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Reframing Cultural Diplomacy: The Instrumentalization of Culture under the Soft Power Theory

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Abstract

Although cultural diplomacy has grown in importance in recent years, there is no consensus on its definition. Cultural diplomacy is commonly framed in terms of soft power: the capacity of persuasion and attraction that allows the state to construct hegemony without using coercive methods. In this article, I offer a critical analysis of this theory's limitations. To shed light on this situation, I provide an historical analysis of cultural diplomacy. Based on this historical analysis and on an extensive desk research, I examine the dominant methodological and conceptual articulation of soft power in cultural diplomacy literature to clarify how the logical framework of soft power favors a specific and restrained conception of these policies, narrowing its understanding and legitimating its economic and political instrumentalization.

Keywords: cultural diplomacy, soft power, instrumentalization, branding, propaganda

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Introduction

In today´s globalized and highly interconnected world, cultural diplomacy is receiving renewed attention. Social and economic changes as well as geopolitical transformations have led to a new relevance for international cultural policies. The impulse towards financial and technological globalization and post-Fordism economic changes (Jessop 2002; Brenner 2004) have given greater importance to cultural production and consumption in the so-called post-industrial society (Bell 1976; Morató 2012). These transformations and a shift of power relations within the international system have revealed new actors (Bound et al. 2007) and dynamics in cultural diplomacy (Paschalidis 2009: 283). Arts and cultural industries have become designated by governments and academics as central instruments for the construction of power within the international system, favoring a diversification of cultural policy and the intervention of new governments in its development. Moreover, pre-existing national models were specialized and replicated (Wyszomirski et al. 2003) because a renewed dynamism in policy transfer boosted the reproduction of official institutions and political strategies.

During this period, which has been characterized by a shift towards the entrepreneurial and local public cultural management in the developed world (Harvey 1989; Bianchini 1993), internationalization of these local policies has significantly influenced the development of cultural diplomacy. Similarly, the increasing influence of global events and policies at the local level has given way to the development of a multilayered diplomacy that involves sub-national levels (local, regional, and provincial) of administration (Hocking 1993) in the cultural sphere. Cultural diplomacy also gained increasing influence and importance for supra-national organizations (entities that are composed of more than two states and have common administrative and programmatic mechanisms, such as UNESCO or the EU), where previously marginalized national and sub-national organizations take active participation in a new multilevel governance (Singh 2010). Therefore, internationalization became of major importance for all levels of government dealing with cultural policies, and the monopoly of central governments in external cultural policy was challenged by the growing intervention of supra-national organizations, regional and local authorities (Paquin 2004), and social organizations (Castells 2009).

In this scenario, the theoretical definitions of cultural diplomacy established during the Cold War were rendered obsolete. Nevertheless, many of the ideas developed during the Cold War influenced what was meant to be the most widespread understanding of cultural diplomacy since the 1990s. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, new schools of thought, such as neorealism and neoliberalism, sought to explain the "world of distention". In the context of neoliberalism, Joseph Nye re-contextualized the concept of soft power as the state's capacity to deal with

international politics without relying on economic or military force (Nye 2004), the focus of traditional hard power. Many studies of cultural diplomacy have taken their departure from this point of view and focused on the intervention of nation-states as a way of monopolizing power through culture, a sign of the endurance of state-centered analytical approaches despite the changing landscape of cultural policy. This perspective views culture as part of foreign policy and a means of expressing soft power in the international arena.

Soft power as a concept is categorically distinguished from hard power (i.e., the capacity to use force) or nation branding (i.e., strategies aimed at allowing states to better control their image and to attract investment, tourism, and talent) (Aronczyk 2008: 43). However, the literature about cultural diplomacy based on soft power rationale commonly subsumes these policies to economic or geopolitical aims. Similarly, Melissa Aronczyk's research on nation branding policies shows that culture can be ultimately understood as a way to achieve economic goals (2008), an approach that has significantly influenced the research in this field, especially in the context of renewed debates about soft power after the 2003 invasion of Iraq (Schneider 2006). This view puts forward an instrumentalist interpretation of cultural diplomacy in many of its logical and prescriptive aspects. In this context, soft power and cultural polices have been conceptualized and deployed as tools to improve the way the U.S. is viewed abroad (Djerejian 2003; Lenczowski 2007, 2011). A conception of such policies has been adapted by other governments around the world (Rius & Zamorano 2014).

