Role of the Media in Supporting Public Policies

SalahAldeen Dulayoum, L.Nesseef

Abstract

Public diplomacy is often defined as the basic communication activity and relations with the public carried out by states, that is, as a set of different types of interactions between states and citizens through direct communication. Digital diplomacy implies the use of the Internet, digital media, most often social networks, but also computers and mobile devices, through which the connection is made. Given that modern society is networked and digitally connected on a global level, digital diplomacy has widespread communication with citizens.

Thanks to the participation of the public, the possibility of citizens' participation and influence on the decisions and behavior of foreign statesmen and peoples is achieved through dialogue and negotiations. Digital diplomacy is an extension of public diplomacy, which arises from the development of digital communication technologies and can be seen as "an instrument used by states to understand cultures, attitudes and behavior; establishment and management of international relations; and for influencing the public."

Key words. Public.Diplomacy.Communication.modern.

Introduction

Changes in society that follow the modern world, globalization and technological progress have created new challenges for modern diplomacy, which primarily relate to issues of security in the world, promotion of the need to respect human rights, issues of democratization and sustainable development, as well as economic cooperation between states and joint fight against international crime, terrorism and the like.

If we ask the question whether the media is necessary for a society to be democratic, the answer is self-evident, because if there is no media in society, then there is no recording of events, no public discussion, no informed citizens, no accountability reports that influence the increase of citizens' awareness, there is no education of citizens. [1]

However, from all these positive sides of the existence of the media, i.e. of the objective mass media in society, one of the most important is white-collar reporting. It is important for citizens to be informed about certain issues (about which they would not be able to inform themselves that way), for presenting events to citizens in a meaningful and comprehensible way.[2] The political power of the media is succinctly presented through several items. First, they establish a link between government policy and citizenship. Second, as we have already mentioned, they provide citizens with information, determine the priority of some

---

[1] Prior, M. (2007). Post-Broadcast Democracy: How Media Choice Increases Inequality in Political Involvement and Polarizes Elections, New York: Cambridge University Press.
[2] Pateman, C. (1970). Participation and Democratic Theory. Cambridge University Press.Cambridge.

news over others, have persuasive power through the offer determined by the editorial board, and finally, have a direct influence on political participants.[3]

Media influence

The media summarizes the collected information, forming major (political) issues from it, about which they inform the citizens, and require them to take a position in relation to them.[4] In this way, the population is educated politically.[5] In this way, the population is politically educated. Consequently, the mass media give instructions on how citizens should approach the new discourse. [6] But most importantly, the mass media provide conditions for the exchange of opinions and public debate. Today, the neglected role of the mass media, and one of the most important, is contained in the role of the media to archive what is recorded, and to use it in accordance with how the situation unfolds.[7]

Media cover most of the public political discourse worldwide, and from there they supply information to public opinion. What the media enables citizens, with a minimum of time spent, through informational "shortcuts" to gain knowledge about certain current issues, and then apply them on a personal level, taking a position on them.[8] It is still not entirely certain, and after numerous discussions and studies, whether the media is actually just an information channel, through which information from political life is channeled, or whether their role is much more significant, some even claim that their reach is much greater, that they influence changes in politics.[9]

There is a classification that refers to the roles of the media and public opinion, depending on whether it is the so-called "easier" or "harder" questions. The media strives to have an indirect influence on public policy makers, in the area where public opinion wants to influence their actions, and where public opinion changes under the influence of the media. Also, the media will not have much influence on public policy makers, where public opinion will not seek to influence public policy makers, although the media may have a direct influence on them.

The media should have less influence on areas involving lighter issues, where public opinion is not inclined to change its opinion under the influence of the media, because these are fundamental opinions. The media should have more influence in areas that include difficult issues, where the doors are mostly closed, because policy is created without the possibility of external influences, on political decision makers.

"Easier" issues would be those that are important to public policy makers, within public opinion, but the media cannot have much influence on them. On the contrary, "harder" issues are those that are dealt with by a very small circle within public opinion, and where the media can, perhaps, have an influence on public policy makers, but only in some specific cases, and very indirectly. We also have the so-called "framed" public issues, which include "lighter" ones with a certain background, which the media can influence to a certain extent. Also, there are issues that are not public, and neither public opinion nor the media have an influence on them.

