
Special issue

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Introduction

Strategic narratives for a changing world

The study of international communication is a matured discipline. The globalization-deglobalization tension, the invasion of Ukraine, the consequences of COVID19, the rivalry between China and the United States, the constant redefinition of the European Union, the new leaderships in Latin America or technological developments open up new avenues of research. International communication has evolved accordingly. The principles of visibility and marketing campaigns (competing for the attention of audiences, the volume of tweets) are being used to focus on performance (individual and collective credibility, accountability, transparency). In an environment of distrust and post-truth, the very definition of soft, hard, or smart power merits a theoretical revision to understand what the role of communication is. We are not facing the same political and communicative bases as a decade ago.

In this context, this special issue seeks to address some of these issues and to understand what progress has been made in public diplomacy. Thus, we can read texts on public and digital diplomacy, and their role and impact on the definition of foreign policy. It analyzes the new ideas coming from Japan, where technology has been embedded in political life and aims to order the growing uncertainty. The connection between public diplomacy and international security, a field of study of growing interest in academia, is discussed. It studies how the decline of democracies can accelerate the deinstitutionalization of public diplomacy and increase hyper-presidentialism. The last paper reminds us that China has a seductive proposition for public opinion in Latin America. In sum, these eight papers broaden the avenues of research and provide new case studies.

Finally, this special issue serves to remember María Teresa La Porte, a pioneer in the study of international communication in Spain. She passed away in 2020, but her intellectual legacy lives on. She has a text that is worth reading on any trend that is now emerging in public communication, from think tanks to journalism in war and conflicts. We note, in particular, her work on public diplomacy and her passionate defense of the legitimate and effective participation of civil society in international affairs. Those of us who were fortunate enough to work

with her are humbled by her work capacity and indebted to her intellectual leadership. She was always available to tackle new projects and ideas. She always had a kind word. Having just returned from the annual congress of the International Studies Association in Montreal, I can attest that she was a topic of regular conversation in the international communication section. Her work, Mateye's work, is in the intellectual corpus of the discipline. May this special issue serve to celebrate her memory.