global communication is common for political, economic and cultural elites because they can take part in the global information flow to a similar degree, especially assuming that they speak English. One example of such a global communication network is Twitter. The reports by Burson-Marsteller[3], devoted to the use of Twitter by Prime Ministers and presidents world-wide, reveal that is has become an important channel of communication between political leaders and their electorate, as well as between the members of political elites on a global scale. The Twiplomacy study also suggests that the politicians who are the most popular on Twitter, like Barack Obama (2016), if they represent superpowers, are much less likely to maintain symmetrical contacts with their followers. At the same time, Twitter is an extremely popular tool for the transmission of popular culture messages. It is precisely those messages, rather than the messages of political communication, that are the closest to global availability and decodability. This is due to the preferences of global communication participants who are linked by the lack of interest in politics. In order to reach the greatest number of recipients possible, the messages in global communication are diversified according to the recipients' expectations. The process has been explained by Pablo J. Boczkowski who drew attention to the fact that the focus of the media is no longer on journalists, but rather on the recipients

---

[3] *Twiplomacy*, www.twiplomacy.com [accessed: 30 Jul. 2016].

("from journalist centred to audience centred media")[4]. Ingrid Volkmer perceives this new audience as "disembedded "[5].

One of the simplest definitions of global communication is to describe is as the flow of information, or messages on a global scale. One of the features of such communication is the flow of information, or messages despite state borders, rather than across them. The importance of borders declines in global communication. Many interpretations, such as that by Castells, point to the network character and horizontality as being the components of the global communication structure, as opposed to the hierarchical verticality of international communication. The functioning of a global media network does not, however, mean that we deal with global communication, because this single component is not sufficient to perceive global communication as constituting the model of message flow around the world.

In the literature of the 1990s, there were largely optimistic views concerning the prospects for social development in the world as a result of emergence of global media. Some authors anticipated a fast development of a supranational public sphere (Jürgen Habermas), deepening globalisation of culture and the appearance of hyper-deterritorialisation, seen as positive phenomena[6]. As pointed out by James Curran in *Misunderstanding the Internet*[7], particular attention was given to the development of the internet, expecting that it would foster the "globalisation of culture "and "hyper-deterritorialisation", or "denationalisation of communication infrastructure", which, according to Nancy Fraser, would lead to the formation of "transnational ethics", "global standards of public sphere "and "international public opinion"[8]. In 1996, Arjun Appadurai predicted the imminent emergence of the "postnational imaginary "as a result of the national state crisis, which was an additional variable in the observed processes[9].

Recent literature devoted to global communication or presenting the communication processes in a global context does not contain many attempts at defining this phenomenon. On the other hand, other ideas appear, such as the globalisation of communication, communication in the globalisation era, global media, global information system and global

---

[4] P. Boczkowski, *Digitizing the news. Innovation in online newspapers*, Boston 2004, p. 10.
[5] I. Volkmer, *The global public sphere. Public communication in the age of reflective interdependence*, Cambridge 2014, p. 10.
[6] J. Stratton, *Cyberspace and the globalization of culture* [in:] *Internet culture*, ed. D. Porter, New York 1997, p. 258.
[7] J. Curran, *Reinterpreting the Internet* [in:] J. Curran, N. Fenton, D. Freedman, *Misunderstanding the Internet*, London–New York 2012, p. 8.
[8] N. Fraser, *Transnationalizing the public sphere*, "Theory, Culture and Society" Vol. 24 (2007), no. 4, pp. 7–30.
[9] A. Appadurai, *Nowoczesność bez granic. Kulturowe wymiary globalizacji* [Modernity at large. Cultural dimensions of globalization], Kraków 2005.

media system [10]. Optimistic interpretations of the observed changes can still be found, e.g. in the work by Nathan Gardels and Mike Medavoy who, inspired by Habermas, introduced the notion of the "global public sphere". This is a "new space of power where images compete and ideas are contested; it is where hearts and minds are won or lost and legitimacy is established. It is a space both of friction and fusion where the cosmopolitan commons of the 21st century is being forged"[11] Such optimistic views are less common after 2011.

