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## **PUBLIC DIPLOMACY AS A TOOL FOR THE FORMATION OF THE POLITICAL BRAND OF GERMANY**

**Key words:** political brand, brand culture, communication channels, public diplomacy, global branding, agenda

**ABSTRACT:** Current trends in global development (migration processes, hybrid wars, global pandemics, multiculturalism) bring new challenges for nation states. The level of international competitiveness and subjectivity of a modern state depends on the successful positioning of its political brand, secured by the choice of adequate tools for achieving the goals and objectives. This research aims at studying the peculiarities of the public diplomacy resource potential and its use in the process of political branding in Germany. The research methodology combines system and axiological approaches, as well as discourse analysis; this helps to reveal the structural relationships within the brand, and their correlation with the peculiarities of national political and economic development and global trends. The content of the political brand is studied through the prism of the interaction of the public (politics, economics, public administration) and national (mentality, culture, traditions) components that correlate with the level of political and economic development. National political leaders, public and political institutions play a leading role in generating the key message of a state. It is proved that public diplomacy expands the possibilities of successful implementation of economic, political, socio-cultural initiatives of the state, based on partnership and cooperation with representatives of the international community. The main tools of public diplomacy include setting the agenda,

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synchronization of information messages by government agencies, the use of a wide range of communication channels and special events aimed at building trust and lasting relationships between international actors. The article pays special attention to the study of the content of the branding campaign «Land of Ideas». It presents Germany as an active actor in the international political space, focused on the use of brand-new technologies in all spheres of society to ensure sustainable development. The authors prove that the current branding campaign focuses on economic (sustainable development and citizens' welfare), technological (technological innovation, energy efficiency, environmental safety), and cultural (dialogue, intercultural communication) aspects. The key ideas of the branding strategy are sustainable economic development, manufacturability and digitalization, environmental friendliness and energy efficiency, partnership dialogue and cooperation. German public authorities are actively involved in the process of political branding, which is carried out at the internal and external levels through public diplomacy. The key ideas of the political brand are presented to the domestic public through constant two-way communication on specialized online platforms, meetings of high-ranking officials with representatives of municipalities, and citizens' potential is actively involved in various innovative projects. The process of state branding in Germany is synchronized with key global trends – environmental security, climate change issues, energy efficiency. In this context, Chancellor A. Merkel and government agencies are actively cooperating with the EU and other international organizations, participating in forums, summits and online discussions. The experience of German political branding is relevant for other countries in the context of its content, synchronization of government and society, and the use of public diplomacy.

## INTRODUCTION

In the context of the XXI century challenges – migration processes, hybrid wars, pandemics, when national identities began to crystallize against the background of the multicultural environment globalization, the study of positioning tools in the global communicative space is becoming increasingly important. Accordingly, the role of «political branding policy, i.e. the use of the new political situation for social integration provided that disciplinary mechanisms are incapable» is growing (Bystrytsky, 2015). Competitions of symbolically attractive images enable to prove the attractiveness of the collective lifestyle, longitude and prospects of the national grand narrative, and the competitiveness of new brands faster and better than disciplinary mechanisms.

The content of the political brand is implemented through the interaction of governmental (political, economic, managerial) and national

(population mentality, culture, historical heritage) components (Parshikova, 2016). The generation of a key message about the state correlates with the peculiarities of economic and political development, depends on the political will of public officials. However, finding a balance between the public and private sectors, i.e. branded establishments, is important in this process. Meanings, ideologies, symbols, mythologies can also become markers of branding, authenticity, differentiation, when «neotribalization is both a result and an amplifier of the political dimension of brand culture, which leads to the fragmentation of the political sphere» (Bystrytsky, 2015).

The outlined tendencies actualize modern states' search for new tools to increase the level of their international subjectivity for the implementation of national interests and brand positioning. The main purpose of this work is to outline the peculiarities of using the public diplomacy resource potential in political branding in Germany. This country occupies a top position in the international ratings of political brands, and therefore its experience is relevant. The integrity of the study is connected with the revelation of public diplomacy content and specification of the opportunities that its resource potential provides in the implementation of branding strategy in Germany. A systematic approach helps to determine the features of the interrelation and interaction of the brand structural components with the level of economic and political development of the state, as well as the adequacy of the chosen tools for branding strategy to global challenges. The axiological approach contributes to the concretization of key axiological characteristics of the political brand and their compliance with 2015–2030 Sustainable Development Goals. The use of discourse analysis expands the opportunities to study the outlined issues, considering global axiological paradigms and dominant trends of political and economic development.

