

CHAPTER III

CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION IN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBALIZATION AND ITS IMPACT ON SHAPING THE STATE'S IMAGE

3.1. European multiculturalism policy and successful cross-cultural communication practices to enhance Ukraine's international authority

Olena Lauta

PhD, Associate Professor

National University of Life and Environmental Sciences of Ukraine

03041, 15, Heroyiv Oborony Str., Kyiv, Ukraine

URL: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6118-0258>

Abstract

The modern European policy of multiculturalism plays an important role in shaping a harmonious intercultural environment and promotes international integration of countries. For Ukraine, which seeks to strengthen its international authority and deepen cooperation with European partners, the study of successful practices of cross-cultural communication is extremely relevant. The purpose of the study is to analyze the European policy of multiculturalism, identify the most effective models of cross-cultural communication and justify their feasibility for implementation in Ukraine to improve its international image. The research methodology is based on an interdisciplinary approach and includes comparative analysis, synthesis of scientific sources, content analysis and expert evaluation methods. The main focus is on studying the experience of EU countries in implementing multiculturalism policy, as well as identifying factors that contribute to effective cross-cultural interaction. The results of the study show that successful practices of cross-cultural communication, such as interethnic dialogue, education on intercultural tolerance, and the development of inclusive public initiatives, contribute significantly to the international authority of the state. The proposed recommendations for adapting these practices in the Ukrainian context can contribute to a more effective positioning of Ukraine in the international arena. The practical value of the study lies in the possibility of applying the findings to the development of state programs for intercultural interaction and improvement of Ukraine's diplomatic communication mechanisms. The conclusions emphasize the importance of implementing European approaches to multiculturalism in Ukraine and identify prospects for further research, in particular in the field of digital cross-cultural communication and integration of migrants into the socio-cultural environment of Ukraine.

Keywords: multiculturalism, cross-cultural communication, European integration, international image of Ukraine, intercultural interaction, tolerance, social inclusion.

Introduction

In today's era of rapid globalization, mass migration processes and digital transformation of society, the policy of multiculturalism is emerging as one of the key tools for ensuring stability, social dialogue and sustainable development of democratic

societies. In particular, for the European Union countries, the issue of effective integration of ethno-cultural diversity is becoming not only a domestic political need, but also an international image strategy that determines the level of involvement of states in shaping the values of an open, tolerant and inclusive world.

The policy of multiculturalism in Europe has undergone significant transformations in recent decades. A noticeable conflict of values and growing cultural divisions in Europe emphasize the importance of supranational identities and geopolitical rivalries.

However, the European policy of multiculturalism, despite criticism in some countries, continues to transform towards flexible models of intercultural integration. Moving away from the idealized concept of a “melting pot” to more realistic and multicomponent models of ‘interculturalism’ and “inclusive citizenship”, European governments are developing new institutional mechanisms to ensure interethnic interaction, minority participation in public space, preservation of linguistic and cultural identity, and development of intercultural competence at all levels of education and socialization.

These processes are particularly relevant in the context of the challenges of recent years: the war in Ukraine, the crises in the Middle East, the increasing number of refugees and internally displaced persons, new waves of xenophobia and populism in some countries. The media discourse in covering military conflicts is of great importance here. In particular, in the study by S. Geiko. (2023)¹ research examines how the media shape public perception of the war, construct narratives of “friend” and “foe”, and influence the emotional and political response of the audience. Particular attention is paid to the analysis of language strategies, manipulative techniques and ideological attitudes that are manifested in the Ukrainian media space during the coverage of the russian-Ukrainian war.

In this context, it is the successful practices of cross-cultural communication in different regions of the world – from Canada to the Netherlands, from the Scandinavian countries to Australia – that serve as models of sustainable social policy based on the dialogue of cultures, equal representation of different communities, and integration through education, art, media, and digital platforms.

Scientific reflection on these processes demonstrates the importance of a holistic vision of multiculturalism not only as a state policy, but also as a value orientation of modern humanism, which recognizes diversity not as a threat but as a resource for social development. Therefore, it is important to study those models and practices that demonstrate effectiveness in the context of a crisis of trust, cultural polarism, and geopolitical conflicts.

For Ukraine, which seeks to integrate into the European community and strengthen its international authority, studying the European experience of multi-culturalism and applying effective practices of cross-cultural communication is extremely relevant.

¹ Geiko S., Heiko T., Laut O., Prytyka O. (2023). The role of media discourse in coverage of military conflicts. *Humanities Studios: Pedagogy, Psychology, Philosophy*, 11 (4), 190–195. URL: [https://doi.org/10.31548/hspedagog14\(4\).2023.190–195](https://doi.org/10.31548/hspedagog14(4).2023.190–195)

Ukraine is characterized by significant ethno-cultural diversity, which necessitates the development of an effective multiculturalism policy.

In the context of European integration processes and globalization, the issues of cross-cultural communication are of particular importance for enhancing the international authority of the state. Studying the European experience and adapting successful practices will help strengthen Ukraine's position in the international arena and develop internal social harmony.

Since Ukraine is becoming an active participant in international dialogue, in particular, in the framework of cooperation with the EU, NATO, the Council of Europe and UNESCO, it is crucial to implement effective practices of cultural diplomacy based on the principles of multiculturalism, intercultural sensitivity and openness to dialogue. The relevance of this study also lies in the fact that in the postwar period, the humanitarian dimension will play a key role in shaping Ukraine's new international image as a modern, inclusive, tolerant state with deep European cultural roots.

A review of scientific works in recent years shows a growing interest in the topic of multiculturalism and cross-cultural communication. In the context of cross-cultural communication, A. Ivashchuk's study (2024)² emphasizes the role of cross-cultural communication in shaping Ukraine's cultural image in the international information environment, emphasizing the importance of cultural diplomacy and overcoming stereotypes. The researcher emphasizes the place and role of cultural diplomacy in the process of consolidating Ukraine's image in the international arena. She emphasizes the importance of Ukrainian culture in the international information environment. cultural image belongs to the international information environment, and Ukraine is characterized by the ability to withstand various external pressures.

She proposes effective mechanisms for shaping a positive cultural image of Ukraine at the international level, including long-term cultural diplomacy aimed at deepening cooperation with other nations, global dissemination of accurate narratives about Ukraine, and countering stereotypes or misinformation. The author emphasizes that it is important to differentiate Ukrainian culture from external influences, such as the Soviet-era discourse and the modern Russian narrative, as the dissemination of facts about Ukraine will help create the country's cultural image in the international information environment.

O. Kakhovska (2024)³ analyzes innovative approaches to cross-cultural communication in the context of the development of the digital economy, emphasizing the importance of digital technologies in transforming traditional methods of communication. In particular, it is noted that cross-cultural communication is an important aspect of globalization, which is growing in the context of digitalization

² Ivashchuk A. (2024). Cross-cultural communications in shaping the cultural image of Ukraine in the international information environment. URL: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/388730628>

³ Kakhovska O. (2024). Innovative approaches to cross-cultural communications in the context of the development of the digital economy. *The Paradigm of Innovative Development in the Conditions of Permanent Crisis* : Collective monograph. URL: <https://doi.org/10.54929/monograph-12-2024-02-01>

of economic and social processes. In the modern world, the development of digital technologies transforms traditional methods of communication, creating new opportunities and challenges for intercultural interaction. Given the diversity of cultural contexts and the growth of global connections, innovative approaches to cross-cultural communication have become essential for effective interaction in international business, as well as for overcoming cultural barriers in everyday communications.

In the formation of intercultural dialogue, the interaction of cultures and the phenomenon of tradition are of great importance. In particular, S. Heiko (2022)¹ examines the interaction of cultures through the prism of the phenomenon of tradition, paying attention to the Ukrainian context. The author analyzes that tradition functions as a mechanism for preserving cultural identity and at the same time serves as a basis for intercultural dialogue. On the example of Ukraine, the dynamics of interaction between the national and the global are examined, in particular, the transformation of traditions in the processes of cultural exchange, modernization, and European integration.

A. Dzhurylo (2024)² examines contemporary intercultural communication in a globalized world, focusing on the European Union's experience for Ukraine and emphasizing the importance of intercultural understanding and cultural diversity.

In today's globalized world, culture is increasingly seen as a tool for shaping a country's national image, soft power, and strategic narrative in the international arena. In the system of international and intercultural interaction, the concept of national branding through culture involves the systematic representation and promotion of the country's unique cultural elements that form its positive image in the eyes of an external audience. Mytsyk L. (2021)³ notes that cultural diplomacy for Ukraine is an important element of strategic activity, a "soft power" that makes it much easier to position itself in the world and find support among the public. It is a tool for realizing national interests.

In the field of digital communication, E. Haddad (2024)⁴ assesses the impact of social media, big data, and smart technologies on intercultural communication. The researcher emphasizes the importance of using social media, big data, and smart technologies for intercultural communication and effective leadership.

¹ Laut O. D., Geiko S. M. (2022). Interaction of cultures and phenomenon of tradition. *Humanities Studios: Pedagogy, Psychology, Philosophy*, 10 (3), 176–184. URL: <https://humstudios.com.ua/uk/journals/tom-13-3-2022/vzayemodiya-kultur-i-fenomen-traditsiyi>

² Dzhurylo A. (2024). Modern intercultural communication in a globalized world: the experience of the European Union for Ukraine. *Problems of the effectiveness of professional speech communication in conditions of information aggression* : materials of the 1st All-Ukrainian scientific-practical conference. Kyiv. P. 228–232. URL: <https://elibrary.kubg.edu.ua/id/eprint/50551>

³ Mytsyk L. (2022). Cultural diplomacy as a tool for international positioning of the state. *Literature and Culture of Polissya*, 105 (15i), 70–84. DOI: 10.31654/2520-6966-2021-15i-105-70-84. URL: <http://lib.ndu.edu.ua/dspace/bitstream/123456789/2424/1/8.pdf>

⁴ Haddad E. (2024). Leveraging social media, big data, and smart technologies for intercultural communication and effective leadership. *International Journal of Data and Network Science*, 8, 857–870. URL: http://m.growingscience.com/ijds/Vol8/ijdns_2023_244.pdf

C. S. Patro (2022)⁵ analyzes cross-cultural communication in the digital age, emphasizing the importance of digital tools to overcome cultural barriers. Cultural awareness shapes the behavior of business organizations in intercultural international markets. Therefore, understanding cultural differences is one of the important skills that organizations must develop to have a competitive advantage in international business. The researcher assesses the impact of globalization on intercultural communication, overcoming barriers to cultural adaptation, and key areas that affect the implementation of digital communication.

The relevance of this study is stipulated by the need to adapt the European experience of multiculturalism and implement effective practices of cross-cultural communication to enhance Ukraine's international prestige. This section of the monograph is devoted to the analysis of the current state of multiculturalism policy in the European Union, as well as to the study of effective examples of cross-cultural communication at the global level. A comprehensive study of multiculturalism policy in the European Union and the identification of effective practices of cross-cultural communication will facilitate adaptation to the Ukrainian context and determine the strategic potential of these practices in strengthening Ukraine's image and international authority.

The main purpose of the study is to identify conceptual changes in approaches to multiculturalism in Europe, analyze examples of successful implementation of cross-cultural communication and outline their potential as an element of Ukraine's foreign communication policy in the context of European integration. Particular attention is paid to interdisciplinary approaches that allow integrating philosophical, sociological, political and cultural visions in forming a holistic strategy for adapting and implementing relevant practices in the context of Ukrainian reality.

The object of the study is the policy of multiculturalism in European countries in the context of cross-cultural communication.

The subject of the study is the mechanisms for implementing successful practices of cross-cultural communication and their potential for Ukraine's image policy.

Objectives of the study: to analyze modern theoretical and methodological approaches to understanding the policy of multiculturalism in the European Union, to outline the leading directions of development of cross-cultural communication as a component of international cultural dialogue and a tool for creating a positive image of the state. To identify effective practices of intercultural interaction used in European countries for the integration of national minorities and migrants. To analyze the existing challenges and risks associated with the implementation of multicultural policy in the context of cultural identity and social cohesion. To systematize examples of successful implementation of cross-cultural strategies that have a positive impact on the international reputation of countries. To assess the potential for adapting

⁵ Patro S. Ch. (2022). Cross-Cultural Communication in the Digital Business Environment. In *Handbook of Research on Building Greener Economics and Adopting Digital Tools in the Era of Climate Change*. DOI: 10.4018/978-1-6684-4610-2.ch006. URL: <https://www.igi-global.com/chapter/cross-cultural-communication-in-the-digital-business-environment/309800>

European experience in the Ukrainian context, taking into account domestic socio-cultural specifics and foreign policy priorities.

Scientific novelty of the study: for the first time, the European experience of implementing multiculturalism is combined with the Ukrainian context of cross-cultural communication as a component of international positioning within the framework of a comprehensive analysis. An integrative approach is proposed that takes into account both political, socio-cultural and communicative factors in the formation of an effective model of cultural diplomacy. The conceptual and categorical apparatus of the study of cross-cultural communication within the framework of multicultural policy is clarified, taking into account current changes in the international environment. Specific mechanisms for the implementation of European practices to enhance Ukraine's international prestige, in particular in the context of information policy, cultural image and interethnic interaction, are identified. It is argued that cross-cultural communication should become a strategic tool in the policy of international integration of Ukraine and strengthening its position as an open democratic state.

Materials and Methods

The methodological basis of this study is based on an interdisciplinary approach that combines theoretical and empirical methods of analysis typical of social philosophy, political science, cultural studies, and communication studies.

The study focuses on the relationship between the state policy of multiculturalism, cross-cultural communication practices and their impact on Ukraine's image policy in the international arena. The study is based on the principles of constructivism and the cognitive paradigm of social sciences, which involve understanding culture as a social construct and communication as a space for interaction where meanings, identities, and political perceptions are formed.

The mechanisms for implementing successful European practices of cross-cultural communication and multiculturalism policy and their potential for Ukraine's image policy are important. Only those political practices that meet the following criteria were included:

- effectiveness: availability of documented positive social results;
- sustainability: the practice should be implemented for at least three years;
- adaptability: the ability to adapt to the Ukrainian cultural and political context;
- institutional support: availability of state or interstate funding, strategic support.

The comparative-analytical method was used to study multiculturalism policies in the EU countries and to compare their effectiveness, identify common and distinctive features. The study of national strategies, programs and regulations in the field of culture and communication was based on content analysis. The systemic-structural approach allowed us to study how individual elements of multicultural policy (education, media, public administration) function in a single communication system. Philosophical analysis was used to understand the value foundations of multiculturalism in the context of the humanistic traditions of European political philosophy. SWOT analysis was used to assess the opportunities and risks

of implementing international practices in the Ukrainian context. The method of systematic approach helped to generalize information and identify structural links between elements of the policy of multiculturalism and the international authority of the state.

Since the study was carried out as part of an interdisciplinary analysis that combines elements of political philosophy, cultural studies, social communication, and international relations, its structure is based on a comparative analysis of multiculturalism policies in European countries with the subsequent extrapolation of the most effective practices to the Ukrainian context. The logic of the study is based on the principle of “from the general to the specific”, which allows us to systematize international experience and test its relevance to Ukrainian reality.

The selection of countries, policies, and cases for analysis was based on the following criteria:

- institutional implementation of multicultural policy: the existence of a formalized strategy of multiculturalism or intercultural dialogue;
- effectiveness: confirmed positive impact of the chosen practice on social integration, international reputation, and peaceful coexistence of cultures;
- openness to adaptation: the potential for transferring certain practices to the Ukrainian socio-cultural context;
- availability of official analytics: the availability of statistics, reports, and analytical studies that allow to assess the success of the A total of 5 countries were selected for a detailed case study: Germany, France, Sweden, the Netherlands, and Lithuania (as an example of a country with similar post-Soviet preconditions but a successful cultural diplomacy strategy).

The theoretical basis of the study was formed by works on the philosophy of communication, intercultural pedagogy, social capital theory, and cultural diplomacy.

Results and Discussion

The analysis of multicultural policies and practices of cross-cultural communication in leading European countries can be viewed through several key aspects, such as approaches to the integration of immigrants, the interaction of cultures and national identities, and mechanisms of mutual understanding between different ethnic and cultural groups.

There are several approaches to multicultural policy in Europe, each of which differs depending on historical, political and social factors. The main models include:

The British model (multiculturalism): The UK has recognized the importance of preserving diverse cultural identities while integrating them into the national social fabric. This includes educational programs, social integration measures, and legal support for minority rights.

The French model (republicanism): France has traditionally rejected multiculturalism in favor of the concept of “republican values” that require all citizens to accept a single national identity. The country has certain restrictions on the cultural autonomy of minorities, including religious symbols in public places.

German model (integration): Germany once applied the principle of “open doors” for immigrants, but today it mainly focuses on integration through language courses, education and employment programs. Recent years have seen policy changes in support of cultural integration.

The Swedish model (global citizenship): Sweden supports a policy of active integration, in particular through state support for immigrants who can preserve their culture while adapting to Swedish social norms.

A comparative analysis of multiculturalism policies of leading European countries has identified five key components of a successful cross-cultural communication strategy that directly affect the international image of the state:

Institutional support for multicultural initiatives (national agencies, councils, ombudsmen for integration).

1. Inclusive education system that takes into account cultural diversity (language programs, intercultural pedagogy).

2. Cultural diplomacy and branding (state cultural institutions abroad, festivals, exchanges).

3. Digital communication platforms aimed at supporting dialogue between cultures in the Internet space.

4. Municipal intercultural strategies that adapt national policies to local realities (as in Barcelona, Toronto, or Amsterdam).

