



THE CONCEPTUAL FIELD OF CONTEMPORARY PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

El Marco Conceptual de la diplomacia pública contemporánea

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This article considers public diplomacy as a distinct modality of diplomacy, arguing that it generally reflects the contemporary transformation of the international system and the ways of interacting and achieving influence within it. After identifying the main functions of diplomacy generally, the article considers the nature of the different public diplomacy modalities and how these fulfil diplomatic functions: Propaganda, nation branding, strategic communication, relationship building and outsourced public diplomacy. Common to these are the challenges of actively listening to the audience and achieving a coherent and effective public diplomacy. Finally, the article argues that the power notions implied in public diplomacy are basically of an indirect and structural nature, permitting public diplomacy practices to add value to other, more classical, modalities of international interaction.



Abstract

Public diplomacy, nation branding, relationship building, power, diplomacy.
Diplomacia pública, marca país, construcción de relaciones, poder, diplomacia.



Key words

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Fechas

Este artículo analiza la diplomacia pública como una modalidad diferenciada de la diplomacia, situándola dentro del contexto de la transformación contemporánea del sistema internacional y sus formas de interactuar y conseguir influencia. Después de identificar las funciones de la diplomacia de forma general, el artículo considera las diferentes modalidades de diplomacia pública y cómo cada una tienen una función diplomática: propaganda, marca país, construcción de relaciones y diplomacia pública 'subcontratada'. Común a todas estas son los retos de escuchar activamente a la audiencia y conseguir una comunicación coherente y efectiva. Finalmente, el artículo concluye que las nociones de poder implícitas en la diplomacia pública son básicamente de una naturaleza indirecta y estructural, lo que permite a la diplomacia pública añadir valor a las otras modalidades más clásicas de la interacción internacional.



Resumen

1. Introduction

In the contemporary globalising world, public diplomacy has become a central concern to both academic analysts and policy-makers, as evidenced by the steady stream of academic publications and the substantial resources allocated by foreign ministries to the theme. Every state government and every other international actor must define its interests and foreign policy strategy within the enabling and constraining context of global public opinion. The fact is that very few political systems exist in which the government, or those interacting with this government, can afford to ignore the public opinion on the issue at hand. Political influence in global politics is therefore increasingly a matter of being able to shape how foreign publics define the meaning of facts, interpret events and perceive other actors in the international system. In a global political struggle for the legitimacy of actions, the framing of events becomes as important as the ability to shape reality on the ground. Whereas this may be true in 19th century-type conflicts such as the Russian annexation of the Crimea, this is even more so in relationships where the use of brute force has been ruled out from the beginning.

But even if the contemporary social and academic relevance of public diplomacy can this way be argued, the phenomenon can be analysed both in its empirical manifestations and conceptually, the latter of which will be done in this article: How to understand public diplomacy in the framework of diplomacy more generally as a method of how states and other actors interact.

First of all, there is the question of how public diplomacy is different from other, more traditional, practices of diplomacy. This is a question that relates to the changed patterns in how the units of the contemporary international system interact, and how public diplomacy works as an instrument of the states that adds value to the traditional channels of diplomatic interaction, a question that will be taken up in the second section of this article. In this sense also, whereas there seems to be a general consensus that public diplomacy is about communicating with foreign publics in order to promote one's own interests, we are dealing with a very rich social field, which is why a distinct purpose of the article is to clarify the conceptual field of public diplomacy and its related concepts, such as propaganda, nation branding, strategic political communication and cultural diplomacy, taken up in the third section. The fourth and fifth sections are dedicated to analysing two dimensions common to all public diplomacy modalities, and the sixth argues that contemporary public diplomacy leads to a reconsideration of the notions of power in international relations more generally. The final section contains the conclusions of the study.

The framing of events becomes as important as the ability to shape reality on the ground

2. Public diplomacy as diplomacy

2.1. The concept of diplomacy

A key characteristic of diplomacy is its management of change in international relations, and in this respect, innovations in diplomatic practice have always characterised diplomacy (Melissen, 1999, p. xix). Public diplomacy could thus be understood as a development in diplomatic practices that accompanies and reflects the transformation of the states and forms of communicating amongst them generally.

