

**How is Mexico implementing its soft power by means of its  
public diplomacy to influence its international image?**

Marina Guajardo Villar

S1031449

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Leiden University

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“La historia podrá esclarecer el origen de muchos de nuestros fantasmas, pero no los disipará. Sólo nosotros podemos enfrentarnos a ellos. La historia nos ayuda a comprender ciertos rasgos de nuestro carácter, a condición de que seamos capaces de aislarlos y denunciarlos previamente. Nosotros somos los únicos que podemos contestar a las preguntas que nos hacen la realidad y nuestro propio ser”.

***Octavio Paz, El Laberinto de la Soledad.***

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## **How is Mexico implementing its soft power by means of its public diplomacy to influence its international image?**

### **Introduction**

Recently, the attention given by scholars and academics to the study of Mexican soft power and public diplomacy has not been abundant. The existent literature is not consistent enough to provide a thorough study and explanation of how the country has so far acknowledged the concept of soft power, and more importantly, what actions need to be followed to start practising public diplomacy as a major, integral component of its foreign policy.

In this way, understanding how history has shaped Mexican politics, and, altered its domestic and international dynamics, highlights the present challenges that the country faces while attempting to improve its image internationally. Being relatively new, the study of Mexican soft power should certainly have an impact on how the country regards its foreign policy. Also, the following investigation attempts to contribute to the theoretical gap present in the study of Mexican soft power and its public diplomacy, understanding that public diplomacy is one of the best tools to observe and understand how a country wields its soft power.

The following thesis attempts to expand this area of research by observing how Mexico fits existing theoretical models and approaches of public diplomacy, by which Mexican public diplomacy will be analyzed, including cultural diplomacy as its strongest component. Nevertheless, both concepts – public diplomacy and cultural diplomacy – will never be treated as synonymous – a practice that has been followed by Mexican scholars when studying Mexican public diplomacy. Although it is important to understand that Mexican cultural diplomacy is the strongest component of Mexican public diplomacy, as several scholars note, public diplomacy is formed by at least 5 different components, cultural diplomacy being only one of them.

All in all, conceptually, public diplomacy still remains unclear, and the discussions in this field are relatively immature. Nevertheless, it remains a widely discussed practice nowadays. Overall, some elements are present in the Mexican practice, and some others are missing; in Mexico there exists a lack of tradition; it doesn't have the full repertoire of public diplomatic practice that it needs to gradually become more confident: hence the challenging nature of this investigation. For clarity, an early definition of the concepts is needed, as most of the main terms and concepts that will be used in the following investigation are conceptually interwoven with each other. It is of great importance that clear and precise definitions are made of the main concepts that will be used in the present thesis.

Even though there is a general academic and conceptual fuzziness on the main concepts, the present thesis will not examine deeply why currently Mexico's international image is the way it is, but it will try to understand and elucidate the efforts and concrete actions that the Mexican government is following – and, most importantly, needs to follow – to wield greater soft power through improving its image abroad.

To do so, a study of how Mexico aspires to wield soft power by means of public diplomacy will be able to offer a real analysis of the degree to which these practices are implemented and understood in Mexico. In other words, models out there are applicable to a certain extent, and the following work encompasses reflections on Mexican public diplomacy and cultural diplomacy – with all its limitations – as its main strength. Subsequently, beyond all its cultural projection, Mexico needs to embrace a new, integrated public diplomacy. The relevance for Mexico of using effective public diplomacy is enormous; it is essential to take a moment for deep reflection, as public diplomacy also serves to fight a negative image abroad.

In his study, Simon Anholt, a specialist on advising countries on their image that will be discussed in this investigation, notes that Mexico needs to become a leader and not remain a victim anymore. So, what should Mexico be doing to become a leader as Anholt suggests? What is it that Mexico has not been able to clearly see over the years? And which would be the best way to approach foreign audiences? Many conclude that Mexican cultural legacy is the key; it would be a gigantic task for

Mexico to export all over the world its ancient cultural legacy, a legacy that constantly attracts the attention of millions of people around the globe. But will this be sufficient?

Mexican economic development and soft power are not equivalent; they have not developed conjunctively. While Mexico holds an increasingly strong global economic position, its soft power examination, and its public diplomacy analysis and practice, need to be comparable, as Mexico needs this to have a better impact in the world.

The notion of states being concerned about their image beyond their borders is probably one of the oldest features observed in history that is now present in a dynamic international system. Likewise, the Mexican President Felipe Calderon faces a tremendous political challenge as he fights organized crime and a lack of social credibility of his legitimacy to govern Mexico. The image of Mexico abroad has been tainted by drug cartels-related violence presented in national media, and reproduced by foreign media abroad. As a whole, the challenges that the Mexican government faces while implementing soft power to improve its image abroad can be understood in the success of policies such as public diplomacy and nation branding implemented so far. Today Mexico has a new story to tell.

## **Soft Power**

Joseph Nye developed and introduced the concept of soft power to international relations in 1989, while he was working on a book about the decline of American power. Nye defines soft power as: the ability of a country to get other countries to want what it wants or the power of attractive ideas to set the political agenda and determine the framework of debate that shapes others' preferences. Even though the concept was developed for the field of international relations, characterized by several states in an anarchic system, soft power is not exclusive to states or to international relations.

Nye also argues that he developed the concept of soft power as descriptive rather than normative, meaning that as any other form of power it can be wielded for good and bad purposes or objectives. Nevertheless, it is important to mention that, theoretically, the concept of soft power is not manipulative power with a negative connotation, where by means of threats one actor achieves what is desired (Yan, 9).

Soft power is attraction, but agents can control agendas and structure subjects' preferences so that some things appear attractive that might otherwise not be so. With soft power, the subjects matter as much as the agents. Attraction is co-determined and persuasion is socially constructed. Soft power encompasses a wide range of activities which are influential in the fields of international politics and political economy. It refers to the capacity of achieving certain outcomes by means of attraction and not coercion; soft power is power of attraction and seduction by demonstrating to the other actor how attractive and interesting what you have to offer really is.

Generally, Nye determines that efficiently incorporating soft power into a government strategy is not an easy endeavor. Concrete results achieved by soft power take time, and this is often the case where both the politicians and the public do not have enough patience to wait for long term results. The parenthetical conditions are the key to determining whether soft power resources translate into the behavior of attraction that can influence others toward favorable outcomes.

Also, the author identifies that the soft power of a country rests primarily on three resources: its culture (in places where it is attractive to others), its political values (when it lives up to them), and its foreign policies (when they are seen as legitimate and having moral authority- (Nye, 96). Even though Nye concedes that the concept of attraction he has developed needs further research, academics and theorists of international relations have diversified opinions concerning the conceptual framework that Nye has defined as soft power. Even so, public diplomacy has been defined as an important tool in the arsenal of soft power, but it is not itself the soft power. Having soft power does not necessarily mean an international actor can have successfully implement public diplomacy and vice versa (Nye, 103).

## **Public Diplomacy**

Until now, there has been little guidance and agreement on what public diplomacy is and how states could benefit the most from this practice. Lately, as many scholars have devoted their attention to discussing, analyzing and generally



understanding what exactly public diplomacy is, uncertainty and fuzziness still remain around the concept. As public diplomacy still remains conceptually unclear, the discussions on this field are relatively immature, and nevertheless it remains an increasingly discussed practice nowadays. For the purpose of this investigation, public diplomacy will be defined as the diplomatic engagement with people in contemporary diplomatic practice (Melissen, 1).

In order to understand what public diplomacy means it is necessary to first observe what traditional diplomacy stands for, and how the evolution of the latter has influenced contemporary diplomatic practice. In a broad sense, traditional diplomacy can be interpreted as an international actor's attempt to manage the international environment through engagement with another international actor.

As Melissen notes, in the contemporary context of diplomacy, public diplomacy has a distinct quality, in that it helps to entice diplomats out of their narrow domain of officially accredited representatives, ruling elites, and others orbiting around government. For diplomacy and individual official diplomats, this opening up of their previously privileged habitat is not a superficial concession to a new era. Rather, it is an important historical development (Melissen, 5).

Theoretical models related to public diplomacy are not abundant; however I would like to refer to Nicholas Cull's core approaches, and what Nye raises as the three dimensions of Public Diplomacy. Nicholas Cull defines public diplomacy as an international actor's attempt to manage the international environment through engagement with a foreign public. Involved in the engagement with international audiences, Cull equally identifies key contemporary actors such as: states, multinational corporations, non-governmental organization/stateless paramilitary organization or other players on the world stage such as individuals. Cull identifies the following as main components/approaches of public diplomacy:

- 1) Listening:** Is an actor's attempt to manage the international environment by collecting data about publics and their opinions overseas and using that data to redirect its policy or its wider public diplomacy approach accordingly.

- 2) **Advocacy:** Is an actor's attempt to manage the international environment by undertaking an international communication activity to actively promote a particular policy, idea or that actor's general interests in the minds of a foreign public- Embassy Press Relations.
- 3) **Cultural Diplomacy:** Is an actor's attempt to manage the international environment through making its cultural resources and achievements known overseas and/or facilitating cultural transmission abroad.
- 4) **Exchange Diplomacy:** Is an actor's attempt to manage the international environment by sending its citizens overseas and reciprocally accepting citizens from overseas for a period of study and/or acculturation.
- 5) **International Broadcasting:** Is an actor's attempt to manage the international environment by using the technologies of radio, television and Internet to engage with foreign publics.

As Nye notes, public diplomacy is an important tool in the arsenal of smart power, but smart public diplomacy requires understanding of the roles of credibility, self-criticism, and civil society in generating soft power (Nye, 94). In addition to Cull's theoretical model, Joseph Nye identifies three major dimensions of contemporary public diplomacy; according to the author, the mix of direct government information with long-term cultural relationships varies with three dimensions of public diplomacy.

First, daily communications refer to the explanation of the context of domestic and foreign policy decisions. This dimension encourages nations to not only devote their attention to national media but rather consider foreign press as an important actor of contemporary diplomacy. Second, a strategic communication, which serves to develop a set of simple themes, as political or advertising campaigns, can do. Last but not least, the development of long-lasting relationships with key individuals over many years by means of scholarships, exchanges, training, seminars, conferences and access to media channels.