The application of the SWOT analysis methodology allowed us to identify potential strengths and threats to the implementation of similar practices in Ukraine. The strengths include a high level of cultural capital, the activity of civil society, and the existence of a strategic foreign policy course for European integration. Threats include the fragmentation of communication initiatives, poor coordination between institutions, and insufficient staff training in the field of cultural diplomacy.

The empirical study analyzed multicultural policies and practices of cross-cultural communication in 10 European countries representing different models of integration of ethno-cultural communities. The main focus was on the following indicators:

- the existence of an official multiculturalism strategy;
- institutional support for minority integration;
- development of intercultural education;
- inclusiveness of media policies;
- public support for multicultural initiatives.

Thus, Sweden demonstrates a continuous growth of initiatives, which is the result of active promotion of intercultural dialogue, state support and inter-institutional cooperation.

Germany is stepping up its efforts to promote the cultural integration of migrants, in particular through educational and language programs, which contributes to the annual growth of projects.

The Netherlands is developing digital and long-distance partnership formats in the field of cross-cultural education, in particular within the framework of Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps.

Table 1. Comparative analysis of multicultural policy in the EU (2024)

Country	Official multi-culturalism strategy	Institutional support	Intercultural education	Public support*	Model
Sweden	Yes	High	High	78 %	Intercultural
Netherlands	Yes	High	High	73 %	Intercultural
Germany	Partially	Medium	High	62 %	Integrative
France	No	Low	Medium	41 %	Republican
Belgium	Yes	High	High	69 %	Intercultural
Italy	No	Medium	Low	45 %	Hybrid
Spain	Partially	Medium	Medium	58 %	Hybrid
Austria	No	Medium	Medium	54 %	Assimilation model
Denmark	Yes	High	High	61 %	Intercultural
Finland	Partially	Medium	High	66 %	Intercultural

* Public support data obtained from the European Social Survey (ESS 2023)¹.

Source: European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (2023)²

*Council of Europe Intercultural Cities Index (2024)*³

Table 2. Dynamics of cross-cultural initiatives in European countries (2019–2024)

Year	Sweden	Germany	France	Netherlands	Spain
2019	18	15	11	13	10
2020	21	17	12	14	11
2021	23	19	13	16	13
2022	26	21	13	17	15
2023	28	22	14	19	17
2024	30	24	15	20	19

Source: Compiled on the basis of reports of cultural ministries, program analytics Creative Europe, Intercultural Cities Index (Council of Europe), Migration Policy Index (MIPEX), 2019–2024.

Spain has intensified local multicultural projects at the regional level, especially in Catalonia and Valencia, where intercultural councils are functioning.

France shows the slowest growth rate, which is partly due to internal debates around the concept of secularism and national identity, which hinder the full-scale implementation of the multicultural paradigm.

A comparative analysis has shown that the most successful countries in implementing cross-cultural communication are those that have chosen an intercultural model based on dialogue, interaction, and common citizenship (in particular, the Netherlands and Sweden).

¹ ESS Round 10 (2023). URL: <https://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/news/article/round-10-data-now-available>

² European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (2023). URL: <https://fra.europa.eu/en>

³ Council of Europe Intercultural Cities Index (2024) URL: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/interculturalcities/index-results-per-city>

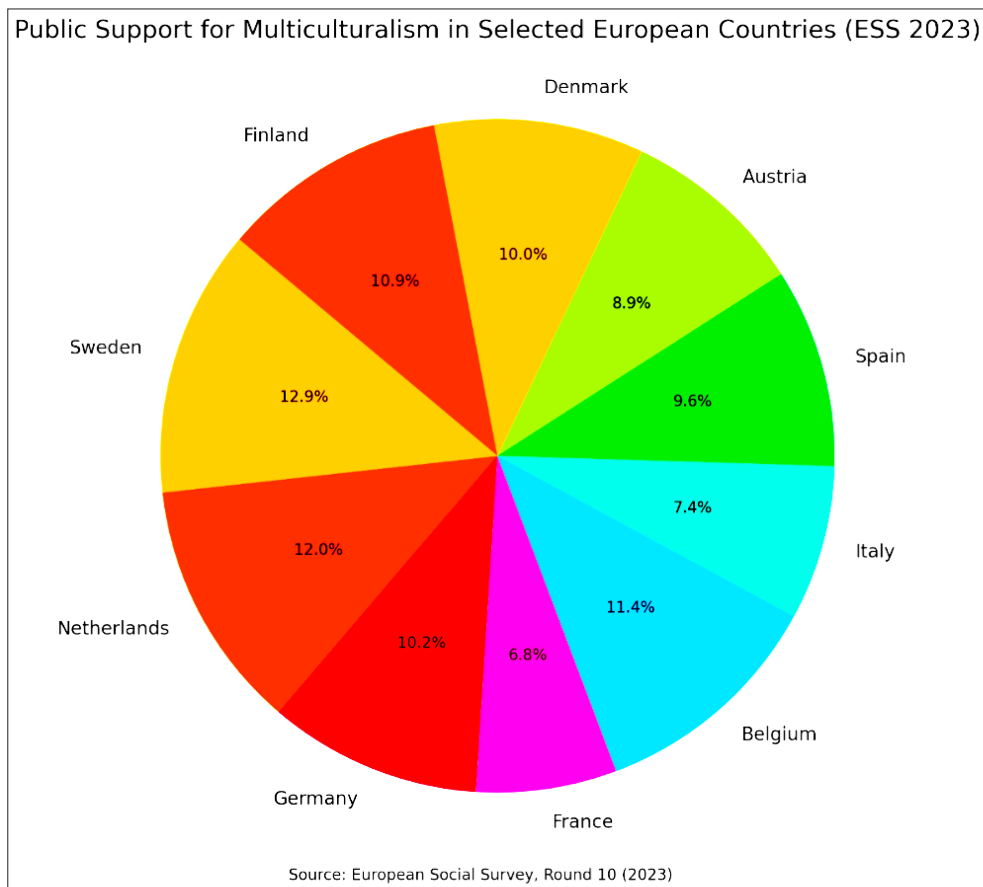


Figure 1. Chart. Level of public support for multiculturalism in leading European countries according to ESS 2023

The pie chart (Fig. 1) shows the percentage distribution of public support for multiculturalism in ten European Union countries according to the results of the 10th round of the European Social Survey (2023).

The highest level of support was recorded in Sweden (78%), the Netherlands (73%) and Finland (66%), while France (41%) and Italy (45%) have a lower level of acceptance of multicultural values.

According to the data presented, the Scandinavian countries (Sweden, Finland, Denmark) are examples of a balanced model that combines cultural autonomy with civic integration and demonstrate a consistently high level of support for multiculturalism. This is indicative of a deeply rooted model of social consensus and educational policies focused on accepting diversity as a social norm. Germany (62%) and Belgium (69%) maintain medium levels of support, which confirms the effectiveness of long-term integration programs aimed at including migrants in the socio-economic life of the country.

France, despite its long history of immigration, demonstrates difficulties in implementing cross-cultural interaction policies due to the tradition of a rigid republican approach to integration. According to statistics, support here is the lowest among the selected countries, and we can observe the influence of both historical models of assimilation and new challenges related to tensions in the field of migration policy, the rise of populism and social polarization.

A comparative analysis of these data with the dynamics of state support for integration programs (see Figure 2) suggests a correlation between the level of institutional support for multiculturalism and public acceptance of cultural diversity. Countries with a high level of institutional support and intercultural education demonstrate a higher level of public acceptance of multiculturalism.

The graph illustrates the dynamics of the launch of state integration programs in four leading European countries – Sweden, Germany, the Netherlands, and France – in the period from 2015 to 2024. The data are summarized on the basis of annual reports of national ministries and analytical materials of the European Migration Network (EMN) and the Migration Policy Institute.

Key observations: Sweden demonstrates the highest growth rate in the number of integration programs, which indicates a consistent government policy to support cultural diversity and social inclusion of migrants. From 10 programs in 2015, the number grew to 30 in 2024, which is the highest among the countries analyzed.

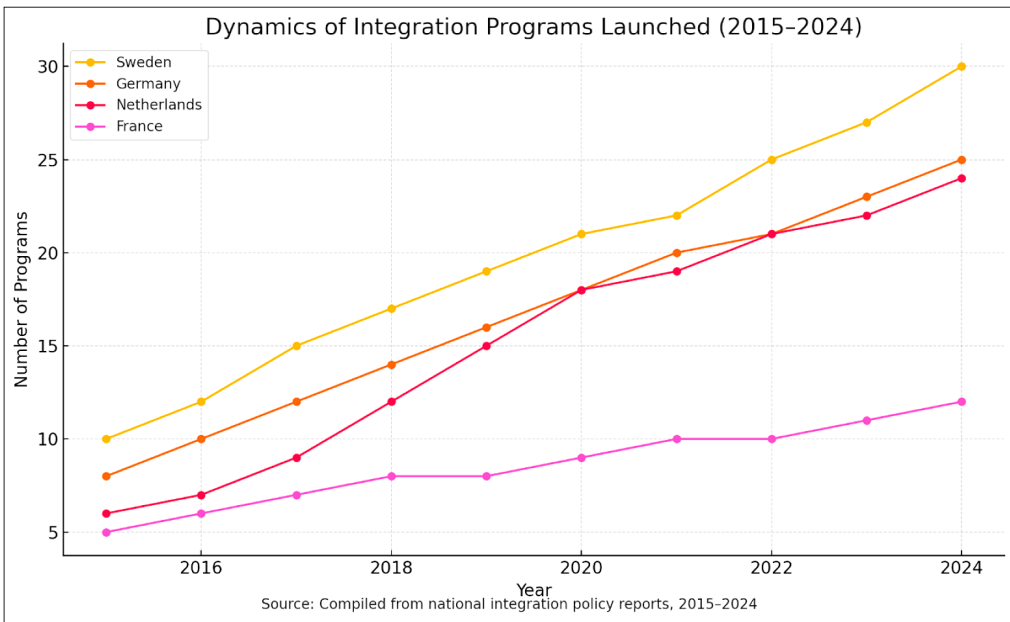


Figure 2. Graph. Dynamics of launching integration programs in Sweden, Germany, the Netherlands and France in 2015–2024

Germany has a steadily increasing trend, which is largely due to the 2015–2016 migration wave and integration policy reforms aimed at language training, employment, and civic participation of newcomers.

The Netherlands has shown growth after 2017, coinciding with the adoption of a new intercultural strategy and the development of digital platforms for integration (e.g., online courses “Inburgering”).

France has the slowest growth dynamics, which is likely due to the republican model of integration, which does not provide for special policies for cultural groups but focuses on the unification of civic space.

Thus, a comparison of the dynamics of launching integration programs with the level of public support for multiculturalism (see the previous pie chart) shows the relationship between state activity in the field of cultural integration and public tolerance for ethnic diversity. The growth in the number of programs in Sweden, Germany, and the Netherlands correlates with a high level of support for cross-cultural interaction among the population.

For Ukraine, this data is strategically important, as it allows us to form an effective model of humanitarian policy based on European standards, taking into account the needs of integration of internally displaced persons, national minorities and representatives of other cultural communities in the post-war period.

Ukraine, which is currently in the process of post-war reconstruction and active development of its European integration strategy, has every reason to adapt successful practices of cross-cultural communication to enhance its international credibility. In particular, this applies to the following areas:

1. Using the Swedish model of institutionalizing intercultural dialogue.

In Sweden, intercultural policy is part of the state cultural strategy. Ukraine could introduce a national strategy for cross-cultural communication, which would include support for educational and cultural initiatives aimed at integrating internally displaced persons, national minorities and migrants, as well as partnership programs with European institutions.

2. German approach to supporting intercultural educational programs.

The use of resources such as the Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung can become a guideline for the development of state institutions of humanitarian diplomacy in Ukraine. This will create a systematic approach to promoting Ukrainian culture abroad through cultural centers, educational grants, and academic mobility.

3. The Dutch digital model of interaction.

Ukraine has a high digital potential, and the experience of the Netherlands shows that platforms for intercultural exchange (online courses, virtual festivals, digital archives) are extremely effective. It is worth investing in the creation of digital intercultural hubs, which can become a tool for building a positive international image of the state.

4. Institutionalization of intercultural communication.

A key factor in the success of European countries is interagency coordination and the existence of special coordinating structures. Ukraine could consider establishing

a National Center for Intercultural Communication with analytical, communication, and educational functions.

5. Cross-cultural diplomacy as an instrument of soft power.

Implementation of cross-cultural programs in partnership with EU countries will allow Ukraine not only to strengthen its humanitarian presence, but also to influence the formation of a positive international discourse on Ukraine as an open, inclusive, tolerant European society.

In today's globalized world, traditional means of geopolitical influence are gradually losing their effectiveness, giving way to soft power, which is the ability of a state to shape positive perceptions abroad through cultural, value, and humanitarian instruments of influence. One of the key vectors of soft power is cross-cultural diplomacy, which is a synthesis of intercultural communication, international cultural policy and public diplomacy.

Cross-cultural diplomacy is a set of actions, initiatives and strategies aimed at promoting the values of the state through intercultural interaction, supporting the dialogue of cultures, mutual respect and understanding of diversity. Unlike traditional diplomacy, it does not appeal to institutional policies, but rather to the emotional, value, and cultural engagement of the international community. It is cross-cultural diplomacy that allows to create a stable circle of trust in the state, avoiding confrontations and conflicts, increasing its attractiveness as a partner in economy, politics, science and culture.

European countries are actively using cross-cultural diplomacy as a tool of strategic narrative. For example, France promotes the French language and culture through the Alliances Françaises network; Germany through the Goethe-Institut, with its focus on educational programs, artistic collaborations, and cultural integration; Spain through the Instituto Cervantes, which works as a cultural inter-mediary between Spain and the world; and Sweden through the Swedish Institute, which emphasizes inclusiveness, human rights, and cultural sustainability. These institutions not only teach languages, but also build cultural trust, promote democratic values, and strengthen the international reputation of states.

Ukraine, especially in the post-crisis period, has every reason to use cross-cultural diplomacy to build soft power. Potential areas include: expanding the network of Ukrainian cultural centers abroad (like the Ukrainian Institutes) with a focus on intercultural dialogue, promoting the Ukrainian language, literature, art, and cinema through international festivals, forums, and art residencies; digital cross-cultural diplomacy – creating platforms like the Ukraine Digital Cultural Hub, which integrates cultural initiatives in the online space, international youth programs and exchanges based on the principles of intercultural learning and tolerance, and using diaspora.

Adapting the tools of cross-cultural diplomacy will help to: create a positive international image of Ukraine as an open, democratic and European-oriented society, increase international trust in Ukraine as a partner in the humanitarian and cultural spheres, expand channels of international influence beyond official diplomacy, and attract foreign partners to support the processes of Ukraine's reconstruction and integration into the European community.

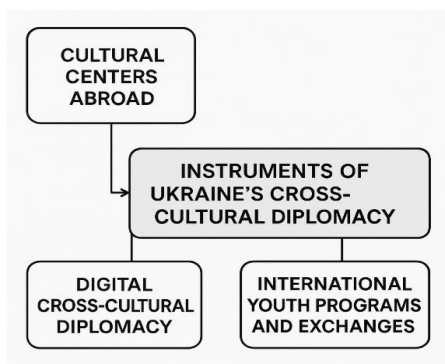


Figure 3. “Tools of Ukraine’s cross-cultural diplomacy”

In summary, cross-cultural diplomacy is not only an important tool of soft power, but also a strategic component of cultural policy that allows Ukraine to consolidate its image as a responsible international actor with a developed cultural identity and openness to the world.

European experience demonstrates that multiculturalism is not only a policy of integration, but also a strategy of public diplomacy, building trust and a positive international image. Ukraine, being at a critical historical moment, has a unique opportunity to use the potential of cross-cultural communication as a tool for internal consolidation and external representation.

In the Ukrainian context, it is especially important to take into account the successful intercultural practices of the Baltic States and Eastern Europe, which, like Ukraine, combine the post-Soviet heritage with modern European integration. The practice of intercultural education, support for minority languages, cultural initiatives, and digital dialogue platforms (e.g., the Estonian Integration Foundation) can be effectively adapted to the national humanitarian policy.

The results of the comparative analysis show that the sustainability of multicultural policy directly depends on consistent state support, educational integration, and transparent mechanisms of communication with ethnic and cultural communities. For Ukraine, which is on the verge of large-scale European integration, it is critically important to implement the best European practices, taking into account national realities and wartime challenges. A systematic study of multicultural strategies and communication models can become the basis for the formation of effective cultural diplomacy in Ukraine in the future.

The use of adapted European models will not only strengthen Ukraine’s image, but also increase the country’s attractiveness on a global level as a reliable, open and culturally diverse partner.

Recent studies by domestic and foreign scholars in the field of European multiculturalism and cross-cultural communication policy highlight various aspects of this topic, reflect current trends and approaches to multiculturalism and intercultural communication policy in Europe, emphasizing the importance

of integration, tolerance and effective dialogue between cultures. Analyzing the new EU cultural policy, emphasizing its controversial aspects and challenges in the implementation of intercultural dialogue, the researchers draw attention to the need for a critical approach to the implementation of cultural programs to avoid superficial interpretation of intercultural interaction. In particular, the researcher Bugnariu A. (2023)¹ explores the importance of intercultural dialogue in EU policy, emphasizing its role in preventing racism, exclusion and discrimination against migrants. The author emphasizes the importance of effective dialogue to promote equality, human dignity and shared responsibility.

