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THE INFLUENCE OF MEDIA ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

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ABSTRACT

The paper is featured by a multiple case study on the influence that media makes in the field of international relations. More specifically, this inquiry is due to the need to understand how the intervention of world media into international politics can influence the formation of a ‘global’ agenda. Methodologically, this research is utilizing a constructivist paradigm, while concluding on a dualistic nature of modern media, which simultaneously acts as a means of construction by states and various non-state actors of the reality of world politics, as well as an actor of this reality. On a concrete note, a set of prerequisites of how the emergence of Internet-based technologies has led to a substantial impact made on participants of international relations is clearly outlined.

Keywords: media, foreign policy, international relations, social media, informational war, public diplomacy.

INTRODUCTION

The turn of the XX-XXI centuries was marked by mass computerization, the introduction of new technologies in almost all spheres of public life. Information technologies have entered our everyday life, interfered into almost all processes of being, adjusting, changing, redeveloping and even replacing them. Today, they are forming a new level of interlinkages between countries, creating a global communicational infrastructure, which have never been in existence before. The modern world is subject to the unspoken rule: a real event is only significant when the media have told about it to the general public. Although conventional diplomacy is considered a rather conservative sphere, such serious changes could not be bypassed. As the example of the most developed and active players in the world arena shows, in their relations with the outside world, one of the priority roles is given today to the media. As argued, if a modern country fails to enter the world's information and telecommunication system as an independent player, then it would have to cede part of its independence to other, more developed in this regard, states (Krist 2013, 47). Transforming the media into a system that can effectively compete with rivals abroad, this means not only ensuring the information security of the country, but also creating another essential tool for protecting foreign policy interests.

Currently, media represents such a powerful tool for influencing people's behaviour that it is, perhaps, not recognized for its strength only by a rare and not very far-sighted politician. Media sources are among the most important institutions of modern society (Hunt *et al.* 2017, 212). They play an essential role in the formation, functioning, and evolution of social consciousness as a whole. Moreover, the perception and interpretation of the most important phenomena and events occurring in the country and the world are carried out through the media.

Therefore, the relevance of this inquiry is due to the need to understand how **the intervention of world media into international politics can influence the formation of a 'global' agenda.** Because it could be argued that media is a means, by which current history is written. In order to tackle the claim that participation of world media in international politics can influence the formation of a 'global' agenda, we need to see the process of how the media influencing world politics. Moreover, what kind of tools, approaches, theories are in use?

This paper utilizes a number of theoretical approaches toward studying the activities and the potential influence of media on world politics, identifying the features of the modern global information space, examining the main aspects of media interaction with states and non-state actors, and underlining the fundamental ways used by global media to influence world politics.

Methodologically, this research is utilizing a **constructivist paradigm**, while concluding on a **dualistic nature of modern media**, which simultaneously acts as a means of construction by states and various non-state actors of the reality of world politics, as well as an actor of this reality. Arguably, global media are the main actors of the informational space, and they are actively participating in its formation as well as development of its dynamics. At the same time, they operate under significant influence of the processes developing in it. In analyzing those processes of the international information regime's formation, this research also builds on some aspects of the theory of **international regimes** that were developed by S. Krasner (1983), R. Kohehin (1993), J. Paul (2007), and others.

From general scientific methods, the dissertation research uses methods such as comparative analysis, observation, and text analysis. The study uses a method of modeling: the model of interactions of 'global' media identified by the author among themselves and with other subjects of international political processes have not only critical functions but also predictive, which allows making forecasts based on these models and offer specific recommendations. For the analysis of concrete examples illustrating the theoretical assumptions being put forward into practice, the case-study approach was methodologically applied, predominantly focusing on the United-States-related examples.

1. ROLE OF MEDIA IN POLITICS

Before we began to talk about the role of media in international relations, and how the intervention of world media into international politics can influence the formation of a ‘global’ agenda, we need to talk about what kind of role media plays in politics in general. Because when one compares to the other, it will be seen that both are the same, with the only difference being the scale and the actors behind the media.

According to *the Macmillan Dictionary* (2017), the word ‘media’ comes from the word ‘medium’ or mode/carrier. Media is designed to reach a large target group or audience. This word was first used with books and newspapers, that is, print media, and with the advent of technology, the media now covers television, films, radio, and the Internet. A substantial volume of the issue-specific literature has been devoted to the problem of media influence on politics, and this is detailed myriads of ups and the falls that are associated with this social aspect (Abdulaziz 2015). In the modern world, media plays a crucial role in shaping the political scenery.

In this context, McCombs and Shaw (1972) talk about how the content of the media influences the political course because it determines the value that people attach to various problems in voting. If the media pay close attention to unemployment, they publish materials about its level, how it grew, massive cuts in companies, and how unemployment affects the daily life of the population — people would attach greater importance to unemployment when voting. Politicians, anticipating this, are likely to devote more resources to solving this problem.