## **Nation Branding**

Nation branding and its rapid growth and impact as a conventional practice within states and international relations has become widely popular. While some remain skeptical, others have discovered in nation branding a new sense of direction that cannot be compared to simple propaganda or well-structured and managed public relations. On the contrary, nation branding as a main tool of public diplomacy is being utilized by more and more countries, and has demonstrated that if managed correctly, it can make a substantial difference to a country's foreign perception. Also, nation branding is inherently part of the constructivist paradigm, since it builds on the understanding that territorial actors have a considerable impact in shaping their place and role in international politics (Van Ham, 103).

Nation branding emerges as a present concept, closely linked to public diplomacy, that is not very easy to define or conceptualize. The creation and conceptualization of the term is generally attributed to Simon Anholt, who later renamed the concept as competitive identity. Competitive identity is used to describe the synthesis of brand management with public diplomacy, trade, investment, tourism and export promotion.

Competitive identity then, is a new model for enhanced national competitiveness in a global world, and one that is already beginning to pay dividends for a number of countries, cities and regions, both rich and poor (Anholt, 3). As the author identifies, a proper competitive identity is formed through six areas of activity: tourism promotion, exported products and services, policy decisions of the country's government, business audiences, cultural exchange and the people of the country themselves.

In addition, nation branding as a sister practice of public diplomacy is not exclusive to developed countries. On the contrary, middle powers can benefit greatly from an effective and well-structured nation branding strategy. Unfortunately for Mexico this has not been the case so far, and neither has an agency nor an office for this purpose been officially set up. However, in 2010 Mexico hired Simon Anholt.

In addition, Mexico must bear in mind that even when the results published by Elcano Institute, or the global index published by Simon Anholt are very promising, they only reflect the potential of resources one country owns. The study does not measure to what extent countries actually use them. For this reason, in terms of owned resources, it is quite promising to observe that Mexico appears in a high-ranking position presented by both studies. Still, such results should be a reminder for Mexico of the diversity of powerful resources it possesses and that such resources will remain hidden from the world until they are used efficiently to inform and attract foreign audiences (Fan, 7).

### **Mexican Foreign Policy**

Contemporary Mexican foreign policy is the responsibility of the Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores (SRE). The mission of Mexico's Foreign Ministry, SRE, is to: "broaden and deepen Mexico's political, economic, cultural and cooperative relationships with all regions for the benefit of integral development of all Mexicans". The SRE aims to safeguard and strengthen Mexico's sovereignty and independence and to guarantee its national interests and security based on the Constitutional principles of foreign policy: non-intervention, respect for sovereignty, the self-determination of peoples and national dignity (Arroyo, 35).

The SRE aims to assure that all international programs undertaken by federal, state and local government and by all branches of government that have an impact of Mexico's relationships with other countries are carried out in a coordinated fashion and also to strengthen the expression of Mexico's cultural identity and image. As noted by the SRE "the Secretary safeguards and strengthens Mexico's sovereignty; promotes its interests internationally within a context of peace and respect for international law by fomenting cooperation between the government and the various social actors; assures strong ties between the Mexican communities abroad and Mexico" (SRE).

Noticeably, during Adolfo López Mateos government (1958-1964), Mexico abandoned its traditional foreign policy and adopted a more active one as López Mateos tried to expand the horizons of Mexican foreign policy and Mexico's standing

abroad. As the SRE notes, while Mexican Presidents before him had only visited the United States with the purpose of strengthening bilateral ties, López Mateos visited various Latin- American countries, Asia and Europe. Mexico also received visits from important people such as: Nehru, Tito, and Sukarno, the main leaders of the Third World; Charles De Gaulle, interested in a closer relationship with Latin-America; and the Ethiopian emperor Haile Selassie, who came to thank Mexico for the support of the Cardenas administration during the Italian invasion of Ethiopia prior to World War Two (SRE).

Also, as Rosas points out, besides being a founding member of the Organization of the United Nations, Mexico also forms part of the world's largest multilateral institutions: IMF, World Bank, World Trade Organization, and UNCTAD, G20 (Rosas,166). Mexico has an active participation in regional institutions such as: OEA, APEC, ALADI, OCDE, and BIRD among others. In addition, Mexico also has a solid reputation in the treatment of nuclear and conventional disarmament.

However, even when dominated by isolationist tendencies for most of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, the government of Mexico has grown beyond its self-imposed seclusion with respect to its foreign policy, choosing a more open international position, as evidenced through its work with the G-77, the WTO and the OECD (Cooper, 33).

Another factor that has shaped Mexican foreign policy is the fact that regionally Mexico faces the world's superpower pressure which clearly predetermines Mexican participation in most of the international matters where it is involved. Throughout history, the United States has caused Mexican foreign policy to become nationalist, constricted and strongly defensive. Let's not forget that although Mexico is a blooming developing country with great potential, its economic and financial interests are strongly interwoven with those of the United States.

Predominantly, recent Mexican foreign policy has been determined and designed by the ruling political party and also, to a greater extent, is strongly characterized by the personal political style, views and determination of the Mexican President in power. Strikingly, with Vicente Fox's presidency and during the current administration of Felipe Calderón, Mexican foreign policy has abandoned its traditional principles of self-determination and nonintervention in the affairs of other countries. For example, the style of Mexican foreign policy that Felipe Calderón

promotes is quite distinct from that of former Mexican President Vicente Fox and that of Carlos Salinas de Gortari.<sup>1</sup>

As Rosas notes, Felipe Calderon's administration has to a certain extent promoted sectionalism among those tasks corresponding to Mexican foreign policy: instead of being handled by the SRE, they have been administrated by other offices. For example, the role of the the Procuraduría General de la República (PGR), as well as a clear display of a military fighting organized crime, had never been seen in previous administrations (Rosas, 167). Furthermore, the Secretaría de Economía (SE) is in charge of managing and supervising some of the trade agreements signed by Mexico with other nations, and ProMéxico – in charge of promoting trade<sup>2</sup> – also plays an important role in these matters. As a consequence, the SRE is mainly in charge of sustaining political and cultural relations with other countries and international organizations as some of its other actions have been limited by a different division of tasks among other offices.

Just as in other Latin-American nations, such sectionalism strongly limits the participation and engagement of the SRE in activities that fall under its umbrella. In other words, such actions serve to explain that a defined limitation of functions makes it hard for the SRE to engage and participate in activities that should fall under its jurisdiction. Equally important, such actions constrain the possibility of having a single Secretary or organ in charge of promoting an integrated public diplomacy strategy requiring strict vigilance. Its overall success depends on an internal coordination that, based in the current model and sectionalism, is unlikely to occur. It would, however, prevent a duplication of efforts and a lack of coordination; effective communication is required from all the institutions and secretaries that have an active participation in foreign policy affairs.

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<sup>1</sup> The government of Carlos Salinas de Gortari (1988-1994) assumed the task of designing the inclusion of Mexico in contemporary international relations. It was also during his administration that Mexico ratified NAFTA- North Free Trade Agreement.

<sup>2</sup> ProMéxico, created only in 2007, during Calderon's administrations, is the Mexican Government Institution in charge of strengthening Mexico's participation in the international economy. ProMéxico supports the export activity of companies established in the country and coordinates actions to attract foreign direct investment to national territory (ProMéxico).

Another important contemporary aspect that requires attention is the fact that as Mexico expands its presence internationally so does its diplomatic service. In this sense, being properly trained as a member of the Foreign Service presents its members with unique skills and an academic groundwork that allows them to excel in their tasks and responsibilities. Certainly the work of the Ministry of Economy together with ProMéxico is extremely significant for Mexico's economic growth and development as they promote direct foreign investment and trade for Mexico, but the personal qualifications and professional preparation that members of the SRE enjoy can result a positive asset for them when dealing with foreign actors. This being the current case in the SRE, its political and administrative limitations equally have an impact on the capacity and room they have to try to implement public diplomacy actions.

As a whole, Mexico must bear in mind that its national memory encompasses great historical events which have significantly shaped and determined its foreign policy throughout the years. Mexican foreign policy thus reflects national values as it profiles Mexico's international standing at the same time that it greatly determines the political and diplomatic ambitions being pursued. So, in regards to an evident loss of its international image, Mexican foreign policy would need to re-evaluate its priorities in a short and long term while assessing the conceptual understanding of such practice. As for now, having neither clear and coherent objectives nor the means to accomplish them have not made it easy for the country as its image abroad has been severely damaged during the past years.

The urgency of adopting a new strategy that will allow a healthy diversification of Mexican economic, commercial and cultural relations, as in developed nations, is likely to become more noticeable in a multipolar system; public diplomacy appears as a relevant contemporary diplomatic practice from which Mexico can greatly benefit. Mexico needs to work hard on developing a soft power comparable to that of its blooming economic growth and development among leading world nations.

Even though Mexico's international evolution is strong compared to other emerging powers, paradoxically, middle nations with less economic and social resources than Mexico make themselves more noticeable in the international arena. They have progressively achieved such a presence by incorporating public diplomacy

into their foreign policy, among their other policies. It is time for Mexico to excel in its international participation and be positively noticed, features that remain crucial nowadays for developing nations.

In sum, in order to properly integrate into the international system, Mexico would strongly benefit as never before from having a coherent foreign policy that not only recognizes its limitations, but that also utilizes to the fullest all of its capacities and resources. In other words, Mexico must not remain a passive spectator but has to become an engaged domestic, regional and global actor. In order to do so, public diplomacy offers a wide range of opportunities and approaches that help adapt to a diplomatic practice that is in constant transformation.

Additionally, Mexican diplomats and politicians could benefit from embracing and taking into consideration the concept of soft power and its benefits by consequently adopting a smart public diplomacy that will help enhance the growing international prestige that Mexico enjoys as a Latin-American country. The public diplomacy that Mexico needs to adopt requires constant effort and a permanent critical evaluation of its goals, the policies to be followed and a strategically careful implementation plan.

### **Simon Anholt in Mexico**

Simon Anholt is a British independent policy advisor who helps national, regional and city governments develop and implement strategies for enhanced economic, political and cultural engagement with other countries (Simon Anholt). Since 2005 Anholt has studied the image of many countries analysing 134 billion pieces of data on how people perceive different countries. He has advised over 50 countries, Mexico being one of them<sup>3</sup>. His work in Mexico started in 2010, but for various reasons his professional advice was not able to be successfully implemented.

