10.46272/2587-8476-2022-13-1-110-123

The Role of NGOs in International Relations and Public Diplomacy

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ABSTRACT

The paper examines Russia's and the EU's approaches to non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as instruments of public diplomacy (PD). As the EU and Russia increasingly instrumentalize NGOs in their foreign policy, which seems to erode trust in their already burdened relations, the topic presents an opportunity to compare the mechanisms of government–NGO interaction in Russia and EU. The specific forms, roots, and aims of this phenomenon have often been overlooked in academic research. To these ends, the author looks into different views and practices of Brussels and Moscow in terms of supporting and financing NGOs in the sphere of public diplomacy. The study demonstrates that the EU's approach is characterized by significant funding of NGOs abroad as part of governmental public diplomacy efforts. On the other hand, the Russian approach is mostly characterized by funding of national NGOs, which then implement public diplomacy projects aligned with government policies abroad.

KEYWORDS

non-governmental organisations, NGOs, public diplomacy, the EU, Russia, foreign influence

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Introduction

The world has seen a sharp increase in non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and governmental funding of NGOs in the sphere of public diplomacy (PD). Traditional theories of international relations (IR) are highly state-centric and do not regard NGOs as significant actors of foreign policy.[1] However, the emergence of constructivism within IR has led to a greater focus on non-state actors and their role in shaping identities and ideas in world politics, as well as in promoting political agendas at the international level.[2]

Today, it is not only large NGOs with representations in various countries that have international objectives, but also smaller national NGOs engaging with international audiences through new technology and innovative projects. This calls for new research on how NGOs operate in the European Union (EU) and in Russia, as well as on how state funding of NGOs affects their activities and the countries where they operate. This paper has a descriptive focus and can be used as a basis for further research. It seeks to answer the following questions: what are the peculiarities of the EU's and Russia's approaches to NGOs, and what are the consequences of increased state funding of NGOs for public diplomacy purposes?

By choosing the EU and Russia as a case study, the author avoids the unwelcome notion of "the West" as a singular entity. Thus, the study will focus on the EU and distinguish between Europe and the U.S., when necessary. The EU and Russia constitute interesting subjects for a comparative case study, since the contours of regionalism in a wider Europe are shaped by these two actors. The EU has been described as a normative power under which NGOs and public diplomacy are important tools in shaping the preferences of its external environment.[3] Russia's aim is to shape a predictable neighbourhood as a prerequisite for its security. However, Russia seems to be increasingly willing to promote those political and normative agendas that have the potential to compete with the EU's approach in its periphery.[4] Thus, it is often during Eurasian- and former Soviet countries' rapprochement to either the EU or Russia, that PD-activities intensify, and mutual suspicion of foreign influence appears. Russia's aim in using NGOs for PD-purposes might be similar to that of the EU, but, as it is argued in this article, Russia is less experienced in this endeavour, its resources are more limited, and its approach is rather different.

The research question is twofold and requires detailed description of the concepts of "non-governmental organisations" and "public diplomacy." The paper therefore begins by describing the origin and development of these concepts. The paper proceeds with descriptions of legal approaches to the support for NGOs and mechanisms of their control, as well as public diplomacy objectives of the EU and Russia respectively. The author takes a look at the EU's and Russia's approaches to NGOs and discusses the challenges and opportunities presented by NGOs as public diplomacy actors.

1 Bull 1977; Waltz 1979; Dougherty, Pfaltzgraff 1981; Krasner 1983; Donnelly 1986; Henderson 1988.
2 Risse 2007; Finnemore, Sikkink 1998; Finnemore, Sikkink 2001; Fisher 1998; Florini 2000; DeMars 2005.
3 Ian Manners, "Normative Power Europe: The international role of the EU," 2001, accessed March 15, 2022, http://aei.pitt.edu/7263/1/002188_1.PDF; Manners, Whitman 2013.
4 Haukkala 2008, 37.

Extensive Body of Research but a Lack of Clear Definitions

Even though an extensive body of both Russian and European research deals with non-governmental organisations and a lot of similar concepts, there are no clear definitions and no common understanding of what exactly such organisations or their activities are. Equally, public diplomacy is a popular concept in both research and official strategies in Russia and the EU, but they still lack clear and common definitions.