Ukrainian researcher O. Chaika (2024)² studies the strategy and challenges of intercultural communication in the context of multicultural education. She emphasizes the need to develop intercultural competence and empathy among students to create an inclusive educational environment.

The same position is held by S. Valgardsson (2025)³. High levels of global migration have increased the complexity of the relationship between individuals and cultures. Multiculturalism has emerged as a prominent ideology to support inclusion by calling for the recognition and celebration of cultural differences and inviting cultural groups to maintain their distinctive cultural identities. Assuming cultural influences to be constant, general, categorical, and steady, the multicultural ideology may inadvertently exclude individuals positioned in-between cultures, not quite identifying with either culture but settling in hybridity.

Polyculturalism has recently emerged as an alternative ideology arguing that cultural influences are dynamic, situated, partial, and plural. Autor propose a polycultural mindset-cultural self-awareness embracing hybridity, plurality, and partiality; openness to other cultures and cultural compositions; and openness to the dynamic change of cultures and cultural associations in self and others.

G. J. Drion (2022)⁴ offers a theoretical framework for cultural communication, emphasizing the importance of a systems approach and cultural democracy. He examines how cultural policies can promote effective intercultural interaction and social integration.

I. Tytarchuk, O. Ivanova (2022)⁵ explore the challenges faced by multicultural societies in Europe and propose strategies to promote peaceful coexistence and

¹ Bugnariu A. (2023) The role of intercultural dialogue in european union policy. URL: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/375525449_The_role_of_intercultural_dialogue_in_European_union_policy

² Chaika O. (2023). Intercultural communication in multicultural education: Strategies, challenges, and opportunities. *International Journal of Philology*. DOI: [https://doi.org/10.31548/philolog15\(1\).2024.012](https://doi.org/10.31548/philolog15(1).2024.012)

³ Valgardsson S., Nardon L. (2025). Towards inclusion through polyculturalism: A critical review of cultural hybridity. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 105, March 2025. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2025.102155>

⁴ Geert J. Drion (2022). Towards a theory and practice of cultural communication. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3389/ejcmP.2022.11085>

⁵ Parmanasova A., Tytarchuk I., Titarenko I., Ivanova O., Bakoveieva Y. K., Järvis M. (2022). Intercultural Communication and Community Participation in Local Governance. *The EU Experience*, 40 (74), 246–267. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.46398/cuestpol.4074.13>

integration of different cultural groups, analyze how intercultural dialogue is integrated into EU educational policies, emphasizing its importance for the formation of European identity and social cohesion, emphasize the importance of intercultural competence as part of the professional training of modern specialists, focusing on its role in the context of globalization and international cooperation.

P. D. Mouboua (2024)¹ emphasizes the importance of developing cross-cultural competence in human resource management. She emphasizes the need for training that provides the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to interact effectively across cultural boundaries.

B. Kjellgren, D. A. Taylor, M. Serrano van der Laan (2022)² when studying the documents of the European University Alliance during 2020–2022, emphasize the gap between multilingualism and multiculturalism policies at the EU level and actual practices in technical universities, where education in language and cultural competence is often considered secondary.

E. Arvanitis (2019)³ analyzes the statements of European leaders about the failure of multiculturalism policies in their countries over the past decade. She explores the causes and consequences of these failures, emphasizing the need to rethink approaches to integration and cross-cultural communication in the EU.

In particular, in the document “EU Work Plan for Culture 2023–2026” (2022)⁴, the EU Council outlines strategic goals and actions for cultural cooperation at the European level. The plan emphasizes the importance of multiculturalism and cross-cultural communication for the preservation and promotion of European cultural heritage and diversity.

In the European Commission’s Creative Europe (2022) report, the EU Commission presents a funding program aimed at supporting the cultural and creative sectors across Europe. The program promotes cultural diversity, artists’ mobility, international cultural exchange and the development of innovative forms of intercultural cooperation, especially in the context of digital transformation and social inclusion.

S. Valgardsson, L. Nardon (2025)⁵ emphasize that assimilation policies often cause conflicts, while the model of cultural pluralism contributes to the level of social trust and strengthens the international authority of the state.

¹ Mouboua P. D., Atobatele F. A., Akintayo O. T. (2024). Cross-cultural competence in global HRD: Strategies for developing an inclusive and diverse workforce. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30574/ijjsra.2024.12.1.0765>

² Kjellgren B., Taylor D. A., M. Serrano van der Laan (2022). Struggling at the core: multilingualism and multiculturalism in a European University Alliance. DOI: 10.5821/conference-9788412322262.1297

³ Arvanitis E. (2019). Multiculturalism in the European Union: A Failure beyond Redemption? *The International Journal of Diversity in Organizations Communities and Nations Annual Review*, 19 (1), 1–18. DOI: 10.18848/1447-9532/CGP/v19i01/1-18

⁴ “Creative Europe” European Commission (2022). URL: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_22_286

⁵ Valgardsson S., Nardon L. (2025). Towards inclusion through polyculturalism: A critical review of cultural hybridity. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 105, March 2025. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2025.102155>

Ukraine is in a transitional stage between a monocentric model of national discourse and the need for multi-vector communication aimed at a global audience. The social transformations caused by the war and the change in Ukraine's status in the international arena put forward new requirements for cultural policy as an instrument of diplomacy and integration.

The results of the study demonstrate that in order to increase Ukraine's international prestige, it is advisable to:

- development of the National Strategy for Intercultural Communication based on the EU experience;
- integration of a multicultural component into the system of education and training of diplomatic personnel;
- institutionalization of digital platforms for cultural diplomacy;
- intensification of cooperation with international networks (EUNIC, Anna Lindh Foundation (ALF), Intercultural Cities (ICS)).

EUNIC (European Union National Institutes for Culture) was established to strengthen cooperation in the field of culture, promote European values of the EU through artistic, educational and research programs, implement joint cultural diplomacy, promote intercultural dialogue and social inclusion.

EUNIC is a key actor in shaping Europe's common cultural space, acting at the intersection of cultural policy, diplomacy and innovation. For Ukraine, participation in EUNIC programs opens up important opportunities for integration into the European cultural space, promotion of its own cultural product at the international level, and development of cross-cultural communication as a soft power tool.

The Anna Lindh Foundation (ALF) supports educational programs aimed at building intercultural communication skills, critical thinking and respect for cultural diversity among young people. These programs are ideally aligned with Ukrainian initiatives to promote interethnic tolerance, especially in regions with high levels of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and cultural heterogeneity (Odesa, Zakarpattia, Kharkiv regions). ALF funds a number of projects in member countries through mini-grants. Ukrainian NGOs, in particular those involved in cultural diplomacy, historical memory, interethnic understanding, and public history, have participated in experience exchange programs with Southern European and Mediterranean countries.

After 2014, and especially since the beginning of the full-scale war, cultural diplomacy has become one of the tools for strengthening Ukraine's international presence. The ALF emphasizes the importance of promoting narratives of democratic culture through artistic platforms, something that Ukraine is actively implementing through festivals, cultural missions, and foreign residencies of Ukrainian artists.

Ukraine's institutional integration into the ALF's expanded partnership could become the basis for the introduction of pan-European programs on intercultural dialogue into Ukraine's educational, cultural, and diplomatic strategy.

Use ALF as a platform for cultural dialogue to present Ukrainian narratives, particularly in the context of war, humanitarian diplomacy, historical truth, and the struggle for cultural subjectivity.

The activities of the Anna Lindh Foundation have a high potential for interaction with Ukrainian initiatives in the field of cross-cultural diplomacy, building soft power and promoting cultural diversity as a resource of resilience. Adapting ALF's tools to the national context could be an important step in building Ukraine's public diplomacy strategy in the post-crisis world.

Intercultural Cities (ICC) is a Council of Europe initiative launched in 2008 in cooperation with the European Commission that supports cities, regions and institutions in developing and implementing integration policies through an intercultural approach. Unlike traditional models of multiculturalism, the ICC emphasizes not only the coexistence of cultures, but also active interaction, cooperation and exchange between people from different cultural backgrounds. The program aims to build inclusive societies at the local level, promote the use of cultural diversity as a resource for development and ensure equal access to rights, services and opportunities for all residents, regardless of ethnic, cultural or religious background.

ICC for Ukraine is a key resource for the formation of local models of social cohesion in the context of war and massive population displacement. A national network of Intercultural Cities Ukraine has been established, coordinated by the Ministry of Culture and local authorities in cooperation with the Council of Europe.

The ICC tools allow for the implementation of cross-cultural policies in IDP host communities, taking into account inclusive democracy and human rights. In cooperation with the Council of Europe, Ukraine can implement intercultural strategies as part of post-war reconstruction and humanitarian diplomacy.

Intercultural Cities is an action-oriented, flexible, and effective model of local policy that helps cities use cultural diversity as an asset. For Ukraine, participation in this program opens up wide opportunities in the areas of cultural security, public diplomacy, and democratic community renewal. Adapting the ICC model can serve as the basis for a new state policy of intercultural integration.

Conclusions

The study found that the European policy of multiculturalism is based on the recognition of cultural pluralism as a fundamental value of a democratic society. Successful practices of cross-cultural communication, in particular in Sweden, Germany, and the Netherlands, demonstrate a high level of institutional organization, educational support, cultural diplomacy, and digital integration.

The main conclusions of the study are that multiculturalism as a policy is an effective tool for building a positive international image of the state if its implementation is based on a systematic approach and supported by all levels of government. Cross-cultural communication plays a key role in shaping the cultural subjectivity of the state on the world stage, ensuring effective interaction with foreign partners and diaspora communities.

The Ukrainian context, especially in wartime and under the constant hybrid threat, requires a thorough rethinking of the strategy of cultural diplomacy and cross-cultural communication. Successful European practices, while serving as a guide, cannot be mechanically transferred to Ukrainian soil. A deep adaptation of these models

is needed, taking into account national specifics, historical memory, the socio-political context, and the current state of international relations.

First and foremost, Ukraine must take into account the military aggression of the Russian Federation, which significantly changes priorities in the field of communications. Under such conditions, cross-cultural diplomacy becomes not just a tool of soft power, but a means of information resistance, consolidation of international support, and formation of Ukraine's subjectivity on the global stage.

Adaptation of European experience should include:

- institutional modernization of existing cultural structures (e.g., the Ukrainian Institute), with a focus on operational communication in crisis conditions;
- integration of cultural policy into the state security architecture, as culture becomes an element of strategic stability and national unity;
- strengthening the subjectivity of Ukrainian culture in the world through cooperation with the diaspora, participation in international cultural forums, festivals, and cross-cultural exchange projects;
- development of specialized educational programs that would form the intercultural competence of diplomats, cultural managers and public communicators.

In addition, in the Ukrainian case, it is important to combine national identity with openness to global cultural dialogue, avoiding both self-isolation and cultural assimilation. This is possible through the creation of a unique narrative of Ukrainian culture as a culture of resistance, dignity, creative power, and European values.

Thus, the adaptation of European models in the field of multiculturalism and cross-cultural communication in the Ukrainian context should not only preserve the basic values of humanism and dialogue, but also meet the new realities caused by transformations in foreign policy, cultural security challenges, and the need for Ukraine's strategic positioning in the world.

Prospects for further research

Given the complexity, interdisciplinary nature and dynamics of transformations that cover the sphere of multiculturalism, cross-cultural communication and foreign cultural policy, the relevance of further research in this area is only growing. The results of the study outline several key vectors that require deeper analysis, empirical content and expansion at the methodological level.

1. Update of conceptual approaches to multiculturalism in the post-crisis world. In today's realities, when the world is experiencing the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, a full-scale war in Europe, increased migration flows and new waves of polarization, there is a need to rethink traditional models of multiculturalism that were formed in the context of stable democratic development. Further research could focus on analyzing the transformation of multiculturalism policy in crisis conditions, studying the comparative effectiveness of models of interculturalism, transculturalism, and cosmopolitan pluralism, and examining the role of digital culture in the formation of new identities and communities.

2. Study of cross-cultural communication as a factor of foreign policy and soft power of Ukraine of Ukraine.

The study of Ukraine's cross-cultural diplomacy in the context of geopolitical resistance and international mobilization is becoming relevant. It is advisable to focus further research on the following aspects:

- mechanisms of institutionalization of cross-cultural diplomacy in the system of Ukrainian foreign policy;
- analysis of the effectiveness of Ukraine's international cultural initiatives (forums, exhibitions, festivals, artistic residencies);
- studying the impact of cultural policy on the image of Ukraine in the international media space;
- development of indices and indicators for assessing the effectiveness of soft power based on cross-cultural practices.

3. Interdisciplinary research at the intersection of cultural security, identity politics and international communications.

In the context of hybrid warfare and information attacks, the importance of cultural security as a component of national security is growing significantly. Promising areas of scientific research are:

- identification of risks and threats to cultural identity in the context of external pressure;
- analysis of tools for countering disinformation through cross-cultural platforms;
- study of culture as a strategy to counteract isolation, marginalization and loss of subjectivity at the global level.

4. Development of applied research for the formation of a national strategy of cultural diplomacy.

One of the key practical areas is the development of models, scenarios and roadmaps for the implementation of an effective cultural strategy of Ukraine at the international level. Further research could be aimed at empirically studying the needs and demands of target audiences abroad regarding Ukrainian culture, developing regionally specific communication strategies (in particular, in the EU), and assessing the impact of Ukrainian cultural diplomacy on integration processes and political partnerships.

5. Expanding the base of international comparative studies.

Given the need to adapt European practices to the Ukrainian context, it is promising to involve Ukraine in international comparative studies, which will allow for a comparative analysis of cultural policy and intercultural communication tools in Europe, identify successful cases relevant for implementation in Ukraine, and create an analytical framework for predicting the effectiveness of certain models of influence through culture.

Thus, the prospects for further research include both conceptual and theoretical aspects related to paradigm shifts and applied developments that should form the basis for sustainable strategies for cultural development and international communication in Ukraine. In the long run, the integration of interdisciplinary knowledge in this area will contribute to strengthening Ukraine's cultural sovereignty, soft power, and international authority.

Scientific interest in the problem of multiculturalism in Ukraine will only grow, especially in the context of post-war cultural reconstruction and reintegration of the temporarily occupied territories, building the national brand of Ukraine through the tools of cultural diplomacy, institutional development of intercultural education and the formation of intercultural competence among civil servants, diplomats, and educators. Creation of digital platforms for intercultural dialogue based on the principles of openness, ethics, and sustainable communication, and research on the performative role of culture in Ukraine's foreign policy positioning.

All this forms a powerful scientific, practical, and political potential for transforming Ukraine's communication strategy in the European space on the basis of multiculturalism, inclusion, and value subjectivity.

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3.2. Cultural diplomacy as a component of cross-cultural communication processes

Valentyna Kulenko

Candidate of Philosophical Sciences, Associate Professor,
National University of Life and Environmental Science of Ukraine
03041, 15 Heroyiv Oborony Str., Kyiv, Ukraine
URL: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4313-8494>

Abstract

As a phenomenon of public diplomacy, cultural diplomacy is a fairly young area of international intercultural communication, which has about sixty years of history. However, the effectiveness of cultural diplomacy, the ability to positively influence the image of a country or state in the international space, significantly activates interest in it both within the framework of theoretical philosophical-political-culturological-sociological discourse and in the practical plane of implementing real policy. The secret of the influence of cultural diplomacy lies in the soft nature of the action, the personalized focus of efforts, the appeal to the sphere of culture and art, within which a vast space opens up for emotional and sensory manifestations of empathy, compassion, mutual understanding based on the harmony of cultural traditions and values, and the similarity of experiences. Practitioners in the field of cultural diplomacy note, firstly, its strategic importance for the security of the state; secondly, the long-term nature of the action; thirdly, its advantages precisely as a soft power, which is based on the position of principled abstention from coercion, from limiting the national-cultural identity vis-à-vis. Researchers are optimistic about the prospects for further development in this area. In Ukraine, in the conditions of long-term Russian military aggression, the possibilities of cultural diplomacy become additional means of resistance against the treachery and treachery of the enemy and contribute to gaining the attention, sympathy, support, and empathy of the free world for the victory of Ukraine.

Keywords: cultural diplomacy, cross-cultural communication, intercultural communication, soft intelligence power, and public diplomacy.

Introduction

Cultural diplomacy as a consciously organized and purposeful activity originated as an ideological manipulative practice – primarily in the USSR on a large scale, to force the world to work in the interests of their country. The term “cultural diplomacy” was introduced into scientific circulation by the American researcher Frederick S. Barghoorn in the 1960’s, who defined it as “manipulation of cultural materials and personnel for propaganda purposes”, referring to the propaganda practice of the USSR¹. The concept of “cultural diplomacy” formulated by the American political scientist Milton C. Cummings, understanding it as the exchange of ideas, information, values, traditions, and other aspects of culture that can contribute to improving mutual understanding between peoples, became widespread². The apparent effectiveness and efficiency of the applied practices contributed to a revision of attitudes towards

¹ Barghoorn F. The Soviet cultural offensive: The role of cultural diplomacy in. Soviet foreign policy. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1960.