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<sup>3</sup> Some of the governments that Simon Anholt has advised are: Jamaica, Germany, Bhutan, Slovenia, Ecuador, The Netherlands, Chile, Sweden, South Korea, New Zealand, Tanzania, Switzerland, The Baltic Sea Region, The United Nations, The World Bank and the World Economic Forum.



In fact, most of the nation's branding efforts are outsourced to professional experts such as Simon Anholt. At the moment, there still prevails a weak general agreement on the way that multiple techniques of commercial management can be successfully applied to places. In other words, any direct service comparable to that offered by Simon Anholt hardly exists; it is a new niche market that has found a unique advisory service in nation branding. Even with all its limitations and newness found in this practice and while the concept still remains vague for many, Mexico decided to draw on Anholt's expertise in seeking nation branding advice.

In the early stages, when it was still being considered whether or not to hire Anholt's service, there were divided opinions in Mexico on the necessity of hiring him. Even today, many see Anholt's area of expertise as merely a marketing skill. Eventually, the SRE contacted directly Simon Anholt while he was working in Chile. Anholt was contacted solely with the purpose of improving the distorted Mexican image presented abroad; caused by continuing broadcasting on violence and drug cartel associated problems in the United States.

Once he started working for the Mexican government, Anholt expressed in several occasions that Mexico's image problem can be traced at least 200 years back; Mexico's rich but contrasting history significantly shaped its domestic and international image. All in all, Anholt's early diagnosis clarified how Mexico's current image has not only been created by the news broadcast by the international media; the image of a country is not susceptible to temporary problems (Simon Anholt). Simply put, Anholt agreed on how Mexico is now paying a very high price internationally for not opening and presenting itself in the world.

Throughout his study and observation of Mexico and its current image problem, Anholt remained very transparent and consistent with his main thesis: "Mexico does not have a self-image. Mexico is a victim of the image created by The United States of America". Undeniably, the United States has the loudest and influential voice on the planet and has the resources to mold other countries' participation in the globe. As it appears, Mexican image is an unusual collage of Mexico's weak foreign projection and more importantly it is composed of the different and ambiguous illustrations that the United States transmits to the world. Undeniably the dreadful news reports of violence, extortions and drug related crimes would not

have the same global impact if the United States did not broadcast them in the way it does.

Simon Anholt's strategy in Mexico was named '*From a victim to a leader*'; it mainly consisted on achieving great results on a consistent, permanent basis. He raised 111 different symbolic acts, which he believed that if Mexico could follow, its image could begin to positively transform. Also, part of the proposed strategy was to stay out of the harmful press rather than trying to generate positive notes that might only reaffirm false impressions. Unfortunately time ran out and almost none of his suggestions were taken into effective practice during Calderon's Presidency. Moreover, the time constraint difficulty could partly be explained by the time taken to resolve his collaboration with Mexico; it took about two years to come into general consensus on whether Simon Anholt should be hired or not. By then, Calderon's Presidency was about to conclude and there is now almost no chance that the next Mexican President will implement Anholt's advise (Marin y Kall, Animal Político).

Unfortunately, Mexico also faces the problem that arises when the term of a political party or leader in charge comes to an end; it is rarely the case that the next party and elected President will follow up on the previous administration's work. It is indeed a shame that Anholt's advice will not be implemented into practical and da-to-day situations that could benefit Mexico's image abroad. As Anholt himself mentioned, "In the end Mexican politicians are not cosmopolitan, are domestic and when viewed on an international platform are much more interested in what Reforma<sup>4</sup> is going to say the rest to the world. That was the problem I had with Mexico, I could not make them understand that in fact the six billion people in the world are as important as the Mexican audience" (Simon Anholt).

Overall, Anholt recognized Mexican cultural heritage as the most important asset the country possesses. He believes that if Mexico would be able to successfully manage its cultural relations in the globe, the current reality would be very different. One of the most relevant pieces of advice that Anholt gave in terms of cultural relations was to create cultural embassies all over the world.

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<sup>4</sup> Grupo Reforma is the largest company in Latin-America and Mexico of printed media. Grupo Reforma has active daily publications in Mexico's major cities; in Mexico City-Reforma, in Guadalajara-Mural and in Monterrey-El Norte (Diario Reforma).

For example, Moctezuma's exhibition in London<sup>5</sup> attracted more than two hundred thousand visitors. The exhibition was titled, '*Moctezuma: Aztec Ruler*'. The event displayed rare and precious artifacts such as the double-headed serpent from the British Museum's own collection, pictured, which dates from around 1400 – 1521. The famous Aztec has a complex and ambivalent reputation in Mexico today, but he has continued to hold an almost mythological status in Europe. Their status has been of recent interest to foreign cultures and those individuals who know about Mexican history, when it comes to understanding the mythical Aztec civilization and how the Aztec Empire was conquered by Spain during Moctezuma's rule. Nevertheless, even though Moctezuma's exhibition was highly appealing for the British public, Anholt credits Moctezuma rather than the Mexican culture managers and experts who participated very poorly in the event.

According to Anholt, there is still much to be done in terms of exporting the national, ancient Mexican culture. He observed and noted with emphasis several times during his working time in Mexico that "the cultural sector in Mexico is very focused on promoting Mexican culture to Mexicans, but when it comes to cultural relations beyond Mexico, these are nonexistent" (Simon Anholt). He even compared recurrently to an analogy by saying that CONACULTA spends a lot of time complaining about the ignorance of Europeans about Mexico. But in whose hands lies the great responsibility of promoting Mexican culture abroad? After all, in whose interest is it that Mexico become widely known, recognized and visited?

Even though in Mexico there was no time to consider and apply Anholt's recommendations, some Mexican Embassies have undertaken new actions based on Anholt's advice. For example, in 2011, the Mexican Embassy in London organized '*Mexico through your senses*'; a series of cultural events in which the Embassy of Mexico and Mexican artists projected key cultural figures in the UK in an effort to create a platform for the new Mexican culture.

The events focused on contemporary Mexican culture and featured talent from many fields such as art, craftsmanship and cuisine among others. The four sessions organized included an exhibition of visual art, textile handling, food and drink tasting

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<sup>5</sup> The Moctezuma exhibition in London took place from Thursday 24th September 2010 - Sunday 24th January 2011.

and music. Curators, editors, chefs, painters, connoisseurs and designers were all invited to participate. As presented by the Mexican Embassy in the UK, the purpose of the event was to help British audiences and all the participants to fall in love with each sight, sound, scent, taste and touch of Mexico; so that it could become the birthplace of many fruitful and lasting cultural exchanges between Mexico and the United Kingdom (Embassy of Mexico, UK).

In sum, Simon Anholt's participation in trying to improve Mexico's image abroad demonstrates that Mexico recognizes its international image as one of its main concerns, and shows how Mexico has tried to find creative solutions that could contribute to solving the problem. During Felipe Calderon's presidency, the efforts to boost Mexico's image were considered by many politicians and academics as an effort that had never been made by any other Mexican President. Partly, this is because the violent drug war has become a real threat to Mexico's image; nevertheless Calderon's efforts also represent a realization of the importance of owning permanent respect even though drug cartels and violence problems are associated with Mexico.

It could be said that based in Anholt's advice, for Mexico to sustain a decent international image the country requires a full time engagement from the Federal government as well as the active participation of Mexican civil society, whose role has become increasingly influential. Certainly Anholt's recommendations could greatly benefit Mexico, but it will remain a collective domestic task to improve Mexico's image and to understand that a good nation branding strategy goes beyond commercial propaganda.

In addition to Simon Anholt's specialized advice, in 2010 Mexico hired Ogilvy Public Relations New York to help the country improve its image. Ogilvy was hired to intensely work on improving Mexico's international image and portraying Mexico as a safe touristic destination by presenting a safe country with an ancient culture. Ogilvy launched a campaign named: '*Mexico Today*'. Even when such campaign was principally implemented in the UK, as a whole Mexico Today is an initiative to help promote a positive image of Mexico. To do so, Ogilvy created MexicoToday.org a

leading-edge portal to keep audiences from around the world up-to-date about the latest economy, tourism, culture, and environment news.

The MexicoToday.org<sup>6</sup> website is a user-friendly news website with videos, photos, and short stories that the online user can enjoy according to their own preferences and interests. The website also allows online users to create their own user profiles for personalization, and the portal's intelligent design identifies related stories online users will be most interested to read about based on their most recent views and search activity (MexicoToday).

As Marin y Kall points out, overall, the results of Ogilvy in Mexico are not bad, thanks to the agency's work tourism definitively increased in Mexico, and even though Mexico has been recognized as one of the best tourist destinations year after year we are talking about the image of Mexico as a country and not of a temporary touristic promotion. (Marin y Kall, *Animal Político*). Such affirmation corresponds with Van Ham's perception about nation branding as something more than public relation efforts: states use place branding to affect, even modify, their reputation by similar means and processes to commercial brands. Place branding goes beyond mere slogans or old-fashion ad campaigns. It goes beyond placing a territory on the map as an attractive tourist destination (Van Ham,105).

In other words, public relation efforts are not sufficient when talking about a nation's international image. It is true, as already noted that the work Ogilvy did in Mexico produced positive results, but Mexico's image is not only about enhancing its fantastic natural resources or paradisiac touristic destinations. It certainly helps, but nation branding as a whole is presented as a more integral practice.

Nonetheless, there exist some successful cases such as *'Incredible India'* that demonstrate how a well-managed nation branding strategy can fully modify the perspective of a country in the eyes of foreigners by enhancing the country's truly appealing attributes. Mainly, as Nandan notes, from its early stages the emphasis of

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<sup>6</sup> Likewise, MexicoToday.org website is part of an online communications platform that pretends to engage international audiences through its different social media channels, including Twitter, YouTube, Facebook, and Flickr.

the Incredible India campaign has been innovation: “a new direction has been forged with the Incredible India events worldwide, which revolve around the soft power of India. This soft power is drawn from the graceful forms of classical music and dance, the robust and earthy folk culture, the exquisite craftsmanship of artisans and weavers who nurture the craft traditions of the country, and above all the cuisine” (Nandan, 87).

### **Mexican Cultural Diplomacy**

Even though culture is such a difficult and broad term to define, it is the collective mental programming which distinguishes one group or category of people from another. This programming influences the pattern of thinking which is reflected in the meaning people attach to various aspects of life and which become crystallized in the institutions of society (Sharp, International Negotiation).