In other models, access to the media is taken into account if the information they supply influences collective behavior – for example, voting decisions – is a powerful incentive for politicians to take into account the interests of the informed. Therefore, citizens who have access to the media can benefit from government programs in varying degrees. The content of the media is significant for the same reason. If the media does not cover specific problems, voters who are concerned about these problems cannot receive the information necessary to take appropriate action. Finally, the accessibility of the media and its contents are only relevant if citizens show interest in this information.

Information in the media can influence both the current political process and promises during the election campaign. Thus, during the 2001 elections in Thailand, the Thai Rak Thai Party promised to provide universal low-cost health care through the so-called 30-Bath Gold Card program, while, in 2002, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva was making a promise to launch a program on fighting hunger

in Brazil. Promises of this kind fulfill their administrative tasks only if those who benefit from such initiatives learn about them. Speculatively arguing, politicians may have no incentive to make such promises to the electorate if the mass of predominantly poor voters do not have access to the media, or if the media does not highlight these promises, since attracting a sparse audience hardly increases advertising revenue. Similarly, politicians have less incentive to stick to a political course in the interests of voters after the elections if they do not have access to the media. Such voters have fewer opportunities to evaluate what is happening and to pay tribute to politicians who are sensitive to their needs. In other words, such voters have fewer opportunities to hold politicians accountable for their chosen course.

Doris Graber (2012) describes how after the 2008 presidential campaign, American citizens watched as elected President Barack Obama stood in front of assembled spectators and talked about how young people united by one goal could change the course of history. It was such a united youth that led Obama to victory and used the social networks that Obama often visited. Graber (2012, 37) notes, “[t]he Internet and an unusual social movement allowed him to come to power, and young people became the engine of his victory”. Although President Obama was not the first to research social networks as a campaign tactic, he was the first to use them as an essential aspect of his candidacy promotion. This dependence on social networks and the use of “a variety of new, incredibly fast and cheap Internet tools – email, social networks, *Twitter*, others – to launch a mass campaign that was personally linked to individual voters [,] [with] [m]eetings almost every day” (Graber, 2012). Arguably, it was the first fully formed campaign, the success of which was partially attributed to the use of social networks by researchers and news agencies equally.

According to Strömberg (2010, 26), the powerful influence of the media on the implementation of state policy is expressed in enabling the population to exercise control over the implementation of state power, which may not necessarily be expressed in the active actions of the public. For the successful implementation of the opportunity above, it is necessary to solve several critical tasks, one of which is to provide the media with reliable information that is relevant for making political decisions that are important for voters and the general public. More informed voters get political advantages because they have the opportunity to bring politicians to justice. Informed voters know whom to pay tribute for financial assistance, and re-elect only those who provide them with appropriate support. Politicians satisfy the requirements of voters, counting on re-election (*Ibid*).

After analyzing the works of Graber (2012), Iyengar (2007), Bagdikian (1990), there is a possibility to single out the following essential and commonly features that characterize the process of the influence of the media on public administration and management of the local

community. The aspects of the influence of the media on the functioning of a political institution include: **informing the public about the results of implementing state policy**, about the views of politicians and the results of their activities; **manipulation and persuasion of citizens** (the formation of stereotypes, the spread of ideology, in some cases a change in consciousness and the formation of the image of the “enemy” in the face of representatives of another state or ethnic group, the psychological impact on citizens of other countries); **socialization and education of the population** (introduction of ethno-cultural patterns of behavior, the formation of social, national and class identity); and, finally, **entertainment of the audience**, the distraction of the population from problems and crisis phenomena in the domestic and foreign policy.

1.1. Role of media in foreign affairs

The issue of global media activities and their ability to influence political processes is often the object of scientific research. The media is considered to be one of the tools for implementing the state's foreign policy. The actor approach allows us to consider the global media as relatively independent players, interacting with other state and non-state actors, actors of world politics, and also able to influence world political processes. The problem of the influence of media activities on world politics, the processes is the subject of a large number of scientific research. Traditionally, media is considered as one of the practical tools of state information policy. Thus, Edwards (2001) formulated the notion of ‘mediapolitik’, which characterizes the potential use by the state structures of the information space in achieving their own goals. Noting the role of the media as the essential components of national power along with traditional components – resources, economy, military power, and political will, the effectiveness of which significantly depends on media factors (Edwards 2001).

Eytan Gylboa (2008) goes further, describing ‘mediapolitik’ that boils down mainly to influencing political elites, in contrast to ‘public diplomacy’ as one of the elements of ‘soft power’, the object of which is the public, and is the modern form of propaganda. In general, a considerable amount of scientific work and journalism is devoted to the study of information manipulations, information wars and the psychological impact of various media and communications on the minds of people used in state politics.

At the same time, modern media are not limited to local or national space and audiences, acting as actors of the modern world. *CNN*, *BBC*, *Al-Jazeera*, *Russia Today*, *Euronews* are not only instruments of influence of the leading countries of the world, but also have a significant impact on world public opinion, national policy, and world politics. As an instrument of influence of

independent, influential actors on the process of shaping public opinion of the masses opinion: the media as a factor in the impact of 'soft power'. Today, 'soft power' is the ability to achieve goals in the international not by coercion, but by convincing and attracting the sympathies of other actors – an invariable attribute of any power claiming a high status in world or regional politics (Gylboa 2008). Thus, in the context of international relations, the media can be considered as a tool for implementing the foreign policy of each state, as a mechanism for influencing stakeholders on the process of shaping public opinion. Together with the media actively involved in the search for adequate, objective responses to the challenges of our time.