[3] Siegel, A. (1996). Politics and the media in Canada (2nd ed.). Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson.
[4] Soroka, S. N. (2002). Agenda-setting dynamics in Canada. Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada: University of British Columbia Press.
[5] Carpini, M. (2000). In Search of the Information Citizen: What Americans Know About Politics and Why It Matters. New Haven, CT: Yale Univetsity Press.
[6] Prior, M. (2007). Post-Broadcast Democracy: How Media Choice Increases Inequality in Political Involvement and Polarizes Elections, New York: Cambridge University Press.
[7] Klapper, J. T. (1960). The Effects of Mass Communication. Glencoe, IL: Free Press.
[8] Andrew, B. C. (2007). "Media-Generated Shortcuts: Do Newspaper Headlines Present Another Roadblock for Low Information Rationality?". Harvard International Journal of Press and Politics 12:24–442.
[9] Kingdon, J. (1984). Agendas, alternatives, and public policies. Boston: Little, Brown and Company.

Research often deals with the topic of whether public opinion can influence the agenda of public policy makers and whether public opinion can really influence their decision-making. Media research began in the twenties of the last century, and already in the thirties it was concluded that the media are so attractive and influential that citizens have no choice but to surrender to that influence.[10] That, already from the forties, that influence would be on the decline, until the sixties of the last century. [11]

From the 1960s to the 1970s, nothing big or expected happened, which would bring back the glory of the 1920s or 1930s, but dubious research on the influence of the media on public opinion, known as the Chapel Hill Project, began. , which engaged in cognitive and indirect repercussions, now mass media, on public opinion.[12] One of the findings at the time, regarding the press, for example, they came to the conclusion that the press has no power to influence how public opinion thinks, but it can influence what public opinion will think about.[13]

The goal of all the first mass media research at that time was to find out what public opinion is inclined to, and immediately after that, what is the influence of the mass media on the creators of public policies. Empirical research on both of these goals by Kingdon followed. According to him, the influence of public opinion on the political programs of public policy makers is great, while he concluded that the influence of the mass media on public policy makers is negligible. [14]

It is crucial to give an answer to how and where that influence is achieved, because then it is possible to achieve influence on the making of political decisions by them. Also, we should not ignore the importance of the influence of the media itself on changing the opinion of public opinion. That is why we will single out several possible scenarios.

The first would be where public opinion influences the political decision-making of public policy makers, but it is not influenced by the mass media.

Another would be, where only the mass media, but not public opinion, influences the making of political decisions of public policy makers.

The third option would be where the mass media, as well as public opinion, influence the making of political decisions by public policy makers.

While the fourth would be, where the political decision-making of public policy makers is not influenced by either. [15]

Considering the importance it has, public opinion has been dealt with and is being dealt with by numerous researches of media and public policies, because public opinion is the spreading of the public's favor in relation to politically relevant issues in society. If there is not this breadth of coverage within society, then it is not about public opinion. The aforementioned Chapel Hill research also dealt with public opinion. [16]

Media and public politics

Modern research on the influence of the mass media on the political agenda began during the thirties of the 20th century, due to Hitler's and Mussolini's effective use of the media in spreading political propaganda. One of the first large-scale studies on

---

[10] Perse, E. M. (2001). Media Effects and Society. Mahwah, NJ Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

[11] Rogers, E. M. (1997). A history of communication study: A biographical approach. New York: The Free Press.

[12] Rogers, E. M. (1997). A history of communication study: A biographical approach. New York: The Free Press.

[13] Soroka, S. N. (2002). Issue Attributes and Agenda setting by Media, the Public, and Policymakers in Canada. International Journal of Public Opinion Research.

[14] Zaller, J., Dennis C. (1996). Government's Little Helper: U.S. Press Coverage of Foreign Policy Crises, 19451991. Political Communication.

[15] Iyengar, S. (2001). The Method is the Message: The Current State of Political Communication Research. *Political Communication*.

[16] Soroka, S. N. (2002). Issue Attributes and Agenda setting by Media, the Public, and Policymakers in Canada. InternatiMedia ional Journal of Public Opinion Research.

the mentioned topic was conducted by , which resulted in the conclusion that the mass media have relatively little influence on potential voters. Furthermore, other studies of the time found that propaganda content (in the form of films) failed in its task of indoctrinating a wider audience.[17] A few decades ago, the very role of the mass media in political life changed fundamentally, that is. transformed from the role of a passive transmitter of messages to an active political actor working in its own interest. [18]

Based on the academic literature, we can freely state that the media today actively participate in the public political discourse, shaping the agenda of the political discourse itself, and contributing their preferences (favour) and political attitudes. [19] Some authors are of the opinion that the upward "power" of the media has led to the so-called new types of democracy, i.e. media democracy, in which the media conditionally takes over the political system, while traditional political actors (politicians) conditionally "lose control" over the political process.[20]