² Milton C. Cummings. Cultural diplomacy and the United States Government: a Survey. Center for its Arts and Culture, 2003. 15 p.

them. The knowledge of culture in general and cultural diplomacy, in particular, has been transformed – from negation and ignoring; researchers have increasingly moved to recognize culture's positive, soft, and reasonable influence on the sphere of politics and diplomacy. The reason is the effectiveness of the power of cultural diplomacy, its efficiency, and subjective orientation: a specific cultural offer aimed at a real person. Aesthetic means of influence are used, bordering on the emotional perception of reality, and therefore claim to establish emotional attachment, kinship, attachment, and, ultimately, a stable connection.

The effectiveness of cultural diplomacy efforts has influenced an essential ideological shift: artists, philosophers, writers, and musicians have once again become the nation's leaders. Sports, art, cultural heritage unknown to the world, information about one's country, and its cultural achievements are often emotionally, sensually, and personally colored – these are the areas covered by cultural diplomacy. At the same time, it is essential to understand that culture is part of any country's national security strategy. However, the soft action of culture is not comparable to the brute force of arms and coercion. Cultural diplomacy works with the challenges of the current moment through the mediation of soft power, including developing reputational security trust in one's country and building bridges for international communication to promote the country's intangible values/heritage or develop strategies for deterring unfriendly/hostile/competitive countries. The cultural objects with which cultural diplomacy works can attract attention and interest and, therefore, be capitalized and perceived in intercultural communication. Often, these are objects of elite high culture and usually mass pop culture. An essential condition for the effectiveness of cultural diplomacy is that the choice of objects of cultural diplomacy should primarily identify influential cultural trends and movements, regardless of their status (high or mass culture). Still, their capitalization and dissemination possibilities to the general public are significant.

In the 1990s and early 2000's, Joseph S. Nye, Jr. formulated the concept of culture as an attractive soft and intelligent power. In his opinion, soft power is a state's ability to shape other countries' preferences, relying on three most important components: the country's culture, political values, and foreign policy. The content of the concept is reflected in the central thesis: "A country can achieve the results it desires in world politics because other countries – admiring its values, following its example, striving for its level of prosperity and openness – want to follow it". The thesis is contained in J. Nye's book "Soft Power: A Means of Success in World Politics" (2004)¹.

The problematic point of the concept was that soft power is a descriptive, not a normative, concept. Therefore, such power can be used in any way, contributing to success and leading to terrible consequences. Thus, there arose (and remains an open) need to normalize soft power. However, since cultural diplomacy is carried out mainly at the international level, the problem of norming concerns international law and, therefore, requires the voluntary consent of all countries that use the soft power of cultural diplomacy to adhere to the normalized rules. Currently, in Europe,

¹ Nye J. *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*. New York: Public Affairs Group, 2004.

for more than eleven years, a military invasion of one country into another has been going on, which is accompanied by an open disregard for the norms of international law, UN resolutions, and other international institutions when the internationally recognized borders of the state (Ukraine) are ignored and treacherously violated, the geopolitical picture of the world, determined by the results of the Second World War, has been destroyed. Cheating manifestations of cultural diplomacy also seem futile since compliance with such norms is exclusively a matter of voluntary consent of countries to recognize the norms of international law. The violator will likely find himself in more favorable conditions than those who agree to restrictions and carefully adhere to the standards.

The leading British specialist in public diplomacy, Nicholas J. Cull, considered cultural diplomacy one of the areas of public diplomacy, focused on establishing relations between the state and a foreign audience in the field of culture². In his opinion, the specific tasks of cultural diplomacy, which distinguish it from other forms of public diplomacy, are cultural informing of the international community and maintaining contacts with other nations in the field of education and culture to create a positive image of the country. The primary condition for implementing cultural diplomacy is the desire to understand "others" through cultural projects without denying the rights of others to their own identity. In contrast, the American scholar Philip M. Taylor believed that cultural diplomacy is a political activity that serves national interests "under the guise of culture". He divided the main elements of soft power into long-term and short-term. He insisted that soft power is not just a bridge between countries and civilizations but a platform for effective interaction between civil society, the public sector, and business³.

Culture has gradually become an instrument of domestic and foreign politics. In modern articulation, culture increasingly claims to be the content of politics, its semantic content. This position was expressed, in particular, by the former director of the Polish Institute in Ukraine and the USA, Jerzy Onuch, who emphasized that diplomacy is a part of culture, not vice versa. Indeed, including politics in the sphere of culture contributes to the refinement of politics and its saturation with understanding, trust, and current values. A political message embodied in an artistic/creative/cultural act becomes more attractive and interesting⁴.

In scientific discourse, the problem of defining concepts in cultural diplomacy remains relevant. In Ukrainian scientific discourse, a number of studies by the Ukrainian Institute, the Scientific Society for the History of Diplomacy and International Relations, the Ukrainian Cultural Foundation, and several other international diplomatic institutions are devoted to this issue: the Institute of International Relations of the Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv; the Scientific Society for the History of Diplomacy and International Relations, the NAS

² Nicholas J. Cull, *Public Diplomacy: Lessons from the Past* (Los Angeles: Figueroa Press, 2009).

³ *Cultural diplomacy: a textbook* / ed. I. B. Matyash, V. M. Matvienko; Institute of International Relations of Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv; Scientific Society for the History of Diplomacy and International Relations. Kyiv : State Enterprise "GDIP", 2021. 252 p.

⁴ Right there.

of Ukraine, the Institute of History of Ukraine, the Institute of Political and Ethno-National Studies named after I. F. Kuras, the Diplomatic Academy of Ukraine named after Gennady Udovenko, the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, and others¹. Intercultural relations and cultural diplomacy are close in meaning but not synonymous. The main difference lies in the bilateral nature of intercultural relations. At the same time, cultural diplomacy can be unilateral, aimed at designing, forming, and spreading the image of a country in the world. At the same time, cultural diplomacy contains elements of intercultural relations. Therefore, the main task of cultural diplomacy is the ability to form a brand and the image of a country. The sphere of influence of cultural diplomacy can extend both outwards, beyond the borders of the country, and within the country, contributing to the unification and optimization of intercultural dialogue among different ethnic groups, regions with various cultural enclaves, etc. A unique role in this context is given to practical effectiveness, real cases, and the compelling influence of cultural initiatives at the international level. The purpose of cultural diplomacy, thus, is to uphold, protect, and preserve the national interest².

Cultural diplomacy as a soft power tool in modern diplomatic practice is often associated with public diplomacy. However, the research environment distinguishes them by purpose and means. Suppose cultural diplomacy is more associated with actions based on exchanging ideas, values, traditions, and other aspects of culture aimed primarily at improving the country's image. In that case, public diplomacy is associated with information flows, telecommunication networks, and communication technologies with a political purpose and specific goals. The Encyclopedia of the History of Ukraine³ offers the following definitions for several basic concepts in this area. "Soft power is a conceptual approach in international relations, characterized by the use of methods of persuasion and attraction to achieve the desired results... Soft power has three components – national culture, political values, and foreign policy". "Cultural diplomacy is a set of measures and means combined with the instrumentalization of culture for political purposes; the process of taking into account cultural factors in the diplomatic activities of a state to achieve interstate understanding; a tool for implementing the concept of "soft power"; a form and

¹ Pechyborshch V. (2020). The significance of cultural diplomacy in the context of the foreign policy security of the state: the experience of the Swiss Confederation. *Ukraine – Switzerland: little-known pages of history and modernity* : scientific collection / edited by I. Matyash. Bern – Kyiv. P. 45–55; Tertychna A. (2020). Cultural communication of Ukraine with Bulgaria in the light of public diplomacy of the 1990 s. *UII* / NAS of Ukraine, Institute of History of Ukraine, Institute of Political and Ethnonational Studies named after I. F. Kuras. 1 (550), 112–125; Khomenska I. (2020). Instruments of cultural diplomacy of the Embassy of the Swiss Confederation in Ukraine (2017–2019). *Ukraine – Switzerland: little-known pages of history and modernity* : scientific collection / edited by Iryna Matyash. Bern – Kyiv. P. 56–64.

² Kravchuk N., Lutsyshyn O., Androschuk D. (2025) Public diplomacy as a strategic imperative for strengthening the competitiveness of the state in the context of the transformation of the world order. URL: <https://ekmair.ukma.edu.ua/server/api/core/bitstreams/8ff931a7-fe14-4cba-aa97-71cf8964cabd/content>

³ Magda E. V. (2021). SOFT POWER, concept. *Encyclopedia of the History of Ukraine: Additional volume*. Book 1: A–Z / Ed.: V. A. Smolii (chair) and others. NAS of Ukraine. Institute of History of Ukraine. Kyiv : Publishing house "Naukova Dumka". 773 p. URL: http://www.history.org.ua/?termin=mjaka_syla_ponjattja.

process of international communication aimed at promoting the image of a country, building trust in it and its authority, which also makes it possible to understand the culture, values, and goals of other countries and peoples of the world. "

Professor at Georgetown University, USA, Vivian S. Walker, proposed differentiating the concepts of "Intercultural Policy", "Cross-Cultural Policy", and "Cultural Diplomacy", "Public Diplomacy", according to the criteria of content and influence⁴. In particular, she defined cultural diplomacy as an instrument of state soft power, a sphere of policy aimed at mobilizing the state's cultural resources to achieve the goals of international policy and improve the reputation and image of the state. From the standpoint of internationalism, the cross-cultural activity of V. Walker identified cognitive and transnational activities, which is why this policy involves many different actors and pursues many different interests, including global goals. Cultural diplomacy is part of strategic communications and public diplomacy efforts, which consist of communicating and influencing audiences in other countries to implement the goals of the foreign policy of its state. Cultural diplomacy does not coerce, it convinces, demonstrating the attractiveness of the country's resources and using innovative means and tools of soft influence. The challenges of cultural diplomacy are related to how recipients perceive information about cultural resources and what reactions it causes. V. Walker pointed out the problematic nature of this issue because perception is outside the scope of the cultural diplomat's capabilities but within his area of responsibility. Public diplomacy aims to listen from the point of view of studying the audience of potential influence or potential stakeholders.

Pavlo Klimkin, a Ukrainian statesman and diplomat, 2014–2019 Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, considers one of the problems of Ukrainian cultural diplomacy to be the need to determine the essence of Ukrainianness. This is necessary to understand what cultural achievements Ukraine can be represented in the world to be recognizable. The second problem he calls the emotional opposition of Ukrainian cultural diplomats to the culture of the "russian world", primarily russian propaganda. The radical position of Ukrainians is poorly perceived in the world, which is accustomed to the "great russian culture" and its roots in world culture. Therefore, the Western world sees bias, excessive emotionality, inability to compromise, etc., in the irreconcilable position of Ukrainians. Thus, Ukrainian cultural diplomacy loses its effectiveness and favor in the Western world. The way out of the current situation, P. Klimkin sees the need to distinguish between the past and the present, namely, to distinguish between the culture of the past empire (russian, Soviet), which was created on colonial principles, and the modern propaganda manipulations of the russians, in which the accents are shifted and distorted when the modern is woven into the past to justify the murders and russian terror with past cultural achievements⁵.

⁴ Ukrainian Institute. Workshop on Teaching Cultural Diplomacy (2024). URL: <https://ui.org.ua/sectors/projects/vorkshop-z-vykladannya-kulturnoyi-dyplomatiyi/>

⁵ They don't understand us! Base from Klimkin how to explain Ukraine to the world (2025). URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cf3l0GkjuGk&list=TLPQMjEwMzIwMjVBFuWY2Zbmug&index=3>

In general, we can observe a significant similarity in the interpretation of concepts related to cultural diplomacy by different scholars and research sources.

Materials and methods

The basis of the study is theoretical materials, journalistic, video materials from the mass media, Internet resources, social networks, etc. The selection of materials is because cultural diplomacy is a practical, relatively young, and insufficiently reflected sphere of activity. In this regard, practical actions, often impulsive, emotional, or intuitive, require theoretical understanding and generalization.

The study's methodology reflects its systemic nature and understanding of the dynamics of processes occurring in international intercultural communication. The study applied the dialectical method to understand and explain the development of the processes being studied: the phenomenological method to clarify the essence of the concepts and phenomena under study; the culturological method to study the content of cultural processes, phenomena and phenomena relevant to intercultural, international, cross-cultural communication and cultural diplomacy.

Results and Discussion

According to the organization's form, it is customary to distinguish three main (classical) cultural diplomacy models: French, British, and German. It is also possible to distinguish the Italian, American, and Asian models. Each of the models has its characteristics that contribute to their effectiveness. In particular, the French model is characterized by strict centralization, direct state control, and a high level of state funding of cultural programs. The British model is based on indirect control (the principle of "outstretched hand"). It is about state intervention only in case of urgent need. The middle option between the French and British models is the German one, where the tradition of concluding bilateral international agreements on intercultural cooperation is widespread. In practice, the foreign policy cultural strategy is implemented through the efforts of non-governmental institutions (such as the Goethe Institute) financed by the state within the limits of the competence assigned to them. Cultural diplomacy in Great Britain, Australia, Canada, and Singapore is considered within a broader concept – international cultural relations. In some countries, for example, the PRC, the term "people's diplomacy" is used, which is understood as large-scale non-state cultural interaction. In the foreign policy practice of the United States, cultural diplomacy is inseparable from the public and is carried out outside the boundaries of state influence or control¹.

Ukrainian researchers and cultural figures working in cultural diplomacy note that in Ukraine, the sphere of cultural diplomacy is active in formation and development and has a formulated subject, goal, methodology, and means of activity and influence. In particular, Tetyana Filevska, creative director of the Ukrainian Institute, noted this. This institution is responsible for systematically presenting Ukraine worldwide

¹ Cultural diplomacy: a textbook / ed. I. B. Matyash, V. M. Matvienko. Institute of International Relations of Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv; Scientific Society for the History of Diplomacy and International Relations. Kyiv : State Enterprise "GDIP", 2021. 252 p.

by creating a modern Ukrainian cultural product². Iryna Shum, Deputy Director of the Department of Public Diplomacy and Communications of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, emphasized the ability of cultural diplomacy not only to represent the country in the world competitively but also to emotionally influence recipients, thanks to which space of trust and understanding is built. "It is not just about facts and figures – it is about an emotion that remains for a long time"³. Shum, this is precisely the primary mission and specificity of cultural diplomacy.

V. Walker drew attention to the landscape of cultural diplomacy, which does not necessarily require professional diplomatic education (which is consonant with the position of P. Klimkin) but rather involves the ability to communicate and establish connections to practically influence recipients through various means of culture. According to the researcher, cultural diplomacy is important because it is the culture that determines and shapes the democratic or authoritarian positions or image of a country in the world. Another important issue is cultural identity and the related problem of choosing cultural artifacts, namely, which of the country's cultural heritage is worth using in cultural diplomacy. At the same time, the palette of artifacts is quite broad and diverse – from works of high art to objects of folk culture or modern pop/mass culture. Equally important is the issue of forming common artistic/cultural traditions at the cross-cultural level and the cultural borrowings associated with it. This concerns the need for a conceptual definition and coordination of the copyright issue. Inquiries regarding the cultural affiliation of original cultural products are especially relevant for works of contemporary art, which are often paraphrased, interpreted, or allusions to classical works and artifacts. In this context, the standardization of legal issues at the international level is important.

Also important is the relationship between cultural diplomacy and cultural imperialism, or the imposition of cultural influence by more influential countries/cultures on less powerful cultures, potentially threatening the loss of national identity for the latter. Philip M. Taylor, in this context, emphasized the importance of understanding the soft power of culture and the ability to recognize propaganda. According to the researcher, the criterion for differentiation can be the belief that "cultural diplomacy is a political activity that serves national interests "under the guise of culture"⁴. During the topic, I. Shum noted that the priority principles for deploying cultural diplomacy should be truthfulness and honesty. Relying on them distinguishes cultural diplomacy from propaganda. The priority of honesty and truthfulness sets the vector for the formation of the tasks of cultural diplomacy. Among them, I. Shum identified the following: establishing an extensive communication system between institutions, embassies, consulates, and other representative state bodies;

² Filevska T. Why is cultural diplomacy important? Some conclusions from the Great Britain/Ukraine Culture Season. URL: <https://life.pravda.com.ua/columns/2023/05/26/254489/>

³ Emotion stays for a long time": three cultural managers on the soft power of cultural diplomacy (2023). URL: <https://creativeeurope.in.ua/posts/soft-power-cultural-diplomacy>

⁴ Cultural diplomacy: a textbook / ed. I. B. Matyash, V. M. Matvienko. Institute of International Relations of Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv; Scientific Society for the History of Diplomacy and International Relations. Kyiv : State Enterprise "GDIP", 2021. 252 p.

developing a budget planning horizon for at least 2–3 years; and a strategy for the country's humanitarian development. An important condition for the success of cultural diplomacy is the consistency and systematic nature of work and influence on recipients. Consistency, systematicity, and continuity over time build trust in actors, which is possible thanks to years of working together.