The role of NGOs in international relations has been thoroughly studied in Russia and abroad. Two examples of recently published papers are "Handbook of NGOs and International Relations" by T. Davis and "Wielding Soft Power: The New Public Diplomacy" by J. Melissen.[1] However, little is published in Russia on the role of NGOs in international relations. There are works by R. Mukhametov[2] and I. Shershnev[3] analyzing the institutional aspects of the Russian non-governmental sector development and the interaction thereof with the government. T. Zonova (Professor at MGIMO-University) has done research on the role of NGOs in the contemporary world.[4]

Emergence and Growth of NGOs

The term "non-governmental organisation" was introduced in Article 71 of the Charter of The United Nations in 1945 and has been widely used ever since by the U.S., the EU, its member states, and many other international actors. Presumably, the UN wanted to consult private non-profit organisations that were independent of governments.[5] Today the UN defines an NGO as "any non-profit, voluntary citizens' group which is organized on a local, national or international level. Task-oriented and driven by people with a common interest, NGOs perform a variety of services and humanitarian functions, bring citizens' concerns to Governments, monitor policies and encourage political participation at the community level."[6]

Thus, an NGO can be an organisation of any kind, and it can vary in legislation, under the sole condition that it must be not-for-profit and independent of government, for example, think tanks, political foundations, churches, voluntary associations, charity organisations, independent election observers, research centres, cultural institutes, and so on. It is supposed to be a body of individuals or legal entities in the form of a social organisation, it is a bridge between a government and civil society in terms of key issues of social development, it exercises social control over the state, ensures participation of society in decision-making processes, and observes the rights and freedoms of citizens. The overall definition and a wide range of activities are the reasons why every country has its own specific interpretation and understanding of NGOs and civil society activities.

Scholars have traditionally distinguished between operational NGOs and advocacy NGOs.[7] Whereas the former focus on designing and implementing development-

1 Davis 2019; Melissen 2005.
2 Mukhametov 2016; Mukhametov 2017.
3 Shershnev 2012.
4 Зонова, Т. Сохранятся ли НПО в будущем? // МГИМО. 5 ноября 2013. [Электронный ресурс]. URL: https://mgimo.ru/about/news/experts/243121/ (дата обращения: 05.03.2022); Зонова, Т. Публичная дипломатия и ее акторы // МГИМО. 31 августа 2012. [Электронный ресурс]. URL: https://mgimo.ru/about/news/experts/226467/ (дата обращения: 05.03.2022).
5 Doh et al. 2009, 3.
6 "Civil Society," the UN, accessed January 30, 2022, https://www.un.org/en/civil-society/page/about-us.
7 Keck, Sikkink 1998; Reimann 2006; Gregory 2016; Bloodgood, Tremblay-Boire 2017.

related projects, such as provision of food or medical supplies, advocacy NGOs seek to defend or promote specific causes, for example, by lobbying decision-makers. In the U.S. and Europe, the 1950s and 1960s saw an increase in NGOs interest in Third World development and modernisation.[1] In the 1960s and 1970s, there was a surge in both international governmental and non-governmental organisations, and ever since NGOs have dramatically increased in number[2]. In particular, in the 1990s and in the first decade of the 21st century, there was a boom in NGOs in the U.S. and Europe. More and more NGOs moved beyond national boundaries and turned into actors of international relations and public diplomacy alongside professional diplomats[3]. According to the Union of International Associations' Yearbook of International Organisations[4], the number of international NGOs (INGOs) grew from 985 in 1956 to around 75,000 in 2021. In particular, NGOs concerned with humanitarian, medical and environmental aid, as well as human rights NGOs, have come to play a significant role in international politics[5]. The number of both national and international NGOs in the world in total is unknown but it probably exceeds 10 million.

