New Crossroads in Managing Strategic Diplomacy to Advocate the UN-SDGs

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This issue of *Tripodos* includes papers presented at the 5th Blanquerna-Emerson Global Summit —“Advocating United Nations Sustainable Goals Through Strategic Diplomacy”— held in Barcelona in November 2019. Throughout its five years, this annual Summit has evolved into a think-tank of top scholars and practitioners in strategic communication, public diplomacy and civic engagement.

Through these Summits, we have archived provocative essays, persuasive campaigns, narratives and case studies of theory and practice published in peer reviewed journals, including a ground breaking issue of the *American Behavioral Scientist* entitled Trends in Global Public Relations Grassroots Diplomacy” and two issues of *Tripodos*, “New Perspectives on Cross-Cultural Communication and Corporate Diplomacy” —published in 2018— and this current issue. We now are at a juncture where such research and practical application of theory, along with our on-going exploration of the most efficient immersive pedagogy, provide salient tools that enable us to engage with colleagues from around the world, as agents dedicated to finding commonalities in a deeply divided global village.

The BE Global Summits, initiated in 2015, furthered the collaborative excitement and enriched the heritage of the 18th Global Symposiums on Global Communication, founded at Blanquerna (Barcelona) in 2001, and promoted by the Global Communication Institute, a consortium of 15 Schools from the 5 continents. Our first Summit in 2015 was intimate, primarily consisting of faculty and students from Emerson and Blanquerna who debated timely topics in a spirited dialectical engagement. The themes of the first and subsequent Global Summits mirror the timely and diverse topics of world: Global Communication, Public Diplomacy and Civic Engagement (Barcelona 2015); Politics, Sports, and Civic Engagement (Boston 2016); Cross-cultural diplomacy: Engaging in Diplomacy, Sports and Politics Across Cultures (Barcelona 2017); Politics, Propaganda

and Strategic Diplomacy (Capitol Hill-Washington DC 2018) and, the most recent, *Advocating United Nations Sustainable Goals Through Strategic Diplomacy* (Barcelona 2019).

Led by the Blaquerna-Emerson Center for Global Communication,¹ all such conferences have a common core. Our purpose is to explore common pathways forward among the experts, opinion leaders and practitioners, engaged in debate and dialogue on global public affairs, public relations, crisis communication, and various themes and subjects of the burgeoning field of public diplomacy.

It is within this historical context that we provide this issue of *Tripodos*, with a special focus on the 2019 Summit, dedicated to the study of global trends linked to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals in the field of Global Communication, Diplomacy, Health, and Politics. Leading scholars and practitioners who attended the conference submitted articles and abstracts in four tracks related to the UN Sustainable Goals:

1. Thriving world: Reduced Inequality; Zero Hunger; Gender Equality;
2. Sociable World: Good Health and Well-Being; Responsible Consumption and Production; Sustainable Cities and Communities;
3. Clean World: Life on Land; Climate Action; Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure; and
4. Productive World: Clean Water and Sanitation; Decent Work and Economic Growth; Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions.

The axiological foundation of the BE-Center for Global Communication reflects an on-going exploration of common core beliefs and values, in an era where institutions and governments around the world are under attack in terms of credibility and trust among their constituent publics. One such area of study focuses on the corporate entity and increased value in “Social Consciousness”, a result of active publics and influencers calling for such leadership in business given a broken political system.

In the attempt to establish a credible ethos of social legitimacy, as a result of increased grassroots campaigns focused on influencing corporate strategy, the overall goal is a better alignment of corporate values with in the global demands for social justice. This approach is in marked contrast to companies acting as independent bodies, disenfranchised from such calls for corporate social consciousness, and only motivated by sheer larger profit. The result of this dialectic is that many organizations have adjusted to the current economic crisis by reexamining their values and corporate philosophy to ensure they are more in alignment with the culture and values of the communities they call home.

1 The Blaquerna-Emerson Center for Global Communication aims to develop teaching, research and transfer of technology and the confluence of knowledge to promote critical thinking and ethical communication among International Relations, Political Communication, Strategic Diplomacy and Corporate Communication.

Such emerging corporate values and policies, a product of a new conception and growth of collaborative cultures, is an extension of the “shared economy”, and growth of shared social justice values within the global society.

The BE-Center for Global Communication is a hub of knowledge dedicated to explore such innovative and transformational change. Our goal is to be a Global Communication think-tank devoted to acquire, dialogue, generate and disseminate knowledge via conferences, research projects and educational programs.

The articles in this issue reflect such insights on a variety of topics. We invite you to read, reflect and re-tool, as we collaboratively focus our efforts to meet today’s global challenges through the appreciation of the art and practice of critical thinking and ethical communication.