From a historical point of view, if we look at the situation regarding this topic in the US territory, we come to the conclusion that policy makers listen to public opinion to a significant extent. Legislators very often "incorporate" factors into decisions related to public policy, which are directly related to what the media discourse emphasized. Namely, the media themselves are very often perceived as the so-called those who determine the political program because they are the ones who select the topics (issues) worth announcing and therefore "raise" the exposure of certain topics in the public discourse.[21]

The framing of the mentioned topics in the media affects the choice of issues that are in the public eye, as well as the way citizens perceive them. However, the relations between the media and political decisions are almost always complementary, because the media pay attention to the interests and, therefore, to the demands of their "consumers", [22] and they very often push topics of a sensationalist character that intrigue the public. On the other hand, a large number of academics advocate the thesis of a strong connection between the public (political) agenda and the media agenda. Most of the academic literature on the topic of political influence of the mass media is essentially focused on the issue of media effects on citizens' attitudes. In other words, whether and to what extent the media themselves influence the process of public policies. The mentioned aspect of the media in democratic politics was resolved only recently.[23]

Academic literature based on case studies resulted in a rather mixed picture, ranging from the media having a significant influence on the outcome of political events, to the fact that certain decisions were made without media coverage, and therefore without their influence.[24] Furthermore, studies have established that the mass media themselves significantly influence the political agenda in several ways:

a) they influence elections of a political nature through the channeling of messages from the campaign, namely messages related to the future of citizens-the electorate,[25]

b) they inform the voters themselves about the political past of political actors and in this way inform them about the (im)possibility of fulfilling political promises taught by past experiences,[26]

[17] Hovland, C.I., Lumsdaine, A.A., Sheffield, F.D. (1949). Experiments on mass communication. Studies in Social Psychology in World War II, Vol. III Princeton. NJ: Princeton University Press.
[18] Iyengar, S., Simon, A. (1997). News coverage of the Gulf Crisis and Public Opinion. A study of Agenda Setting, Priming and Framing, in: Iyengar S., Reeves, R., Do the Media Govern? Politicians, Voters and Reporters in America. Thousand Oaks.
[19] Bennett, W.L., Entman, R.M. (eds.) (2001): Mediated Politics. Communication in the Future of Democracy, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
[20] Meyer, T. (with Hinchman L.) (2002). Media Democracy: How the Media Colonise Politics. Cambridge: Polity.
[21] McCombs, M. (2004). Setting the Agenda: The Mass Media and Public Opinion. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing Inc.
[22] McCombs, M. (2004). Setting the Agenda: The Mass Media and Public Opinion. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing Inc.
[23] Voltmer, K. (2013). The Media in Transitional Democracies. Cambridge: Polity.
[24] Spitzer, R.J. (ed.) (1993): Media and Public Policy, Westport: Praeger.
[25] Stromberg, D. (1999). The Leindbeck-Weibull model adapted to US federal structure. Stockholm University Press.
[26]Ibid

c) mass media can also influence processes of a political nature by influencing the issues themselves (prioritizing them), which will be in focus within a political system. [27]

However, regardless of the fact to what extent the media influence citizens or politicians, one thing is certain, and that is that politicians rely more and more on the media to help them assess the priorities that citizens feel. [28]

Politicians often try to arrange the media agenda so that the mentioned agenda is in support of their political agenda. Available research shows that such attitudes are successful only in the so-called initial stages of presidential elections, but it is certainly more common for the media agenda itself to shape the political agenda. [29]

Research that focuses on the relationship between community and public policy and the role of the media in said relationship examines a larger number of parameters over longer time intervals. Most of the aforementioned research uses the so-called statistical techniques in order to determine certain regularities. For example, analyzes of presidential elections (including campaigns) on the territory of the USA (in 1992 and 2000) show that media agendas as well as public agendas had a significant impact on shaping the agendas of presidential candidates.[30]

The academic community came to almost identical results by analyzing the evening broadcasts and their content in the period from 1984 to 1994 in connection with foreign policy on the territory of the USA, and the conclusion was that media coverage in the field of foreign policy influenced the presidential agendas regarding with foreign policy.[31] Furthermore, Gosenbach, conducting analyzes of a similar type as mentioned, found that public opinion regarding the drug problem significantly influenced media coverage, which, as a reversible process, influenced the shaping of presidential agendas on the topic of drug control in the period from 1984 to 1991. .year.