In Ukraine, an important center for cultural diplomacy, the development of an influence strategy, the selection of artifacts that should be presented to the world to form an attractive image of Ukraine and Ukrainians, and the establishment of intercultural and international relations is the Ukrainian Cultural Foundation. When it was established in 2017, it was defined as a state investor in the development of culture and creative industries in Ukraine. The Ukrainian Cultural Foundation was created to integrate Ukrainian culture into the global socio-cultural space. The sphere of direct interest of the foundation is supporting projects in audio, visual, audiovisual art, cultural heritage, literature, performative and stage arts, and cultural and creative industries. The foundation's activities in the context of a full-scale Russian invasion are carried out, according to its executive director, Anastasia Obraztsova, to help "preserve and popularize heritage, tell the world about Russian aggression in the language of art. The Fund invests not only in projects – it invests in society's resilience through culture, in its future, helping it adapt, develop and become stronger despite all challenges."¹ The Ukrainian Cultural Fund closely cooperates with the Ukrainian Institute, which was established in 2017 to represent Ukrainian culture worldwide and shape a positive image of Ukraine abroad. This task is enshrined in the mission of the Institute: strengthening the international and domestic subjectivity of Ukraine through cultural diplomacy. Thus, the Ukrainian Institute is the central state body carrying out cultural diplomacy. The strategic goals of the Institute are the following:

1. To disseminate knowledge about Ukraine in foreign societies, involve a wide range of citizens of other countries in discussion and dialogue, ensure Ukraine's visibility in the information field, and offer Ukrainian narratives about Ukraine.
2. To develop a proactive interest in cooperation with Ukraine in the international professional and expert environment; provide mediation and expert support.
3. By involving the cultural sphere in international cooperation, the Institute develops its participants' competencies and capabilities, improving the quality and effectiveness of Ukraine's representation in the world.
4. Strengthen the role of Ukraine in international cultural dialogue and exchange; ensure the sustainable presence of Ukraine at key cultural, scientific, educational, and political platforms in the world.
5. Strengthen the presence of the Ukrainian language in the public space and its use in the professional environment².

In its activities, the Ukrainian Institute is based on a system of values, including responsibility, professionalism, sustainability, openness, and a noble goal – the creation and achievement of the common good. A noble system of values requires

¹ Ukrainian Cultural Fund (2025). URL: <https://ucf.in.ua/news/istorii-8-rokiv>

² Ukrainian Institute (2025). URL: <https://ui.org.ua/mission/>

extensive skills from those who implement the Ukrainian state's tasks in the cultural diplomacy field. It is about professionalism, the ability to make well-considered decisions, promptly respond to the challenges of the time, unite the efforts of various actors of cultural diplomacy to achieve the goal, and maintain a constant dialogue with the actors and recipients of cultural and diplomatic missions. The Ukrainian Institute's official website explicitly emphasizes that the institution does not support any political force, does not engage in propaganda, and condemns corruption or discrimination. These positions are spelled out as the principles of the Ukrainian Institute's activities. Thus, we can single out the joint activities of the Ukrainian Cultural Foundation and the Ukrainian Institute as state organizations that create and promote Ukrainian cultural products/projects in the world within the framework of a policy of soft innovative power, which involves combining the efforts of culture, diplomacy, and political values to achieve the desired results. International cooperation projects supported by the Ukrainian Cultural Foundation concern both specific artistic interventions carried out by the Ukrainian Institute and the development of programs to translate national literature and other steps to disseminate information about the culture of Ukraine. Such projects work on the image of the country, avoiding outdated stereotypes and prejudices. Yulia Fediv, Executive Director of the Ukrainian Cultural Foundation, noted that "the power of cultural diplomacy is based on the uniqueness of the language of art, which impresses and makes you reflect"³. The point is that art appeals to universal themes understandable to people from different countries. The most common, most understandable, universal themes, the relevance of which is not limited by the time context, are the struggle for freedom and dignity, the theme of peace and war, and a person's search for himself at the level of an individual, a community, even an entire nation. In the conditions of the struggle of Ukrainians for the freedom and sovereignty of their state, these topics are a priority and especially relevant for all Ukrainians; they are actively used in performances presented within the framework of cultural diplomacy actions.

At the same time, Tetyana Filevska pointed out the peculiarity of the effect of cultural diplomacy: "It is a long game."⁴ It is about forming a long-term impact from cultural and artistic events. Accordingly, T. Filevska sees the power of cultural diplomacy to achieve this long-term effect in the ability to change the perception and attitude at the personal level towards the country, culture, and the bearers of this culture: "let it be slowly but forever – at least, for a very long time."

Pavlo Klimkin associates the prospects for the effectiveness of Ukrainian cultural diplomacy with the opening in the international world space of a network of centers of Ukrainian studies, where Ukrainian culture will be presented scientifically using rationalized communication. The diplomat draws special attention to avoiding propaganda and counter-propaganda cultural products. P. Klimkin expressed

³ Ukrainian Institute. Workshop on Teaching Cultural Diplomacy (2024)]. URL: <https://ui.org.ua/sectors/projects/vorkshop-z-vykladannya-kulturnoyi-dyplomatiyi/>

⁴ Filevska T. Why is cultural diplomacy important? Some conclusions from the Great Britain/Ukraine Culture Season. URL: <https://life.pravda.com.ua/columns/2023/05/26/254489/>

his conviction about the artificiality, and therefore the ineffectiveness, of such means. He emphasized that cultural diplomacy should not be carried out so much by professional diplomats as by those who know how to communicate and convey their creative ideas to others, thereby ensuring the interests and recognition of the Ukrainian state worldwide. Creative ideas and plots should form the basis of Ukrainian cultural diplomacy in conditions of limited financial, economic, human, and intellectual resources. He defines the task of such plots as the creation of Ukrainian heroic mythology as a factor in representing Ukraine in the world.

In this context, it is worth mentioning that the values of Ukraine are included in the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage List, which are objects of cultural diplomacy. Through them, Ukraine and Ukrainians actively declare themselves to the world. Among such values are Kosiv-painted ceramics, Petrykiv painting, Krolevets woven towels, bread culture, Opishnyan ceramics, Cossack songs of the Dnipropetrovsk region, and Ukrainian borscht. These cultural heritage objects are distinguished by their uniqueness, originality, and unique sacred essential content that conveys the nation's Ukrainian traditions, symbolism, spirit, and culture. These values are not limited to the national Ukrainian intangible cultural heritage. As of July 2024, 103 elements from different ethnocultures that comprise a single Ukrainian nation have been included in the National List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Ukraine. Among them, various dialects, rituals and customs, crafts and technologies of embroidery, ornamental painting, Easter egg making, weaving, carpet weaving, bird breeding, sheep breeding, pottery, carving, herbalism, crafts, kobza, a rich song and dance heritage and traditions of preparing various dishes, celebrating holidays, etc.¹

The concept of intangible cultural heritage was proposed in the 1990s as an analog of the UNESCO World Heritage; it focuses on material culture. The content of the concept is reflected in the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. Article 2 of the Convention proposes a definition of intangible cultural heritage. "Intangible cultural heritage means customs, forms of representation and expression, knowledge and skills, as well as the associated tools, objects, artifacts, and cultural spaces, recognized by communities, groups, and, in some cases, individuals as part of their cultural heritage. Intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly reproduced by communities and groups depending on their environment and interaction with nature and history. It forms a sense of identity and continuity in them, thereby contributing to respect for cultural diversity and human creativity².

However, cultural diplomacy cannot be limited only to cultural heritage objects. The sphere of physical culture and sports has excellent opportunities in the field of cultural diplomacy because the interest in sports is universal, the language of sports is understandable to people from different parts of the world, the sporting

¹ On approval of the Procedure for maintaining the National List of Elements of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Ukraine: Order of the Council of Ministers of Ukraine dated 08/25/2023 № 449. URL: <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/z1718-23#n7>

² Convention for the Protection of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. URL: https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/995_d69#Text

achievements of athletes arouse admiration, a desire to get closer and communicate with their idol in different people, regardless of age, social status and role in society. The slogan of Russian politicians, they say, "sports are outside politics", is manipulative for almost everyone involved in this sphere. "As a "soft power", sports can establish good-neighborly relations between states, act as a catalyst for the mutual enrichment of cultures, intensify cultural and humanitarian exchanges and even contribute to resolving the most important diplomatic issues. However, sports also act as a powerful means of political manipulation, pressure on a geopolitical rival, and the resolution of one's own narrowly selfish foreign policy goals and objectives. In the 21st century, the winners seem to be those states that can skillfully combine various aspects of sports diplomacy as an important tool of "soft power"³.

Another topic worthy of attention in cultural diplomacy is the idea voiced by P. Klimkin of developing a Ukrainian heroic myth – legendary stories based on actual historical events told by modern means. On the one hand, this will contribute to strengthening the sense of national unity among Ukrainians, and on the other, it will help interest the outside world in Ukraine. The point is that it is necessary to create a Ukrainian legend as an opportunity to present Ukraine to the world as a territory with a centuries-old heroic history and traditions but in the context of modern culture and modern art forms. Such a legend can be based on the historical logic of the formation of the ancient Ukrainian state from the standpoint of European history. According to P. Klimkin, it could be presented to the world through adventure series, computer games, posters, memes, etc.

In this context, a promising direction may be to focus on the commonality of Ukrainian and European history, especially since there are enough examples. In particular, the historical version of the creation of Rus by the Scandinavian Vikings contains heroic historical and adventure components, so it is a good material for various film/television/gaming products. The story of Anna Yaroslavna, the daughter of the Kyiv prince Yaroslav the Wise, who became the queen of France (11th century), is also very illustrative. Powerful sources for the creation and presentation of Ukrainian legendary mythology to the world can be, among other things, excavations and artifacts that testify to the uniqueness of the Trypillian culture as an archaeological culture. The Copper-Stone Age – the beginning of the Bronze Age (c. 5400 – 2750 BC), whose monuments are known in Moldova, Romania, and Ukraine⁴. Another powerful topic for developing cultural diplomacy projects can be the development of Ukrainian identity around the Magdeburg Law and the ideas of local self-government. Considering that the Magdeburg Law was introduced on Ukrainian lands during the 14th-18th centuries, this topic will contribute to strengthening the intercultural ties of Ukraine in the European cultural space, for which it is also close and understandable. The advantage of such a project will be the demonstration of the historical kinship of Ukrainian and European political traditions,

³ Filipova Yu. (2020) Sports diplomacy: essential importance, challenges and prospects for Ukraine. *Politicus. Scientific journal*, 3, 153–157.

⁴ Videyko M. Yu. Trypilska culture. URL: http://www.history.org.ua/?termin=Trypilska_kra

based on the priority of freedom, the right to autonomous development of cities, and self-government. The uniqueness of Ukraine's historical existence indicates that even under the totalitarianism of the Russian Empire, several Ukrainian cities, including Kyiv, managed to preserve self-government until the 19th century. These stories can become the basis for international film projects, adventure series, children's animation, etc. At the same time, it is important to combine historical truth with creative imagination so that historical explorations do not replace the present. A great Ukrainian history must be created, which Ukrainians will be proud of, and the world will admire.

Conclusions

Thus, it is evident that states achieve the greatest return on public diplomatic activity through a complex combination of information activities, cultural diplomacy, and the promotion of their national values. The cultural policy of the state, directed at the international space, should have three interrelated goals:

- promotion of a positive image of the state abroad;
- creation of favorable conditions for the implementation of political, diplomatic, economic, and informational tasks of the country in the international arena;
- developing equal and mutually beneficial partnerships with foreign states in various spheres.

Since the primary source for implementing cultural policy is culture, it is important to have a philosophical understanding of culture as an environment that creates meaningful content for society. Within the framework of cultural diplomacy, culture is used as an independent political tool, and cultural diplomacy itself also becomes a platform for effective interaction between civil society, the public sector, and business.

Ukrainian culture in the modern world is perceived as a culture of sustainability, which is becoming a powerful source for forming the art of the future. It is expected that this will change the country's perception in the future and rewrite the historical memory of the past from the position of Ukraine's interests.

In the context of the prospects for further research, it seems important to clarify the pressing issues of cultural diplomacy of a theoretical and practical nature. In particular, the following. Is it possible to talk about cultural diplomacy without promoting national interests, or will there be a need to promote world values in the future? Will artificial intelligence affect cultural diplomacy, and how, because the essence of cultural diplomacy is in intersubjective contacts and connections? What is the place and role of cultural diplomacy in the context of the crisis of democracy and the growth of populism in politics? Is the exchange of ideas possible between alternative cultures that do not sympathize with each other, between mutually hostile people?

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3.3. The Use of Cross-Cultural Communication Tools to Shape the Geopolitical Image of the State

Andrey Goltsov

Doctor of Political Sciences, Associate Professor
National University of Life and Environmental Sciences of Ukraine
03041, 15 Heroyiv Oborony Str., Kyiv, Ukraine
URL: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7696-3223>

Abstract

In the context of dangerous transformations in the international order, many countries face urgent tasks related to optimizing their geopolitical image and enhancing the effectiveness of its dissemination in the international arena. This article explores the potential of cross-cultural communication tools for the creation and promotion of a state's geopolitical image. The study employs a synergistic approach alongside general scientific methods, discourse analysis, comparative-historical and comparative-geographical methods, geopolitical analysis, abstract geopolitical modeling, and others. A state's geopolitical image is understood as a coherent and vivid representation of it as a geo-spatial political entity, based on particularly significant integral geographic and activity-based characteristics. Geopolitical image-building should draw upon historical discourse and take into account both objective indicators of the state's development and deliberately constructed, expressive, and emotionally resonant features. In the process of geopolitical image-building, states utilize constructed geopolitical myths to anchor specific narratives in the collective consciousness of the domestic population and to broadcast these narratives abroad. The abstract geopolitical model of a state's image includes a set of key parameters that characterize its geopolitical role, status, foreign policy features, etc. Amid the development of global cultural processes, the potential for employing a state's 'soft power' and instruments of cultural diplomacy to construct and disseminate its geopolitical image has significantly increased. Cross-cultural communication is viewed as a form of social interaction among individuals or groups from different cultural communities, manifested in interconnected processes of exchanging information, ideas, cultural values, and more. To effectively form and disseminate a state's geopolitical image, it is appropriate to utilize core tools of cross-cultural communication, including diplomatic, project, symbolic, media-based, informational, and educational. The findings of this study are relevant for improving the theoretical foundations of Ukraine's foreign policy, enhancing its geopolitical image, and contributing to the effective promotion of the country's image in the international environment.

Keywords: *geopolitical image, 'soft power', cultural diplomacy, cross-cultural communication, geopolitical image-building, geopolitical myth, abstract geopolitical model.*

Introduction

In order to effectively advance its political, security, military, economic, cultural, and other interests on the international stage, Ukraine, as a sovereign state, is in urgent need of cultivating a maximally positive image. Following the onset of Russia's full-scale invasion in February 2022, Ukraine intensified efforts to strengthen its international standing. The geopolitical image of the country should function as a powerful 'tool' for mobilizing international support, securing military-technical assistance, and enhancing economic cooperation, among other objectives. Ukraine consistently presents itself as a legitimate democratic state that defends its territorial integrity and strictly adheres to the norms of international law.

The formation and maintenance of a positive geopolitical image is a crucial factor in ensuring Ukraine's successful progress along the path of European integration. A stable image of Ukraine as a reliable partner is expected to positively influence the dynamics of its negotiations with the European Union. This also extends to Ukraine's effective cooperation with NATO in securing military-technical assistance from the member states of the Alliance. A positive national image enhances the country's investment attractiveness and contributes to the development of multifaceted international cooperation. Thus, the geopolitical image serves not only as a reflection of Ukraine's political strategy but also as a powerful 'instrument' for safeguarding its long-term national interests.

Scientific exploration on the issues related to the formation of a geopolitical image is inherently interdisciplinary, encompassing research from geopolitics, history, political science, international relations theory, sociology, and related fields. Particular attention should be given to the study of geopolitical image formation under conditions of information warfare, where destructive informational influences are exerted, disinformation is disseminated through the media, and negative perceptions of certain geopolitical actors are deliberately constructed. Think tanks and research institutions regularly assess the international image of states using both qualitative and quantitative indicators. However, there remains a notable absence of a unified methodology for the objective evaluation of a state's image on the international stage.

To construct and enhance the geopolitical image of their state, government authorities employ a set of tools commonly referred to as 'soft power'. In exercising 'soft power', states engage in activities such as participation in international organizations, cultural diplomacy, scientific exchanges, humanitarian initiatives, and educational programs, etc. The development of digital technologies and social media has opened new avenues for the deployment of 'soft power'. At the same time, it has given rise to challenges related to disinformation, propaganda, and information warfare.

In contemporary academic discourse, cultural diplomacy is regarded as one of the very important means of 'soft power', aimed at shaping a positive image of the state, expanding international cultural exchanges, and promoting national values across various regions of the world. Numerous examples of successful cultural diplomacy demonstrate that even small states can leverage their cultural capital to construct a favorable geopolitical image and enhance their significance on the international stage.

One of the significant 'mechanisms' for shaping a positive image of the state is cross-cultural communication, the development of which is greatly facilitated by cultural diplomacy. In the context of the development of globalization processes, the importance of cross-cultural communication has significantly increased across various domains, including international relations, business, science, education, and interpersonal interactions. Through cultural institutions, art exhibitions, cinema, tours of creative ensembles, educational programs, language courses, and similar initiatives, the state has the opportunity to represent its identity, values, traditions, and achievements. Such cultural policies enable the state to enhance its international standing, broaden its network of partners, promote favorable narratives on the global stage, and counter disinformation. Given the intensification of intercultural contacts,

there is a growing need for both theoretical reflection and practical optimization of communication processes between diverse cultural communities. Contemporary research focuses on the influence of cultural differences on information exchange, the perception of non-verbal cues, and the specific features involved in developing intercultural competence. Particular attention is devoted to the study of cultural codes, barriers, stereotypes, manifestations of ethnocentrism, and the contradictions and conflicts that may arise within the cultural sphere.