Although it is a concept with which we are all familiar, there is actually no generally agreed definition of what diplomacy is. Sharp concludes after reading the literature on diplomacy that

diplomacy is basically used with three different meanings (Sharp, 2003). The first is the art of the state, meaning the implementation of foreign policy, with diplomacy being the form of interaction whereas foreign policy is about content. Precisely this distinction is to Vilariño Pintos (2003) a defining characteristic of diplomacy and points to the main function of diplomacy: to promote state interests with peaceful means (pp. 68-79). In this sense, diplomacy is basically one of the tools of statecraft, the other being the use of force. The second meaning refers to policy implementation by official state representatives that embody the state in international relations, making anthropomorphism an important element of diplomacy and stresses as a characteristic of diplomacy the channels of interaction that are used among states. The third meaning identified by Sharp is about the way foreign policy is conducted, not only by peaceful means but also with intelligence and tact, adhering to diplomatic protocol as an expression of a shared diplomatic culture. This again relates to the function of diplomacy, which is not only to promote specific interests, but also to promote the systemic interest in avoiding war, what Bull (1977) calls reduction of friction in the international system (p. 165) and Pérez de Cuéllar (1997) “diplomatic management” (p. 153).

Whereas these elements of diplomacy constitute good benchmarks that will help understand public diplomacy as a modality of diplomacy, the most adequate definition of diplomacy for an analysis of the public diplomacy modality is that of Der Derian (1987), which sees diplomacy in more ample terms as “the mediation among estranged peoples organized into states that interact in a system” (p. 43). Whereas this definition is rather far from those of classical approaches to diplomacy (Der Derian, 2009, pp. 196-197) it has the virtue of stressing the social aspects of diplomacy, mainly the identity of the actors involved and how the relationship between them is ultimately a question of identification processes. This is a vital point of focus, since public diplomacy is in large part about influencing the estranged other and its perception of both itself and one self, as well as its perception of other events and phenomena.

Public diplomacy is essentially about communicating with foreign publics to obtain certain goals

2.2. The concept of public diplomacy

Public diplomacy is essentially about communicating with foreign publics to obtain certain goals. Accepting the importance of separating the form and process (diplomacy) from the content (foreign policy), the focus is here on the practices of public diplomacy. In this regard, Sharp (2005) defines public diplomacy in instrumentalist terms as “the process by which direct relations with the people in a country are pursued to advance the interests and extend the values of those being represented” (p. 106) a definition that most analysts could probably agree with. Nevertheless, there is no agreement over whether this is necessarily done by official representatives. McClellan (2004) writes about “the strategic planning and execution (...) by an advocate country (...)” (pp. 23-24), which seems to suggest that it is government officials that engage in public diplomacy, whereas Davis Cross (2013) expands the concept to include people-to-people relations thereby making the number and types of people involved in public diplomacy “virtually limitless” (p. 4).

Whereas Davis Cross is arguably right, for the purposes of this article, public diplomacy will be considered a practice of the state (or another actor), although keeping in mind the fact that a lot of what influences foreign publics, if not the main part, is not the public diplomacy practices of state officials. In this sense, a central challenge to the state becomes one of coordinating and increasing the coherence of the total communicative ‘output’ of the society, including the com-

municative impact of local governments, organised civil society and individuals, a point that will be taken up in the following sub-sections of the article. This expansion of the actors involved stands in contrast to traditional diplomatic practices. Also here, the monopoly of the central government on international interaction is being eroded and the foreign ministries transformed from gate-keepers to boundary-spanners (Hocking, Melissen, Riordan & Sharp, 2012), but public diplomacy is arguable the diplomatic modality where the loss of control and influence of the central government has advanced the furthest and which is the most difficult to coordinate.

Apart from being directed at the general public and not official representatives of other states, another aspect that singles out public diplomacy as a special modality of diplomacy is precisely the public nature of its various practices, which contrasts with the pervasive secretiveness of non-public diplomatic practices.

Having made these general observations as to the nature of public diplomacy as a modality of diplomacy, two analytical dimensions can be applied to distinguish and conceptually differentiating the different forms of communication: The time frame and the broadness or generality of the element in foreign public opinion that is sought influence. Leonard (2002) distinguishes between three sets of practices of public diplomacy (pp. 8-21). The first is news management, where the interpretation of current events and initiatives is sought influenced. The second is strategic communication, where a certain set of core messages are sought transmitted through planned activities. Finally, relationship building is not about specific messages, but about furthering greater understanding generally. It is thus possible to distinguish public diplomacy activities depending on how broad an influence is sought.

Different concepts normally discussed in relation to public diplomacy can in this view be seen as specific forms of communication, whereas public diplomacy remains the broader concept within which these more specific communicative forms can be subsumed.