There are several main ways of presenting information through the use of which the media achieve their goal: distortion of reality; display of a fragment of reality taken out of context; interpretation of real events from the point of view of specific political forces or interest groups; prediction of events, prediction of threats; silence of the facts. At the same time, it is impossible not to admit that it is challenging to display all the diversity of facts in the framework of news reporting, and the media are not always interested in this, respectively, political events would be selected for a specific task, in particular, the implementation of the political order of leading world players. Also, the selection of events would be carried out under the influence of the institutions of power, in the interests of the opposition, in the interests of 'mediacrats' (media owners), and in the context of public opinion.

In modern conditions of information, there cannot be an informational vacuum, because if there is then the information space is not filled with official information, hence the emergence of non-initialized rumors or aggravation of the media activities of other states. At present, fierce wars are unfolding not only in the combat zones but also in the global information space. Information wars have become an attribute of modern international relations, a 'soft power' that determines the winner in conflicts of the XXI century. It should be noted that the effectiveness of the media of developing countries in world politics is extremely low, as evidenced by unsuccessful information campaigns in conflicts with the West, as well as the desire to create their media with an alternative agenda.

Baum and Potter singled out, at a minimum, the following three main areas of media activity in world politics (2008): **firstly, the media as an instrument of political power**, through which propaganda of state ideology is carried out, imposing their cultural values, patterns of behavior, schemes thinking and demoralization of the enemy, the formation of public opinion regarding the state foreign policy. **Secondly, the media is a social institution whose main task is to express a public opinion about the most critical foreign policy decisions and actions.** Moreover, the

opinion expressed in the media may differ significantly from the political point of view. For example, the public opinion of the Americans against the Vietnam War diverged from the official point of view and turned out to be ultimately more important in making political decisions in the process of conflict development. This phenomenon is called the “CNN effect” (Livingston 1997, 13), it describes the influence of the media on the government decision-making process when the organization of live broadcasts during a crisis affects its course and outcome. **Thirdly and finally, the media is a corporation or ‘institute influence’** when, at present, citizens prefer receiving political information from the media, guided by the news selection system, as well as by the interpretation and assessments offered by the media based on the interests and political preferences of media crates.

For example, the US authorities used two methods of information pressure. Firstly as **an instrument of political power** and secondly as **a social institution** to initiate an invasion of Iraq: the search for evidence of the existence of chemical weapons and, as a result, the threat to the existence of civilized countries; exerting information pressure using own arguments to convince potential allies. Several countries use to exert pressure on foreign countries ‘public opinion’ initiated by the authorities. In particular, Evdokimov wrote that “in modern China, for foreign policy purposes, the methods of mass demonstrations and appropriate coverage of ‘popular sentiments’ in the Internet, media and print production are being used more and more” (2011, 12).

At present, the media presence in world politics is complemented by Internet communities and social networks, which allows mass media to influence the world community, using not only linear channels for presenting information but also involving the general public in different countries in the process of discussing topical world problems. This kind of complex impact, of course, can have a significant impact on the political decision-making process in the framework of world politics.

2. THE MANIFESTATION OF MEDIA IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONSHIP

As we already learned, media plays a vital role in modern society, and their role in people's lives is continually increasing. The reason for that is because media becomes accessible to the masses, and people are always vulnerable to the impact of the media. In this situation, the media have become a powerful tool, by the help of which the public opinion can be changed. Consequently, the impact of the media on people occurs at the level of consciousness, because people perceive the information from the media and form their views and opinions based on the information they receive from the media, and how this information is presented in the media determines the perception of certain events and problems by the public. The influence of the media on individuals and society as a whole is so significant that one can speak of the influence of the media on international politics by influencing public opinion.

2.1. Media and World Public Opinion

The mass media, have long served the task of not reflecting reality but shaping it in a predetermined tone. Often it is the media that becomes the tool that allows not only to enlist public support but also to create a pretext for a military invasion of a sovereign state. A classic example that has already become an imagery 'textbook' in itself is the former Yugoslavia. Preparations for Western intervention in Kosovo events began to unwind from a material produced in 1992 by the British company *ITN* (*The Bosnian...1992*). President Bill Clinton referred to them in his speeches (1994). These materials showed a man behind barbed wire. It was argued that this is a concentration camp in which the 'bad' Serbs keep the 'good' Albanians ('*The Bosnian...*' 1992).