The aforementioned points underscore the relevance of this study. Therefore, the examination of how cross-cultural communication tools contribute to the formation of a state's geopolitical image is of considerable scholarly and practical interest.

The aim of the research is to identify the essence of a state's geopolitical image and to determine the most appropriate means of cross-cultural communication for its formation. Objectives: to uncover the essence of the geopolitical image; to clarify the significance of a state's 'soft power' in the process of geopolitical image-building; to identify the most effective forms of cultural diplomacy for shaping a state's geopolitical image; to analyze the potential of cross-cultural communication tools for the purposes of geopolitical image-building.

Scientific novelty: a conceptual interpretation of the geopolitical image of the state has been proposed, along with a corresponding abstract geopolitical model. The study of the geopolitical dimensions of 'soft power' and cultural diplomacy, as well as the most appropriate means of cross-cultural communication for shaping a state's geopolitical image, has undergone further development.

Literature Review

In classical geopolitical literature of the 20th century, considerable attention was devoted to the formation of the geopolitical image of states. In the 21st century, there has been a growing interest in the issue of a state's geopolitical image as a key component of its geostrategy aimed at securing its interests within geopolitical space. Among the various strands of scientific geopolitics, critical geopolitics has achieved significant advancements in the study of geopolitical constructs – such as images, brands, and representations. According to widely accepted views within this approach, deliberately constructed models of objects, phenomena, and processes typically serve the interests of ruling groups. In his analysis of state image, K. Dodds (2019)¹ conceptualized it as an impression primarily intended for an external audience, communicated through diplomacy, mass media, cultural initiatives, and similar channels. In examining the emergence and development of geopolitics, Dodds also analyzed the ways in which a state's image and brand significantly influence its capabilities on the international stage. These constructs shape perceptions among the populations and political elites of other states, reputable international organizations, and other global actors.

J. Agnew (2022)² investigates the formation of global discourse, its subordination to the interests of elite groups, its dynamic transformations, and the production

¹ Dodds K. (2019). *Geopolitics: A Very Short Introduction*. (3rd ed.). Oxford : Oxford University Press.

² Agnew J. (2022). *Hidden Geopolitics. Governance in a Globalized World*. Lanham, MA : Rowman & Littlefield.

of images and representations that serve elite agendas. From Agnew's perspective, a state's geopolitical image emerges not only as a result of its actual political actions but also through complex communicative processes (political, social, and cultural), along with the influence of media. In his study of geopolitical representations of states, D. Moïsi (2009)³ emphasized not only rational assessments but also the impact of socially significant emotions – such as fear, hope, and humiliation. These emotions, in his view, give rise to distinct cultural patterns across regions and countries, leading to the development of cultures of fear, hope, or humiliation. According to D. Moïsi, the formation of a geopolitical image is significantly influenced by the strategic interests of the respective state, national political narratives, socio-psychological factors, and cultural codes.

Numerous studies examine various aspects of the formation and transformation of the geopolitical image of specific states. In particular, experience has been gained in studying the geopolitical images of the US, European countries, Canada, Russia, China, India, Brazil, and others states. Scholars have shown considerable interest in the impact of crisis situations on the transformation of states' geopolitical images. In the context of international crises or warfare, a state may either suffer reputational losses or, conversely, enhance its authority and improve its image on the global stage. Studies focused on the geopolitical images of medium-sized and small states are also relevant, as these countries strive to construct a favorable image and pursue their national interests within a competitive international environment. Overall, an analysis of contemporary scholarly literature reveals a lack of comprehensive methodological frameworks for the study of geopolitical image.

A solid research arsenal has been developed by scholars and practitioners regarding the use of various parameters for calculating specific indices for the purpose of ranking states globally. These efforts primarily rely on objective indicators related to the geographical environment of states, their military capabilities, economic and social development, participation in international organizations and peacekeeping missions, and their implementation of various programs and projects.

The concept of 'soft power' was introduced by J. Nye in the 1990s. Among this scholar's subsequent contributions to the study of various aspects of 'soft power' it is worth mentioning, for example, the articles published by Nye (2019)⁴ and (2021)⁵. This concept is understood as a state's ability to achieve its foreign policy objectives not through coercion or military force, but by means of attraction, persuasion, and influence over other actors within the international order, primarily through culture, values, ideology, authoritative policy, diplomacy, and related mechanisms. In the scholarly research of the 21st century, the concept of 'soft power' has undergone further development. Researchers consider its main components to include ideological

³ Moïsi D. (2009). *How Cultures of Fear, Humiliation, and Hope Are Reshaping the World*. London : Bodley Head.

⁴ Nye J. S. (2019). Soft Power and Public Diplomacy Revisited. *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy*, 14 (1–2), 7–20. DOI: 10.1163/1871191X-14101013

⁵ Nye, J. S. (2021). Soft Power: The Evolution of a Concept. *Journal of Political Power*, 14 (1), 196–208. DOI: 10.1080/2158379X.2021.1879572

appeal, legitimacy in international relations, responsible political institutions, culture in all its forms, humanitarian activities, and more. Particular attention is also given to the study of the 'soft power' exercised by influential international intergovernmental organizations (the UN, the NATO, and the EU), as well as by non-governmental organizations, transnational corporations, foundations, and other subjects of world politics.

Particular interest among scholars and policymakers is directed toward the practical implementation of 'soft power' in the international arena. A number of studies focus on analyzing the 'soft power' tools employed by the US, China, Russia, the EU, Japan, and others actors. For instance, attention is given to the EU's strategy, which traditionally relies on the promotion of democratic values, human rights, and international legal norms. Criticism of the concept of 'soft power' in academic literature often pertains to its conceptual ambiguity and the difficulty of measuring its effectiveness. Some authors point to the risk of using cultural narratives for one's own geopolitical purposes, which can reduce trust in those actors who consciously promote them. Despite criticism, the concept of 'soft power' remains authoritative in influential political circles, and its various interpretations serve as a significant analytical tool for understanding current processes of interstate competition in the realm of ideas, values, and identities.

The theoretical foundations for studying cultural diplomacy as a component of 'soft power' were laid in the seminal works of J. Nye at the end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century. In the works of other scholars devoted to the cultural dimensions of 'soft power', attention has been given to the role of culture in shaping a positive international image of the state, supporting bilateral and multilateral relations in the international arena, and countering geopolitical challenges through the organization and implementation of international communication in the cultural sphere. Within Ukrainian scholarship, the issue of cultural diplomacy research remains highly relevant. Among the works of Ukrainian scholars published in the 2020s, examples include articles by O. Shtyrov (2024)¹, A. Tatarnikova (2023)², and the co-authored article by Yu. Poliakov, O. Shayda, and A. Stepanov (2020)³, among others.

Cultural diplomacy is interpreted not only as a political practice but also as a set of processes of mutual influence, in which cultural communication facilitates the engagement of other parties in cultural and political dialogue. Of particular relevance are studies of cultural diplomacy within the framework of next-generation public diplomacy. Numerous scholarly works analyze the international activities of major cultural cooperation institutions, such as the British Council and the Goethe-Institut.

¹ Shtyrov, O. M. (2024). Cultural diplomacy as an tool of state policy. *Investments: Practice and Experience*, 4, 214–218. DOI: 10.32702/2306 6814.2024.4.214 [in Ukrainian].

² Tatarnikova, A. (2023). Cultural Diplomacy in the Eastern European Space: Culturological Aspect, Current Trends. *National Academy of Managerial Staff of Culture and Arts Herald*, 3, 15–19 [in Ukrainian].

³ Poliakov, Yu. V., Shayda, O. Y., & Stepanov, A. V. (2023). Cultural Diplomacy as a Tool of International Communication. *Herald of Lviv University of Trade and Economics. Economic Sciences*, 71, 57–63.

In light of the proliferation of social media, online platforms, and virtual cultural content, research on digital cultural diplomacy has also gained significance.

The issue of ensuring effective cross-cultural communication has acquired exceptional significance. According to one definition, 'cross-cultural communication refers to interactions occurring at the intersection of cultures, characterized by clear differences between those cultures, as well as at the intersection of worldviews, perspectives, ages, social statuses, and, naturally, cultures themselves' (Kudlai & Babina, 2023: 152)⁴. The outcomes of international cooperation in political, economic, educational, and cultural spheres largely depend on the successful implementation of cross-cultural interactions. Contemporary academic literature reflects a growing practical interest in cross-cultural communication and offers diverse approaches to its theoretical foundations, methodological frameworks, and empirical methods.

Let us briefly examine the scholarly works of the most authoritative theorists in the field of cross-cultural communication studies. G. Hofstede (1980)⁵ is widely recognized as the foundational figure in the research of cultural dimensions. He identified fundamental cultural parameters for characterizing various national communities across the globe. His theory inspired numerous subsequent studies in fields such as cross-cultural communication, intercultural management, international business, and beyond. M. Gelfand (2018)⁶ made a substantial contribution to the development of intercultural psychology by introducing the concept of 'tight' and 'loose' cultures. Through numerous examples, she analyzed how the degree of social control influences behavioral patterns in different cultures. R. Lewis (2018)⁷ in his model proposed the identification of three types of cultures: linear-active (e.g., Germanic, Scandinavian), multi-active (e.g., Italian, Latin American), and reactive (primarily Asian). F. Trompenaars and C. Hampden-Turner (2011)⁸ developed their own model of cultural differences based on seven dimensions, emphasizing the dynamic interaction of cultures rather than rigid comparisons. They argued that cultural differences should not be overcome, but rather integrated in order to develop effective global strategies. The aforementioned scholars have significantly contributed to the formation of the theoretical foundations of cross-cultural communication. The models they proposed are widely utilized both in academic research and in practice, particularly for developing recommendations aimed at facilitating effective intercultural dialogue.

Many authors examine the specific features of cross-cultural communication in individual countries around the world in their studies. Thus, drawing on empirical

⁴ Kudlai I. V., & Babina, V. O. (2023). International Relations and Cross-Cultural Communication. *Regional Studies*, 34, 151–156. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.32782/2663-6170/2023.34.26> [in Ukrainian].

⁵ Hofstede G. (1980). *Culture's Consequences: International differences in Work-Related Values*. Beverly Hills, CA : Sage.

⁶ Gelfand M. (2018). *Rule Makers, Rule Breakers: How Tight and Loose Cultures Wire Our World*. New York : Scribner.

⁷ Lewis R. D. (2018). *When Cultures Collide: Leading Across Cultures*. (4th ed.). Boston, London : Nicholas Brealey.

⁸ Trompenaars F., Hampden-Turner C. (2011). *Riding the Waves of Culture Understanding Cultural Diversity in Business*. (3rd ed.). London : Nicholas Brealey.

material related to Ukraine, M. Starodubska (2014)¹ examines in her monograph the processes of cross-cultural interaction and its outcomes within the mentality of Ukrainians. The author identifies numerous opportunities for communication between the Ukrainian nation and foreign national communities, facilitated by 'horizontal' connections among civil society institutions, particularly volunteer organizations.

Overall, contemporary scholarly literature on cross-cultural communication is characterized by rapid development and a diversity of approaches. Future research should strive to integrate theoretical principles with applied strategies and concrete proposals aimed at enhancing mutual understanding between cultures across countries and regions.

Materials and Methods

In a philosophical sense, the study was grounded in the dialectical method of comprehending objects, processes, and phenomena at various levels of the geospatial organization of society. The synergetic approach enables the integration of scientific knowledge from political science, geopolitics, international relations theory, cultural studies, sociology, and other disciplines, as well as to identify vertical and horizontal interconnections among the structural elements of the research subject – the geopolitical image of the state. Through the application of a comprehensive approach, the interrelations among heterogeneous components of the image are examined, resulting in the conceptualization of the object as a coherent construct.

The research employed general scientific methods such as analysis, synthesis, induction, and deduction. The analysis of individual components of the state's geopolitical image involved a detailed examination of their essential characteristics. Among the wide array of tools for cross-cultural communication, particular attention was given to those most appropriate for the purposes of geopolitical image-building. In studying the structure of a state's geopolitical image, synthesis was used to group the principal parameters, which collectively aim to reflect the integrated unity of the image.

In this study, the historical method is primarily aimed at examining the formation and development of the geopolitical images of states throughout history. A comparative-historical method was employed to contrast the preconditions for the emergence and the distinctive features of the development of geopolitical images across different countries. The comparative-geographical method is used to identify the common and divergent characteristics of various spatial objects, phenomena, and processes. Given the need to consider the development of states (and their geopolitical images) simultaneously in both temporal and spatial dimensions, the integration of the comparative-historical and comparative-geographical methods is considered appropriate. Cross-cultural comparison allows for the examination of differences and similarities in the communicative practices of two or more cultures, facilitating the identification of the specific characteristics of cultural interaction both within individual countries and on the international stage.

¹ Starodubska M. (2014). *How to Understand Ukrainians: A Cross-Cultural Perspective*. Kharkiv : Vivat [in Ukrainian].

Discourse analysis possesses significant heuristic potential, as it enables the reliable identification of ideological orientations, moral-ethical and social normative foundations, cultural models, and emotional-psychological aspects embedded in texts related to geopolitics, soft power, cultural diplomacy, and cross-cultural communication. A crucial role is played by the interpretation of textual content as a representation of the latent interests of political elites, the nature of social relations within political systems across various hierarchical levels, as well as the influence of historical memory, geopolitical myths, and other factors.

The application of a geopolitical approach to the study of a state's image on the international stage involves identifying the characteristics of its geopolitical position at various hierarchical levels; determining the state's primary objectives within geopolitical space, its strategic vectors, and directions of implementation; analyzing the state's overall potential; and characterizing the spatial dimensions of its policy toward other countries, including the specific instruments of power used in their execution.

Geopolitical modeling serves as a crucial tool for analyzing interactions among international actors (primarily states), forecasting the development of the international order, and assessing the consequences of specific political actions. In a narrower sense, geopolitical modeling is aimed at representing the geopolitical structure of the object of inquiry. Accordingly, this study employs a broader integral geopolitical modeling of the state's image, which performs the following functions: diagnostic (identifying strengths and weaknesses of a state's image positioning on the international stage), strategic (promoting specific narratives in the international arena in line with the objectives of the state's geostrategy), communicative (disseminating image-related narratives through diplomacy, cultural policy, and related channels), and prognostic (anticipating the reactions of other states and international organizations to particular foreign policy actions).

The abstract models constructed are intended to adequately reflect real geopolitical entities, processes, and phenomena. Geopolitical modeling within the framework of constructivism focuses primarily on the consideration of ideological, historical, and cultural factors that shape a state's image. This method enabled the development of an abstract geopolitical model of a state's image. Additionally, the evaluation of the constructed models of the geopolitical images of various states was of significant importance.

Results and Discussion

In academic literature, a clear and universally accepted definition of the geopolitical image of a state or other actor is rarely proposed. In this study, the geopolitical image of a state is understood as a coherent and distinctive representation of the state as a geo-spatial political entity, based on particularly significant integral geographical and functional characteristics. The geopolitical image of a state should unambiguously 'mark' it within the global political space. A positive geopolitical image can be reasonably regarded as an important component of a state's 'soft power'. The state's image is intended to reflect its most distinctive and specific symbols,

signs, attributes, and other markers. The geopolitical image of a state comprises both external (international) and internal dimensions.

The construction of geopolitical images of states and other actors is referred to as geopolitical '*image-building*'. In the process of image-building, both objective indicators of a state's integral potential and its foreign policy activities are taken into account, while at the same time, subjective perceptions of the state are deliberately shaped for both its domestic audience and the international community. This process involves the use of cultural diplomacy as well as a range of cross-cultural communication tools. Geopolitical image-building constitutes an essential component of constructive geopolitics.

The development of a state's geostrategy largely relies on specific ideological foundations, particularly geopolitical ideology. The ideological discourse required by ruling elites becomes embedded in the mass consciousness of the population. As a result, deliberately imposed geopolitical ideology serves to justify (and simultaneously legitimize) the main objectives and directions of the geostrategy, the state's own geopolitical image as well as those of other states, and the use of various political instruments by the state. Geopolitical ideology influences the formation of the cultural code of the nation itself, while also shaping the constructed cultural codes of other nations and peoples. This is achieved through the use of the discourse of 'low' geopolitics (popular geopolitics intended for the general public) which is consciously produced by state authorities or other actors for dissemination within society. 'Low' geopolitics is characterized by reductionism: a deliberate simplification of the geopolitical picture of the world, featuring simplified and clearly defined geopolitical images that are necessarily emotionally charged.

In the process of geopolitical image-building, geopolitical myths are employed. A geopolitical myth should be understood as a collective perception held by a particular community regarding a specific geopolitical spatial object (process or phenomenon), primarily expressed through a narrative. This narrative may be supplemented by signs, symbols, literary and artistic works, and other cultural attributes. Common examples of such myths include those concerning ancestral yet lost territories, traditional geopolitical adversaries (or allies), or the 'legitimate' (or illegitimate) possession of certain geographical entities by a particular state. Artificially constructed myths must align with existing traditional geopolitical stereotypes embedded in the collective consciousness of the population. When this alignment occurs, a so-called 'multiplicative' effect may take place, thereby enhancing the likelihood that the geopolitical myth will become deeply rooted in public consciousness.