Miriam Meckel started her reflection on communication and globalisation looking from the 2001 standpoint. She assumed that globalisation is communication, and she did not define global communication or even introduce that notion[12]. She uses the terms "global media communication "and "global journalism"[13]. At the turn of the millennium, notions such as "global media system"[14] and "global media policy "attracted more attention than the idea of global communication. The book entitled *Global communication. Stakeholders and trends*, edited by Thomas L. McPhail, 2010, mentions international communication in the introduction, and its authors do not attempt to define global communication[15]. Likewise, this notion does not appear in the book *The handbook of global media research* published in 2012. Instead, Volkmer identifies six trends within "globalised communication "which are responsible for the changes in communication worldwide. They include: the geopolitical paradigm whose representatives investigate the phenomena of soft power and public diplomacy, paradigm of political economics; the paradigm referred to as "transnational conflict sphere"; then the paradigm of "transnational media extensions "(which refers mainly to research on transnationalisation of political messages due to satellite TV); the fifth, "trans-local "paradigm which emerged from research on hybrid and modal cultures; the sixth one which concentrates on regional networks understood as regions of the world[16]. The researcher points out that, compared with political or social science, media and communication science has been slow to react to the relationships between globalisation and international communication. In her book of 2014 (*The global public sphere*), the author once again uses the term "globalised communication". She focuses on global public communication where

[10] C.J. Hamelink, *Global communication*, London 2015, p. 6.

[11] N. Gardels, M. Medavoy, *American idol after Iraq. Competing for hearts and minds in the global media age*, Oxford 2009, p. 1.

[12] M. Meckel, *Die globale Agenda. Kommunikation und Globalisierung*, Wiesbaden 2001, p. 19 ff.

[13] Ibidem, p. 147.

[14] D. Winseck, *The WTO, emerging policy regimes and the political economy of transnational communications* [in:] M. Raboy, *Global media policy in the new Millenium*, Luton 2002, pp. 19, 23.

[15] *Global communication. Theories, stakeholders and trends*, ed. T.L. McPhail, Oxford 2010, p. 3 ff.

[16] I. Volkmer, *Introduction* [in:] *The handbook of global media research*, ed. I. Volkmer, Oxford 2012, pp. 2–3.

individuals and organisations communicate via "platforms "provided by both classic media and social networks. Volkmer suggests that "globalised communication "should no longer be seen as the macro-structural networks described by Castells at the turn of the twenty-first century, but rather as micro-networks whose "nodes "are situated in the universe of subjective, personalised network structures linking the entities in all regions of the world[17]. Those networks do not function in opposition to mass media, nor are mass media their nodes: this role is fulfilled by individuals, irrespective of the platforms of information transmission they use. In line with this approach, which is inspired by Habermas's classic understanding of the public sphere (Volkmer highlights the importance of Habermas's tradition in her studies), the global public sphere is formed at the level of subjective micro-networks where individuals share interests or common concerns, regardless of the country they live in or the nationality they consider themselves to be.

Cees J. Hamelink in the handbook entitled *Global communication*, published in 2015, regards the use of the term "global "in connection with "communication "as a promise, rather than the description of reality. According to that author, global communication suggests the "existence of a global society in which all the planet's inhabitants participate and equally matter"[18] Following the ideas of Nick Couldry, Hamelink suggests viewing global communication as a "trans-local communicative practice "and investigating how this "practice interacts with economics, politics and culture[19]. In the latter two cases, there is a clear trend to define global (globalised) communication as a social process. The trans-local has also been discussed by other authors, including Marwan Kraidy and Patrick D. Murphy, who used the example of global TV formats, such as *Big Brother*, to point to the results of investigating not only their links with the original version that was the basis for creating the "bible "of the format, but also to the importance of the comparative studies of their local versions. They described such an approach as "trans-local"[20]. The approaches discussed above indicate that, in global communication, the notion of global audience derived from studies on mass communication can be replaced with Volkmer's micro-communities with delocalised character. Thus, global public sphere develops through internal differentiation , just like

---

[17] Idem, *The global public sphere*, p. 4 ff.
[18] C.J. Hamelink, *Global communication*, op.cit., p. 3.
[19] Ibidem, p. 42.
[20] M.M. Kraidy, P.D. Murphy, *Shifting Geertz. Toward a theory of translocalism in global communication studies*, *"Communication Theory"*, Vol. 18 (2008), no. 3, pp. 348-349.

Luhmann's subsystems. However, those micro-networks use platforms that allow them to maintain constant communication with each other.