3. Public diplomacy: modalities

3.1. Propaganda

Propaganda has negative connotations, not least due to the successful use of this instrument by Nazi Germany, but from a communications point of view, what characterises propaganda is that it is essentially one-way communication with a specific audience with the aim of persuading people how to think about a given topic. Many public diplomacy campaigns probably fall into this category, but it could be argued that there is a qualitative difference between public diplomacy campaigns and the essence of propaganda. According to Cull, propaganda aims to narrow people's perspectives and close their minds, and functions by making a person form an opinion before she can deliberate freely (Melissen 2005, p. 18). This stands in stark contrast to other forms of communication that aims to provide new information and the better argument in a more or less free communication process, as opposed to propaganda's aim of controlling.

As is the case with the other public diplomacy practices considered in this article, propaganda communicates directly with foreign publics disregarding official diplomatic channels. Still, it is characterised by being centrally planned and executed by designated state officials, and does not leave room for the inclusion of other points of view or feedback from the audience. The influence sought is specific, aiming to change the opinion of foreign audiences on specific issues, deemed to be of political priority. The interaction with the audience is therefore limited

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to measuring the effectiveness of the propaganda and perhaps an adaptation of the specific techniques, but will not include a rethink of the messages.

3.2. Nation branding and projection of self-images

One of the central purposes of public diplomacy is projecting and controlling self-images abroad. Although other elements are also targets of public diplomacy, depending on the political priorities of the government, how these are communicated also reflects back on the image that is projected to foreign audiences. In fact, each event or communicative initiative from any actor of a given society contributes to constructing in image of that society in the eyes of foreign publics, and the challenge of branding a society (nation, or state) and communicate a coherent image to foreign publics is therefore enormous. This is what leads Melissen (2005) to see the projection of self-images through branding as holistic and more ambitious than the more limited and partial nature of public diplomacy (pp. 19-20), which in this view is basically oriented to strengthening relationships in general (Melissen, 2006). This is basically because nation branding is considered to be based on mobilising and coordinating the communication of an entire society, whereas public diplomacy is seen as restricted to the activities of state officials. Still, and assuming that the activities of actors other than state officials are either included or excluded in both concepts, it could be argued that nation branding is merely the part of public diplomacy that attacks the self-image as an element in foreign political discourses, whereas public diplomacy remains a larger phenomenon seeking also to influence foreign publics in other ways.

Nation branding is therefore a modality that breaks with traditional diplomatic channels and the traditional monopoly of foreign ministry officials to control the interaction of a society beyond the borders of the state, and the role of foreign ministry officials are radically different from the role they have in propaganda. It includes a determined effort within domestic society to make sure that there is a general consensus on the overall image among the actors with important international impact, be they local governments, private companies or civil society organizations. The task of coordination is immense and strategies for achieving coherence become vital. The brand of a society or image that is sought projected is essentially about the collective identity of a society. In the following section, the importance and relevance of identity for public diplomacy is considered specifically. As a modality of diplomacy, nation branding serves a limited purpose, which is mainly about generating positive views of one-self in order to achieve political or economic advantages down the line. Whereas the objective of nation branding is thereby at the same time limited (to the self-image) and diffuse (non-specified gains), as a modality of diplomacy it is limited to a form of promoting the national interest by other means than what the traditional diplomatic toolbox offers.

3.3. Strategic communication on political issues

Apart from the propaganda and the specific public diplomacy practices related to the projecting of a certain self-image, other public diplomacy initiatives typically involves communication campaigns, which can of course be very different with respect to the object sought influenced, audiences, channels and specific activities. What they share is the previous design of communication strategies, based on the identification of messages, audiences and channels of com-

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munication. The time perspective can be from the immediate, such as mainly reactionary crisis management (ex. the Danish Mohammad Cartoon crisis) to the very longterm, such as activities to convince global audiences of some fundamental values (ex. EU campaigns against the death penalty).

Generally, the strategic communicative initiatives have specific aims of promoting a change of perceptions among foreign publics on rather limited issues, and it thus shares the instrumental nature of other public diplomacy practices.

3.4. Building relationships

A separate set of public diplomacy practices can be distinguished by their different purpose. Whereas propaganda, nation branding and strategic political communication share the objective of undertaking certain activities with the aim of promoting a specific interest, public diplomacy also includes practices that are more general with respect to their purpose, and more longterm in their focus, as identified also by Leonard, as outlined above. They are communicative initiatives aimed at increasing knowledge on certain topics as well as creating and improving relations in general. Good examples of this type of activities are those normally associated with cultural diplomacy. Cultural diplomacy is essentially about communicating deeper values of a given society and increasing the knowledge of foreign audiences about the specific culture of a given society. Other practices include exchange programs for students and teachers, journalists etc.