## **PUBLIC DIPLOMACY IN THE FORMATION OF THE POLITICAL BRAND**

According to US Congressman G. Hyde, public diplomacy is aimed at forming stable relations between the state and foreign government structures and the external public. The main goal of public diplomacy is to actualize the importance of such values as security, freedom, prosperity for the world community and to create the preconditions for collective action for their implementation (Hyde, 2001).

Public diplomacy expands the capabilities of the state in shaping the current agenda, which corresponds to national interests and global development trends, promoting the involvement of stakeholders in its implementation based on cooperation and mutual understanding. The main tools of public diplomacy, according to K. Rose, include determining the agenda that meets the national interests; synchronizing the type and content of information messages for different groups of the public by government agencies; using a wide range of communication channels (media, Internet resources, official social network accounts of government agencies, speeches of public opinion leaders, special events – conferences, briefings, forums, summits); political dialogue with international policy actors to build trust and lasting relationships based on common interests; creating coalitions for partnerships aimed at solving pressing problems (Ross, 2003). Thus, public diplomacy resource potential can be used in the formation and international positioning of the political brand.

There are three main stages of branding: strategic, i.e. the formation of a positive internal and external image of the state and its development vectors, determined by the national interests; activity – aimed at the implementation of economic, political, socio-cultural solutions, designed to ensure the progress of state development, by governmental and non-governmental institutions; symbolic, which provides a correlation of strategy and activities with national values and traditions (Anholt, 2013). In the first stage, public diplomacy tools are used to update the agenda, which correlates with the concept of the political brand. In this context, it is also advisable to use different channels of information and event communication. The success of the second stage of political branding will be

determined by the synchronization of actions and information messages of different subjects of communication, as well as their ability to attract the resources of stakeholders. The third stage of branding is closely connected with the implementation of state initiatives abroad, the formation of a culture of dialogue and communication aimed at satisfying national interests. In general, public diplomacy expands the opportunities for successful implementation of economic, political, socio-cultural initiatives of the state, which form the content of its political brand, based on understanding and cooperation with stakeholders.

### **GERMAN EXPERIENCE IN FORMING A POLITICAL BRAND**

One of the first successful branding campaigns in Germany was «Brand Manifesto for Germany». The necessity to change the state logo and its color scheme, as well as to negative stereotypes overcome was emphasized, thus confirming the idea that the importance of national connotations is an important factor in political branding as a component of modern political practice in many countries. Before the start of the 2006 Football World Cup, a new «Land of Ideas» branding campaign was launched. It patronized by the President, with the involvement of the federal government and the German Industrial Association. The German Foreign Ministry, the Goethe-Institute, «Invest in Germany», the Chambers of Commerce and the Länder (Brandenburg, Baden-Württemberg) actively participated in the branding strategy implementation. The key event of the branding campaign was the «Walk of Ideas» project organized in Berlin, which brought together representatives of German science, culture, and industry. This contributed to the formation of a culture of political dialogue between the public and government agencies in addressing pressing issues of state development (Parshikova, 2016).

In today's political reality, the «Land of Ideas» branding campaign has been transformed in a certain way to meet modern global challenges. It presents the state as an active subject of the international political space, focused on the use of the latest technologies in the field of science, educa-

tion, culture, contributing to the formation of a collective security environment in the context of sustainable development. It aims to present and consolidate a stable image of Germany as a leading subject of international politics in the minds of the internal and external public. The implementation of the branding campaign is facilitated by both public authorities and established discussion platforms, in which dialogue communication strategies and public diplomacy are preferred (Zöllne, 2020).