Global communication from the perspective of geopolitical paradigm

As a representative of the research trend that Volkmer referred to as geopolitical and that is focused on the phenomena of soft power and public diplomacy, I will present the conclusions of my studies on those phenomena and their significance for the understanding of global communication. The studies concentrated on Poland and its efforts to achieve the position of a middle-rank state in European policy after 2004 by using the tools and resources of soft power, in the face of limited hard resources, both military and economic ones. Middle-rank countries often resort to soft power to improve their international position . They are almost invisible in global communication, which is why their activities are usually aimed at achieving visibility. To this end, they introduce into their foreign policy such tools as shaping the country's brand with a focus on the country's image and perception abroad, as well as public diplomacy which involves winning stakeholders with the aim of building long-term relationships. Since middle-rank countries are not usually able to influence the international flow of information by means of their own media (broadcasting abroad in languages of wider communication), they direct their messages to global media, or important regional media, attracting their attention.

International perception and visibility of countries have become an important research category. This is due to the fact that media, in the framework of global communication, concentrate only on certain regions of the world, mainly on the United States of America and regional superpowers in Europe, as well as trouble spots, such as, after 2011, the Arab Spring countries, later Syria, Iraq and Ukraine. Poland, like the whole Central and Eastern Europe, does not belong to relevant regions in global communication[21], which aggravates the problem of the lack of visibility in international relations. The information from that region is of little value to the media, since these countries are not seen as influential and visible in the international system. This leads to a vicious circle: a country with a weak international position is not able to improve its status by means of media, since it rarely attracts media attention. Those phenomena have been investigated by political and media scientist since at

---

[21] W. Schulz, *Politische Kommunikation. Theoretische Ansätze und Ergebnisse empirischer Forschung*, Wiesbaden 2008, p. 71.

least the 1960s.[22]. They are explained through the news values concept . One of the independent variables in this concept is the prominence of the nation. As pointed out by Winfried Schulz, in the case of Poland, the low prominence is detrimental to the visibility of the country in global media. According to Schulz, the power of attracting media attention (one of the dimensions of soft power) depends on the country's international status as well as on the sense of geographical, cultural and political proximity[23]. Poland can attract greater attention from the media in neighbouring countries where it performs the role of information neighbour. It does, not, however perform the role of a regional information centre.

During the first fifteen years of the 21st century, more and more attention was given to the events in the BRIC countries. Russia, India and China hold a fairly stable position in the global information flow thanks to their hard resources and influence on the global situation. In 2015, the BRIC countries organised their first media summit where the decision was made to tighten the cooperation between the media in those countries in order to influence the global information flow. Such activities carry echoes of the discussion about the freedom of information flow in the world and the methods of regulating this freedom. Traditionally, there was a strong trend within global communication studies that focused on the New World Information and Communication Order initiative (NWICO) which, until 1989, supported the developing countries in their efforts to break the dominance of the wealthy North in the field of information. In the age of the internet, the debate on the global information flow was carried out in the forum of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) which was held in two phases - in 2003 in Geneva and 2005 in Tunis- and discussed the methods of counteracting the processes of digital exclusion. However, while the NWICO concentrated on the exclusion of countries and regions from information flow, the WSIS was more focused on the rights of an individual in global communication.

As can be seen from this introduction, the geopolitical trend in research on global communication still takes into account the influence of political and economic variables on the status of a country in global information flow. At the same time, it's worth noting that the idea of national borders losing their relevance stems from the tradition of West-European and American media studies, and does not really work outside those areas such as in the eastern

---

[22] The news values concept was developed in the 1960s by, e.g., J. Galtung and M.H. Ruge, based on the example of the press. In the updated versions of the concept, the analysis also covers electronic media. For more details see: J. Galtung, M.H. Ruge, *The structure of foreign news* [in:] *Media sociology*, ed. J. Tunstall, London 1970, pp. 259–300.
[23] W. Schulz, *Politische Kommunikation…*, op.cit., p. 90.

part of Europe. Commercialisation, marketization of the media and, to a certain extent, also market liberalisation are common trends worldwide. This does not, however, mean the same effects on media content, especially in relation to cultural and national identity. Michael Curtin follows this train of thoughts when he describes and explains the defeat suffered by Rupert Murdoch and his company, News Corporation, when building the Phoenix TV in China[24]. It would be useful to consider anew the integrating role of the media for national culture, taking into account their growing diversity and specialisation, i.e. the transition - according to Wayne Wanta - from elite media, through mass media to specialised media [25] (like in Castells's *mass self-communication*).