Considering these activities as a modality of diplomacy, according to the dimensions set forth above, they can be seen as being essentially about what Bull (1977) termed the 'reduction of friction' in international relations (p. 165), functioning by increasing understanding and thereby reducing the risk of unnecessary conflict and facilitating mutually beneficial cooperation. Public diplomacy thus reproduces the duality that is also evident in diplomacy generally, between the *raison d'état* and the *raison de système*. The purpose of diplomacy can be conceptualised as the mediation of the material and ideational propensities of universalism and particularism (Jönsson & Hall, 2005, p. 33), meaning that the diplomatic activities of a given actor must at the same time serve the particular interests of that actor, but also the systemic interests of the international community of ensuring a functioning system based on predictability and the peaceful resolution of disputes, preferably by strengthening a system of consensuated legal rules.

Still, cultural diplomacy and exchange programmes can of course also be seen as to prepare a favourable ground for specific policy initiatives just as much as nation branding or other public diplomacy modalities, a core function of diplomacy, as argued above. It is the time aspect and scope of cultural diplomacy that distinguishes it from other public diplomacy modalities (Mellissen, 2005, p. 22) since it does not normally involve influencing the interpretation of contemporary events and other specific meanings.

3.5. Outsourced public diplomacy

A general problem in public diplomacy when an accredited diplomat communicates the message is the problem of credibility that leads to a lack of impact. Therefore, it is common to outsource certain public diplomacy functions, depending on the aim and topic. For instance, to

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promote human rights in societies without strong democratic traditions, it is logical that activities by local human rights groups are more effective than conferences given or articles written by foreign diplomats. In this case, rather than executing a public diplomacy activity through the embassy, it would be a more effective use of money to fund local groups. Thereby, the changes proposed are not seen by the audience as foreign attempts to impose foreign values, but to a larger degree as a natural social development of the local society. Of course, this modality is not restricted to the promotion of values or attempts at transforming the basic fabric of foreign societies. Another good example is the recent accusations by the NATO secretary-general that Russia has begun systematically funding local NGOs in Europe and North America that are active against shale-gas exploitation, with the aim not only of off-setting the official policies of the foreign governments, but also to promote Russian economic interests. Coupled with the notorious Russian crackdowns on Russian NGOs that receive foreign financing, this seems to suggest that the outsourcing of certain communicative activities is indeed an effective mechanism for achieving political influence.

As a modality of diplomacy, however, the outsourcing to local civil society groups seems to be the best example of public diplomacy practices that break with some of the fundamental norms of traditional diplomacy and general public international law. It is clearly a form of achieving influence disregarding official channels, to the point where it can be considered intervention in the internal affairs of other states in disrespect of their political independence and sovereignty. In this sense, it is a very good example of how international political practice is adapting to the global interconnected world, where the negotiations between accredited diplomats is but one channel for influence, and not necessarily the most effective one.

Public diplomacy is based on disregarding the official diplomatic channels of communication

4. The role of the audience

Public diplomacy is based on disregarding the official diplomatic channels of communication. But it is worth considering, then, public diplomacy as an alternative channel of communication between two societies. Obviously, it is more difficult to influence the basic beliefs of others than their opinion of phenomena of marginal importance to them. This points to the futility of too ambitious public diplomacy campaigns, which try to change the basic values and perceptions of foreign audiences. Influence is more easily obtained if the message transmitted is consistent with the basic beliefs and values of people. Public diplomacy should thus as a first step analyse the target group, and the level of ambition be adjusted in consequence. In consequence, Noya (2007) argues that officials working with public diplomacy should be geographically specialised (p. 155).

In this regard, it is beneficial to maintain a two-way communication process, to engage in dialogue (Melissen, 2005, pp. 13-14), since for maximum impact, both the message and communicative activity should be adjusted continuously depending on the impact on the target audience. This creates a need for high flexibility at the time of executing public diplomacy initiatives and, as argued above, in this respect there is also much to be said for the outsourcing of public diplomacy to domestic or foreign civil society organizations.