No less vivid facts of the coordinated work of the media in foreign policy can be found in the story of the first American invasion to Iraq. It is known that some human resources companies were directly assigned to the task to justify the participation of the United States in this particular military intervention. So, at a hearing in the US Congress, a certain Kuwaiti girl told in detail how Iraqi soldiers took out their babies and laid them on the cold concrete in one of the hospitals ('*Nayirah...*' 1991). The story made the right impression and played an essential role in preparing the military actions. However, as it turned out later, the girl had been specially prepared for the 'performance'. She was the daughter of the ambassador of Kuwait to the USA. In the third millennium, information technologies took a step further, and the role of the media from auxiliary turned into a central one (MacArthur 1992). The wars of the twenty-first century turn into staged performances designed to control the emotions of global audience in the interests of implementing

their state policy. Arguably, the example of the second Iraqi campaign of the USA and its allies represents a confirmation of this claim. As is was noted, during the 2003 invasion to Iraq, some military units seemed to be posing for television cameras and fighting only when the effect of their public relations was known in advance (Hebert 2003). Such a scenario has become a new kind of influence on the mass consciousness, in which they work with reality in the same way as they do with the plot of journalistic reporting.

After the March 2003 invasion in Iraq, US Congressman James Marshall (2003) expressed the view that reporters represented a “false grim picture” that “weakens our national resolve”. President Bush (2003) made a similar statement, saying that “[w]e are making good progress in Iraq. Sometimes it is hard to say when you listen to the media filter”. US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld (2005) added to that “the news media seems to want to carry a negative”. These statements reflect two assumptions widespread by decision makers regarding all political perspectives: first, the media are often unable to present topics that politicians consider necessary, and second, that the media form public opinion about foreign policy.

At present, public opinion is an essential and inalienable attribute of the life of almost all countries of the world. Entering into interaction with traditional components - participants of the foreign policy process, public opinion reflects the attitude of various groups of society to foreign policy in general. Also, in the presence of several circumstances, public opinion, intruding into the field of foreign policy, can have an impact on decision-making in this area, turning into a mechanism whose effect leaves a mark on the development of the current system of international relations.

Given the increased activity of the public in recent years in the political sphere of society, it can be argued that the importance of the phenomenon of public opinion is gradually increasing. This tendency is also noted in our country, but primarily outside its borders – in the countries of the West and the East. Without limiting its sphere of influence exclusively to the domestic political sphere, public opinion often intrudes into the sphere of foreign policy. In this regard, public opinion is of increased interest concerning foreign policy issues.

The facts show that the world community, both as a whole and in individual countries, actively respond to events occurring in the world, and its opinion is gradually becoming a factor in foreign policy, the potential of which is very significant. Public opinion and foreign policy interact with each other, influencing each other depending on political, economic, and social implications. That implies a public interest in foreign policy, as well as its awareness. This opinion establishes certain limits within which decision makers choose if they do not want to face problems during voting in

elections. In other words, the government, given the need for a report to the voters at the elections, would not take actions that discredit it in the eyes of voters. A ‘payment’ for unsuccessful and unpopular actions is the loss of electoral support. Accordingly and generally speaking, the political elites – be it in the United States, Russia, or elsewhere – seek to adjust their foreign policy with the help of public opinion polls, seeking a positive public reaction to the decisions taken by the government in the field of foreign policy.

Social networks and the Internet have changed the way information is distributed to the public. Information was once available only through government agencies, and the flow of information between governments and citizens was strictly controlled. Since we saw on the Internet that this model has completely turned upside down, since the costs of recording and distributing information have decreased dramatically, and a steady increase in the number of citizen journalists, bloggers, and online activists has begun. As the growing use of digital devices and social network platforms has shifted from the private to the public sector, the use of social networks to help governments achieve their political goals both at home and abroad has become a widely accepted strategy.

2.2. Digital diplomacy and Twitter

The relationship between the Internet, foreign policy, and diplomacy have become an attractive topic in academic circles in recent years. Various studies have assessed the contradictions of this connection in the context of public diplomacy and civil diplomacy, primarily focusing on the role of social networks as mechanisms for penetrating world public opinion. In this case, it is worth noting that this relationship is in constant development, and this is the field of scientific activity, which every day provides new perspectives and approaches to its analysis. In this sense, this section aims to assess the primary and most elementary characteristics of the relationship between the social network *Twitter* and the form in which world leaders used it as the newest mechanism for spreading the foreign policy of countries through a set of specific historical facts that are described with methodological and historical positions.

Social networks are the media (media), which have practically become a key platform for disseminating information (Wasserman *et al.* 1994). Nevertheless, social networks are much more. For example, due to their rapid development in the past ten years, social networks have even changed the form of communication, the way of consumption, and our habits (The Nielsen 2014). Also, they invaded politics as a new battleground for political parties, as well as to discuss ideas (Izquierdo 2012, 24). Social networks discovered the harmonious combination between virtual elements and components from the real world, which made it possible to gain enormous popularity

among the masses, and this attracted the attention of leaders and governments around the world who began to use them to their advantage.

Unlike traditional media (for example, television, radio, and newspapers), social networks immediately organize a dialogue between users on national and international issues, and this gives a tremendous political appeal. Thus, political leaders, government agencies, public organizations, and private companies gradually created accounts on these social networks to maintain direct communication with other users at the moment when they need to convey a message to them. At the same time, states also took places on social networks and even used them to connect with other states, in what some have called digital diplomacy or electronic diplomacy (Hanson 2010). This new type of diplomatic interaction in social networks was studied in 2012 following the results of a conference organized in the city of Turin by the Italian Foreign Ministry.