Economic, technological, and cultural components are highlighted. The economic aspect of the brand focuses on the formation of a sustainable development economy, which provides a balance between the various interests of citizens, contributing to the continuous improvement of quality of life. The technological aspect presents the focus on the use of the latest technologies in all areas of production to increase the level of environmental friendliness and energy efficiency. The content of the cultural aspect is implemented through the constant communicative interaction with various groups of the public regarding the presentation and explanation of key principles of branding strategy, the upgrade of the culture of partnership dialogue and interstate cooperation in sustainable development, as well as the development of civic political culture. Therefore, the key ideas of the German branding strategy are sustainable economic development, manufacturability and digitalization, environmental friendliness and energy efficiency, partnership dialogue and cooperation.

German public authorities are actively involved in the process of initiating and implementing solutions that correlate with the branding strategy. For example, the Federal Ministry of Transport and Digital Infrastructure is implementing the German Mobility Award project. It aims to draw public attention to digital innovations and smart solutions that expand the opportunities for business development in Germany based on environmental friendliness and digitalization. The ministry and the stakeholders communicate with the public on the online platform <https://land-der-ideen.de/en/competitions/german-mobility-award>. Among the remarkable 2020 initiatives, there are the following: 1) the creation of an intelligent service system for the Rhine-Ruhr express, aimed at improving passenger comfort and environmental friendliness of the transport system; 2) online service Carré Mobility, which allows within a certain area

to synchronize citizens' needs and opportunities in rapid communication with producers of goods or services, optimizing the process of obtaining them by consumers, expanding the opportunities for social distancing during COVID-19 pandemics; 3) technology of autonomous car driving, which will increase the competitiveness, mobility of logistics companies upon the condition of labor force shortage.

Representatives of municipalities are actively involved in the implementation of the branding strategy, which indicates the synchronization of the activities of governmental entities of different levels. For example, A. Merkel held a video conference with representatives of municipalities (The Federal Government, 2021). The key topic of discussion was the problem of combating climate change. The Chancellor noted that only the joint efforts of the government and municipalities will promote a gradual transition to renewable energy, expand the opportunities of using SMART technologies to meet citizens' needs in environmental safety.

The Federal Ministry of Education and Research, sponsored by the German Bank, summed up the results of the nationwide competition «Remarkable Places in the Land of Ideas» in a live broadcast. They also presented the book «Power of Ideas» which contains advice from stakeholders and winners of the competition on the practical implementation of creative ideas, the peculiarities of interaction with the authorities and the sponsorship search. On the online platform <https://land-der-ideen.de/wettbewerbe/ausgezeichnete-orte-im-land-der-ideen>, C. Rummel, the head of the German Bank brand communication department, expressed the opinion that such national projects contribute to the intensification of the public initiative. In search of ways to improve the quality of life, expanding the opportunities for economic growth of the state based on innovation and technology.

The key ideas of German branding strategy are constantly presented to the public. Speaking at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Federal Chancellor A. Merkel emphasized the need to form a «neutrality» in Europe by 2050. It provides for the shared responsibility of the European community to reduce carbon emissions and to gradually replace traditional energy sources with renewable ones. In this context, the German federal government is stepping up its efforts to implement the 2030 Cli-

mate Action Program, which aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, increase climate mobility and energy efficiency in infrastructure (The Federal Government, 2021).

The issue of energy efficiency and climate security was recognized as one of the key issues during Germany's presidency of the European Union (July-December 2020). At the December EU summit, member states agreed to implement the European Green Deal program, which aims to reduce carbon emissions by 55% by 2030. According to the President of the European Commission U. von der Leyen, EU environmental initiatives will accelerate the modernization of member states' national economies and increase the environmental security of citizens. All this will be the key to achieving climate neutrality by 2050, creating the preconditions for sustainable development of the EU. The President of the European Commission also emphasized the synchronicity and effectiveness of A. Merkel's government actions in the implementation of environmental initiatives, which was the key to a compromise decision at the EU summit (European Council, 2020). During this year's German-Ukrainian forum, A. Merkel focused on the expediency of deepening the partnership in the field of digitalization. This will help expand business opportunities through transparency, partnership, responsible consumption, energy efficiency and optimization of the use of large data amounts (The Federal Government, 2021).

It is noteworthy that articulated axiological priorities synchronize the global horizon of German brand meanings, particularly in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). They were formed as part of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development, held in Rio de Janeiro (2012). During the event, the priorities of the world community for 2015-2030 to address pressing environmental, political, and economic issues were identified. We can mention the following goals: 12 – «responsible consumption»; 13 – «combating climate change»; 14 – «conservation of marine ecosystems», etc. They set common standards for the sustainable development of humanity and outline areas for deepening the world community's cooperation in solving global human problems (United Nations Development Program, 2015). Thus, their correlation with the national branding strategy of Germany contributes to the formation of a stable



image of a responsible international subject, able to solve key problems of national and global development.