In all public diplomacy practice, then, is it important to take seriously the audience and not only talk, but also to listen. However, depending on the specific public diplomacy practice, although all should take into account the impact on target audiences, there is a great difference with respect to the nature and purposes of the 'listening' to what audiences have to say:

1. It can be an end in itself, if the point is to generally increase understanding and knowledge. (Practices aimed at the reduction of friction in the international system)
2. It can be simple learning, in that the methods of communication can be adapted for maximum effect (Propaganda, nation branding)
3. It can be advanced learning, in that the communicators are actually convinced of the opinions of the audiences with a resulting feedback into the policy formulation process (nation branding, strategic communication, outsourced PD)
4. It can be reflexive, in that it makes the communicators question their perception of self, which can potentially feed back into changes of national identity (All modalities except propaganda)

This means that to engage in two-way public diplomacy also necessarily means opening up to foreign influences. This is essentially a social constructivist argument, the depth of which is impossible to treat in this article. It involves a certain loss of control, a dimension of public diplomacy that will be treated in more practical terms in the following.

5. The challenge of coherence

In a globalised world where state governments have lost the monopoly on interaction with foreign societies, many channels other than the official foreign ministry-approved communication influence foreign publics. As such, in the case of countries that are more or less present in the worldview of the audience, the biggest impact probably comes not from public diplomacy, but from books, TV, films, company brands, etc. outside of government control (Leonard, 2002, p. 4). Consider, for instance, whether official US public diplomacy campaigns or US popular culture, in the form of films, TV series and music, has the greatest impact on foreign audiences. Of course, public diplomacy can include the promotion of the part of popular culture that is deemed beneficial for a public diplomacy purposes, but the point is that it is impossible to avoid the non-desired impact.

Furthermore, the involvement of other actors than state officials, and potentially all audience-relevant individuals and organizations of a society in a public diplomacy initiative, which is assumed planned by the central government, is beneficial with respect to communicating a given message, since this means increased ability to engage with a specific audience on its own terms and tailor the public diplomacy activities for increased efficiency.

For these two reasons, contemporary public diplomacy is faced with serious problems of coherence and coordination, apart from the more communications-technical challenges of exactly which communication techniques to employ in different circumstances. To avoid that the communicative effects of the activities of different actors towards a given audience cancel each other out, there must be a basic agreement on content in a given society and, in order to be truly efficient, even based on cooperation to reap synergy effects. The activities of state officials responsible for public diplomacy should therefore also necessarily include efforts to coordinate with domestic civil society actors (Melissen, 2011, pp. 16-20).

In democratic societies, to engage in public diplomacy effectively means recognising the loss of control. It is possible to control the interaction between the organs of two states and their official representatives, but it is impossible to control the actors and individuals that interact

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across the political borders of two different societies. Other public diplomacy practices perhaps do not suffer from the disadvantage that image projection and nation branding has with respect to the need for control to the same extent, since practically all activities in a society impacts on how this society is perceived by a foreign audience. A central question in nation branding is therefore to which extent it is possible to control the image projected, and how the coherence of the total communication output of a given society can be increased.

What is common for all public diplomacy practices is that general clarity and agreement within a country (or organisation) is vital, a factor which can be conceptualised in terms of having a strong and consensuated identity.

Nevertheless, the challenge of coherence is not limited to the communicative activities of different actors. Public diplomacy is a modality of diplomacy seeking indirect and structural influence internationally by affecting the political discourses within other states. But any diplomatic practice has at least a potential public diplomacy effect, since actions communicate as much as words. Consistency between the discursive impact of traditional diplomacy and that of public diplomacy is thus important so that the two modalities of diplomacy do not cancel out each other's effects, meaning that public diplomacy initiatives should be very attentive to the other modalities of diplomacy and that public diplomacy should be present across the board of diplomacy and not reduced organisationally to a separate department designing communication campaigns.

For democratic states, the basic condition is the impossibility to control the messages communicated to foreign audiences, due to the interconnectedness of societies on a global scale. In the contemporary environment, states should forget any ambition to control the international interchange, with the foreign ministry acting as gate keeper, and instead embrace the possibilities that globalisation offers and improve the foreign ministry's function as a boundary spanner (Hocking et al., 2012). This lesson holds especially true for the public diplomacy modality of diplomacy, and for the ambitious modality of nation branding in particular. No matter how many campaigns are designed, there is just no way of controlling what message reaches the audience in today's interconnected global world. The best a concerted public diplomacy effort can hope to do is to increase the coherence of what is communicated. This requires engaging with relevant domestic actors, so no contradictory messages are sent, and those that are sent are mutually reinforcing. This is essentially a political process and about constructing a widely shared identity, whether in a specific organization or within a state. Of course, this task is easier for a functionally limited international organization such as NATO than it is for a functionally near-universal international organization such as the EU. And by extension of this argument, it is easier for a relatively small and culturally, economically and politically homogenous state such as Iceland than for a bigger state with greater internal diversity such as Spain.