In early studies of transnational actors, political scientists and sociologists argued that the increasing number of NGOs was caused by such factors as democratic norms, economic development, and integration in the global economy[6]. These approaches assume that NGOs emerge due to societal demand and development. Hence, allegedly, their aim is to help people by influencing governments to consider certain concerns and interests of civil society. Whereas many NGOs still focus on providing humanitarian aid as a service, an increasing number of them also pursue goals that can be viewed as political advocacy, and more organisations working with different issues combine services and advocacy to accomplish their goals[7]. The NGOs increasing in number across what we could call a "Western-Eastern axis" seem to be more focused on empowerment, human rights, and democracy rather than, for example, poverty or emergency responses. Since 1989, European democracies have been actively engaged in furthering NGOs to bolster civil society, along with political institutions, constitutions, and legal codes, in Central and Eastern European countries as part of democratization assistance.[8] Political advocacy of NGOs can range from public education to public protests.[9]

As for Russia, the involvement of civil society organizations in public diplomacy and international contacts has a long history dating back to the late imperial Russia and, especially, to the Soviet era. Civil society organizations were used extensively in the Soviet Union as part of Soviet public diplomacy politics carried out via interaction of the unions and public organizations of the soviet people with the civil society of friendly countries. Such interaction was, for example, proclaimed as one of the purposes of

1 Wells 2001; Wright 2012.
2 Wright 2012, 124.
3 Tatiana Zonova, "Public Diplomacy and Its Actors," Russian Council, August 28, 2012, accessed January 10, 2022, https://russiancouncil.ru/en/analytics-and-comments/analytics/public-diplomacy-and-its-actors/?sphrase_id=85390227.
4 "The Yearbook of International Organizations," Union of International Associations (UIA), accessed March 15, 2022, https://uia.org/yearbook.
5 For example, Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders), Reporters without Borders, Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, Transparency International etc.
6 Nye, Keohane 1972; Skjelsbaek 1972; Boli et al. 1999.
7 Warleigh 2001; Chaves et al. 2004; Stroup 2012.
8 Phillips 1999, 70.
9 Bloodgood, Tremblay-Boire 2017, 402.

the All-Union Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries founded in 1925, which was transformed into the Union of Soviet Societies for Friendship and Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries in 1958.[1] This Union included "over 25,000 different scientific, cultural and educational organisations and bodies," "maintained contacts with 7,500 organisations, public figures and representatives of scientific and cultural circles from 134 countries."[2] However, all activities in this field were incorporated in the governmental structures. For this reason, NGOs, as they are understood in the U.S. and the EU, appeared only in the new Russia of the 1990s and experienced a boom in the late 2000s.

Development of Public Diplomacy

As the international system changed, as democracy became the new norm and NGOs grew in both number and importance, diplomacy practices also changed, and the so-called "public diplomacy" was introduced as a term.

Public diplomacy has had so many definitions over the years that it is impossible to establish one definition, which would reflect the broad range of interests and practices associated with this term. The author dares to say that public diplomacy in the U.S. and the EU is mainly regarded as a governmental practice and as a means of communication between states and foreign public. For this reason, the U.S and many EU-member states have public diplomacy departments that organize information campaigns and PD-activities. The term "public diplomacy" was coined in the U.S. and, in modern times, was first defined by E. Gullion, a former U.S. Ambassador, in 1964. He defined PD as an embassy practice that "deals with the influence of public attitudes on the formation and execution of foreign policies. It encompasses dimensions of international relations beyond traditional diplomacy; the cultivation by governments of public opinion in other countries."[3] At the time, public diplomacy was seen as a practice concerning embassies' communication with the press of the host country, given that journalists could distribute information to people through local media. The "new public diplomacy" is basically public diplomacy carried out through new communication channels. New PD involves: 1) a shift in diplomatic practices motivated by new actors; 2) engagement with increasingly "interconnected" foreign public; and 3) moving away from one-way information flows towards dialogue and engagement.[4] With these shifts, NGOs have gained leverage and importance in Europe having become public diplomacy actors and now receive large funds to deliver services and carry out advocacies aligned with foreign policy aims.[5] And since many NGOs first emerged in the Western countries, the EU seems to enjoy favourable conditions when it comes to public diplomacy efforts.