In the final document, it was found that “social networks are a new public forum and a new political tool in the hands of citizens to improve democracy since many people would be able to express their opinions in real time. With the restructuring of diplomacy to improve the response to new challenges, social networks are widely used among diplomats, government offices and their propagandists as a way to interact with the audience and popularize their commitments in the field of international politics” (CIFOIT 2012).

Events show that *Twitter* has become an innovative tool of public diplomacy and has changed the form of perception of strategic processes. Citizens and politicians of many countries have the opportunity to instantly learn about international political acts and communicate with other citizens, commenting on these events. *Twitter* also allows us to evaluate in quantitative terms the opinions of users, as well as the degree of popular support of world leaders. This means a research alternative for developing statistics on citizens' political preferences, used by some private organizations to establish the popularity ratings of international leaders. At the same time, world leaders and diplomats recognized the benefits of some of the services offered by *Twitter* to maintain the most favorable relationship with voters.

Arguably, one of these leaders is Donald Trump. Trump today is the most popular among the world political leaders in the number of subscribers (more than 52 million), overtaking the Pope by this indicator. Loughkens (2018) notes that most of the American or international leading personalities do not respond via *Twitter* on Trump's tweets, making the assumption that they do not want to engage with him in the dispute publicly. However, individual cases of direct appeal to Trump were also recorded. For example, the leaders of Fiji and the Marshall Islands, via *Twitter*, tagged the personal account of the US President, urging him not to leave the Paris Agreement. On

the Fijian case, Frank Bainimarama (2017) responded to the White House video that the Paris Agreement is a 'bad deal' for America, posting the edited video in support of the agreement.

On 19 December 2018, Trump summoned shock waves around the world with a tweet-video message announcing that the US would withdraw its forces from Syria: "They are returning now" (2018), which arguing that the ISIS has been defeated. The public reaction was quick, and the 'alarm' was widespread. Over the past decade, it was objectively detected how social networks are helping to change radically and to shift countries towards equality and democracy, such as the role of *Twitter* in 2011 and the Arab Spring. Researchers also believe that social networks attract the attention of a broad audience. The refugee crisis in Syria, the 'Ice Bucket' problem of motor neuron disease (also known as Lou Gehrig's disease) and air quality in Beijing are all examples of problems that have 'benefited' from the ability of social networks to quickly distribute images and information among the population (Kapoor *et al.* 2017, 542-544). The idea of electronic diplomacy, or digital diplomacy, as the driving force of public goods, has been widely discussed by theorists, government officials, and scientists.

However, lately, we have seen the role of social media in creating narratives and political rhetoric for home audiences, as well as the damage that can be done to foreign relations on the global front. Perhaps we naively decided to ignore the opportunity offered by the international leader in social networks to support domestic support at the expense of international relations. Thanks to the possibility of creating a 'connection' between users, *Twitter* also demonstrated that it is a system that is convenient for mobilizing social groups for numerous tasks, such as organizing protests. For example, *Twitter* was used to better organize the so-called "Twitter revolutions" (Zuckerman 2014), that is, revolutions and protests that were coordinated and planned through *Twitter*, as well as to mobilize protesters and publish news to the whole world. Examples of such cases are the Egyptian revolution in 2011–2013, protests at elections in Iran and in Moldova in 2009, students' protests in France in 2012, actions against corruption in Turkey in 2014, shares due to the revolution in Ukraine in 2013-2014 and the Crimean annexation by Russia in 2014, and protests and killings in Venezuela in 2014. In each of these political episodes, the protesters used *Twitter* to send messages to their followers to inform them and place them on the streets. In this sense, Emalida Vilorio (2014) believes that *Twitter* has become "a fashionable tool for editing and destabilization in the informational and psychological warfare" and it is not at all like "an additional communication channel that allows political leaders to be in direct contact with voters and informal communicating with each other". Moreover, the same scholar noted that *Twitter* is going to go unnoticed in each of these revolutions. Jonathan Zittrain (2009) suggested that these qualities of *Twitter* allow him to look harmless, and this is his most prominent attribute.

3. THEORETICAL ANALYSIS OF MEDIA IMPACT ON WORLD POLITICS

3.1 Informational war and Soft Power

There are several techniques and methods for defining the term 'information war'. For example, Ballard Forno (1999, 43) wrote that "information war is a complex of measures aimed at a massive change in people's consciousness and imposing goals on them that do not affect the number of their interests, as well as protection from possible influences". Four years before him Colonel Richard Szafranski of the USAF (1995) wrote a more militaristic discretion that still befits here:

Information warfare is hostile activity directed against any part of the knowledge and belief systems of an adversary. The 'adversary' is anyone uncooperative with the aims of the leader. Externally, this is the agreed upon 'enemy,' or the 'not us.' Internally, the adversary might be the traitor, the faint of heart, or the fellow traveler--anyone who opposes or is insufficiently cooperative with the leader who controls the means of information warfare. If the internal members of a group are insufficiently supportive of the aims of the leader during warfare, internal information warfare (including such things as propaganda, deception, character assassination, rumors, and lies) can be used in attempts to make them more supportive of the aims of leadership.