Tan and Weaver, studied the correlation between public opinion, the media itself and political agendas based on various political topics. The results showed that all three mentioned components are causally connected. However, the media and political agendas are most closely related. Furthermore, academic literature proves that politicians often listen to the feelings of voters, and that the media themselves are responsible for the "shaping" of said feelings. In accordance with the above, the academic literature points to an increasingly strong connection between the media and the political agenda, [32] with an emphasis on the fact that politicians first "consult" the media in order to "scan" the situation among the voters.[33]

Namely, the mass media as an instrument for creating public policy comes from the fact that the media themselves "shape" public opinion, and thus have a crucial influence on politicians and thus encourage them to adequately respond to the aforementioned challenge. In the USA, a study was conducted by the tandem of Page and Shapiro, which confirmed that the mass media play an important role in shaping citizens' issues, thereby significantly influencing the making of political decisions in the USA. Bretschneider, in Germany, came to an almost identical finding. Politicians should almost always take citizens' sentiment into consideration and incorporate it into their political decisions.

[27] Besley, T., Burgess, R. (2000). "Land Reform, Poverty Reduction, And Growth: Evidence From India". The Quarterly Journal of Economics. MIT Press.

[28] Jones, B.D., F.R. Baumgartner. (2005). The Politics of Attention: How Government Prioritizes Problems. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

[29] McCombs, M. (2004). Setting the Agenda: The Mass Media and Public Opinion. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing Inc

[30] McCombs, M. (2004). Setting the Agenda: The Mass Media and Public Opinion. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing Inc

[31] Edwards, G. C. and B. D. Wood. (1999). Who Influences Whom? The President, Congress, and the Media. *The American Political Science Review.* Vol. 93, No. 2.

[32] Jacobs L., Shapiro R., (2000). Politicians don't pander: Political manipulation and the loss of democratic responsiveness. Chicago. University of Chicago Press.

[33] Jones, B.D., F.R. Baumgartner. (2005). The Politics of Attention: How Government Prioritizes Problems. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

The academic community has been arguing for decades about the extent to which politicians do this. [34] The prevailing view is that the political agenda largely reflects the so-called public agenda. In the psychological sense, the media are the instruments through which policies are shaped in the modern social community. [35] Politicians themselves, as makers and creators of political decisions in a society, are ultimately consumers of the media themselves and as such can be affected by the way the media reports on current topics.

Based on the topic of gun control in the US, [36] came to the conclusion that the political moves made by the holders of political power were precisely shaped by the media. Herbst went a step further in his research, he is of the opinion that politicians perceive media coverage as a kind of shortcut to public opinion, and therefore consider it more important than public opinion research itself.

Baumgartner and Jones, [37] using a very rich data base on the relationship between the media and the political agenda in the field of public policy, came up with convincing evidence that the media really influence the process of creating a political agenda. According to what was stated, and in agreement with the mentioned authors, the holders of political power are directed towards immediate and to a good extent risky solutions as such, which would certainly have far less chance of implementation in environments that are less "saturated" with the media.

Research conducted in the field of international politics fully supports the observations presented. Namely, since the beginning of the Gulf War (in 1991), academic students in the field of international relations have seen the upcoming changes in the role of the media when it comes to international relations, more precisely international conflicts. More precisely, according to the hypothesis of the so-called CNN effect, the more proactive role of the media when it comes to foreign policy is also managed by the new communication instruments (online mass media) of the media industry.[38]

Conclusion

Diplomacy is a field of foreign policy whose mission is aimed at achieving the foreign policy goals of a country. Traditional diplomacy implies intergovernmental interactions, of bilateral or multilateral type. Traditional diplomacy is characterized by one-way communication, which involves only announcements, that is, the transfer of information, and is often labeled as an elitist and secret activity of diplomats. Changes in society, conditioned by the revolution in information, redirect one-way communication to the field of dialogue.

This new way of communication ensures the connection of diplomats with citizens, which represents the basis on which diplomacy is transformed and adapted to the needs of modern times. Public diplomacy uses direct information of the foreign public as a tool. Digital diplomacy, as an upgrade of public diplomacy, appears thanks to the development of new information and communication technologies. Very quickly it becomes indispensable for the immediate promotion of diplomatic goals and the countries from which diplomats come, including not only information about diplomatic activities, but also the promotion of the culture and traditions of those countries.

---

[34] Manza, J., Cook, F. L. (2002). The Impact of Public Opinion on Public Policy. The State of the Debate. In J. Manza, F. L. Cook & B. Page (Eds.), Navigating Public Opinion. Polls, Policy, and the Future of American Democracy. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press.

[35] 35 McCombs, M. (2004). Setting the Agenda: The Mass Media and Public Opinion. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing Inc.