In Russia, the practice and terminology of public diplomacy are rather different as compared to the American concept.[6] The term "public diplomacy" was first used

1 After the collapse of the USSR, the Russian Association for International Cooperation (RAMS) replaced the Union of Soviet Societies for Friendship and Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries.
2 RAMS official website, accessed January 30, 2022, http://rams-international.ru/history/.
3 According to Cull, Nicholas J, "Public Diplomacy Before Gullion: The Evolution of a Phrase," USC Center on Public Diplomacy, 2006, accessed January 30, 2022, http://surl.li/bnssx.
4 Melissen 2005, 11–16.
5 Gregory 2008, 276; Ayhan 2019, 64.
6 Velikaya, 2018, 42.

in the expert and social-political discourse in the 2000s but did not attain unanimous recognition among Russian foreign affairs officials or in the social system. The terms "Public diplomacy" and "soft power" are frequently confused and are used interchangeably. In the Russian language, the terms "people's diplomacy" or "social diplomacy" are more common than "public diplomacy" due to the Soviet legacy and the way soft power was understood in the Soviet times. The term "people's diplomacy" was coined in the Soviet Union to denote horizontal communication among people. Back then, soft power was based on interpersonal contacts (people's diplomacy) and the communication between social agencies in the cultural, scientific, and humanitarian fields (social diplomacy). However, such activities and all social structures were tightly controlled by the government enabling its systematic work with the foreign target audience on the basis of instructions issued at the decision-making level. Today these fields are predominant in the work of the Federal Agency for CIS Affairs (*Rossotrudnichestvo*),[1] the key Russian public diplomacy operator.

Few official Russian foreign policy documents mention public diplomacy. Only the Foreign Policy Concept of Russia from 2013 offers insight into the way the Russian state sees such activities.[2] The document stipulates that through public policy Russia seeks to "ensure its objective perception in the world," "develop its own effective means of informational influence on public opinion abroad," and "take necessary measures to counter informational threats to its sovereignty and security." Thus, despite the confusion concerning the definition of the term, Russian authorities realize that public diplomacy is an important instrument to achieve their foreign policy goals more efficiently, and that in Russia, as in Europe, non-governmental (non-profit) organisations are key elements in these activities.

Contemporary EU's Approach to NGOs in Public Diplomacy

The EU seems to view NGOs as civil society actors seeking to influence decision-making processes.[3] Article 11 of the Consolidated Version of the Treaty on European Union, as amended by the Treaty of Lisbon (which replicates Article I–47 of the abandoned Constitutional Treaty), formally recognizes the role of NGOs by stating that "the institutions [of the EU] shall, by appropriate means, give citizens and representative associations the opportunity to make known and publicly exchange their views in all areas of Union action."[4] In addition, it states that the institutions shall maintain an open transparent and regular dialogue with representative associations and civil society. As of 2008, all organisations wishing to engage in political activities in the EU are expected to register in the European Union's Transparency Register (EUTR).[5] While registration is voluntary, NGOs and other interest groups have to register in order to obtain accreditation and access to the EU Parliament.[6] Thus, NGOs are perceived and

1 The Federal Agency for the Commonwealth of Independent States Affairs, Compatriots Living Abroad, and International Humanitarian Cooperation (Rossotrudnichestvo) Official Website, accessed January 30, 2022, https://cyp.rs.gov.ru/en/about.
2 "Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation. Approved by President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin," February 12, 2013, accessed December 4, 2021, http://surl.li/bnstc.
3 Butler 2008, 559.
4 Official Journal of the European Union, June 7, 2016, accessed January 30, 2022, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:12016M011.
5 "Transparency Register," accessed January 30, 2022, http://europa.eu/transparency-register/.
6 Bloodgood, Tremblay-Boire 2017.

legitimised as representatives of citizens and have authority only as part of the EU response to their civil demands.

The EU's Funding of NGOs

Throughout the 1980s, there seemed to be a certain pro-NGO norm prevailing within the EU when international organisations (including the EU) pressured states to support NGOs and integrate them into both national and international politics.[1] That is likely the reason why we saw an unprecedented growth of opportunities for state funding of NGOs in the 1990s and in the beginning of the 21st century. While private donations were the main component of NGOs and civil society organisations funding for many years, since the 1990s, the most significant amount of NGOs budget has been derived from grants and subsidies provided by states and intergovernmental organisations, causing the growth of NGOs within the EU but also their emergence in the parts of the non-Western world.[2]

The EU started financing NGOs in the mid-1970s with a small co-financing program, which had a budget of approximately 2.5 million ECU equal to about $3.2 million[3]. Since the 1980s, the absolute and relative amount of EU foreign aid channelled through NGOs has been rapidly increasing. By 1995, it had reached an estimated amount of $1.0 billion, accounting for somewhere between 15 to 20 pct. of the EU foreign aid budgets[4]. According to the Report published by the European Court of Auditors in 2018,[5] the EU entrusts the implementation of 1.7 pct. of its total budget to NGOs, notably in the fields of humanitarian and development aid, environmental protection, and culture. Additionally, the Report stipulates that NGOs are involved in implementing 6.8 pct. of the European Development Fund.