The initiative to construct geopolitical myths most frequently originates from the ruling political elite. The mass media play a leading role in embedding newly created or modernized geopolitical myths into the public consciousness. As a result, society is presented with a set of simplified myths that are deliberately crafted and reflect the geopolitical narratives favored by those in power. Within society, geopolitical myths serve both identificational and mobilizational functions. For the purpose of mobilizing the population, negative myths about 'enemies' (whether traditional or even 'eternal')

prove to be particularly effective. The ongoing manipulation of public consciousness constitutes a key objective of geopolitical myth-making. At the same time, the primary goals involve the creation of a generalized and simplified geopolitical worldview and the construction of the geopolitical image of one's own state.

The formation and dissemination of geopolitical object images on the global stage emerges as one of the key tasks of practical geopolitics. According to T. Volyanuk (2023)¹, 'in the postmodern era, the geopolitics of images emerges as the deliberate positioning and manipulation of specialized geographical representations within the mental-geographic space' (p. 308). The construction of a state's geopolitical image requires a comprehensive consideration of factors within the international environment. It is essential to analyze both the favorable and unfavorable aspects of the state's geopolitical position globally, as well as within its respective macro-region, mesoregion, and sub-region. In achieving the objectives of geopolitical image-building, it is crucial to account for the state's integral geopolitical potential, which is understood as a complex of interrelated potentials, including military, natural-resource, economic (encompassing financial, industrial, scientific-technological, agricultural, and communication dimensions), cultural, demographic, and others.

The integral geopolitical models of real or potential objects or processes developed by researchers are intended to be comprehended by political elites and society at large. These models serve as a foundation for strategic decision-making by government authorities and for the formulation of strategic as well as operational-tactical recommendations concerning policy in the geopolitical space.

The consideration of a state's geopolitical brand merits particular attention. Typically, such a brand is created as a relatively stable construct that is politically appealing both to the population of the country itself and to the international community. Geopolitical branding involves the creation of a unique and complex entity that combines specific characteristics intended to be closely associated with a particular state. This brand may be grounded in the country's tangible advantages as well as in symbolic constructs that emphasize its identity, values, historical experience, and cultural heritage. At the same time, the geopolitical brand is designed to function as a kind of 'trademark', enhancing the state's attractiveness for trade, investment, tourism, and other forms of economic activity. In this way, a state's geopolitical brand is closely linked to its overall image, assuming a subordinate role in relation to the latter.

The formation of a state's image must be grounded in historical discourse, particularly in a generalized and predominantly positive evaluation of its political past, as well as in interpretations of key historical events that serve to enhance national prestige. History is often interpreted from a specific ideological standpoint and, at times, is even deliberately constructed. The politics of historical memory are pursued with the aim of glorifying the state's history and 'demonizing' past

¹ Volyanuk T. A. (2023). The Image of the State: The Genesis of the Concept and the Main Approaches to Understanding in Modern Science. *State and Regions. Series: Law*, 2 (80), 305–310. DOI: 10.32782/1813-338X-2023.2.53.[in Ukrainian].

adversaries. As such, the historical past becomes subject to manipulation by the ruling political elite, who justify these actions with the ostensibly noble goal of constructing an ancient and heroic national narrative. For instance, within Russian society, there exists a widely propagated image of the Muscovite principality as possessing a glorious past, and claims are made regarding the continuity of the Muscovite Tsardom from Kyivan Rus. Russia's geopolitical image incorporates narratives of a grand and powerful Russian Empire surrounded by hostile states, with which it waged victorious wars. In 'Putin's' Russia, particular emphasis has been placed on the discourse surrounding the victory in the 'Great Patriotic War'. These geopolitical narratives have become deeply embedded in the collective consciousness of the Russian population and significantly influence how Russians perceive the Russo-Ukrainian war in the 21st century.

A state's geopolitical image is shaped by objective factors, particularly those related to its concrete actions both domestically and on the international stage. For instance, in 2014, Russia carried out the illegal occupation and annexation of part of Ukraine's territory, and in 2022, it launched an armed aggression against our country. The image of Russia as an aggressive and criminal state is something its leadership seeks to 'neutralize' by employing narratives centered on the purported necessity of defending national security from external threats. These narratives are actively disseminated by Russian political institutions through state-controlled mass media.

The geopolitical image of a state is constructed for both internal (domestic) and external (international) audiences. It is important to emphasize that image-building involves a combination of rational (cognitive) and irrational (emotional-psychological) dimensions of a state's image.

The abstract geopolitical model of a state's image consists of a set of interrelated parameters, each of which provides a qualitative assessment of a given state. Let us examine the key parameters of such a model of a state's image.

Geopolitical role in the world and its regions (for states with high integral potential): *leader; hegemon; empire (neo-empire)*.

Geopolitical status: *'pole'* at the global level; *'center'* at the macro-regional (or trans-regional) level; *regional 'center'* (center at the meso-regional or sub-regional level); *regional actor-state; satellite state* (dependent on a more powerful actor); *'buffer'* state.

Position of the state in the international order, in the context of how it is perceived by other members of the international community: *respected; partially respected; 'rogue state'*.

Tendency toward military expansionism: *aggressive*, using armed force to achieve expansionist goals; *peaceful*, favoring diplomatic means to resolve international disputes, although capable of using force in accordance with international law under certain circumstances.

A special case is the *image of a victim* – a state that has been subjected to external aggressive actions.

Adherence to international law: *conscientious subject; unconscientious subject* (violation state); intermediate variants are also possible. subject of international law.

Compliance with international partnership or alliance obligations: *reliable partner* (or *ally*); *unreliable partner* (or *ally*).

Degree of foreign policy activity: *active*; *passive*; intermediate variants are also possible. Sovereignty (external and internal): *sovereign*; *partially sovereign*; *non-sovereign* (the state possesses only formal sovereignty).

Degree of democratization of the political regime: *democratic*; *non-democratic* (totalitarian, authoritarian); *semi-democratic* (a formally democratic regime that in practice demonstrates numerous violations of democratic norms). Degree of internal stability: *stable*; *unstable*; intermediate variants are also possible.

Influence of the religious factor on the state's geopolitics: *clerical*; *secular*; intermediate variants are also possible.

It should be emphasized that the proposed model specifically incorporates geopolitical parameters. Let us consider the potential application of a state's 'soft power' and instruments of cultural diplomacy in the context of geopolitical image-building.

To advance their interests on the international stage, states employ a variety of political 'technologies' – a set of practical tools aimed at achieving and maintaining political control over geopolitical space. In contemporary foreign policy, states utilize not only traditional methods of 'hard power' but also increasingly popular instruments of 'soft power'. According of J. Nye's (2019)¹ somewhat revised interpretation, a state's 'soft power' should be based on three main pillars: 'its culture (in places where it is attractive to others); its political values (when it lives up to them at home and abroad); and its foreign policies (when they are seen as legitimate and having moral authority)'. In the 21st century, 'soft power' has come to be viewed in international relations as an alternative to traditional 'hard power' tools, such as economic or military pressure. This essentially neoliberal concept posits that the dissemination among states of the belief in the necessity of adhering to international law, the positive value of liberal democratic principles, and the primacy of human rights and freedoms can contribute to the harmonization of international relations and the international order.

From the perspective of US strategic interests, J. Nye proposed the concept of 'smart power', which was intended to support the development of a comprehensive strategy, resource base, and toolkit for achieving American objectives globally. This approach was to be grounded in the flexible use of various instruments of both 'hard power' and 'soft power'. American 'smart power' was envisioned not only as a means to serve US interests but also as a tool to benefit the broader civilized world. The implementation of 'soft power' tools in the practical policies of states in the 21st century has yielded mixed results. Notably, Russia began to interpret its disinformation campaigns and political coercion of other states as forms of 'soft power'. It is important to emphasize, however, that the essence of 'soft power' lies in engaging other international actors by generating interest, persuading them of the value

¹ Nye J. S. (2019). Soft Power and Public Diplomacy Revisited. *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy*, 14 (1–2), 7–20. DOI: 10.1163/1871191X-14101013

of proposed actions, and attracting them with promising prospects. In this regard, J. Nye (2021, p. 201)¹ wrote: 'Agenda-setting that is regarded as legitimate by the target, positive attraction, and persuasion are the parts of the spectrum of behaviors I include in soft power. Hard power is push; soft power is pull.'

Cultural instruments of 'soft power' contribute to establishing a foundation for the state's long-term strategic influence on the international community. The effectiveness of their application depends on the state's ability to develop a coherent and effective foreign policy in the cultural sphere, the creativity of state institutions in shaping and promoting its cultural products on the international stage, and the extent to which cultural-civilizational characteristics of countries and regions, as well as local factors, are taken into account.

Thus, to establish and enhance the geopolitical image of their state, government authorities employ a range of instruments collectively referred to as 'soft power'. In exercising 'soft power', states engage in the activities of international organizations, cultural diplomacy, scientific exchanges, humanitarian and educational programs, among other means. The development of digital technologies and social media platforms presents new opportunities for the application of 'soft power'. At the same time, however, serious challenges arise in the form of disinformation, destructive propaganda, and information-psychological operations carried out by adversaries.

A crucial component of a state's 'soft power' is its cultural diplomacy, which constitutes a distinct domain of diplomatic activity and involves the use of culture as an effective instrument for achieving strategic national objectives on the international stage. According to A. Tatarnikova (2023, p. 16)², cultural diplomacy performs several important functions: 'disseminating information about the state globally; shaping a positive image of the country; fostering international cooperation among nations; establishing the state's political influence; and contributing to the country's economic development'. Cultural diplomacy enables a state to influence other international actors not through diplomatic pressure, military threats, coercion, or economic sanctions, but rather through the appeal of its cultural heritage, contemporary cultural achievements, spiritual and cultural values, and national identity. Following the words of J. Nye (2019, p. 8), 'the Roman Empire rested on the success of its legions, but its longevity also depended on the attraction of its culture'³. Although instruments of geopolitical pressure or blackmail remain relevant, it is often more advantageous to ensure the political, economic, and cultural attractiveness of one's state. In this way, the objective of softly promoting a positive image of the state in other countries and regions of the world is realized.

In its traditional conception, the strictly 'cultural' component of cultural diplomacy referred to 'high' culture (literature, music, visual arts, etc.) created by the intellectual

¹ Nye J. S. (2021). Soft Power: The Evolution of a Concept. *Journal of Political Power*, 14 (1), 196–208. DOI: 10.1080/2158379X.2021.1879572

² Tatarnikova A. (2023). Cultural Diplomacy in the Eastern European Space: Culturological Aspect, Current Trends. *National Academy of Managerial Staff of Culture and Arts Herald*, 3, 15–19 [in Ukrainian].

³ Nye J. S. (2019). Soft Power and Public Diplomacy Revisited. *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy*, 14 (1–2), 7–20. DOI: 10.1163/1871191X-14101013

elite. However, in the 21st century, it is increasingly recognized that cultural diplomacy should actively promote 'popular' ('mass') culture, whose events attract the widest possible audience (Shtyrov, 2024, p. 227)⁴. Through the organization of cultural cooperation with other countries, narratives favorable to domestic authorities are disseminated internationally. From a geopolitical perspective, it is particularly important to cultivate the image of a legitimate international actor, a reliable ally, and an active participant in global cooperation. Cultural diplomacy is closely linked to the strategy of promoting the national image of a state. In the case of Ukraine, particular emphasis is placed on the importance of ensuring 'that all parties involved in the formation of a positive image of Ukraine abroad share a common understanding and vision and use unified approaches and a visual image to represent Ukraine at the international level' (Poliakova et al., 2023, p. 60)⁵. This contributes to the formation of a perception of the state as one that is capable of defending its sovereignty while simultaneously being peace-oriented and committed to the conscientious observance of international legal norms.

In order to promote their positive image globally, certain developed countries have established and effectively utilize specialized institutions that advocate the richness of their national cultures across numerous countries, provide opportunities for local populations to study their language, and design and implement intercultural communication projects. Notable examples include the British Council, the Institut Français, the Goethe-Institut, the Cervantes Institute, the Dante Alighieri Society, and the Confucius Institute. Medium and small states, of course, do not possess such extensive resources for conducting cultural diplomacy on a global scale. Nevertheless, they are capable of promoting their language and culture abroad, organizing cultural events (such as festivals, exhibitions, and conferences), and developing and implementing cultural cooperation projects. In doing so, they contribute to the formation of a favorable image of their country within the societies of partner states.

State institutions play a significant role in fostering the development of public diplomacy in the cultural sphere. In particular, the activities of non-governmental organizations operating in the international arena are actively encouraged – these include research institutes, institutions of higher education, literary and artistic unions, sports organizations, various cultural societies, and others. Thus, the implementation of cultural diplomacy objectives aimed at promoting the image of the state is entrusted to non-state actors and individuals, including scholars, artists, writers, athletes, businesspeople, and public figures.

Thus, cultural diplomacy emerges as a vital component of 'soft power', aimed at shaping a positive image of the state, expanding international cultural exchanges, and promoting national cultural values in various countries and regions across the globe. Numerous examples of successful cultural diplomacy demonstrate that even

⁴ Shtyrov O. M. (2024). Cultural diplomacy as an tool of state policy. *Investments: Practice and Experience*, 4, 214–218. DOI: 10.32702/2306 6814.2024.4.214 [in Ukrainian].

⁵ Poliakova Yu. V., Shayda O. Y., Stepanov A. V. (2023). Cultural Diplomacy as a Tool of International Communication. *Herald of Lviv University of Trade and Economics. Economic Sciences*, 71, 57–63.

small states can effectively leverage their cultural capital to construct a favorable geopolitical image and enhance their significance on the international stage. From an optimistic perspective, 'by fostering collaboration and synergy among diverse actors, countries can present a unified and authentic image to the world, enhancing their credibility and attractiveness in the eyes of international audiences' (Kelechi, 2024, p. 48)¹.

In contemporary academic discourse, cross-cultural communication is understood as a form of social interaction that takes place within the context of cultural diversity and entails consideration of linguistic, symbolic, behavioral, value-based, and worldview differences. Its significance has considerably increased in the context of globalization, population mobility, and the expansion of international interactions in the spheres of business, education, diplomacy, and media.

Cross-cultural communication is intended to encompass the entire spectrum of information exchange processes between different cultural systems. The Resolution adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on December 17, 2021², emphasizes that 'cultures and civilizations can contribute to, and are crucial enablers of, sustainable development'. Cross-cultural communication is understood as a set of processes involving the exchange of information, ideas, and values between individuals or groups belonging to different cultural communities. In the context of increasing cultural diversity, cross-cultural communication can be understood as a form of social interaction that occurs among representatives of communities that differ in terms of ethno-cultural background, language, social status, gender, age, profession, and other characteristics. In a narrower sense, 'the crux of cross-cultural communication is developing effective ways to appreciate the culture of others involved in the acts of communication' (Aririguzoh, 2022, 9)³.

In his monograph, G. Hofstede (1980)⁴ identified four fundamental dimensions of cross-cultural communication: 'individualism – collectivism', 'power distance', 'uncertainty avoidance', and 'masculinity – femininity'. Subsequently, M. Bond and a group of Chinese researchers proposed the dimension of 'long-term orientation – short-term orientation', while M. Minkov, in a co-authored monograph with G. Hofstede and G. J. Hofstede, substantiated the relevance of incorporating an additional dimension – 'indulgence – restraint' (Hofstede et al., 2010)⁵. The study of cultures through such dimensions enables the anticipation of potential

¹ Kelechi W. (2024). Public Diplomacy and Nation Branding. *Journal of Public Relations*, 3 (1), 40–51. DOI: 10.47941/jpr.1774.

² Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 17 December 2021. 76/214. Culture and sustainable development. UNESCO. URL: https://articles.unesco.org/sites/default/files/medias/fichiers/2023/05/Resolution%2076_214.pdf

³ Aririguzoh S. (2022). Communication competencies, culture and SDGs: effective processes to cross-cultural communication. *Humanities & Social Sciences Communications*, 9 (96), 1–11. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-022-01109-4>

⁴ Hofstede G. (1980). *Culture's Consequences: International differences in Work-Related Values*. Beverly Hills, CA : Sage.

⁵ Hofstede G., Hofstede G. J., Minkov M. (2010). *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind*. (3rd ed.). New York : McGraw Hill.

communication barriers associated with differing behavioral norms, speech styles, and interlocutor expectations.

A distinctive feature of cross-cultural communication lies not only in the process of information exchange but also in the capacity for intercultural sensitivity – that is, an awareness of one's own cultural perspective and the degree of openness to the experiences of other cultures. Communicative barriers (ethnocentrism, traditional stereotypes, cultural distances, and linguistic challenges) can significantly hinder mutual understanding. Therefore, the development of intercultural competence, which encompasses the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for successful functioning in a multicultural environment, is a vital component of effective cross-cultural interaction.

Thus, cross-cultural communication constitutes a complex set of sociocultural processes that, in essence, represent a multifaceted interaction occurring at the intersection of cultures. It entails the development of the ability to establish effective communicative connections within the context of diverse cultural codes. Cross-cultural communication emerges as a key prerequisite for successful intercultural cooperation, mutual understanding, and peaceful coexistence among nations worldwide. In a broad sense, consideration of the cultural context is essential in every act of international communication, as the same behavior by an actor may elicit radically different perceptions across various cultural communities.

Depending on the communicative context and type of environment, cross-cultural communication can be categorized as interpersonal, mass, or media-based. Interpersonal communication occurs in the form of direct interaction between individuals belonging to different cultures. Mass communication involves the transmission of cultural information to broad audiences through traditional mass media, while media communication in the contemporary era is carried out via digital technologies, particularly through social networks, online platforms, and virtual environments. Adaptive cross-cultural communication is distinguished by a conscious effort to adjust one's communicative strategies in accordance with the cultural characteristics of the 'interlocutor'. This type of communication serves as a critical precondition for successful integration into a foreign cultural environment and for minimizing communicative barriers.