The importance of culture in contemporary international relations is both paramount and undeniable. In this respect, countries are increasingly regarding a subset of public diplomacy – cultural diplomacy, or the deployment of a state’s culture in support of its foreign policies – as one of the most effective diplomatic tools, one which is also attractive for foreign audiences, and helps enhance a positive national image in the world. Generally speaking, the soft benefits of cultural diplomacy have made it possible to establish positive relationships which could hardly have been achieved with other methods.

As Mark notes, cultural diplomacy activities include educational scholarships, visits of scholars, intellectuals, academics and artists both domestically and abroad, cultural group performances, artist performances and exhibitions, seminars and conferences, the operation of libraries, festivals abroad and support for festivals of other countries held domestically, and the presentation of books, among many others (Mark, 10). Mostly, as cultural diplomacy plays a major role in public diplomacy, former Director-General of UNESCO once said: “film and video production are shining examples of how cultural industries- as vehicles of identity, values and meanings- can open the door to dialogue and understanding between peoples, but also economies worth and development” (UNESCO).

Regardless of the emphasis that Mexico has put on expanding its economic and commercial horizons, which have been both progressive and consistent during almost all Federal administrations, cultural relations in Mexico have scarcely been recognized as possibly one of the most amicable ways to build and sustain relations with the world. Mexican cultural diversity is vast; it presents itself to foreign cultures as a traditional arena where history, cultural syncretism and diverse artistic expressions remain in permanent transformation and renovation. Nowadays Mexican culture proudly embraces its millenia-old cultural heritage and national popular culture.

Since its inception, the SRE has had among its diplomatic members leading writers, devoted simultaneously to diplomacy and literary creation. However, such efforts are not sufficient in terms of numbers and results as such diplomats and their work only represent a small fraction of the work that needs to be done to fully export Mexican culture abroad.

Officials responsible for managing Mexican cultural diplomacy should focus on ensuring that cultural diplomacy has the potential to become a more valuable tool, and a more significant component of the practice of public diplomacy. In principle, Mexican diplomats able to adequately serve the functions of Mexican public diplomacy should be aware of the various policy objectives and goals of its foreign policy. In practice, they must have an extensive knowledge of Mexico: its culture, language, history, traditions and principles. But above all Mexican diplomats must have the ability to create and sustain a highly cultural dialogue and become cultural ambassadors to positively influence the image of Mexico.

Culture is one of the most attractive assets of Mexico to the world. However, dimensional perspectives of diplomacy in Mexico have prevented the appreciation of the great role that culture can play in the development of Mexico abroad. Despite having a recognised presence and diffusion locally, Mexico needs to understand which are the best ways in which Mexican cultural diplomacy could be delivered to foreign audiences to promote different forms of intercultural dialogue.

## **Cultural Institutes as Cultural Embassies abroad**

Contemporary cultural actors of public diplomacy offer interesting insights by means of profound contributions that help engage with foreign audiences. Several nations have discovered in cultural institutes a valuable and unique tool to do so: by conferring the dissemination of national values, traditions, culture and language, cultural institutes are nowadays one of the most effective tools of public diplomacy. As Melissen notes, future public diplomacy is likely to be more culturally sensitive. It will build to a greater extent on the legitimacy of non-governmental actors, as well as the efficacy of extra-governmental networks and partnerships (Melissen, 25).

But why is it that some countries have developed such institutes and some others like Mexico have not? As mentioned before, soft power or public diplomacy is not the property only of developed nations. Nevertheless, such states found several years ago stronger instances to make the creation of such cultural institutes a recent success all over the world. To do so, it is true that investment in social, human and economic resources still remains a very important factor. However, for developing nations and middle emerging powers as Mexico, understanding the unique role that culture plays could be one of the first steps to create and disseminate cultural institutions all over the world.

Leading cultural institutions, the British Council from the United Kingdom, Alliance Française from France, the Confucius Institute from China, and El Instituto Cervantes from Spain among others are current successful examples that demonstrate the extent to which they propagate culture all over the world. The impact abroad ever since their creation remains one of the strongest diplomatic tools and forms of wielding soft power such countries own.

In sum, the use of culture in Mexico as a fundamental diplomatic tool is a practice relatively known and utilized that should nowadays, in light of current events, develop to help Mexico optimise its cultural relations and its international image.



Mexico is making an unsuccessful attempt of establishing such cultural institutions dedicated exclusively to the promotion of Mexican values, traditions and language by means of its culture in foreign countries. Former Secretary of Foreign Relations, Castaneda has actively tried to create the Mexican Institute. As Baños explains in her article, Castañeda's concept was interesting, but the means to achieve it were too complex for his brief tenure as Mexican Foreign Ministry (Baños,156).

These early efforts to create a Mexican Culture Institute failed in its early stages, leaving the country with the promotion of Mexican culture in the hands of its national cultural institutions that, among many functions, must try to promote Mexican culture abroad. Nevertheless, for these institutions, promoting and exporting Mexican culture is not a primary task of their daily agendas. Attracting foreign audiences is not a skill they have yet mastered. In sum, the creation of Mexico Institute remains essential to integrally coordinate Mexico's cultural activities abroad.

### **International Awards, Honors and Distinctions**

If in the new order of diplomacy, where the relationship and engagement of contemporary actors is observed to be horizontal opposed to a vertical structure, individuals play a very important role as their participation, voices and achievements also serve as great representatives from a nation's public diplomacy.

International recognition in the fields of research, academia, culture and social development have an enormously positive impact on a country's image, as it not only demonstrates and proves the constant engagement and drive of certain individuals, but proves that the governments of, and communities in, such nations support such activities. It also serves to demonstrate the competitiveness that a nation possesses by receiving prestigious international awards. As relevant examples of international distinctions and awards that Mexico has received, I would like to elaborate on the Noble Prize and UNESCO recognitions.

Since 1901 the Nobel Prize has been awarded for achievements in physics, chemistry, physiology or medicine, literature and peace. The Nobel Prize is an

international award administered by the Nobel Foundation in Stockholm, Sweden<sup>7</sup>. During the period 1901-2011 a total of 549 prizes have been awarded.

Mexican Nobel Prize receivers have not been very numerous, but the prize has been consistently awarded, and they have helped improved the country's attractiveness abroad. The first Mexican to be awarded with such high honours was Alfonso García Robles, who received the Nobel Peace prize in 1982 for his unique contributions. Also, the globally recognized chemist Mario José Molina received in 1995 the Chemistry Prize, and in 1990 Octavio Paz received the Literature Nobel Prize. Certainly, as is the case for all Nobel Prize winners, they represent Mexico's name and are unique examples of science, technology, social development and culture all over the world.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, UNESCO, is an agency belonging to the United Nations and was officially established in 1945. Its main and fundamental purpose is that of contributing to peace and security by promoting international understanding and collaboration through education, science, and culture. UNESCO actively works to create the conditions for dialogue among civilizations, cultures and peoples, based upon respect for commonly shared values (UNESCO).

As UNESCO notes, World Heritage is the designation for places on Earth that are of outstanding universal value to humanity and as such, have been inscribed on the World Heritage List to be protected for future generations to appreciate and take care of. At the moment, the World Heritage list comprises 936 different properties.

Unquestionably, Mexico is one of the world's strongest cultural powers with an important cultural legacy. Mexico is still not only the Latin-American country but the country in the whole American continent with the largest numbers of sites that have been declared World Heritage by UNESCO. These multiple UNESCO official recognitions have facilitated and strengthened Mexican cultural components, and

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<sup>7</sup> In 1968, Sveriges Riksbank established The Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel, founder of the Nobel Prize. Each prize consists of a medal, personal diploma, and a cash award.

they remain one of the main reasons for foreign tourists to visit the country. Mexico has 31 declared World Heritage designations located throughout all its national territory.<sup>8</sup>

As UNESCO recognizes, cultural heritage is not limited to material manifestations, such as monuments and objects that have been preserved over time and space. This notion also includes living expressions and the traditions that countless groups and communities worldwide have inherited from their ancestors\*. Mexico has added to the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity over 7 living expressions: Mariachi, string musing, song and trumpet (2011), Parachicos in the traditional January feast of Chiapa de Corzo (2010), Pirekua, traditional song of the Purhepecha (2010), Traditional Mexican cuisine as an ancestral, ongoing community in culture (2010), Places of memory and living traditions of the Otomí-Chicimecas people of Tolimán (2009) and the Ritual Ceremony of Voladores (2008) and the traditional indigenous festivity dedicated to the death (2008).

I would like to further elaborate on one particular element, Mexican Traditional Cuisine, as in Mexico food is an elementary component of national cohesion. UNESCO announced in Nairobi on 16 November 2010 that the Mexican Cuisine had

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<sup>8</sup> Historic Centre of Mexico City and Xochimilco, Historic Centre of Oaxaca and Archaeological Site of Monte Albán, Historic Centre of Puebla, Pre-Hispanic City and National Park of Palenque, Pre-Hispanic City of Teotihuacan, Sian Ka'an, Historic Town of Guanajuato and Adjacent Mines, Pre-Hispanic City of Chichen-Itza, Historic Centre of Morelia, El Tajin, Pre-Hispanic City, Historic Centre of Zacatecas, Rock Paintings of the Sierra de San Francisco, Whale Sanctuary of El Vizcaino, Earliest 16th-Century Monasteries on the Slopes of Popocatepetl, Historic Monuments Zone of Querétaro, Pre-Hispanic Town of Uxmal, Hospicio Cabañas, Guadalajara Archaeological Zone of Paquimé, Casas Grandes, Historic Monuments Zone of Tlacotalpan, Archaeological Monuments Zone of Xochicalco, Historic Fortified Town of Campeche, Ancient Maya City of Calakmul, Campeche Franciscan Missions in the Sierra Gorda of Querétaro, Luis Barragán House and Studio, Islands and Protected Areas of the Gulf of California Agave Landscape and Ancient Industrial Facilities of Tequila, Central University City Campus of the *Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México* (UNAM), Monarch Butterfly Biosphere Reserve, Protective town of San Miguel and the Sanctuary of Jesús Nazareno de Atotonilco, Camino Real de Tierra Adentro Prehistoric Caves of Yagul and Mitla in the Central Valley of Oaxaca (UNESCO).

been conferred with the great honor of becoming part of the list of intangible cultural heritage designation. Such distinction became possible only after the recognition of the collective development and production of natural elements, original products, and historical continuity. It plays a crucial role in creating national identity and social cohesion for which Mexican cuisine stands. After 12 years, the ambition of proposing Mexican cuisine as cultural heritage finally became a reality and thus a great motive of Mexican national pride.