The programs and instruments that are used to channel most of the EU-funds to NGOs, according to the Financial Transparency System Data 2007–2020,[6] are "Horizon 2020," "Seventh Research Framework Programme," "Development Cooperation Instrument," "Erasmus+," "European Neighbourhood Instrument," "Environment and Climate Action," and "European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights." According to this document, the European Commission distributed a total amount of around €37 billion to NGOs between 2014 and 2020. Most of the political foundations that support the promotion of democracy in the EU member states have been established in the past 30 years following the model of the German political foundations, which were set up in the early post-war period to bolster democracy in Germany. However, over time, the foundations have become increasingly focused on promoting human rights and democracy abroad too[7]. When it comes to management and funding projects, political foundations are officially deemed to be independent organisations, but they are often financed by governments and/or political parties.

1 Reimann 2006, 46–48.
2 Walker 1991; Salamon 1995; Wells 2001; Bloodgood, Tremblay-Boire 2017.
3 Reimann 2006, 51.
4 Randel, German 1999
5 European Court of Auditors, "Transparency of EU funds implemented by NGOs: more effort needed," Special Report no. 35, 2018, accessed January 30, 2022, https://www.eca.europa.eu/Lists/ECADocuments/SR18_35/SR_NGO_FUNDING_EN.pdf.
6 "Financial Transparency System – Analyse," accessed January 30, 2022, https://ec.europa.eu/budget/financial-transparency-system/.
7 Smillie, Helmich 1993; DAC 1998; Reimann 2006, 53.

Public Diplomacy of the EU

The Lisbon Treaty from December 1, 2009, designated the European External Action Service (EEAS)[1] as a core facilitator of the EU's external relations, including its public diplomacy and strategic communication aimed at implementing a more coherent, effective, and visible foreign policy. A brief overview of the Commission's vision of public diplomacy was provided in the booklet issued on the occasion of the EU's 50th anniversary stating that, "Public diplomacy deals with the influence of public attitudes. It seeks to promote EU interests by understanding, informing and influencing. It means clearly explaining the EU's goals, policies and activities and fostering understanding of these goals through dialogue with individual citizens, groups, institutions and the media." This rather broad definition captures the essence of the EU's internal and external public diplomacy, which is aimed at promoting and improving the image of the EU among third parties abroad.[2]

Post-Lisbon administration of PD-efforts is performed by the External Relations Information Committee in coordination with the Strategic Communications Division in the EEAS. This division provides daily "lines to take" that are distributed to all heads of delegations, the press, and information officers.[3] In a notable effort to streamline the EU's external public diplomacy, the division and DG DEVCO[4] (Communication and Transparency Unit) jointly issued an Information and Communication Handbook for EU Delegations in December 2012.[5] In the document, the delegations are encouraged to concentrate their "messaging and action" around five priorities meant to promote the EU as 1) a major partner in democratic transition (in particular, in its wider neighbourhood); 2) the world's biggest cooperation and development donor; 3) a global economic power responding to crises and using trade as an engine for change; 4) a human rights advocate working through establishing dialogue with partners and implementing strategic cooperation programs; and 5) a security provider addressing global security threats.[6]

Civil society in host countries of EU-delegations is one of the most relevant groups targeted by PD activities, including all kinds of organisations, such as environmental and gender equality activists, human rights groups, associations for the protection of disabled people, etc. In the case of Russia, the EUs PD efforts are mainly focused on maintaining contact with civil society organisations and support them, for example, by issuing statements and funding their projects. By engaging NGOs in public diplomacy, the EU seeks to reach and influence civil societies abroad, however, leaving it up to the NGOs to frame and disseminate specific information and projects. Nevertheless, the activities of NGOs depend on what services and values are deemed important under a given EU-instrument, and thus on the EU's vision of how international society should be developed.

