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*The Politics of International Relations*

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**COMMUNICATIVE RATIONALITY AS POLITICAL COMMUNICATION  
MECHANISM  
(paper in progress)**

**Abstract:** The article deals with the phenomenon of communicative rationality, interpreted as an element of political technologies, a mechanism of political communication and as a part of strategic communication. It is separated from the phenomenon of rational communication and their brief comparative analysis is carried out. The effectiveness of communicative rationality, its capacities and limits are illustrated with the examples of constructing of a political communication space of BRICS states, the EU and Ukraine.

**Key words :** political rationality, communicative rationality, political technologies

In 2008 the US National Intelligence Council (NIC) issued the report and it “is the forth unclassified report that takes a long-term view of the future”<sup>1</sup>. Using the methods of scenario modelling the authors presented Four Global Scenarios: “A World Without the West”; “October Surprise” that demonstrates the fatal climate changes and thereat further ecological problems; “BRIC disintegration” (yet without South African Republic); “Politics is Not Always Local” in which the international political landscape is described already not by national states but subnational and international alliances. The Third Scenario “BRICs’ Bust-Up” outlines that “misperceptions – along with

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<sup>1</sup>National Intelligence Council, 2008, Global Trends 2025: A Transformed World. *US Government Printing Office*. Available from: [https://www.dni.gov/nic/NIC\\_2025\\_project.html](https://www.dni.gov/nic/NIC_2025_project.html) [Accessed 23 November 2015] We should notice that in 2012 NRC published the fifth report “Global Trends 2030: Alternative Worlds” in which they presented quite different characteristics of the future world arrangement.

miscommunications – could play as important a role as any actual threats”<sup>2</sup>. There are several preconditions for this Scenario:

1. A steady period of growth has slowed as states struggle to cope with energy and resource shortages, which are particularly acute in the Asian economies.
2. A rise in nationalist sentiments occurs with the energy completion in this zero-sum world.
3. A balance of power emerges that resembles a 21<sup>st</sup> century replay of the years before 1914.<sup>3</sup>

In the description of this probable Scenario is disclosed the hypothetical letter by the current Foreign Minister to former Brazilian President dated February 1, 2021. He said there: “Brazil has pulled its weight over the past six months, performing feats of diplomacy that even the US could not equal in present circumstances”<sup>4</sup>. He noted that Brazil “was the only country that had the trust of all the others. Even the Europeans were discredited because of their links to the US in the Iranian crisis”<sup>5</sup>. Meanwhile he wasn’t sure whether he “succeeded in building up mutual confidence and trust” on the upcoming negotiations in Rio, but he hoped “a more convivial atmosphere will do the trick. Rio Carnival is around the corner”<sup>6</sup>.

The introduced story besides the evident research interest of scenario projecting of future events including probable scenario failures, triggers, drivers and intersections, has another point. That “point” was very well expressed by Karl T. Jaspers: “searching for the truth means being permanently ready to communicate and wait for such capability from the others”<sup>7</sup>. In politics and not only in it, this means a possibility to achieve agreement, reached in the process of communication. This process needed to be organized in the best optimal way. After all “any social activity has a communicative nature and presuppose recognition from the side of the other. That is why communicative activity is often made of 1. communicative subjects; 2. intersubjective notion; 3. project; 4. conative complex” Russian researches S. Neretina and A. Ogurtsov mention<sup>8</sup>.

To make communication actually work, it must be strengthened by rationality and to be more exact – by communicative rationality. By communicative rationality we tend to

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid, p.76.

<sup>3</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p.77.

<sup>5</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>6</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>7</sup> Ясперс К. Истоки истории и ее цель // Антология мировой политической мысли, М, 1997, Т. 2. Зарубежная политическая мысль. стр. 271.

<sup>8</sup> Неретина С., Огурцов А. Концепты политической культуры, М., 2011, стр. 191.

mean a specific character of mentation and action processes that appears when such processes fit the criteria of coherence, consequentiality and normativeness. It is important these criteria are shared by every culture engaged in the process of communication. Due to these criteria: *rational* – promotes goal achieving, *non-rational* – prevents this, *irrational* – leads astray from the goal<sup>9</sup>.

Rational communication limits our notions about what does it mean to communicate rationally. There are two types of it – absolutist and relativistic<sup>10</sup>. Absolutist rationality *appears before the beginning of communication process* – this is an assumption that there is an imperative, undoubted rationality for every person without exception. It is not bounded by any conditions and leads to universal knowledge. Absolutist rational communication is *internal* by its nature. Here are something that most people share – e.g. to say “hello” while meeting.

Relativistic rationality means *external* rationality, equality of different, often conflicting sides of it. The rationality is determined exactly by them and its selection depends on the particular goals of communication participants. For example, if there is a situation during the negotiations, that in order to achieve agreement and prevent the failure of negotiation process, we need to give up some conditions and principles – this will be rational and will be dictated by external circumstances.