Public diplomacy should be present across the board of diplomacy

6. Public diplomacy and power

Whereas public diplomacy in the instrumentalist perspective would fit in nicely with the classical Realism of Morgenthau, it will be argued here that there is far more to the concept of public diplomacy than an instrument for the conduct of the foreign policy of sovereign states. It is far beyond the scope of the present article to do a full-fledged analysis of how the concept of public diplomacy fits in with different IR theories. Instead, the discussion will focus on the concept of power, central in any IR theory.

Public diplomacy is by scholars as well as politicians widely associated with the notion of soft power, a term coined by Joseph Nye and defined as “getting others to want the outcomes you want” (Nye, 2004, p. 5), not by means of coercion, but by attraction (Nye, 2004, p. 6). The conceptual connection is problematic, however. Hocking highlights the paradox of associating soft power with public diplomacy, arguing that if attraction really worked, there would be no need for public diplomacy (Hocking, 2005, p. 35). Indeed, because values and ideas do not transfer themselves, there must be some contact between the two parties.

Manners’ ideas about normative power recognise this, and identify specific mechanisms through which public diplomacy can function (Manners, 2002; Manners & Whitman 2013). In contrast to the soft power notion of attraction that seems to imply that it happens automatically, in a normative power perspective, public diplomacy is the efforts by which an actor seeks to transfer ideas and beliefs by influencing foreign audiences through direct engagement with them.

What is the basis of both the soft and the normative power concepts is that they recognise that public diplomacy is aimed at the structural environment in which actors define themselves, their interests and their truths about the world. It could therefore be argued that the power notion in public diplomacy is structural in nature. In this sense, Lukes (2005) redirects the attention of the analyst of public diplomacy to questions of how powerful agents make others change their perceptions of their own interests (pp. 492-493). But extending the logic of this, essentially constructivist, argument even further, what is at stake in public diplomacy is not only the interests of other actors, but also their self-perception, perception of other actors and international events, as well as their basic world-view, including notions of what the ‘good life’ is like and causal ideas about how to achieve it.

Although public diplomacy is thus generally associated with power notions of a structural nature, when considered in the context of traditional diplomacy based on ideas of sovereignty and interaction with official representatives, the nature of the power exercised through public diplomacy seems to be more ‘manipulative’, since it circumvents official channels and does not respect the idea of non-intervention in the domestic affairs of other states, but is specifically directed at changing self-perception, perceptions of interests and causal ideas in other political entities.

In this sense, the form of influence in public diplomacy may be indirect with respect to the dealings with other states, but the level of ambition is ultimately higher than in the classical modalities of diplomacy and their direct power notions, where influence is gained through modifying the behaviour of foreign states to one’s own benefit only, but not their identities, ideas or interests.

7. Conclusion

A first conclusion is that an effective public diplomacy, regardless of the specific modality, needs to be adapted to specific foreign audiences and engage in listening in order to improve effectiveness, although this raises questions about the influence that foreign publics this way will have on the state or organization executing public diplomacy. Also, due to the democratic nature of most contemporary societies and the global interconnectedness, public diplomacy’s main challenge is one of coordination and coherence. In this sense, the article points to the need of constructing a solid and consensuated collective identity previous to international interaction.

*The power notion
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To conclude as for the nature of public diplomacy as a modality of diplomacy, it should be understood within the context of the reduced importance of state borders and increased importance of global public opinion. It serves much the same functions as traditional diplomacy, furthering both particular and systemic interests, and the proliferation and attention given to public diplomacy undoubtedly reflects is added value in global politics to achieve political influence (greater perceptiveness to one's views) and economic benefits (ability to attract investments and tourists and win international competitive projects).

A third conclusion is that public diplomacy is problematic as a modality of diplomacy, at least from the viewpoint of the classical Westphalian system. It is not based on recognising and interacting with official state representatives, but seeks to circumvent these and engage directly in internal political debates in other states. This challenges basic international norms of respecting the sovereignty of other states, as it constitutes a direct intervention in the internal affairs of other states.

As such, public diplomacy is a good reflection of how sovereignty is being transformed in the contemporary international society, and also of how the ways in which to achieve influence in global politics have changed. This has a theoretical impact on the IR discipline and our ways of understanding the concept of power, which shifts from thinking in terms of direct influence through persuasion and coercion, to structural and indirect forms of achieving influence in contemporary global politics.

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