1 "European Union External Action Service," accessed January 30, 2022, https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage_en.
2 Duke 2013, 2.
3 Ibid., 123.
4 The Directorate General for International Cooperation and Development (DEVCO) is a department within the European Commission responsible for formulating EU's policy on development and for delivery of international aid.
5 EEAS, "Information and Communication Handbook for EU Delegations in Third Countries and International Organisations," December 2012, accessed January 30, 2022, https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/delegations/ghana/documents/press_corner/20121231en.pdf.
6 Duke 2013, 125.

Contemporary Russian Approach to NGOs in Public Diplomacy

As it was pointed out above, in contemporary Russian public discourse, the term "non-governmental organization" (NGO) is often replaced by the term "non-profit organisation" (NPO). The term "non-profit organisation" has been officially enshrined in Russian legislation, and this notion is used to describe the activity of the entire Russian non-governmental civil society. Such activity is regulated by the Federal Law on Non-Profit Organisations (N 7-FZ of 12th January 1996).[1] The Law defines an NPO as any organisation "that does not set profit-making as the main objective of its activities and does not distribute the received profit among its participants." It is worth noting that the term "non-profit organization" is used by Russian state officials when they address domestic audience, but when they mention activities abroad, they often use the term "non-governmental organization." Thus, the key criterion used by the Russian state to distinguish NGOs is their non-profit activity, rather than the form of their incorporation. Under the Russian law, a large expert institution financed from the state budget and a small NGO financed by its founder or through private donations are both considered to be NPOs, and both form a part of civil society.

Russian NGOs as Partners of the State

An NGO can be established by an individual (a citizen) or a legal entity, and even by the state represented by its bodies. This is the reason why such organisations as the Gorchakov Fund for the Support of Public Diplomacy or the Russian International Affairs Council (RIAC) are sometimes labelled by Europeans as "pro-Kremlin" and "propagandist" or categorized as "government-organized non-governmental organizations" (GONGO). While these organisations receive most of their funding from the Russian state budget, it does not conflict with their status as NGOs under the Russian law. However, as we have seen above, government funding of NGOs is not a peculiarity of Russian approach. The majority of Russian NGOs, including those engaged in international affairs, are established by private individuals and operate without direct government involvement. But most of Russian NGOs engaging with international community are partners of the Russian state in promoting national interests, especially among Russian-speaking population abroad.

Consultative status with UN ECOSOC serves as an indicator of success for Russian NGOs and their international activity. By 2019, this status had been granted to 62 Russian NGOs (with the number of such organisations totalling ~5,000 globally). The first Russian NGO to gain a consultative status was the Federation for Peace and Conciliation back in 1987 under the USSR. Today, the Federation is a part of the Soviet public diplomacy legacy. Most organisations from the list are social, scientific, and educational organisations. Another type of Russian NGOs are humanitarian and charity organisations that operate abroad and represent the public diplomacy

1 Федеральный закон «О некоммерческих организациях» от 12.01.1996 N 7-ФЗ (последняя редакция) // Консультант Плюс. [Электронный ресурс]. URL: http://www.consultant.ru/document/cons_doc_LAW_8824/ (дата обращения: 04.03.2022).

direction called "International Development Assistance."[1] However, the overall number of "international NGOs" in Russia is small, many of them were established in the Soviet times and then transformed into Russian official structures.

Since 2017, the Russian government has transferred all funding for Russian NGOs to a single operator. On April 3, 2017, the single operator of Presidential Grants for the development of civil society started operating. Until 2017, the system of receiving grants was opaque; the money was distributed through several funds-operators. Annual allocations from the federal budget for Presidential Grants for the development of civil society were estimated at 8 billion roubles in 2019, 2020, and 2021.

Areas of Activity of Russian NGOs in Public Diplomacy

The main areas of public diplomacy according to The Foreign Policy Concept of Russia (2016)[2] are: 1) cultural and language diplomacy; 2) working with compatriots; 3) preservation of historical truth and countering attempts to falsify history at the international level; 4) international youth cooperation, and; 5) human rights protection. These are the traditional areas of "social diplomacy," and hence of the public diplomacy of NGOs engaged in foreign policy in Russia.