The media act as a watchdog to protect the public interest from abuse and raise public awareness. Moreover, because of that, it can be easily used in the informational war, by different actors to push their agenda. It can only be a speculation on what was the real agenda in regards of the Dominique Strauss-Kahn scandal, however, the informational campaign that went against him in September 2011 deprived him of any chance in the France presidential campaign of that time.

Therefore when, for example, a government makes some unpopular decisions in local or foreign policy, it is the media that informs the common people. Before the Brexit referendum, in 2016, the standard polling on EU membership showed that since 2014, 162 out of 240 polls showed that the British population wanted to stay in the EU. However, because of the enormous media campaign that supported Brexit, we now have a ripple effect that could affect the whole EU (BPC 2019).

Both cases are an example of how media can be used in the informational war in a small and precise way. Both examples have an 'adversary' that media tried to entirely 'destroy'. Because of this, it had to lead to different kinds of a ripple effect in world politics in the future. In the first case, the 2012 France elections were won by a pro-European president. In the second case, the Brexit showed to other Eurosceptic movements in Europe that there is a way out of the EU.

Global media continues to be the most important source of public information, and therefore, inevitably gets involved in the mechanism of information confrontation. Their primary function in this mechanism is to transmit to the audience specific ideas and values, to form the necessary information agenda and appropriate coverage of events in the country and the world. In information wars, the media can act on a larger scale as agents of states. Like for example, in the USA, the Broadcasting Board of Governor's government agency directly funds and coordinates *Voice of America and Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty*.

As for other global media in private and other forms of ownership, the degree of their independence in the information war is higher and would be primarily determined by the position of the owners of these companies. However, the observed explicit synchronization of the activities of the world's leading Western media on a global scale in covering recent political events (former Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Iraq, South Ossetia, Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, Syria), where the political interest of major powers can be traced. It should be noted that mass media in the information confrontation can be used as agents – regardless of their nationality – against any object of attack, including their state of registration. That can occur both naturally, based on the formation of cross-border alliances of interests and through special operations to introduce agents of influence in the media of the opposing state.

The essence of the information war is the covert management of political, economic, military, and other processes of the adversary state. The most crucial property of information warfare actions is the absence of evidence of the involvement of the interested party in the damage inflicted on the opposing side. Information warfare methods include information weapons, means, and means of political, legal, and economic influence on the formation of the information space of the opposing side, the traditional physical destruction of information space elements. The primary tool of information warfare is information weapons, which to use in the modern world is quite simple; with the help of the Internet, information is distributed in seconds (Szafranski 1995).

The end of the 'cold war' at the dawn of the XX century led to the fact that the well-established system of international relations based on the geopolitical confrontation of two opposing systems based on the elements of 'hard power' transformed into a more complex system without bipolar opposition. Remaining a significant factor in ensuring the national security of the state, solid strength, based primarily on military strength, has gradually given way to tools of 'soft power,' whose role in foreign policy has consistently increased over the past decades.

It should be noted that the American political scientist Joseph Nye, who first coined the notion of the 'soft power', formulated the definition of soft power as "forcing others to want the results you would like to get". Based on the "attractive power" (Nye 2013, 30), it is something more than "persuasion, persuasion, or the ability to make something happen with the help of arguments". Not all political scientists agree with the definition of soft power since it is vague and quite broadly interprets "the inclusion of both financial instruments of government – both carrot and whip – and even military force. Soft power, it seems, now includes everything" (Nye 2013, 69).

The media, in its ability to influence public opinion, can be attributed to one of the most effective tools of soft power. By contributing to the formation of public opinion, the media allow us to highlight one fact or another with a certain, "more correct angle in the right ideological perspective" (Nye 2013, 143). A typical statement confirming this thesis is a statement by US General of the Armed Forces John Shalikashvili: "We do not win until CNN informs us that we are winning" (1991).

At the same time, the mechanisms of influence on the state in general, and the population of the state in particular differ. The scheme of influence on the state can be built according to the following logical chain: resources – government elites – gravity – making decisions by the elites and getting a result. At the same time, the mechanism of media influence is not directed at the government elites, but, first of all, at the population. In this case, it looks like this: resources - the public – attraction/rejection – are conducive or not conducive to the decision-making environment for decision-making by the government. It is evident that the primary purpose of the impact of the media and non-governmental actors, in this case, is public opinion. An example of the combined effects of hard and soft power, as well as non-governmental actors, is US policy in post-war Western Europe.

However, soft power in foreign policy can be directed not only at creating a positive image and strengthening one's influence but also at creating a negative image of a third party, which aims to undermine its influence in a particular region, deprive it of legitimacy or the possibility to strengthen its influence. Often, such actions are not publicly disclosed and not carried out by public diplomacy tools, but there are also reverse precedents: in 2009, the US Senate allocated USD 30 million to detect human rights violations in Iran, which caused asymmetrical response (Gypson 2018).