Television: the old new medium of global communication

In the geopolitical trend, the state is still considered to be an important actor of global communication, partly because of its involvement in broadcasting abroad within the framework of mediatised public diplomacy. I will illustrate this phenomenon using the example of the development of government-sponsored global and regional televisions after 2001.

The media which are called "global "tend to focus on specific regions. This tendency is overcome by televisions, along with online services, which have a global reach, as well as local language versions. A good example here is Al Jazeera whose Arabic version had a significant impact on the shaping of the Arab public sphere. The impact that the station had on the media agenda through its portrayal of the events in the Arab world, such as e.g. the Arab Spring, was called the "Al Jazeera effect "This example is significant for further reflections since Al Jazeera is the product of a small country which, however, has considerable economic resources. Undoubtedly, the world would not have learned so much about the events in Egypt and Tunisia in 2011 if it had not been for the complex network of bureaus and numerous permanent correspondents of Al Jazeera in that region (English version since 2006). The station also gained recognition by broadcasting directly from the scene of the events, e.g. from Tahrir Square in Cairo in 2011, rather than from bureaus and hotels, like BBC correspondents did. The news came from the participants of the events that were known to Al Jazeera thanks to social networks, and the station passed the news on. Al Jazeera's English-language service

---

[24] M. Curtin, *Murdoch's dilemma, or 'What's the price of TV in China'?*, "Media, Culture & Society", Vol. 27 (2005), no. 2, p. 157.
[25] W. Wanta, *Fox News and the polarization of attitudes in the U.S*, "Central European Journal of Communication", Vol. 1 (2008), no. 1, pp. 111-121.

is perceived as a medium that reverses the North-to-South direction of information flow that dominates global communication. The main focus of the television is on the news from the South (the "South "as understood by Al Jazeera)[26]. However, the pan-Arab public television sphere cannot be seen as monolithic. It is varied both in terms of media ownership (there are private and state-owned stations - in 2013, sixty-eight out of over 1,320 stations were owned by the state), as well as politically and culturally. Some TV stations have a religious character (sunni or shiite, also Christian), while others are secular. The most popular ones broadcast universal, secular content[27].

A similar effect on transforming the global media landscape is produced by such televisions as the Russian RT, Chinese CCTV, or TeleSUR in Latin America and Press TV in Iran. They break the monopoly on global broadcasting held by private TV stations from the USA, or public stations from the United Kingdom. They are directed at the English-speaking (or, like TeleSUR, at the Spanish and Portuguese-speaking) audience around the world which is described as global audience in media studies. Thus, global media landscape witnesses the growing number of media with global and regional-language significance that can potentially fulfil the role of actors of international relations on a global scale. However, the very fact of setting up a 24/7 TV station or information platform in the English language does not guarantee that its creators or owners will have an influence on the global information flow. In fact, they may find themselves in the sea of media "plankton "[28] without much relevance for global narrations and without any impact on the international media agenda.

The content offered by global televisions is used in a localised manner, as can be seen from the extreme examples in the studies on the sources of information used by Syria inhabitants during the war with ISIS and the Ukrainians during the conflict with Russia after 2014. Arab TV stations, such as Al Arabiya (26% of the respondents) and Al Jazeera (16%), enjoyed the greatest popularity in Syria [29]. Their information was verified in the programmes broadcast by the BBC (4% of the respondents), France 24 (1.6%) and Russian RT (1.2% of the respondents)[30]. The motives for searching for information in global media are varied and

---

[26] T.U. Figenschou, *Al Jazzera and the global media landscape. The South is talking back*, London 2014.
[27] E. Galal, *Introduction* [in:] *Arab TV –Audiences. Negotiating religion and identity,* ed. E. Galal, Frankfurt am Main 2014, p. 9 and 16.
[28] I have derived this notion from *Strategia państwa* [Strategy of the state] by Wojciech Lamentowicz (Warszawa 2015) who drew the distinction between "super-entities "and "plankton mass "in the global system, and pointed to the growing asymmetry between the two (p. 59).
[29] Al Arabiya is a pan-Arab information TV station which has been broadcasting from Dubai since 2003, linked with Saudi Arabians.
[30] Syria Audience Research, August 2014, Media in Cooperation and Transition, Berlin 2014, p. 25 and 27.