This article seeks to clarify the relation between the previously mentioned theoretical outline and the historical evolution of cultural diplomacy by problematizing its definition, models, and goals. Based on extensive desk research, this article aims to improve the existing theories and main conceptual frameworks by analyzing a wide corpus of theoretical and empirical literature in the field of cultural diplomacy and by considering the interrelations between theory and historical development. This analysis improves our understanding of cultural diplomacy as well as defines the characteristics and limitations of the soft power approach, which is usually presented as a neutral perspective. In addition, this article reveals the common political and conceptual prescription of cultural imperialism, neo-propaganda, and nation branding when cultural diplomacy is approached from the soft power concept. My analysis of this conceptual framework is mainly based on the definition of power proposed by sociological and philosophical post-structuralism. Post-structuralism frames power, an elusive entity that can neither be owned nor possessed but is always contested, as an inherent component of social relations re-inscribed via cultural and political hegemony, a strategy that attempts to mask the real source and agenda of power (Foucault 1992). I also consider other conceptualizations of recent development in the field of cultural

diplomacy such as those established within the constructivism theory of international relations (Villanueva 2007; Topić and Sciortino 2012). These approaches focus on the importance of democratic representation, social participation, and horizontal governance for (inter)national cultural relations. Therefore, from an interdisciplinary approach, our study seeks also to contribute to the development of these emerging perspectives and to articulate its current debates.

The text is divided into three general sections: 1) a description of the most relevant meanings and definitions of cultural diplomacy; 2) a brief historical description of this policy evolution from the 19th century to 1945 and from the Cold War to 1989, which correlates with the boost of soft power and cultural branding[1] ; and 3) an investigation of how cultural diplomacy has been conceptualized and instrumentalized on the basis of soft power theory, on which basis I propose its conceptual reframing.

The definitions of cultural diplomacy

In 1965, the American professor Edmund Guillon, who worked for the U.S. state department, coined the phrase "public diplomacy" to avoid the term propaganda. During the post-war period, public diplomacy was also known as "public opinion diplomacy", a concept that concerns various forms of rapport established between governments and people abroad (Mannheim 1994)[2]. Today, public diplomacy consists of communicative activities (e.g., TV campaigns, radio programs, and events of international projection) designed to generate a positive external interest regarding a political territory and diverse social groups. Using these activities, governments encourage various external actions (tourism, investment, etc.) considered beneficial for a specific political space.

From the 19th century, these policies have accompanied the process of constructing nation-states and have become progressively incorporated into those said entities' postcolonial logic of action. As the result of the two World Wars and the Cold War, public diplomacy not only gained importance but also become a specific approach that in many cases has been reduced to propaganda (Noya 2006; Arndt 2009). Thus, the term has had a confusing conceptual development and lately it has been used in diverse contexts (Arndt 2005). In this regard, there is a certain consensus about current public diplomacy, covering multiple activities, that involves new agents and methods (Cull 2009: 13), such as relations between parliaments and civil groups, international conferences, para-diplomatic actions (i.e., the international actions of sub-state institutions), and the work developed by third sector organizations (Leonard 2002).

Cultural diplomacy is used in an imprecise conceptual context and is generally subsumed or placed as the main sub-area of public diplomacy (Schneider 2005;

Mark 2009). However, the definition of cultural diplomacy is almost as varied as the number of countries that claim to use it (Wyszomirski et al. 2003). Moreover, cultural diplomacy refers to multiple uses of culture as a communication channel between governments and diplomats (Bound et al. 2007, 21). For example, Milton Cummings defines cultural diplomacy as "the exchange of ideas, information, art, and other aspects of culture among nations and their peoples in order to foster mutual understanding" (2003: 1). Richard Arndt, on the other hand, is more precise and distinguishes cultural diplomacy from cultural relations: "[C]ultural diplomacy only takes place when the governments pay attention to this complex field and try to give sense to chaos so as to configure it, to some extent, and put it at the service of the elusive 'national interest', so difficult to define" (2009: 31). Finally, Louis Bélanger summarizes cultural diplomacy as "the activities of foreign policy that deal with culture, education, science and, to a degree, technical cooperation; in other words, those that relate to activities of the spirit" (1994: 422). In principle, I assume some elements of each of these definitions: Cultural diplomacy involves the systematic intervention of governments in the arts, sciences, and other cultural expressions as the basis of an official categorization of national identity.