In multicultural societies, cross-cultural communication assumes particular importance as a component of effective public governance, social integration, and the maintenance of peaceful interethnic coexistence. Government authorities are expected to play a central role in shaping a communicative environment that safeguards the cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and religious diversity of the population. In this context, cross-cultural communication emerges as a deliberate activity undertaken by state institutions aimed at fostering mutual understanding, inclusion, and the equitable participation of all cultural groups in the public life of the country.

Diplomatic instruments have historically been, and continue to be, among the most effective means within the system of cross-cultural communication. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of a given state, its regional branches, diplomatic missions

abroad, research and cultural-information centers, as well as state agencies in the field of culture, implement a variety of programs aimed at promoting the national language, arts, traditions, and cultural heritage. These state institutions operate in the sphere of international cultural cooperation on the basis of relevant international treaties and agreements.

Among the promising means of cross-cultural communication, public diplomacy stands, which encompasses various forms of interaction with foreign partners beyond the scope of official diplomacy. In the context of a well-developed civil society, the appropriate type of diplomacy plays a significant role – the international activities of non-governmental organizations, associations and communities from the diaspora, volunteer movements, and similar entities. These actors function as a bridge between the cultures of different countries. Civil diplomacy has the potential to complement official diplomacy and, in some cases, may even operate independently in the form of 'people-to-people diplomacy'.

A productive means of cross-cultural communication in foreign policy is the informational dimension of diplomacy, which involves the creation and dissemination of content aimed at foreign audiences. For example, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine conducts informational campaigns in English and other languages, utilizing digital platforms, social media, and multimedia resources. This approach not only allows for the dissemination of objective information about events in Ukraine but also serves as an effective tool to counter disinformation and manipulation.

Cultural programs and projects initiated by international organizations (such as UNESCO) are aimed at supporting cultural diversity and preserving the unique cultural heritage of numerous small ethnicities and ethnic groups. The challenge of preserving cultural diversity is particularly acute in underdeveloped countries, where interethnic or interreligious conflicts may be present. States that allocate resources to fund cultural initiatives in poorer countries and engage in humanitarian projects contribute to the enhancement of their geopolitical image on the international stage as leaders in the field of humanitarian cooperation.

Various cultural initiatives are employed to promote a state's geopolitical image. Government-led cultural programs are implemented to support the dissemination of national culture through the organization of music and film festivals, museum exhibitions, book fairs, and events dedicated to national holidays, among others. These initiatives are intended not only to reinforce national identity within the country but also to foster international respect and recognition for the organizing state.

Mass media play an important role in ensuring effective cross-cultural communication. They function not merely as 'instruments' for disseminating information but act as intermediaries between cultures, fostering mutual understanding, tolerance, and respect among representatives of different ethnic, linguistic, and cultural communities. One of the key functions of the media is the transmission of cultural codes, symbols, norms, and values to external audiences. This transmission occurs through news programs, documentaries, social media, and other informational platforms, thereby granting foreign audiences access to diverse

cultural practices and ways of thinking. Such exposure contributes to reducing cultural barriers and prejudices. However, the activities of the media are not without drawbacks. Distorted or stereotypical portrayals of certain cultural communities, their traditions, and customs can exacerbate intercultural tensions and promote xenophobic sentiments.

Symbolic means, such as state symbols, emblems, distinctive images, and specific color combinations, are also employed in geopolitical *image-building*. It is important to consider, however, that the meanings associated with certain symbols or colors may vary significantly across the cultural traditions of different ethnic communities. State, regional, and ethnic symbolism reflects not only the uniqueness of the state itself but also the cultural diversity of the ethnic and regional communities residing within its territory. These 'instruments' are characterized by their emotional appeal and are intended to facilitate the establishment and development of amicable relations. They showcase cultural potential and expressions of national identity on the international stage.

Mediation of intercultural conflicts involves the participation of a neutral third party with the aim of achieving mutual understanding between cultural communities. At the international level, such a role may be fulfilled by international organizations, reputable states, influential political and legal institutions, as well as prominent individual figures. As a result, it becomes possible to reach a constructive resolution of disputes by taking into account the cultural specificities of the parties involved and applying adequate and effective communicative strategies. Mass media can also function as mediators in conflicts between cultures, promoting mutual respect, challenging outdated confrontational stereotypes, and ensuring the representation of all cultural groups in public discourse. The constructive resolution of intercultural conflicts within a country contributes to enhancing the geopolitical image of the state and its political institutions. When a state plays an active role in the successful resolution of an acute intercultural conflict at the international level, its reputation as a global 'peacemaker' is strengthened.

Informational tools include the creation and dissemination of content aimed at international audiences through official information portals, foreign-language broadcasting, international media outlets, and social networks. Such content shapes perceptions of societal processes within the country, its values, norms, rules, and cultural heritage. It is also intended to counteract disinformation and negative stereotypes. Thanks to modern technologies, it has become possible to reach broad international audiences, respond promptly to contemporary global challenges, and influence public opinion in other countries.

In practical terms, the role of technologically mediated cross-cultural communication is increasingly significant, particularly through digital platforms, social networks, and virtual environments. It is essential to consider the specific features of digital behavior exhibited by representatives of different cultures and to adapt communication approaches accordingly, taking into account the characteristics of the new environments in which individuals live and operate. Contemporary cross-cultural communications are also extending into the 'Metaverse', a virtual space in which

individuals, through the use of digital technologies, can interact both with one another and with digital objects. The Goethe-Institut intends to leverage the potential of the 'Metaverse' to implement modernized artistic, cultural, and educational projects on a global scale (Bakk & Gschanes, 2024)¹.

Educational means of cross-cultural communication are designed to strategically expand the circle of supporters of a particular country's cultural development values and models. These include, in particular, student exchange programs, which foster long-term networks of contact and cultivate a positive attitude among foreign students toward the culture of the host country. Upon completing their education, former students often maintain communication ties, remain sympathetic to the country where they studied, speak its language, understand its culture, and are familiar with the mentality of its citizens. Specific measures include the provision of scholarships for foreign students, the establishment of educational centers abroad, and cooperation with international educational and scientific institutions. Through such educational means, the state promotes intercultural understanding at the youth level and fosters a positive perception of itself among future members of foreign elites. In doing so, opportunities are created to enhance the international image of the state.

Undemocratic states such as North Korea and Russia are illustrative examples of countries possessing negative international geopolitical images. At the same time, within these countries, positive geopolitical self-images have been constructed through the active use of cultural instruments.

North Korea possesses a negative external geopolitical image as a totalitarian state that disregards international law, develops nuclear weapons, and demonstrates a willingness to use them in pursuit of its own interests. In contrast, for the domestic audience, a constructed image portrays the country as a majestic people's state, where wise leadership, guided by the most progressive ideology, is engaged in building the world's most advanced socio-economic system. The maintenance of such an image under a totalitarian regime is achieved through the dominant cultural discourse. However, promoting a positive image through cross-cultural communication presents a very complex (or even unattainable) task for the leadership of North Korea. World-renowned political and cultural institutions in the world, as well as global mass media, play a significant role in the processes of cross-cultural communication by disseminating a negative image of this state, which becomes deeply embedded in the public consciousness of populations in many countries, particularly democratic ones.

The Russian geocultural and, simultaneously, geopolitical project known as the '*Russkiy mir*' (the 'Russian World') poses a threat to peace and security not only in the post-Soviet space but also in other regions of the world. Its true purpose lies in extending Russia's geopolitical influence beyond its borders through spiritual-cultural, religious, cultural-informational, and educational means. For the populations

¹ Bakk Á. K., Gschanes S. (2024). Making Sense of the Metaverse: A Cultural and Educational Perspective. The Goethe-Institut. URL: https://www.goethe.de/resources/files/pdf339/momeic_goethe_doc_en_v11.pdf

of other countries, this involves the promotion of Russian spiritual and cultural values, the implementation of targeted scientific and educational programs, the organization of 'soft' linguistic expansion, and propaganda dissemination via mass media, particularly by leveraging the capabilities of the Internet (Goltsov, 2022)². Simultaneously, efforts continue to shape the image of Russia as the principal defender of conservative spiritual and moral values in a globalized world.

The Russian government established and funds the '*Russkiy mir*' Foundation, which has organized cross-cultural communication under its auspices in nearly all regions of the world. Through this foundation, centers of influence so-called 'Russian Centers', were created to implement programs for the study of the Russian language and to promote further dialogue in the cultural sphere between Russia and host countries. These centers were particularly effective when established within institutions of higher education, such as universities and colleges. In addition to post-Soviet states, by the second decade of the 21st century, dozens of such centers were operating in various countries across Europe (including the United Kingdom, Italy, Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Hungary, and others), South and East Asia (especially China), Latin America, and other regions of the world. However, following Russia's armed aggression against Ukraine in 2022, many of these 'Russian Centers' ceased or, at the very least, suspended their activities³.

In numerous countries around the world, primarily within the post-Soviet space, the '*Russkiy mir*' Foundation implemented a targeted initiative entitled the 'Russkiy Mir Cabinet' program. This initiative aimed to create favorable conditions for individuals interested in independently exploring the achievements of Russian culture, engaging with Russian spiritual values, and learning the Russian language. Abroad, numerous libraries, as well as video and audio collections, were established within educational institutions, cultural societies, civic organizations, and similar venues. Overall, the implementation of the geocultural project '*Russkiy mir*' achieved only limited results globally and within the post-Soviet region, with the notable exceptions of Russia and Belarus⁴. Nonetheless, the threat posed by the advancement of Russian cultural influence worldwide remains a pressing concern.

Russia justifies its armed aggression against Ukraine, initiated in 2022, by claiming the need to protect its national security. The Russian authorities engage in cross-cultural communication with the aim of promoting a deliberately constructed image of a powerful and just Russia – one that defends traditional cultural values and advocates for equality in international politics. This image distorts the geopolitical worldview in the minds of many communities and poses a threat to morality and the rule of law in international relations.

² Goltsov, A. (2022). Prospects for the 'Russian world' in the Geopolitical Dimension. *Bulletin of the National Technical University of Ukraine 'Kyiv Polytechnic Institute'. Political Science. Sociology. Law*, 4 (56), 37–42. DOI: [https://doi.org/10.20535/2308-5053.2022.4\(56\).269600](https://doi.org/10.20535/2308-5053.2022.4(56).269600) [in Ukrainian].

³ Goltsov A. (2022). Prospects for the 'Russian world' in the Geopolitical Dimension. *Bulletin of the National Technical University of Ukraine 'Kyiv Polytechnic Institute'. Political Science. Sociology. Law*, 4 (56), 37–42. DOI: [https://doi.org/10.20535/2308-5053.2022.4\(56\).269600](https://doi.org/10.20535/2308-5053.2022.4(56).269600) [in Ukrainian].

⁴ Ibidem.

Overall, the means of cross-cultural communication employed in geopolitical image-building are multifaceted, encompassing both forms of cultural interaction and a range of innovations, particularly digital technologies. Contemporary cross-cultural communication is influenced by state authorities, international organizations, civil society institutions, and other non-state actors. The systematic use of all available cross-cultural communication tools by governmental authorities enables them to effectively promote their image on the global stage.

The scientific novelty of this study lies primarily in the definition of the geopolitical image of the state and the development of a corresponding abstract geopolitical model. Additionally, the research advances the study of the geopolitical aspects of 'soft power' and cultural diplomacy, and identifies those means of cross-cultural communication that are most appropriate for constructing a state's geopolitical image.

The results of the conducted study have revealed a number of discussion issues. From a theoretical perspective, there is a need to systematize the terminology used in geopolitical discourse. A similar issue is observed in interdisciplinary studies of cross-cultural communication. The methodology for researching the geopolitical images of states requires further refinement, with particular deficiencies evident in the methodological support for developing qualitative parameters of a geopolitical image. The diverse disciplinary approaches to studying cross-cultural communication call for integrated harmonization.

Geopolitical models are employed for the analysis and forecasting of international relations; however, in a number of studies, their reliability has proven to be relatively low. There is a pressing need to adapt geopolitical models to contemporary political and economic realities. The application of empirical models for assessing cross-cultural communication reveals the necessity of adjusting these models to account for new factors, in particular associated with the digitalization of global communications. Empirical research increasingly requires the inclusion of a larger number of variables, which must be as accurate and verifiable as possible. Despite ongoing development of new predictive models, forecasting further transformations of cross-cultural communications remains insufficiently reliable.

Scholars and experts emphasize the importance of critically analyzing 'soft power' and cultural diplomacy in the 21st century. Particular attention is drawn to manifestations of ideological influence, political bias, colonial legacies, and cultural asymmetry. Powerful states with substantial resources for exercising their 'soft power' are capable of imposing their values and cultures on other actors in international relations. Cultural diplomacy, which should contribute to promote mutual cultural enrichment, may instead be instrumentalized to disseminate biased narratives and to secure cultural dominance by powerful international actors.

The foundation of our narrative regarding a positive geopolitical image is rooted in the concept of a democratic state that pursues 'normal' national interests (those aligned with the norms of international law) and implements them in the international arena. However, certain states deliberately violate fundamental norms of international law, while justifying their unlawful actions through narratives grounded in historical, cultural, ethnic, religious, or other rationales.

The global information space is increasingly populated with deliberately constructed narratives that disseminate disinformation, selective interpretations of historical events, and numerous falsifications. As a result, national communities across different countries and regions, as consumers of mass information, encounter significant difficulties in forming objective perceptions of specific geopolitical entities, phenomena, and processes. This underscores the pressing issue of ethical 'boundaries' in cross-cultural communication, particularly in the context of image-building strategies. The use of manipulative techniques in cross-cultural communication can discredit the very idea of the necessity of intercultural dialogue. Instead, it may give rise to risks associated with the entrenchment of negative stereotypes and a growing distrust toward other cultural communities.

Conclusions

The study of the potential application of cross-cultural communication tools for the formation and maintenance of a state's geopolitical image highlights the relevance of this issue for both academic inquiry and the practical needs of states seeking to enhance the effectiveness of their participation in the system of international relations. In the context of a transforming global geopolitical order, the threats and challenges to peace (both worldwide and in specific regions), as well as to international security, are intensifying.

The construction of a state's geopolitical image is based on indicators of its overall potential and foreign policy activity, as well as on constructed narratives concerning its history, politics, culture, and other attributes. The process of image-building combines both rational and irrational elements that shape perceptions of a given state. A state's geopolitical image has both an internal dimension (aimed at its own society) and an external dimension (geared toward the international environment). Cultural diplomacy and a range of cross-cultural communication tools are employed in the development of a geopolitical image. A positive geopolitical image of the state should contribute to the strengthening of its geopolitical and geo-economic positions on the international stage, facilitate its successful participation in international cooperation, and ensure the growth of its influence in the global political arena.

A state's application of 'soft power' is aimed at enhancing its attractiveness to the societies of other countries. This involves participation in the activities of international organizations, cultural diplomacy, proactive information policy, educational programs, and more. Cultural diplomacy, in essence, represents a specific form of 'soft power' and is directed toward expanding and deepening international interaction in the cultural sphere, safeguarding national cultural interests in the global environment, and, in particular, contributing to the improvement of the state's image. Through effective cultural diplomacy, a state strengthens its geopolitical standing in the world and achieves better outcomes in both its foreign policy and international economic activities. Therefore, the deliberate and strategic use of 'soft power' tools (especially cultural diplomacy) offers the state favorable opportunities for the implementation of its image-building efforts.

It has been established that the tools of cross-cultural communication should be actively employed in shaping and conveying a state's geopolitical image on the

international stage. The effective use of intercultural interaction not only contributes to the enhancement of a state's international standing but also promotes societal cohesion and facilitates the resolution of intercultural tensions. Well-developed cross-cultural communication networks enable a state to adapt its image-related narratives to the cultural specificities of various national, ethno-cultural, religious, and regional communities. As a result, the level of mutual trust is expected to increase, while the significance of intercultural barriers diminishes. The judicious use of cultural diplomacy, language policy, international educational initiatives, mass media, and social networks to promote national culture fosters a positive image of the state as progressive, democratic, and tolerant toward other cultures. Among the instruments of cross-cultural communication suitable for geopolitical image-building are diplomatic, project-based, symbolic, media-related, informational, and educational tools. These should be applied in a comprehensive manner, aligned with the strategic principles of the state's policy aimed at enhancing its geopolitical image globally as well as within specific regions and countries. This integrated approach can generate a 'multiplicative' effect, significantly strengthening the state's credibility within the international community.

Several contentious issues have emerged, particularly regarding the methodology for modeling the geopolitical images of states while accounting for qualitative parameters. There are existing theoretical and methodological challenges in interdisciplinary research on cross-cultural communication. A revision of empirical models used for analyzing cross-cultural communication is necessary. One of the pressing tasks is the development of practical recommendations for improving the organization of cross-cultural communication. In the formulation of strategic foundations for the foreign policies of states, attention should be paid to the task of constructing a positive international image through the use of cross-cultural communication tools. Further research in this field could prove valuable both theoretically and practically.

Under conditions of war, it is crucial for Ukraine to preserve, enhance, and effectively disseminate its positive geopolitical image worldwide. The country must broaden the range of cross-cultural communication tools and refine their practical application within the international environment.

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