depend on the situation. In the face of a crisis, the viewers report using information sources they do not normally use in order to get a more balanced picture of the situation. The information advantage held by television during conflicts is well illustrated by the war that has been going on in Ukraine since 2014. For the audiences in Ukraine and Russia, television is the main source of news and a tool of war propaganda for all the parties concerned. At the same time, TV stations perform the role of information platforms in this conflict. They reach the recipients worldwide through their internet websites and presence on Facebook and Twitter. Since 2014, Ukraine has become an example of how a country engulfed in a conflict has to, at an accelerated pace, join the global information flow. The events from Maidan square were broadcast directly by independent internet television stations (such as e.g. Hromadske). Moreover, in 2014, the Ukrainian government created an English-language TV station called UT. During this time, also the Russian television channel RT gained more and more international popularity. The channel claimed to have more viewers in Great Britain in 2015 than Euronews, which is why it was able to promote the Russian interpretation of the events in eastern Ukraine.

The studies carried out for the American Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG) after the annexation of Crimea revealed that it changed the audience behaviour in about one fifth of the Crimean population and over 10% of the population in other parts of Ukraine. The primary reason for this reorientation was the termination of broadcasting of Ukrainian programmes in Crimea and Russian programmes in other parts of Ukraine. As a result, over 70% of the Crimean inhabitants who changed their viewing behaviour started to watch Russian media more often. A reverse process occurred outside Crimea: nearly 70% of the population began to use Ukrainian media more often. Foreign media were more frequently used by 5.8% of the recipients in Crimea, and 6.2% of the recipients in other parts of Ukraine. In this case, the military conflict did not trigger a significant interest in foreign media. This is partly due to the frequent use of the internet which became the second most important source of information in Ukraine, after television and before radio and the press[31].

Due to the popularity of television in many regions of the world, the medium is often used by governments. To ensure the global reach of television, newly created stations are available online. This is important in a situation where the country to which information is directed has restrictions on receiving TV channels from abroad. The governments which are

---

[31] *Contemporary media use in Ukraine*, https://www.bbg.gov/wp-content/media/2014/06/Ukraine-research-brief.pdf [accessed: 30 May 2016].

not able to invest in 24/7 English-language television and radio become active in social media (e.g. on Twitter) trying to influence micro-networks as the basis for global public sphere.

Relevance of studies on new public diplomacy for defining global communication

The studies on new public diplomacy (NPD) show that also this trend in global communication takes into account horizontal relationships which come into being not only as a result of governments 'presence in social media, but also thanks to the media activity of non-state actors, including online issue alliances . The growing importance of non-state actors in international relations is reflected in the development of new public diplomacy which devotes increasingly greater attention to relational and dialogue-based forms. They assume the involvement of both sides - partners in achieving common goals. Many initiatives within new public diplomacy mention "networking "as their intermediate goal. Networking involves building the relationships between state and non-state, foreign and internal (domestic) actors during the implementation of a public diplomacy strategy. Its goals have not changed significantly, compared with the era of international communication. NPD continues to support the pursuit of national interests in international relations by means of persuasion. However, similar to the symmetrical model of public relations, the impact of new public diplomacy should lead to the creation of mutually beneficial relationships between the participants of this process, now referred to as stakeholders. In NPD, understood as networks, governments are important nodes, but this role can also be fulfilled by non-state actors, including non-governmental organisations or commercial media. The geopolitical trend, despite its devotion to hierarchical macro perspective, taking into account the process of networking, assumes a change in a country's status in global communication from controlling to coordination.

My studies on the Polish model of public democracy show that the network version of NPD exists in parallel with the transmission model. Thus, within global communication, one can find both asymmetrical models of transmission (advertising, promoting a country abroad, shaping a country's brand, broadcasting abroad), and newly emerging network models (cultural diplomacy, local government diplomacy, civic diplomacy). In certain areas, such as e.g. foreign politics of memory, both models can exist simultaneously. The networking in NPD seems to confirm the importance of micro-networks for global public sphere as defined by Volkmer. Also from the point of view of NPD, global communication develops at micro-level, rather than exclusively through government-sponsored broadcasting abroad. For

governments, the use of symmetrical NPD means inclusion in global micro-networks and communication of issue alliances. Participation in communication at the level of social media allows for more attention to be given to the content and creating relationships with potential stakeholders. The process also shows that NPD as part of global communication changes the governments 'perception of the audience. The vision of huge audiences to which homogeneous messages are directed is becoming a thing of the past. It is important to identify the preferences of the members of micro-networks and be able to cooperate with them.