The abundance and tradition of Mexican cuisine both have a long history. During the Spanish conquest Mexico had already started to export a varied number of culinary ingredients that are nowadays significant in the world's gastronomy, such as: corn, chili, beans, tomatoes, avocados, vanilla and cacao (chocolate), among many other products. Also, due to the great variety and production of raw materials produced and harvested annually in Mexico, its great culinary tradition, and its technological innovation, Mexican cuisine has become one of the country's greatest assets (ProMéxico). See *annex 1*

In order to preserve Mexican culinary heritage, the Conservatory of Mexican Food Culture, a civil association in collaboration with the National Council of Arts and Culture (CONACULTA) and the Institute of Anthropology and History prepared the documents that were presented to UNESCO. The documents presented were: *'Mexican Cuisine: an enduring culture'* and *'People of Corn: Mexico's Ancestral Cuisine, Rituals, Ceremonies and Cultural Practices of the Cuisine of the Mexican People'*.

Unmistakably, what has been in Mexico for many a great national privilege also represents a strong and permanent commitment to continue honoring Mexican cuisine worldwide. Mexican culinary elements are powerful factors that shape national identity: in this sense it is the nation's responsibility to promote its high cuisine abroad and present to different markets its variety and strength of flavor. An adequate promotion of Mexican cuisine will not only exalt local values, but will highlight collective national values that can have a great impact abroad. See *annex 2*

To do so, it is up to the government to also dictate public diplomacy policies to preserve such cultural heritage as one of the nation's most precious resources. In this sense the Secretaría de Agricultura, Ganadería, Desarrollo Rural, Pesca y

Alimentación, (SAGARPA)<sup>9</sup> is closely involved in the preservation and conservation of traditional Mexican cuisine through comprehensive actions to actively promote food production that gives Mexico a unique identity. It has at the same time received full Federal support for developing competitiveness worldwide.

SAGARPA plays a fundamental role in preserving and promoting Mexican traditional cuisine, which at the same time has a direct impact on tourism as it is one of Mexico's most attractive cultural attributes. The international promotion of Mexican cuisine has also further developed the agricultural and fishery sectors, and the annual related production has been growing consistently ever since. All in all, these actions support and encourage the Mexican Federal Government to actively promote its cultural assets, considerably strengthened by the inclusion of Traditional Mexican cuisine on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

Consistently, after UNESCO declared Mexican traditional cuisine part of the intangible list of Cultural Heritage of Humanity, the country has experienced a considerable increase of foreigners visiting the country and especially the regions in Mexico that are famous for their ancient cuisine and cooking techniques and traditions, like Oaxaca, Puebla, Michoacán and Veracruz among many more.

### **Mexican Telenovelas**

In recent years, the assumption that cultural diplomacy refers exclusively to theatre, dance, or visual arts has changed. Nowadays, cultural diplomacy also includes "popular culture", or cultural activities that attract mass audiences (Mark, 5). In this sense, one of the most important components of Mexican popular culture are

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<sup>9</sup> SAGARPA- The Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Rural Development, Fisheries and Food, is a unit of the Federal Executive, which has among its objectives to foster the pursuit of a policy of support that can help produce better, better utilize the comparative advantages of our agricultural sector, integrating the activities of the rural environment productive chains with the rest of the economy, and encourage collaboration of producer organizations with programs and projects themselves, as well as promote the goals and objectives for the agricultural sector, the National Plan of Development.

telenovelas, which undeniably offer an accurate picture of Mexican culture that has been communicated to thousands of viewers around the world with great success.

A telenovela is a televised melodramatic serialized fiction with several episodes. It is particularly popular in Latin-American countries such as: Mexico, Brazil and Colombia among many others. Nowadays Mexican telenovelas not only remain extremely popular in Latin-America but there are millions of new spectators all over the world that follow them daily with great interest and curiosity. Notably, telenovelas have become the only product of Mexican and Latin-American television enjoying international recognition as a culture vehicle helping to disseminate Latin culture by reaching massive foreign multicultural audiences.

Mexican telenovelas are known world-wide as fictional dramas that usually involve a young love couple that will fight throughout the daily episodes of the telenovela against cruel and evil villains. The telenovela usually ends as villains encounter death as the final sentence and for the love couple marriage comes as the ultimate and supreme reward. Particularly in the export market of Mexican telenovelas as an emerging cultural production, their voice has become a unique global export product that is not only highly popular in most Latin-American countries, but has also been received by foreign television audiences with great success and enthusiasm. Normally Mexican telenovelas are transmitted in their original format, in Spanish; sometimes they are subtitled or dubbed.

The largest creators, producers and exporters of telenovelas in Mexico are Televisa<sup>10</sup> and TV Azteca followed by the independent company Argos Comunicación. For over 50 years, Televisa has produced more than 800 telenovelas many of which have become international hits; they have been translated into 27 languages, and have been exported over 100 countries in all 5 continents, breaking ratings and sharing records. It was during the 1990's that Televisa discovered a great niche of opportunity for its telenovelas apart from the traditionally large Mexican

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<sup>10</sup> Grupo Televisa, S.A.B is the largest media company in the Spanish-speaking world and a major participant in the international entertainment business. Televisa Internacional, the international distributor of content for Grupo Televisa, is the world's leading distributor of Spanish language programming and formats (Televisa Internacional).

national audience. Televisa began to actively export Mexican telenovelas to several Eastern Europe nations and some Asian countries; as the popularity of Mexican telenovelas increased so did the interest of new audiences to engage with Mexican traditional culture and civil activities. See *annex 3*

For example, the Mexican telenovela 'Los ricos también lloran', produced in 1979 was the first global hit, exported first to the United States, Eastern Europe and then to China. It is widely known among telenovelas producers that Televisa's golden age as top world producer and exporter of telenovelas was during the late 90's and early years of the 2000. Televisa's work helps to demonstrate how the fusion of a corporate and an artistic collaboration has allowed Mexican telenovelas to reach global audiences. In total, Latin-American telenovelas are now watched by 2 billion people in the world and the cultural establishments backing them have now challenged Hollywood's import dominance (Martinez 2005). Likewise, as Mazziotti points out, Latin-American telenovelas have challenged not only American television programs, but have strongly disputed the centrality of English-language programming worldwide.

The impact of Mexican telenovelas abroad goes beyond a simple cultural export program: its social impact and mass mobility capacity has become the center of attention for many that have contemplated this social phenomenon with great interest. According to a UNESCO cultural report, in Abidjan, Ivory Coast some mosques changed their praying schedules during the Ramadan in order to allow the Mexican telenovela *Marimar's* followers to watch the program and not miss the daily episodes (Cisneros, 2).

In the past decades, telenovelas have been broadcasted in countries that had never before issued such programs; for example, in several nations of the former Soviet Union that had little or nonexistent television industry. As a result, Mexican telenovelas, followed by other Latin-American programs were broadcasted with great success in these countries lacking a television industry. In 1992 in Russia the Mexican telenovela 'Los ricos también lloran' was a complete success in terms of ranking and popularity, thus becoming a true engine of expansion for the Mexican cultural industry. Alvaro Cueva explains that 'Los ricos también lloran' became so popular and was such a guaranteed televised hit, that Televisa gave it for free to

some countries, with the aim that new foreign audiences could get to experience Mexican culture, fall in love with it and would ask for more telenovelas" (Cave, 6).

Mexican telenovelas are able to successfully express to overseas audiences how conventional Mexican life is lived; how Mexicans think, what sort of daily problems Mexicans experience and what type of future generations Mexican society is trying to create. However, they have occasionally been explored from a cultural perspective, as a thoughtful and strategic tool to promote culture abroad, and/or as an effort corresponding with public diplomacy. As Casas notes, the traditional characteristics of Mexican cultural identity present in its telenovelas such as religion, language, national character, and history are deliberately being mixed with new elements, thus appealing to a wider, more globalized audience (Casas, 8).

Additionally, as language determines culture, the fact that more foreign people are watching Mexican telenovelas is a great advantage to promoting Spanish language and particularly the Spanish spoken in Mexico, with a rich variety of words and local expressions. Telenovelas contribute more than any other vehicle for the dissemination of Spanish in the world, according to an academic who conducted a study on the subject. Also, in the Spanish-speaking countries telenovelas help to enrich and expand vocabulary, helping 450 million Spanish speakers learn other ways of saying things and, ultimately, to foster communication as Jorge Ignacio Covarrubias, secretary of the American Academy of Spanish Language notes.

Also, telenovelas in general have become a globalized strategy for both promoting particular behaviors, advocating rights of specific social groups and working to articulate social change (Singhal, 13). It has been recently observed that NGO's and social development agencies have shown increasing interest in Mexican telenovelas, as they find in them an appropriate way of portraying contemporary social problems, at the same time showing their viewers how to prevent such situations by increasing their awareness and understanding of the same. It is a rich practical experience that the Mexican television industry offers by producing and using telenovelas strategically in international multicultural development.



In this sense: “Entertainment-Education (E-E) emerges as the process of purposely designing and implementing a media message both to entertain and educate, in order to increase audience members’ knowledge about an educational issue, create favorable attitudes, and change overt behavior” (Tufte,8).

Social marketing and popular culture imports, such as telenovelas, are one of the key origins of today’s Entertainment-Education, E-E strategies. The use of social marketing developed in the 1970s was quickly tied up with fictional genres, and entertainment was particularly linked to mass media-based strategies. One of the pioneers in the use of Television fiction for pro-social behavior change is the Mexican Miguel Sabido<sup>11</sup>. Between 1975 and 1985 Sabido produced a total of seven soap operas with built-in social messages. They were broadcast on Mexico’s largest television network Televisa and were large audience successes (Tufte,7).

As UNESCO has recently determined, cultural exports and media in developing countries grew rapidly between 1996 and 2005 as a result of strategies to increase global competitiveness, and growth in the demand for new communications. Thus, the production of cultural content and communication, as well as their diffusion and consumption patterns, are undergoing significant changes characterized by connectivity, interactivity and convergence (UNESCO). The new cultural voices in and from the developing world are aware of the power structures that they confront, but are as Sing notes, “craftily using their global imaginaries to both borrow from, and as add to, the distinctiveness of their cultural products” (Singh, 18).