In the XXI century, the media have become a useful tool that can significantly strengthen the firm power of the state, or drastically turn it against the actor himself. The military actions of the

Russian Federation, which in 2008 entered Georgia, in order, as it was argued by the official Kremlin, to defend its citizens, were interpreted by a significant part of the world as military aggression. As Levy (2008) argued

Russia was not so clever in the use of soft power. The indiscretion in the organization of supporting its position in the media with the same speed with which it sent tanks to Georgia reflects some extent its attitude to the situation in the world.

Thus, ensuring the information security of the state in order to preserve national sovereignty, consolidate society, and solve domestic problems is necessary for the emergence of an active foreign policy using various tools of soft power. Even though the military component of the foreign policy of world actors is often the last and decisive factor in their confrontation, in binary opposition 'hard power' – 'soft power' the proportion of 'forces' in modern realities, is shifted towards the latter. This fact, in the face of growing influence of both traditional actors - states and actors unable to act within the framework of 'hard power', confronts the state with threats to national interests associated with the destructive and illegal use of 'soft power' in order to manipulate public consciousness, interference in the internal affairs of the state and political pressure. It should be noted here that in the conditions of erosion of national and cultural - civilization borders in the modern, globalizing world, the elements of external influence in the field of religion, education, media, as well as in the socio-cultural sphere, pose a particular danger to states.

One of the most vivid examples of the information wars of the XXI century is the 2008 Russo-Georgian war. In the Russian media, the emphasis was placed on the negative actions of the then Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili, whose foreign policy was considered aggressive, and Lyubov Sliska (2008) a high-profile Russian MP, even compared him with Hitler. Journalists of the Western political media were of a completely different opinion. Extensive coverage was received by the Georgian President's interview with *CNN*, in which he stated that Russia had razed Tskhinval to the ground, turning it into a second Grozny (Saakashvili 2008). The US Vice President Richard Cheney spoke in favor of punishment for Russia, and the country's Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice (2008) questioned Russia's role in the international community. The visual side of the reportages was showing the cruelty of the Russian troops. Georgia was portrayed as a 'beacon of democracy,' and Russia was compared to 'barbarians' ('Russian...' 2008). American media influenced the public through psychological manipulation. Actions in the conflict zone developed rapidly, so there was a lack of information from the scene. From the very beginning of hostilities, the image of the Russian aggressor was formed (Schwartz *et al.* 2008).

3.2 Public Diplomacy

For centuries, the term ‘diplomacy’ basically meant negotiations, official relations between states, document exchanges. With the onset of the information age, traditional diplomacy came to replace public, or, as it is also called, public diplomacy. Public diplomacy actors are now not only states and diplomats, but also individuals, groups, social institutions participating in an intercultural, inter-communication dialogue that influences international relations. The role of the media in public diplomacy is gradually becoming leading, and this is especially true of new media.

The concepts of ‘public diplomacy’ and ‘media’ are very closely related. If public diplomacy is propaganda among the overseas mainly public image and politics of their country, then this task is carried out through the media, both national and specially created to work abroad. Public diplomacy became possible on a large scale only when modern media appeared - radio, television, press in foreign languages, capable of reaching a foreign audience. At the same time, public activity increased in different countries, national and international organizations, and their involvement in public relations, and this also increased the need for public diplomacy. Public diplomacy is not just an integral part of ‘soft power’ (Nye 2004), but also the primary tool for building up the ‘soft power’ of states in the modern world.

The main elements of ‘soft power’ are cultural and political values, public and other institutions that can attract others, and also – not least of all – openness to the world. This concept implies not only the absence of a hard imposing of one's way of life on other states but also the number and quality of relations with the outside world, through which the success of any country, its ‘soft power’ can be conveyed to the audience¹. A prerequisite here is the dissemination of positive, but truthful information, a reasoned explanation of the position of the state, an honest and open dialogue.

New public diplomacy is engaged in dialogue with civil society using the latest information and communication technologies. The political life itself proves the need to establish these relations, since today, citizens are more active in taking part in them through social networks and other advanced communication technologies, for example, *Twitter* microblogging. Moreover, in order not to be left ‘overboard’ of these processes, diplomats need to master the most advanced technologies in the field of the Internet and communications on time, continually using them in their work. Being in the same information field with different target audiences and communicating with them in an accessible ‘language’ for them, it is possible to achieve a constructive dialogue,

improve the image position of the country and facilitate economic, political, educational, cultural and other decisions in its interests.

Within the framework of the proclaimed policy of activating public diplomacy over the past few years in Russia, with the direct participation of the authorities or with their support, a sufficiently large number of projects aimed at creating a favorable image of Russia abroad were implemented. One of the most famous and effective was the launch in 2005 of the information channel *Russia Today*, which received the unofficial name for the world as the “mouthpiece of the Kremlin” (Альперина 2015).