A legally and politically acceptable form of cultural and language diplomacy in furthering humanitarian relations is formalised through the term "compatriots," referring to former Soviet citizens associating themselves with Russian culture and values (the concept of the so-called "Russian world"). Russian PD activities aimed at Russian compatriots are mostly carried out by the Russian government through "Rossotrudnichestvo" and a large number of foreign NGOs formed by compatriots themselves. In this paradigm, Russian NGOs bring together numerous associations of compatriots[3] in its neighbouring countries that regularly compete with European narratives and actors.

Many internationally-oriented Russian NGOs also work within the official line of "preserving historical memory and countering attempts to falsify history" in public discourse.[4] This focus reflects the concern of both Russian society and the Russian government with efforts of former Soviet and Socialist countries to reassess the role of the USSR in World War II, for example, by destroying monuments and burial sites of

1 International Development Assistance is a mechanism for creating an international image through the provision of economic and infrastructure assistance to beneficiaries across the globe on behalf of the Russian government and the Russian people. A good example to this is the "Russian humanitarian mission" founded by Evgeniy Primakov, a famous journalist, a public figure, current head of Rossotrudnichestvo. RHM is "the first Russian NGO professionally providing humanitarian assistance (mainly) abroad." Since Evgeniy Primakov became the head of Rossotrudnichestvo, the Organization has worked in close cooperation with the RHM.

2 When we worked on the present article (October 2021), there were no new editions of the FPC. On 8th October 2021, Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov addressed university graduates recruited for diplomatic service and said that Moscow was "working on a new edition of the Foreign Policy Concept." Лавров заявил, что МИД РФ работает над обновлением Концепции внешней политики России // ТАСС. 8 октября 2021. [Электронный ресурс]. URL: https://tass.ru/politika/12618143 (дата обращения: 04.03.2022).

3 International Council of Russian Compatriots (ICRC) is a global union of organizations of Russian compatriots that includes 137 organizations in 52 countries. Since 2011, Moscow has hosted the World Congress of Russian Compatriots annually.

4 The main organization working in this area are the Foundation for Historical Outlook established by Russian historian and statesperson Natalia Narotchnitskaya, Historical Memory Foundation (Fond Istoricheskaya Pamyat'), etc.

Soviet soldiers.[1] Thus, the Russian government provides significant support (compared to other areas of PD)[2] to NGOs working in this area.

The specificity of governmental support for civil society in Russia is its focus on the domestic dimension. In Russia, NGOs engaged in public diplomacy do not receive much support as compared to the EU or the U.S.[3] It is indicative that in 2018 the overall amount of financial support provided to NPOs by the Fund of Presidential Grants was 8 billion roubles, and only 2 pct. of the sum (about 160 million roubles) were allocated to public diplomacy. The abovementioned not only underlines the fact that Russian funding of NGOs is small compared to the EU, but also stresses the fact that different modes of funding of NGOs could be attributed to the different perspectives on their nature. The EU's funding of NGOs seems to be based on a vision of NGOs as organizations that are *independent* of states, and hence as organizations that can effectively influence public opinion. This approach fails to recognize that such funding, in fact, makes NGOs more aligned with official policies. Russian funding of NGOs, on the other hand, is based on historical dependence on the state and distrust towards foreign NGOs — precisely because many NGOs are financed from the EU and the U.S. For the same reason, the Russian state has tightened control over foreign NGOs operating in Russia[4] through legislation dealing with "foreign agents."

Conclusion

In this article, the author has argued that state funding of NGOs stalls their domestic advocacy while at the same time it boosts their international activities indicating that NGOs play an increasingly important role in public diplomacy and international relations at large. Using the case of the EU's and Russia's instrumentalization of NGO's as public diplomacy tools, the paper's contribution to the field is twofold. First, Russia's "late entry" into the sphere of NGOs and PD accounts for the uneven character of public diplomacy activity. Dozens of Russian NGOs focus their programs on the Russian-speaking compatriots in the Eurasian and the Post-Soviet space, whereas European NGOs are scattered around the world. Second, the "internal" character of NGO activity in Russia accounts for the basic difference between Russian public diplomacy and that of the EU. In the EU, foreign NGOs receive large funds for their international activities and establishments abroad as part of public diplomacy, whereas Russia does not provide the same financial support to foreign NGOs nor does it issue foreign grants.