On an interesting note, in 1992, Veronica Castro, a Mexican actress, was received in Moscow with honors as for a head of state, due to the great popularity and furor that was provoked in Russia by the telenovela ‘Los ricos también lloran’, where there were more than 100 million viewers. Likewise, when Thalia, another Mexican actress, considered the queen of telenovelas, visited the Philippines she was also received with the highest political honors.

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<sup>11</sup> Miguel Sabido is a communication theorist, writer, director and producer of educational and historical Mexican telenovelas. The United Nations Organization and the Population Communication - International (PCI) named him named "Savior of the World" and the International community of Entertainment-Education, has recognized him as the pioneer of this practice in the world.

Interestingly, these references are not just anecdotal but have been presented to demonstrate from a globalized point of view that the increasing impact and cultural consumption that Mexican telenovelas, as a powerful intercultural media, have achieved in the past years has probably been the most effective and successful cultural diplomacy effort of Mexican public diplomacy.

As presented, nowadays Mexican telenovelas not only offer accurate insights of emotional plots that portray how Mexican society functions and interacts locally but they have reached wider international audiences where this television genre had never been broadcast; telenovelas have enjoyed great fame, and Mexico has become an appealing country in terms of culture for many nations.

Mexican telenovelas, as a transcultural product, have been able to influence and also inspire distinct cultural identity patterns by presenting on one hand a multifaceted, vibrant, yet conservative Mexican cultural community, while on the other hand modernizing its national identity to that of a more open, up-to-date, liberal and ever-changing society. Mostly, Mexican telenovelas also have a cultural impact with educational purposes as the topics they abord greatly benefit foreign audiences thus enhancing and reflecting a Mexican cultural presence internationally. In sum, Mexican telenovelas exemplify how cultural voices from developing countries can reach beyond their national borders when they are transmitted with great success to audiences all over the world.

### **Mexico's Participation in International Expositions**

A world exposition is an international forum for dialogue which presents to the world the progress of humanity; each of the participating nations exhibits its environmental, technological, industrial and cultural developments. As many contemporary scholars note, world expositions are ideal occasions for public diplomacy practices as they offer a unique social platform to actively engage foreign audiences.

Expo Shanghai 2010<sup>12</sup>, which had over 73 million visitors augments the world tradition of fairs, begun in London in 1851. If the first world exposition served to show the progress resulting from the Industrial Revolution, Expo Shanghai emerged as the center of sustainable urban development with the participation of more than 200 countries and 50 leading global companies.

Mexico has participated in 29 expositions around the world since 1876. Philadelphia saw the inaugural participation of Mexico in these events; the main objective for the Mexican government was to be recognised as an independent nation after the recent war with the United States. In the world exposition held in Paris in 1889, Mexico highlighted its international participation by creating a monumental '*Palacio Azteca*', which showed a modern and cosmopolitan country, while at the same time reinforcing the pride of Mexican indigenous roots (Suena México).

Dr. Luz Elena Baños mentions in her article prior to the Expo Shanghai 2010 the great importance that such an event could signify for Mexico and its public diplomacy. She notes that during Expo Shanghai 2010 Mexico could have the opportunity to use a unique platform to present to the world the country's ancient culture, and its artistic and intellectual progress (Baños, 161).

It was indeed a great opportunity for Mexico to display at Shanghai's exposition its potential as a richly cultural, developing power. But did the goals of the Mexican participation in Shanghai 2010 materialize in terms of a unique platform of public diplomacy?

The Mexican delegation responsible for presenting the Mexican pavilion at Expo Shanghai 2010 had decided to accept this enormous challenge, considering that a world event of such magnitude would by definition require working with the highest professional standards to be able to excel and make a public demonstration of the real assets the country owns.

Even though the Mexican Pavilion presented in Expo Shanghai was original – it featured a colorful kite forest and had 4 thousand squared meters – Mexican

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<sup>12</sup> Expo Shanghai took place from May 1 to Oct 31, 2010.

participation was not seen as well prepared as it had been in previous world expositions. If Mexico intends to have an appealing participation in major expositions such as Expo Shanghai 2010, there are certainly several areas where Mexico needs to work in cooperation with the various offices in charge. To be able to deliver positive results, the possibilities of presenting the country with success depend greatly on the extent of internal coordination and communication of the departments in charge.

Nevertheless, it is an experience that ProMéxico and other offices should take into consideration for future events, as the rich potential that as a developing country Mexico possesses must be displayed correctly. Overall, the importance of an outstanding participation of Mexico in Expo Shanghai 2010 could have been a perfect opportunity for developing its public diplomacy by sending the appropriate message and finding the correct strategies to do so.

As observed in Mexico's participation in Expo Shanghai 2010, a strong tradition of fruitful participations in world expos was not properly delivered to the audience. Nevertheless it certainly represents a huge domestic challenge for the country to successfully find the means to boost Mexican presence in such forums.

All in all, the outstanding countries in Expo Shanghai 2010 that were rewarded for their participation during the event were, surprisingly, middle powers. As the study presented by the Public Diplomacy magazine indicates, a consistent effort was evident from their governments to inject creativity, quality and exceptional coordination skills to stand out at Expo Shanghai 2010 (Wang, 7).

### **FIL, Guadalajara's International Book Fair**

Founded in 1987 by the University of Guadalajara, the Guadalajara International Book Fair or Feria Internacional del Libro, FIL is the largest market in the world for Spanish language publications. Year after year publishers, literary agents, translators, distributors and librarians have an active participation at FIL. In addition, over 600.000 people visit during the nine days of FIL, immersing themselves in books and taking advantage of one of the most important cultural festivals in Latin-America.

Apart from broadly encouraging cultural development in Mexico and promoting Mexican culture abroad, and Spanish language as a whole, FIL represents an exceptional opportunity for Mexico to strengthen and renew its cultural relations with other nations that have a similar interest in further fostering cultural expansion. Every year, since 1993 FIL has had a country or region as a distinguished guest of honor. This means Mexico displays during this event the very best of the guest's literary and cultural production and also invites distinguished literary figures. During the past years, Mexico has had as guests of honors: Colombia, Puerto Rico, Spain, Germany, Italy, New Mexico and Andalusia among many others. This year 2012, Chile will be the guest of honor (FIL).

With approximately 34.000 square meters of exhibition space, and a yearly average of more than 1.900 publishers from 42 different countries, FIL is one of the biggest book fairs in the world, and it opens its doors to a very international cultural public. Such an event generates a great deal of revenue: more than 330 million USD are raised by the host city of Guadalajara (FIL).

In addition, FIL stands for a literary and public book fair that enhances not only Mexican culture but Latin-American culture as a whole. Every year the fair offers a creative and highly innovative space for thousands of publishers, academics, and other cultural professionals. Year after year, FIL offers multiple spaces that welcome debates on modern literature and cultural trends all over the world. For Mexico, being able to hold such event greatly influences the county's cultural development, but – more importantly – it is an open space that allows Mexico to show to the world the exceptional type of work that Mexican literary, academics, individuals and researchers have accomplished. <sup>13</sup>.

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<sup>13</sup> FIL's attempt to maintain high literary standards and to encourage cultural development also includes the creation of literary and cultural awards that are presented every year.

## **Mexican Bilateral Cultural Exchange programs**

The role of cultural exchanges in cultural diplomacy and exchange diplomacy is very important. It serves two or more different countries to enhance their relations by means of culture promotion, development and exchange. For Mexico, the number of cultural exchange programs is rather limited, as most of its orientation when it comes to bilateral cultural exchange programs is with the United States. For this reason I would like to briefly elaborate on what is probably Mexico's strongest cultural exchange program.

The United States-Mexico Commission for educational and cultural exchanges, COMEXUS was founded in 1990. It is a bi-national organization that fosters bilateral understanding through educational exchanges. All the commission's scholarship programs, financed by both governments, are called 'Fulbright-García Robles', in honor of Senator J. William Fulbright, who started the recognized Fulbright program in 1946, and Ambassador emeritus of Mexico, Alfonso García Robles, also a Nobel Peace Prize winner. The main goal of COMEXUS consists of promoting mutual understanding between Mexico and the United States by means of educational and cultural exchanges<sup>14</sup>.

It is relevant to note that scholarship recipients represent the highest academic and leadership standards, while also reflecting the broad cultural, ethnic, and socioeconomic diversity of both countries. In 2009 COMEXUS awarded 165 annual grants, renewed 57 grants, and gave 121 summer grants for educators. COMEXUS celebrated its 20th anniversary in November 2010, and since its creation in 1990, the commission has awarded a total of over 4,500 Fulbright-García Robles grants (Banos, 156).

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<sup>14</sup> Both countries hold permanent ties, not only geographically by a 2000 mile border, but as a result of the fact that Mexico is the United States' second trading partner, and the United States is Mexico's leading trading partner. Millions of jobs in both countries are connected to trade between the two countries (COMEXUS).

As a strong bi-national partnership, COMEXUS recognizes the central role of education for the future integral development of both countries. COMEXUS is a catalyst for generating constructive opportunities for understanding, cooperation and educative development.

## **Contemporary challenges for Mexican Public Diplomacy: COP16/CMP6 and G20**

COP16/CMP6 refers to the 16th edition of Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP)<sup>15</sup> and the 6th Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP). The name COP refers to the reunions of the State Parties at various international conferences. Nevertheless, as the relevance of the subject in the international agenda increases, the term COP refers exclusively to climate change. Every year, such conferences are held between the months of November and December (COP16).

The government of Mexico recognizes that climate change is the major global environmental challenge of this century, representing in the medium and long term one of the greatest threats to development and human welfare. As a ratifying party, in 2010 Mexico offered to host the COP16/CMP6 in Cancun<sup>16</sup>, as in 2010 the UNFCCC COP16 and sixth Conference of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol was to be held in Latin-America and the Caribbean region. It was during COP 15 that took place in Copenhagen, that the parties approved by unanimous decision that Mexico would be the host country of COP16/CMP6.

As Mexican Foreign Secretary Patricia Espinosa pointed out during COP16/CMP6, Mexico has indeed promoted an inclusive and transparent process of consultation with various contemporary participants. In light of global events, Mexico

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<sup>15</sup> The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change has been signed by 194 State Parties and the Kyoto Protocol has been ratified by 184 different State Parties.