The satellite channel *Russia Today* broadcasts in Russian, English, Spanish, German and Arabic. Announcing the opening of broadcasting in French in 2014, the channel’s management claimed that the way the world events in foreign countries are covered, as a rule, represent Russia in a biased and unfavorable light, creating a negative attitude towards Russia. In December 2015, speaking in Moscow at an international conference dedicated to the 10th anniversary of *Russia Today*, Margarita Simonyan (2015), editor-in-chief of the channel, said:

We are part of the soft power of the Russian people. We strive to talk about the values of our country to the whole world, and we represent Russia’s opinion on events in the world, we are doing everything so that the world would know our point of view.

According to the available data *Russia Today* is watched by 630 million viewers in more than 100 countries of the world. According to a study conducted by Nielsen in 2008, in the United States among subscribers of the cable TV operator Time Warner Cable the daily audience of *Russia Today* exceeded the audience of *BBC America* by 11%, and *Deutsche Welle* – 10 times (Григорьев 2009). According to the 2014 Nielsen survey, in the seven largest US cities, *Russia Today* is viewed by 2.8 million people per week, which is more than the audience of *Euronews*, *Deutsche Welle*, *NHK*, and *France 24*. Another study of the same company in 2014 shows that *Russia Today* in Arabic is one of the three leaders in the daily audience in 6 countries of the Middle East and North Africa, ahead of *BBC Arabic*, *Sky News Arabia*, *American Al Hurra*, Chinese *CCTV* in Arabic. The daily audience of the channel in Egypt, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, the UAE, and Iraq is 7 million people (Мифы... 2015). In the UK, according to open data from British Bureau of Broadcasting Audience Research, weekly, *Russia Today* is viewed by more than 600 thousand people, which is three times more than the audience of *American Fox News* (Мифы... 2015).

Recognizing the degree of *Russia Today*’s effectiveness to be able to reach the audience it targets, the former US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton (2014) underlined that the United States is in a

state of information war with international channels like *Russia Today*, *Al Jazeera*, and *CCTV* and loses it. She specified that *Russia Today* wins the competition in Europe, which is also of concern to European politicians, including the intention to launch new information services to “challenge Putin’s propaganda”. However, despite these apparent breakthroughs in the process of challenging the world’s major media sources with its own content, *Russia Today* has still a way to go to seriously tackle the influence of global media giants such as *Bloomberg*, *Reuters*, *BBC*, *CNN*, *Euronews*, and others on world public opinion. Even though their position is no longer completely dominant, most countries of the world continue relying on global media, concentrated in several countries of the political West.

Information and communication processes that arise between the state, civil society, and the individual contribute to the formation of a positive image of state power, its institutions, and leaders in the minds of the people. Which as a whole contributes not only to the development of mass political awareness of the population but also to increase the capacity of governing functions of the state. Alternatively, otherwise, it is called ‘digital’ is a way of communicative influence on the international situation and foreign Ditore through new technologies (blogs, specialized websites: *Facebook*, *Twitter*, *YouTube*, sending) that are promoted in foreign countries.

In modern world politics, digital diplomacy is becoming increasingly important due to the growing number of users of the World Wide Web, the transformation of the Internet space into a platform for active political interactions. Thus, new public diplomacy takes place when the state comes into contact with international society through non-state actors by focusing on interaction using information technology.

CONCLUSION

Since the beginning of the 2000s, it became possible to talk about the formation of a global information space, the leading players of which are multi-format and multi-level media. The media inevitably act under the influence of direct states and non-state actors, whose interests are called to represent, through the construction and translation of specific interpretations, visions, and images of the events and phenomena taking place. In addition, they are influenced by various cultural and social characteristics in accordance with their country and ideological affiliation. The activities of various global media together set the dynamics of the functioning of the global information space, forming a single 'organism' that acts following its logic and also influences the activities of individual media. The global information space has a significant impact on the processes of modern world politics.

The growing potential of the global information space has an impact on world public opinion and world political processes, forcing states to develop their information policy tools to influence it. The media plays a significant role in shaping the 'brand' of a country in the world, smoothing or fueling the foreign policy contradictions of the state, and also solving or aggravating specific problems on the international agenda. Using the media to achieve individual foreign policy goals through the creation of a beautiful image of the state is one of the components of its 'soft power'. The crucial role in the modern global information market belongs to large media companies, whose activities, in turn, are primarily regulated by the state through political, economic, legal, and cultural instruments.

However, modern globalization processes, especially noticeable in the field of information, practically exclude the state's full control over its public information space. At the same time, it is evident that the media are not only instruments of states in realizing foreign policy goals but also can act as independent actors when interacting with both traditional and non-traditional participants in world politics. It is evident that the global media and the state in certain situations mutually limit each other, while in others they cooperate, thereby expanding their possibilities for realizing each of their often intersecting interests.

Thus, from the point of view of their impact on world political processes, modern media should be considered as an instrument of states in realizing their interests and as actors of the global and/or regional information spaces that form a unique environment of world political processes and having a particular effect on it in this way. At the same time, the media act under the influence of the system of interpretations and ideas existing in the information space and at the same time,

develop and transform it. In turn, the information space simultaneously reflects – in a distorted way – real-world political events and processes and at the same time participates in their development.

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