Active interaction with the external and internal public, systematic implementation of joint projects that meet key aspects of the national branding strategy – all this contributes to the value of tangible and intangible assets of the German brand in today's political reality. In recent years, the state retains first place in the political brands rating. Leading brand communications specialist J. McGrath, analyzing the published results of the annual Nation Brands Index (Table 1), compared the positions of the world's leading countries over the past two years.

**Table 1.** Political brands rating

Rank 2020	Rank 2019	Name of country
1 □	1	Germany
2 ↑	4	United Kingdom
3 □	3	Canada
4 ↑	5	Japan
5 ↓	2	France

Source: drawn up by the authors on the basis (McGrath J., 2020)

Based on a comparative analysis, J. McGrath concluded that the success of the German branding strategy is due to the systematic activities of stakeholders to implement key brand ideas (McGrath, 2020). This contributed to the formation of a high level of the internal and external public confidence in the actions of the federal government aimed at ensuring high standards of quality of life, increasing the investment attractiveness of the economy. It can be stated that the leading role in the process of political branding in Germany is played by public diplomacy. It is an effective tool for «information support of the domestic and foreign policy of the state, creating a positive brand of the state, its goals and values among the foreign community» (Aliyev, 2017).

It should also be noted that in Germany considerable attention is paid to the informational and cultural and educational aspects of the brand. In this context, representatives of the target audience are actively involved in

various cultural and educational programs and projects. For example, the DAAD Academic Exchange Service takes care of the young generation in Germany and abroad in science and culture, economics and politics, educating them for openness and mutual understanding, and enhancing the prestige of German universities. There is active support for German studies in foreign higher education institutions (Aliyev, 2017).

With that, Germany needs to make efforts to increase the total value of its political brand. According to Brand Finance, compared to 2019, in 2020 the state moved from third to fourth place. However, the data show that in the context of the global pandemic and the crisis in the world economy caused by it, all the leading countries have lost the value of national brands (Table 2). The United States and China have managed to maintain their leading positions, which indicates an appropriate level of national economies resilience to the challenges of the external environment and the ability to adequately respond to them. Japan also demonstrates resilience in crises, which has increased the value of the national brand.

**Table 2.** Brand value by country

Rank 2020	Rank 2019	Name of country	2020 (USD)	2019 (USD)
1 □	1	United States	\$ 23,738,342	\$ 27,751,172
2 □	2	China	\$ 18,764,298	\$ 19,485,618
3 ↑	4	Japan	\$ 4,261,272	\$ 4,532,854
4 ↓	3	Germany	\$ 3,812,942	\$ 4,854,854

Source: drawn up by the authors on the basis (Haigh R., 2020).

In this context, strengthening the cooperation of German government agencies with internal and external stakeholders to implement key ideas of branding strategy, expanding the use of public diplomacy, reorientation to the integrated use of strategic communications in public administration can help gradually increase the value of the national brand.

## CONCLUSIONS

Current trends in global development determine the emergence of new opportunities and threats to the subjectivity of the state in the international political space. There is a need for a systemic approach to the formation of the political brand as a set of interrelated key aspects of domestic and foreign policy, outlining the resource potential and opportunities to increase the competitiveness of the national economy and policy at the global level. It is safe to state the success of the German experience in shaping their political brand, which results in maintaining a leading position in the Nation Brands Index. The effectiveness of the branding strategy is due to the use of public diplomacy tools. They helped to put such ideas as sustainable economic development, environmental friendliness, energy efficiency, digitalization on the agenda. The synchronicity of actions and information messages of the federal government, the involvement of the resource potential of stakeholders laid the foundations for the practical implementation of these ideas. The German political brand demonstrates the strategic integration of key components of the economy, politics and culture.

In this context, the experience of forming the political brand of Germany is quite relevant for other international actors. Further research on this issue is related to the study of the opportunities of using public diplomacy resources and the German political branding experience in the Ukrainian political reality.

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