Presently, however, cultural diplomacy is characterized by the multiplication of its intervenient agents at different scales and levels and by the growing importance of supra-national organizations. Aside from a nation's government, its business people, artists, emigrants, etc. also participate in this complex space. Their exchanges are usually pre-determined by the official definitions of culture and operationalized by the governmental institution and agents, which shape and promote a group of artistic and cultural goods and activities that identify with official cultural policy and national identity. This combination of government policies of international cultural promotion, framed as a general strategy, could be considered cultural diplomacy. Nevertheless, this field seems to be as extensive in practice as it is theoretically confusing (Chartrand 1992: 2; Topić and Sciortino 2012: 9). To comprehend how this practice has been conceptualized through history and to understand the logic behind theory and praxis some historical insight is needed.

The development of cultural diplomacy: from cultural diffusion to branding

Beginnings and evolution until the Second World War

Cultural diplomacy emerged in 1870s and started to expand its influence at beginning of the First World War with the creation of national entities and cultural associations based outside their country of origin (Paschalidis 2009: 277). The founders of cultural diplomacy included European artists and intellectuals as well as volunteers and exiles as these organizations encouraged contacts with their di-

aspora. This initial phase comprised nationalist policies aimed at spreading the native language and culture–especially high culture–to specific social spheres where governments had limited participation (Paschalidis 2009). For example, the Alliance Française (1883) was founded under the descriptive title the National Association for the Diffusion of French Language in the Colonies and Abroad and the Dante Alighieri Society (1889) was founded to spread the Italian language.

During the second decade of the 20th century, the government institutionalization of cultural diplomacy began. This process was developed after the constitution of the diplomatic system of European nation-states (Watson 1991: 104)[3] which, seeing its influence diminished over other territories, decided to employ various strategies to sustain neocolonial power. Similarly, the institutionalization of cultural diplomacy was boosted by the First World War, the resulting political antagonisms and "politization of culture" that served as propaganda. The two measures taken in this context were the organization of various areas of cultural administration within the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and the formalization and funding of pre-existing institutions. In 1920, the German government created the Department of Germans Abroad and Cultural Affairs under the auspices of the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and a few years later the Deutsche Akademie, a predecessor of the Goethe Institute (founded in 1951), was created with expansionist intentions that later became heavily tainted with Nazi ideology. Three years later, France created its Office of Cultural Relations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, coining the concept of international cultural relations (Arndt 2005). Subsequently, the propagandist activities of the Dante Aligheri Institute and of the Deutsche Akademie prompted the formalization of the British Council in 1936 (Mitchell 1986). At first, Great Britain was reluctant to develop its own external system for cultural affairs, but this position was altered by the Second World War with a decrease in focus of commercial and industrial power (Parsons 1984).[4]

Moreover, the war of propaganda occurred before the so-called Great War fostered the organization of cultural diplomacy in the United States, which from then on gained influence. In the beginning, cultural diplomacy had a relational approach with exchange programs and a "close collaboration with the universities and U.S. and foreign intellectual world" (Arndt 2009: 37). U.S. diplomacy's resistance to Nazi propaganda started in Latin America through a policy put forward by Franklin Roosevelt as part of the Pan-American project (Espinosa 1976), a strategy reflected in the Buenos Aires Convention of 1936. Two years later, the Division of Cultural Relations (designed for artistic and intellectual diffusion) and the Department of State's Division of International Communication (in charge of media) were established. Although this is how the two institutional branches of U.S. public diplomacy were created, these first efforts to give a dialogue-based character to cultural diplomacy were quickly undermined by the anti-communist

agenda and the propaganda developed during the Second World War.[5]

Postwar cultural diplomacy: a process of expansion and autonomization

After the Second World War, cultural diplomacy articulated culture as an instrument of international conciliation and moral restoration as part of its central discourse. In the context of European reconstruction, the governmental formalization of the public territorial management of culture was starting to develop. In 1946, the Arts Council of Great Britain was launched and, in 1959, France established the first Ministry of Culture, emphasizing its redistributive function (Urfalino 1996: 13). Thus, according to the development and models of various welfare states (Zimmer and Toepler 1996), the cultural field was reaffirmed as an area of organized state intervention.

Accordingly, in a context of specialization of public cultural management, cultural diplomacy was gradually separated from traditional diplomacy, while at the same time it was gaining specificity in its "methods, dynamics and goals" (González-Chiaramonte 2009: 223). As a result, the organizations designed to manage foreign cultural policy would be the cultural bodies of the Ministries or Departments of foreign affairs and the Councils and Ministries of Culture, either from their international departments or as part of the growing cross-departmental programs.