<sup>16</sup> Cancun, located on the northeast coast of Quintana Roo state- southeastern Mexico, is the most important tourist destination in the country and one of the most visited worldwide.

believes that every voice must be heard if mutual common goals are to be achieved (Patricia Espinosa).

Furthermore, in its attempt to positively collaborate on global climate efforts, Mexico has played a decisive role which has influenced and facilitated the final Cancun Agreements. Even when the 16th Conference of the Parties to the Convention United Nations Framework on Climate Change was planned to conclude at six in the afternoon of Friday 10 December, it was until three o'clock on Saturday, when Patricia Espinosa, Mexican Foreign Secretary and President of the COP, read the Cancun Agreements. Such agreements stand out as the ultimate result of two weeks of intense negotiations held among the 194 attending countries.

As Yvo de Boer, former head of the UN climate change said: "Cancun yielded excellent results for developing countries; a new climate fund will be set up and new organizations will create programs to transfer technology, help people adjust to climate change" (Yvo de Boer, former head of UN climate change).

### **Mexican Presidency of the G20**

The Group of Twenty (or G20) emerged in 1999 as a forum composed of finance ministers and central bank governors with the aim of initiating and promoting a transparent dialogue on several financial sector policies that have a direct impact on global economic stability. The G20 is a leading forum for international cooperation focusing on the most important aspects of the international economic and financial agenda, as well as current trends that have an impact on international relations. The G20 is formed by the world's strongest and emerging economies; it includes 19 country members plus the European Union, which together represent around 90% of global GDP, 80% of global trade and two-thirds of the world's population (G20).

From the moment the G20 was formed, Mexico has actively supported its institutional consolidation as a representative forum involved in implementing integrated economic and financial policies in an interdependent international financial order. This year, 2012, Mexico will chair the G20 Presidency and will also host the



seventh Leader's Summit in June in Los Cabos, Baja California<sup>17</sup>. Mexico is the first Latin-American country to do so, and by assuming the Presidency this year it demonstrates the country's active international participation, and enhances its presence domestically, regionally and globally (G20, Summit 2012). *See annex 4*

As current chair of the G20, Mexico will be able to fully demonstrate its strength and capacity both as a G20 member, and as a solid emerging power. In addition, this opportunity will allow Mexico to portray to the rest of the world its regional leadership. As Mexico's G20 Sherpa, Ambassador Lourdes Aranda notes, "Mexico wants to take advantage of its geopolitical and geostrategic position between North America, Central America and South America; as an Atlantic and Pacific country, and of its historical ties with Europe" (Aranda, 27).

Furthermore, in order to effectively contribute and further develop to the G20's goals, as chair of the G20, Mexico has established five main priorities: economic stabilization and structural reforms as foundations for growth and employment; strengthening the financial system and fostering financial inclusion to promote economic growth; improving the international financial architecture in an interconnected world; enhancing food security and addressing commodity price volatility; and promoting sustainable development, green growth and the fight against climate change.

It can be said that the early efforts that Mexico is making to successfully engage with other G20 participants before the Summit takes place have been accepted with great enthusiasm among its participant members. In February 2012 the Mexican Presidency, together with the Mexican Council on Foreign Relations (COMEXI) invited representatives of diverse think tanks from developing and developed countries where to actively discuss and analyze the G20 agenda (Radio Nederland).

As presented in the official G20 Summit website, representatives from the following think tanks participated in the event: Mexican Council on Foreign Relations

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<sup>17</sup> There have been in total six G20 Leaders' Summits (Washington, London, Pittsburgh, Toronto, Seoul and Cannes). At the Leaders' level, this will be the second time, following the Republic of Korea, that an emerging country holds the Presidency of the Group.

(COMEXI), Centre for International Governance Innovation (Canada); the Stanley Foundation (US); the Lowy Institute (Australia), the Council on Foreign Relations (US); the Heinrich Boell Foundation (Germany); the Korean Development Institute; the German Development Institute; FRIDE (Spain), Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey (TEPAV), Nanyang Technological University (Singapore); the Center for Research of Post-Industrial Studies (Russia); the Japan Institute of International Affairs; Stanford University (US); China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations; Getulio Vargas Foundation (Brazil); Centre for Strategic and International Studies (Indonesia); Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations; Council for the Coalition for Dialogue on Africa; and the Brookings Institution (G20, Mexican Presidency).

As an additional effort to engage and listen to third parties, on May 11<sup>th</sup> 2012, the Mexican President, Felipe Calderon, held a dialogue with the youth delegates participating in the Youth Summit Delegates Mexico 20, Y20. Over 130 delegates from various countries joined the event. As Calderon stated: “young people gave me a document with the conclusions of their discussions on the agenda of the G20, which I will share with Heads of State in Los Cabos” (Felipe Calderon). Also, on May 28<sup>th</sup> the Summit of Delegates G(irls) 20 took place.

Throughout the different events organized prior to the G20 Summit, Mexico’s highest political authority, Calderon, has emphasised the impact that leadership typical of young people has had in Mexico, and how crucial it is to help solve the world’s greatest challenges. Hence the importance of listening to their questions, answers, concerns, opinions and most importantly, their proposals.

It is important to note, that this is the first time in the history of the G20 where think-tanks and specialized researches, young leaders and women have been invited directly by the G20 Presidency to engage and contribute with active participation in the main discussions that will be held at the G20 Summit. These efforts prior to the Summit, to be held in June, demonstrate an active interest and participation of the Mexican Presidency in engaging with foreign audiences, think tanks and youth delegates from various countries, and are comparable to Mexico’s outstanding participation during COP16/CMP6.

Moreover, the participation and acknowledgment of new actors in the G20 proves the increasing importance their roles, opinions and diversified voices have in our current globalized agenda. Certainly the fact that Mexico has decided to collaborate in activities that involve contemporary actors such as think-tanks and other individuals can be considered effective public diplomacy, where a profound diplomatic engagement with people is the main aim.

As president of the G20, the government of Mexico has adopted a very open policy by incorporating diverse points of view of different stakeholders alongside those who formally comprise the G20 (Patricia Espinosa). Mexico wants to hear the voices of countries outside the G20, listen to their concerns since what aims to be achieved at the 2012 G20 summit goes beyond financial stability. Overall, Mexico recognizes that financial stability is not an end but a means to generate adequate growth conditions.

For Mexico, as an emerging Latin-American power and expanding actor, to have hosted the COP16/CMP6 in Cancun in 2010 and this year the G20 summit allows the country to contribute to global efforts by promoting development and international dialogue among all the participants and voices that play a major role in such events.

During both events, by following the principles of fair and equal representation of diverse groups, information access, plurality, and transparency, the Mexican government identified civil society's participation as an essential tool that could help to further enhance and reach the goals established by the international community. Mexico's capacity for dialogue with other stakeholders has been demonstrated once more, thus becoming one of Mexico's strongest contemporary assets. As it occurred at COP16/CMP6, these efforts, and extensive consultation among all different stakeholders helped promote effective participation of these parties which had never been achieved in previous international events of this type and political importance.

All in all, Mexico wants to demonstrate that it is capable of becoming an active agent in global affairs. Not only European powers have the political power to host a G20 Summit, on the contrary, for a rising power such as Mexico it is perfect opportunity to demonstrate its relevance by engaging in international forums and

debates. Most probably, Mexico is not aware that through its active participation in the G20, it is putting into practice its public diplomacy. Once again, the lack of identification of this method flows from the limited studies that Mexico has undertaken in this regard.

### **Conclusions: Towards a smart and integrated public diplomacy**

For all practitioners in the field of international relations, translating theory into practice definitively represents a great academic and scientific challenge. Nonetheless, for states belonging to the international order the challenge is even greater as they must translate their political goals and domestic objectives into realities by engaging with the most up-to-date diplomatic practices. As much has been mentioned in the previous pages of this investigation, I would like to conclude by highlighting and restating the position of Mexico in regards to soft power implementation through public diplomacy to improve its image abroad.

As has been presented, following Cull's theoretical model of public diplomacy, the implementation of Mexican soft power by means of public diplomacy remains inexperienced and lacks expertise, as the only component that seems to be even semi-developed is its cultural diplomacy. Overall, public diplomacy and its related terms in Mexico appear as a new trend in international relations that could serve to profile Mexico as a meaningful rising power.

As observed, practical understanding of public diplomacy remains limited in Mexico, and the academic work published by Mexican academics is consistent, but not strong enough to fill theoretical gaps in this practice. Most importantly, it has not achieved an accurate theoretical framework of several terms and definitions that could make the comprehension, assimilation and implementation much more effective, and reach audiences more easily. Yet, it would first require a complete understating and assimilation of what soft power, public diplomacy and nation branding signify.

As the Mexican academic, César Villanueva, brilliantly captures in one of his most recent publications, the evolution of Mexico's image abroad changed dramatically during the decade of the 90's. It went from being positive and

represented by stereotypes such as pre-hispanic cultures, natural heritage and famous artists to a negative and poor image associated with organized crime violence and institutional corruption.

This transformation of Mexico's image internationally certainly has had a tremendous impact domestically. The Mexican government has demonstrated great concern about doing something about this problem, at the same time as trying to reach foreign audiences by highlighting all the positive and progressive features the country owns. It is very obvious that the contemporary problems that Mexico as a nation is facing go beyond a lack of international reputation or a distorted image abroad. There are significant domestic and institutional challenges that await effective solutions; however the new soft power that the country yields by means of its public diplomacy can make a great difference in its international image.

Mexico is a country of interesting contrasts and no one can remain indifferent to it. However, it is about time for Mexico to fight for presenting the current challenges as opportunities and positive challenges, where the ability of Mexico to demonstrate that the country can have honest leadership, effective coordination, and carefully thought-through strategy.

As observed, Mexican President, Felipe Calderon has paid special attention during his presidency to improving and boosting Mexico's image internationally. In this sense, the efforts of the British expert on nation branding, Simon Anholt, alongside Ogilvy's participation represent fundamental milestones in the early efforts of improving Mexico's image abroad, even though Simon Anholt's expertise and specialized advice was not able to be followed and implemented by the Mexican government. Understanding how Mexican diplomacy is evolving most definitely demonstrates the extent and the capacity to which Mexico as an emerging middle power is able to wield its soft power internationally.