[36] Schnell, F., Terkildsen, N., Callaghan, K. (2000). Symbolism and social movements: How U.S. political debates are shaped and citizens' attitudes influenced by symbolic communiques. In C. DeLandtsheer & O. Feldman (Eds.), Beyond public speech and symbols: Explorations in the rhetoric of politicians and the media. Westport, CT: Praeger.

[37] Schnell, F., Terkildsen, N., Callaghan, K. (2000). Symbolism and social movements: How U.S. political debates are shaped and citizens' attitudes influenced by symbolic communiques. In C. DeLandtsheer & O. Feldman (Eds.), Beyond public speech and symbols: Explorations in the rhetoric of politicians and the media. Westport, CT: Praeger.

[38] Robinson, P. (2002). The CNN Effect. London: Routledge.

Refferences:

- Andrew, B. C. (2007). "Media-Generated Shortcuts: Do Newspaper Headlines Present Another Roadblock for Low Information Rationality?". Harvard International Journal of Press and Politics 12:24–442.

- Bennett, W.L., Entman, R.M. (eds.) (2001): Mediated Politics. Communication in the Future of Democracy, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Besley, T., Burgess, R. (2000). "Land Reform, Poverty Reduction, And Growth: Evidence From India". The Quarterly Journal of Economics. MIT Press.

- Carpini, M. (2000). In Search of the Information Citizen: What Americans Know About Politics and Why It Matters. New Haven, CT: Yale Univetsity Press.

- Edwards, G. C. and B. D. Wood. (1999). Who Influences Whom? The President, Congress, and the Media. *The American Political Science Review*. Vol. 93, No. 2.

- Hovland, C.I., Lumsdaine, A.A., Sheffield, F.D. (1949). Experiments on mass communication. Studies in Social Psychology in World War II, Vol. III Princeton. NJ: Princeton University Press.

- Iyengar, S. (2001). The Method is the Message: The Current State of Political Communication Research. *Political Communication*.

- Jacobs L., Shapiro R., (2000). Politicians don't pander: Political manipulation and the loss of democratic responsiveness. Chicago. University of Chicago Press.

- Jones, B.D., F.R. Baumgartner. (2005). The Politics of Attention: How Government Prioritizes Problems. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

- Jones, B.D., F.R. Baumgartner. (2005). The Politics of Attention: How Government Prioritizes Problems. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

- Kingdon, J. (1984). Agendas, alternatives, and public policies. Boston: Little, Brown and Company.

- Klapper, J. T. (1960). The Effects of Mass Communication. Glencoe, IL: Free Press.

- Manza, J., Cook, F. L. (2002). The Impact of Public Opinion on Public Policy. The State of the Debate. In J. Manza, F. L. Cook & B. Page (Eds.), Navigating Public Opinion. Polls, Policy, and the Future of American Democracy. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press.

- McCombs, M. (2004). Setting the Agenda: The Mass Media and Public Opinion. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing Inc.

- Meyer, T. (with Hinchman L.) (2002). Media Democracy: How the Media Colonise Politics. Cambridge: Polity.

- Pateman, C. (1970). Participation and Democratic Theory. Cambridge University Press.Cambridge.

- Perse, E. M. (2001). Media Effects and Society. Mahwah, NJ Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

- Prior, M. (2007). Post-Broadcast Democracy: How Media Choice Increases Inequality in Political Involvement and Polarizes Elections, New York: Cambridge University Press.

- Robinson, P. (2002). The CNN Effect. London: Routledge.

- Rogers, E. M. (1997). A history of communication study: A biographical approach. New York: The Free Press.

- Schnell, F., Terkildsen, N., Callaghan, K. (2000). Symbolism and social movements: How U.S. political debates are shaped and citizens' attitudes influenced by symbolic communiques. In C. DeLandtsheer & O. Feldman (Eds.), Beyond public speech and symbols: Explorations in the rhetoric of politicians and the media. Westport, CT: Praeger.

- Siegel, A. (1996). Politics and the media in Canada (2nd ed.). Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson.

- Soroka, S. N. (2002). Agenda-setting dynamics in Canada. Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada: University of British Columbia Press.

- Spitzer, R.J. (ed.) (1993): Media and Public Policy, Westport: Praeger.

- Stromberg, D. (1999). The Leindbeck-Weibull model adapted to US federal structure. Stockholm University Press.

- Voltmer, K. (2013). The Media in Transitional Democracies. Cambridge: Polity.

- Zaller, J., Dennis C. (1996). Government's Little Helper: U.S. Press Coverage of Foreign Policy Crises, 19451991. Political Communication.