Local government diplomacy represents a special case of the multi-level process of inclusion in global communication in NPD. I examined the development of that area using the example of Poland between 2004-2015. The results of those studies show that networking was effective in this case because it was supported by the growing involvement of local governments in the process of establishing international contacts. The former, vertical relations between local governments and Ministry of Foreign Affairs were complemented by horizontal relationships between local governments and links with government institutions, such as e.g. the Polish Tourist Organisation (with its local, regional and international branches) that is responsible for the promotion of tourism as well as for building Poland's brand, and with non-governmental organizations, such as e.g. the Local Government Development Fund. Networking was possible thanks to the changes in the Polish law which began with the adoption of the Constitution of 1997. The Constitution guaranteed the local governments 'right to cooperate with foreign partners at the local and regional level. As a result, strong relationships were established with the stakeholders abroad, which, in accordance with the considerations above, should be described as trans-local relationships. The network structure was accompanied by the diversity of messages resulting from varied motivation for cooperation with the partners abroad and with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Many local governments in Poland established cooperation with the regions inhabited by Polish minority. However, of equal importance was also economic motivation or the desire to acquire *know how* in management, or to share such knowledge with the partners in the Eastern Partnership countries. The promotion of communes and regions to overseas tourists played no less important role.

On the other hand, the case of Poland as a middle-rank country shows that the effects of inclusion in global information flow are smaller in the area of mediatised public diplomacy. From 2004 to 2015, Poland's public diplomacy was periodically focused on asymmetrical branding with a view to improving the visibility of the middle-rank country in the centre of

Europe. As emphasised earlier, visibility has become an important variable of global communication and represents a significant value for governments as it is associated with international security of a state. Such an interpretation of visibility has been signalled by, among others, small countries, such as Poland's neighbours around the Baltic Sea.

In the period under examination, Poland was not able to create media that would function as regional European information media, let alone global media. In 2007, the Belsat TV channel was set up which broadcasts its content to Belarus in the Belarusian language. The television is for the most part funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and is run in collaboration with the Polish public service broadcaster Telewizja Polska SA, which gives Belsat the status of a Polish project of broadcasting abroad. However, the main government institution of Poland's public and cultural diplomacy, i.e. the Department of Public and Cultural Diplomacy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was not responsible for the operation of that television. Although the basic government documents, such as the *Directions for Poland's promotion until 2015,* drawn up in 2009, placed significant value on broadcasting abroad as a tool for promoting Poland, this was not reflected in the activities of the Polish new public diplomacy. During the period under study, Belsat TV was mainly a tool for promoting democracy in Belarus by substituting for the independent sources of information about politics which were lacking in that country. On the other hand, the Department of Public and Cultural Diplomacy coordinated the broadcasting of the external service of the Polish Radio called Polskie Radio dla Zagranicy.

The shortages arising from the status of a middle-rank country with limited resources and a language that is not used for wider communication were compensated by the branding approach of the Polish public diplomacy, i.e. the strong focus on (economic and tourist) promotion and building the country's brand, as well as on advertising. Those are asymmetric, one-sided forms of messages which seem to have been preferred due to the expected rapid results. Meanwhile, in the era of mass communication it was hard to reach a wider, international audience with such messages, and it became even harder in the era of *mass self-communication* due to the dispersion and "liberation "of the audience

Studies on NPD have verified the understanding of global communication. The results of those studies primarily indicate that the search for a global audience, which is at the same time the search for a global public opinion, is in fact the quest for the Holy Grail. Global communication is a multi-level process of equalising the opportunities for access to information with a potentially global scope. The barriers to achieving this scope are still

ingrained in culture, starting with the language of communication and ending with the conditions under which a message is decoded. The juxtaposition of the local and global in micro-networks seems to be less important than in the optimistic concepts of the 1990s. The "liberated "audiences do not need to travel to create new micro-networks. Marwan M. Kraidy and Patrick D. Murphy[32] suggested that the studies on global communication should begin with investigating the local. In the light of this article, this means that the studies should begin with that which happens in delocalised micro-networks.

One of the specific features of global communication is the parallel existence of transmission and network models. The restrictions of internet freedom around the world show that the network part of global communication can be reduced. The lack of freedom of expression is, beside the infrastructural variables, the greatest barrier to the development of global communication.

---

[32] M.M. Kraidy, P.D. Murphy, *Shifting Geertz…*, op.cit., p. 351.