It is also true, as demonstrated by Mexico's traditional and nationally oriented foreign policy, that the practice of public diplomacy remains very new and to a great extent unknown to many Mexican authorities. Nevertheless an accurate consideration and conversion of theory into effective practice remains the most important challenge for Mexican public diplomacy to reach its maximum potential.

Mexico needs to understand that its public diplomacy should not be approached as a practice separate from its foreign relations.

There must exist in Mexican policies a clear distinction between the goals trying to be pursued in its foreign policy – soft power implementation, and thus public diplomacy – and the strategies and tactics the country wishes to follow in order to achieve them. In order for the results obtained to be greater in both quality and quantity, it is fair to observe that the contemporary practice of implementing soft power in Mexico has only begun to be developed. Even when there some early efforts in public diplomacy have been identified to meet modern challenges, it is not too late for Mexico to embark on the task of understanding the importance of opening up to the world by overcoming the obstacles of the past.

I would also like to restate as one of the most important findings in regards to Mexican Public Diplomacy, that a clear distinction should be made between the terms public diplomacy and cultural diplomacy, as they should not be taken as synonymous in the Mexican case. It is true that the rich and ancient cultural resources that Mexico possesses could be identified as the main tools of attraction and public diplomacy, but it should also be taken into consideration that cultural diplomacy represents a small fraction of the diplomatic power and application that public diplomacy signifies. In this sense, the Mexican government could expand its political horizons by also acknowledging the power and influence they could exert abroad by diversifying and specializing the attention and comprehension devoted so far to public diplomacy.

Furthermore, and once again alluding to the importance of culture in the case of Mexico, the country needs a specialized Institution dedicated to the promotion of Mexican culture abroad. Such a realistic yet ambitious goal will only be achieved through a joint effort of several Federal departments that recognize the great relevance and impact that such cultural institutions could have on the export of Mexican culture, traditions and values all over the globe. Consolidating the international promotion of Mexican cultural institutions is very important: in the sense that if the domestic participation of such institutions is already perceived as fruitful and satisfying, elevating this participation to an international dimension could multiply its success.

Also, if the essence of Mexican cultural institutions is widely recognized domestically by its historical prestige and careful management of various resources, finding an appropriate way of boosting their presence internationally will most certainly export abroad the immense cultural heritage that Mexico proudly possesses, thus augmenting Mexican public diplomacy by means of its rich cultural resources.

Mexico does not have an official department of public diplomacy. It is very likely that following up on the creation of the cultural institute, Mexico Institute will be one of the biggest challenges that await the next president of the republic. It will be imperative that the next president recognizes the importance and necessity of having an exclusive agency to define and give shape to public diplomacy in Mexico.

If Mexico, as the 13<sup>th</sup> world economy develops its global relevance and is able to wisely adapt to a constantly changing, globalized world, there are other relevant fields that will demand a permanent engagement in order to become integrally competitive and comparable to those leading powers of the globe. Taking a deeper look at current trends of international relations implemented by strong nations will certainly be a determining factor for Mexico's subtle international integration process, and will demonstrate its high level of competitiveness and capacity as a powerful developing Latin-American nation.

Within the country, many Mexican citizens are not adequately informed of the activities that engage Mexico with the outside world, about its active participation and about its immense cultural heritage. It is a task that all Mexicans should seek to pursue, since the participation of informed citizens with critical thinking skills also helps to strengthen Mexico's position in international forums, where it defends its unique value as a Latin-American power. Mexican diplomats should be adequately and professionally prepared with theoretical and practical experience. Emerging diplomatic trends must be considered by the SRE very seriously, and the Ministry should contribute to the practice of overcoming traditionalist principles where change is not easily welcomed and embraced.

Mexico is a country rich in social and material resources, with a great youth population. Even so, Mexico struggles daily to excel in its contribution to the world. But if Mexico could identify and then follow the appropriate formula for success by using its resources to the maximum, Mexico's image in the world would be different:

much stronger and with a broader global recognition. In sum, Mexico cannot longer afford to move around the world without fully employing its resources.

As Mexico is trying to acknowledge the importance of public diplomacy, while having an outstanding participation in international events such as COP16/CMP6 and by holding this year the G20 Presidency that serve to capitalize its status as a middle power, the country still finds it very difficult to spend enough social and economic resources in its public diplomacy related activities. As political tradition dictates in Mexico, politicians and political parties hardly spend any money in unfamiliar practices that they either do not comprehend or do not consider important, and remain reluctant to do so.

Still, as a middle and developing power trying to make its way in a forever changing society Mexico races against several factors to maintain and even strengthen its presence in the international arena. Mexico would greatly benefit from taking advantage of the most relevant challenges in the international arena such as the G20 presidency; as also the self-perception of its power status, increases through discussing relevant issues with other nations.

To sum up, Mexico needs to be sensitized towards the needs that emerge in a forever changing global society through applying critical thinking and by generating strategies for crucial social problems that have an impact on its international image. Thanks to Mexico's rich and ancient culture, and its geographical and geostrategic position, it is as never before extremely important that the country finds its way to engage with the international community through concrete political truths based on a profound understanding of the present trends in diplomacy, globalization, regionalization and foreign interdependence so the world knows and appreciates what it really is: a marvellous Mexico.



## Annex 1

Culinary ingredients exported from Mexico to the world.



Avocados



Chilies



Cacao (chocolate)



Vanilla



Tomatoes



Corn

## Annex 2

Mexican Cuisine became part of UNESCO'S list of Intangible Cultural Heritage Designation.



| Chiles en Nogada



| Tacos Dorados



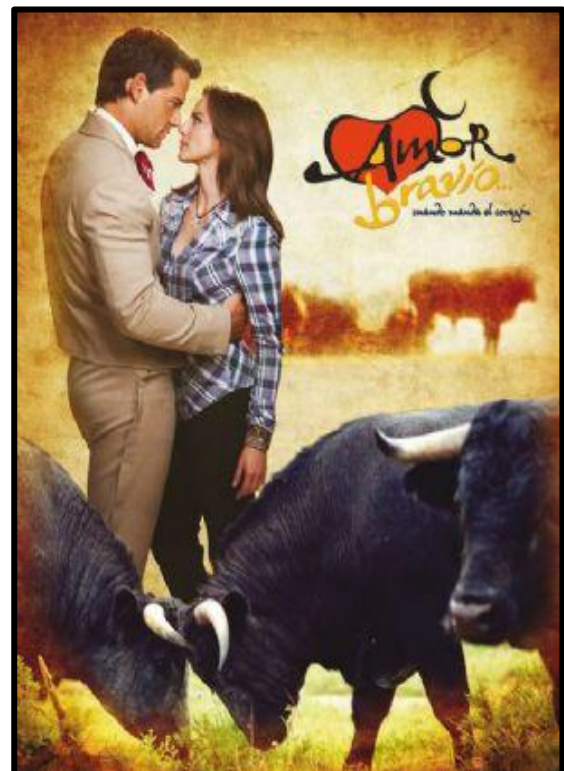
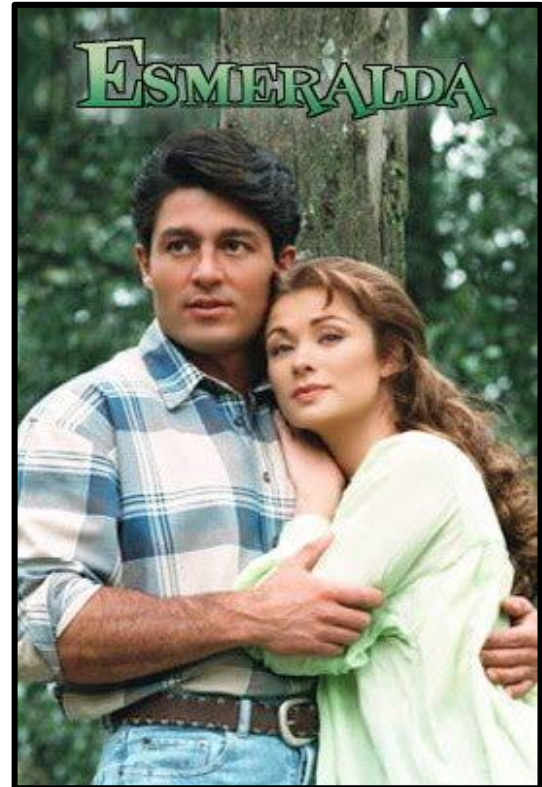
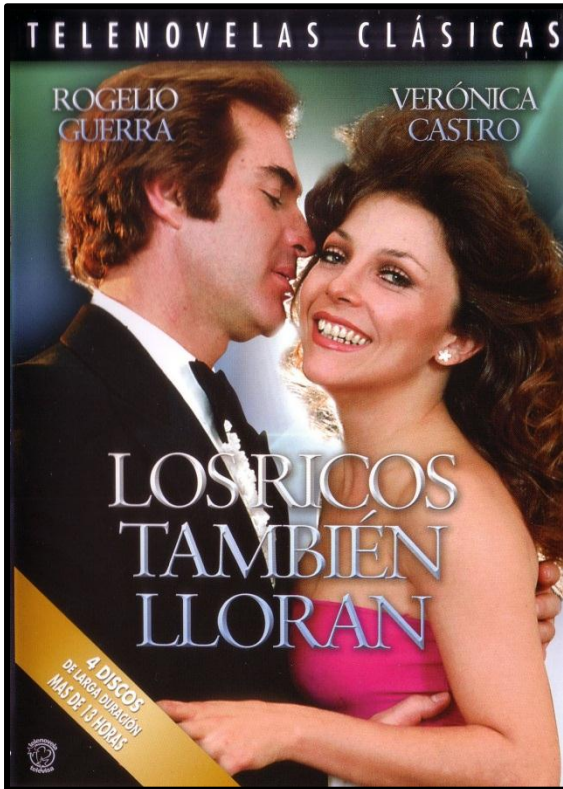
| Mole Poblano



| Jericalla

### Annex 3

Mexican Telenovelas, a great international success.



Annex 4

G20 Summit in Los Cabos, Mexico June 2012.



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For the purpose of my investigation I have extensively consulted the work of Joseph Nye, Nicholas Cull, Jan Melissen, Simon Anholt in addition to an interview that Marin and Kall did to Simon Anholt, same that was published in the Mexican newspaper Animal Politico.

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