1 There have been many examples of destruction of monuments to Soviet soldiers of World War II and of common memorials in Poland (over 400 monuments destroyed), the Baltic countries (for example, the incident with the Bronze Soldier in Estonia), Ukraine (for example, the demolition of the Glory Monument in Lviv and of the grand copy of the Order of the Patriotic War that had been the central element of the burial monument in Marsovo Pole), and so on. In October 2021, the monument symbolizing Russian-Rumanian brotherhood-in-arms in World War I, which was located in the center of the Moldavian capital, was replaced with another monument.

2 "Preservation of Historical Memory" is a separate competition category of the Fund of Presidential Grants, although such internationally oriented projects can also be nominated in the category "Development of Public Diplomacy and Support for Compatriots." Other Russian GONGOs also issue grants for NGOs' activities in this area, as well as the "Istoria Otechestva" ("The History of Motherland") Foundation established by the initiative of the President in 2016.

3 For example, in 2018, the USA allocated 2.19 billion USD to public diplomacy. "Comprehensive Annual Report on Public Diplomacy and International Broadcasting," The United States Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy (ACPD) Annual Report, December 31, 2019, accessed January 30, 2021, https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/2019-ACPD-Annual-Report.pdf.

4 In the autumn of 2021, there was a leak of the reports of British governmental organization Global Britain Fund on the work of the British Embassy in Moscow that showed that the Embassy had rendered financial aid to several Russian media and non-governmental organizations in 2018: В Сеть попали документы о вмешательстве Британии в политику России // Взгляд. 3 марта 2021. [Электронный ресурс]. URL: http://surl.li/bntbu (дата обращения: 04.03.2022).

The Russian approach is rather characterised by funding of national NGO's, which then implement PD-projects abroad. More often than not, both the EU and Russia fund NGOs as part of their public diplomacy efforts in the hope that NGOs will be able to positively influence foreign public opinion. Unfortunately, such state funding frequently causes suspicion and distrust about the activities of NGOs.

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Received: November 19, 2021. Revised: February 7, 2022. Accepted: February 25, 2022.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

For citation

Burlinova, Natalia V. "The Role of NGOs in International Relations and Public Diplomacy." *Journal of International Analytics* 13, no. 1 (2022): 110–123.

https://doi.org/10.46272/2587-8476-2022-13-1-110-123

Роль НПО в международных отношениях и публичной дипломатии

АННОТАЦИЯ

В статье рассматриваются подходы России и ЕС к неправительственным организациям (НПО) как инструментам публичной дипломатии (ПД). Поскольку ЕС и Россия все чаще используют НПО в своей внешней политике, что, кажется, подрывает доверие к и без того напряженным отношениям между ними, эта тема представляет собой интересную возможность сравнить механизмы взаимодействия правительства и НПО в России и ЕС. Тем не менее, конкретные формы, корни и цели этого явления часто упускаются из виду в академических исследованиях. Чтобы заполнить существующую лакуну, данное исследование суммирует опыт других стран и общественного мнения. С этой целью автор исследует разное понимание и практику Брюсселя и Москвы в поддержке и финансировании НПО в сфере публичной дипломатии. Исследование показывает, что подход ЕС характеризуется значительным финансированием НПО за рубежом в рамках усилий государственной публичной дипломатии. С другой стороны, российский подход в основном характеризуется финансированием национальных НПО, которые затем осуществляют проекты публичной дипломатии за рубежом в соответствии с государственной политикой.

КЛЮЧЕВЫЕ СЛОВА

неправительственные организации, НПО, публичная дипломатия, ЕС, Россия, иностранное влияние

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Дополнительная информация

Поступила в редакцию: 19 ноября 2021.
Переработана: 7 февраля 2022.
Принята к публикации: 25 февраля 2022.

Конфликт интересов

Автор заявляет об отсутствии потенциального конфликта интересов.

Цитирование

Бурлинова, Н.В. Роль НПО в международных отношениях и публичной дипломатии // Международная аналитика. – 2022. – Том 13 (1). – С. 110–123.
https://doi.org/10.46272/2587-8476-2022-13-1-110-123