In contrast to rational communication, communicative rationality appears *after* the beginning of the process of communication. It is the product of *a conscious choice* that is never accidental. Every participant of the negotiation process realizes for himself where he is – at the official meeting or at the battleground and what is available. That means that communicative rationality matters the *context that leads to a new notion formation*. “There is a continuous elaboration of notions, that gathers around themselves for some time isolated opinions of participants” of the communication process<sup>11</sup>. Communicative rationality is appropriate at such complicated negotiations as e.g. solving Iranian nuclear conflict. It allows continuing communication even though notions that use both sides (their notional framework) are different. But both sides are willing to reach an agreement so they are ready to form common notions and take into account changing contexts – text surrounding. Context substitute text ambiguity for certainty, specify notion, shows the

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<sup>9</sup> See Кукарцева М., Смирнов Г. Универсальности переговоров // А Лампере, А Колсон Первый шаг Спутник переговорщика. М, 2014, стр. 9-10

<sup>10</sup> See Порус В.Н. Рациональная коммуникация как проблема эпистемологии. // Коммуникативная рациональность. Эпистемологический подход. М, 2009, стр. 22

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, p. 20-21.

limits of the truth – it is connected to metaphor and tropes, it is the organizer of the current situation discourse of – peace, war, negotiations, scandal, etc. The context could be indentifying, strong, weak, open, classified, relevant, irrelevant, isolating, integrating, stabilizing, migrating, generating. The variety of contexts sets up the “creation of notions”, but also the “conflict of the contexts”<sup>12</sup> that makes its definition per se very controversial.

Generally speaking, the skill of using contexts, discover its limits, width, “space and time scopes” help to “make various sources of social events explanation”<sup>13</sup> and that is the art of diplomacy, the ability to hold negotiations, the capability to listen to the other side. Thereby communicative rationality don’t bring under control the participants of the communication, the negotiators, but on the contrary *is controlled by them*. It gives both sides the opportunity to share, at least mentally, each other’s viewpoints. We think that exact mechanism (among many others) let us overcome the features of national identity and as a result appearing communicative failures and create the united communicative space. Meanwhile during the actual negotiating process *rational communication* and *communicational rationality* should supplement each other, if only by virtue of the fact that negotiations is the continuing process and each side while searching for reasons and opportunities to reach an agreement must know how to move the considerations of rationality from one context to the other.

The mentioned letter of the hypothetical Brazillian minister of the foreign affairs is an example of such combination and furthermore the accent was made exactly on the communicative rationality. The supposed BRIC summit would have been held at the moment when it would have been really easier to achieve approval of the undertaken actions by every side. Will be created not the illusion of communication but actual intersubjectivity by adding in political discourse some elements of the strategy of theatricality. By the way, partly exactly because of it the participants of G20 summits always make photos in national costumes of the hosting state – the more they will look the same in all senses, the better and more fruitful will be their negotiations in the end.

Let’s take the specific examples.

In the dispute of Ukrainian sovereign debt (3 billion dollars) payment to Russia, Moscow choose a communicative rationality approach and Ukrainian side – rational communication point of view in its relativistic version. Ukrainian political leaders understand that to reach an agreement they have to give up some conditions. It is obvious

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<sup>12</sup> See Gerring J., 2001. Social Science Methodology. A Criterial Framework. *Cambridge Univ. Press*, 518 p.

<sup>13</sup> Матисов С.К Проблема контекста, // Язык, знание. Социум. М, 2007, стр. 90.

just because there is no alternative. That determines the choice of communicational model. It is rational and it is dictated by the external circumstances. However during the negotiations because of the specific atmosphere in the Ukrainian government working group, the peculiar features of mental strategies of the main arbiters, that make decisions, the prevalence of subjective characteristics in the process of creating communicative space, the rational communication moves to irrationality, leads astray from the goal of negotiations.

The directly opposed example is the terroristic group ISIS activity to establish its statehood. I. Pankratenko stresses the attention on the ISIS policy on the controlled territories. “In most communities the public transport routes are restored almost completely and they are free or have a symbolic price. In some places the functioning of the mail system is reestablished, created the feed system for the poor. Locals who restore or repair their houses can have interest-free loans. Besides, some of them, at the first place the fighters of armed groups, get the houses for free, because after mass evacuation and religious minorities repressions ISIS local authorities accessed enough housing stock. The health services are restored and children are gotten hot meals, etc”<sup>14</sup>. All these shows that ISIS is not only and not just terrorist group, it is an organization that aims, not without success, to build its statehood and for this sake communicate with the locals on the basis of communicative rationality: the continuing forming of new notions occurs and separated opinions of communication participants are united on that basis. Christians, Shias, Yazidis agree to pay a huge duty and Sunnis are not burdened by the restriction of “non-islamic” entertainments. All these complicate the fight against ISIS – after all the risk level of creating the permanent guerrilla on the future liberated territories is extremely high. Then new future government, the forces of liberation in turn will have to stay on the ground of communicative rationality. This example demonstrates that it is just passionless mechanism of political technologies – it can be used both for the political good and political evil.

The peculiarities of every possible communicative political situation demand the specific analysis of the conditions that will allow us to discuss the applicability of the communicative rationality principle to this actual situation.

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<sup>14</sup> Панкратенко И. «ИГ» на пути к полноценному государству //«Исламское государство»: сущность и противостояние. Аналитический доклад / Под общей редакцией Я.А. Амелиной и А.Г. Арешева. Владикавказ: Кавказский геополитический клуб, 2015. – стр 39 // <http://www.kavkazgeoclub.ru/sites/default/files/pdfpreview/dokladig-final.pdf> (Accessed 21 November 2015)

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