Although the aforementioned development was initially centered in Europe, multiple processes transformed the hegemony of Western cultural diplomacy and furthered the progressive diversification of the intervening agents worldwide. In a context of new geopolitical tensions, UNESCO, founded in 1948, promoted a gradual dynamic of power redistribution in the global system. With the creation of UNESCO, the project of international collaboration through culture–as originally pursued by the ill-fated League of Nations (formed in 1919) (Zimmern 1936: 1; Valderrama 1995: 3)–entered a new stage. By strengthening cultural policies at a supra-national level, various countries that were not actors before began to participate in global cultural relations and an important reconfiguration manifested in the flow of cultural exchanges in several new directions. In the same vein, UNESCO was a platform for questioning neocolonial order (Miller and Yúdice 2004: 227) and for incorporating popular and traditional culture in the lexicon of political dialogue in the international sphere. Local cultural policy would soon follow (Urfalino 1996: 143).

Another process that transformed international cultural politics was the consolidation of the U.S. as a cultural power of global reach and the character of its postwar cultural diplomacy. Under the precept that the new geopolitical conditions "required nations and peoples to create a new diplomacy for a world divided into ideological and military blocs" (USIA 1999: 4), the country sought to actively prevail in the field of innovation, continuing its cultural propaganda

strategy (Arndt 2009: 39) through a public-private governance.[6] The CIA came to share this orientation from the late 1940s as did the United States Information Agency (USIA) starting in 1953 and the Division of Cultural Relations of the State Department starting in 1938. In 1946, Voice of America–a radio station created during the war for European broadcasts–was commissioned to this department and soon also started to transmit to other places in the world (e.g., Iran) (Kisatzsy 1999) to promote anti-communist propaganda and the American way of life. On the other hand, in Latin America, through intellectual and artistic promotion and networking, Voice of America was used to mask U.S. interventions in the region and its domestic sociopolitical conflicts (González-Chiaramonte 2009: 226). A different approach, however, was taken by the Fulbright Program of scientific and cultural exchanges, which has promoted scientific and cultural communication since 1948. The Fulbright Program has been differentiated from other diplomacy strategies of the U.S. and is seen by some as the "most important cultural tool that the world has known" (Arndt 2009: 35).

As we have seen, the reconfiguration of the geopolitical map during this period also resulted in the creation of new fronts of cultural diplomacy confrontation in the international sphere. First, it was characterized by the Cold War and the East-West dispute between the U.S. and the USSR with their respective cultural representations and ideologies (Gould Davies 2003). Second, the axis North-South was a neocolonial channel intended to maintain economic and political power. Finally, the confrontation between the U.S. and Europe, led by France, regarding the regulation of cultural industries (Trumpbour 2002). These oppositions revealed the new centrality of culture and the constant temptation of propaganda. The invention of the term public diplomacy in 1965, even as a euphemism for propaganda, came about in a context of diversification in cultural politics, more specifically in its logic of action.

Cultural diplomacy from the 1980s

In the late 1970s, the social and economic developments outlined in the introduction of this article gave continuity to the process of diversification, growth, and autonomization of cultural diplomacy. However, certain significant ruptures need to be discussed.

In terms of continuity, the different traditions of cultural diplomacy led to the crystallization of national models. The French case is the illustration of a centralized, interventionist, and more constitutive model (De Raymond 2000). Currently, French cultural diplomacy is the responsibility of the Ministry of Culture and Communication and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which manages Culturesfrance and the Alliance Française with its network of over 100 cultural centers around the world. The state clearly leads the activity on the international scene,

both in terms of general budget per capita and activity (Wyszomirski et al. 2003). On the other hand, the British case can be seen as the prime example of the delegated model which consists of a "decentralized" cultural organization (Memis 2010), based on the "arm's length principle", which supposes the autonomy of public bodies against improper or partisan political intervention. The British Council, currently under the purview of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, focuses on linguistic education and student exchanges. In the 1980s, the institution expanded geographically and deepened its governmental support, even though the reason for its existence had been historically questioned (Parsons 1984). In 2001, the British Council was second in total investment and third in budget per capita at the international level (Wyszomirski et al. 2003). Despite the theoretical distinction between the centralized and the delegated model, in practice "mixed models" are common especially in Europe where many national systems of cultural diplomacy combine these two approaches (Wiesand 2007).[7]

On the other hand, U.S. cultural diplomacy followed its own path, gradually dismantling at the end of the Cold War (Nye 2008: 98).[8] Although this process has been critically analyzed (Sablosky 2003), during the 1990s the USIA was dissolved because "an organ of propaganda was no longer necessary" (Lenczowski 2011: 62). In this regard, the underestimation of cultural diplomacy in comparison with public diplomacy has been revealed in the foreign agenda priorities; for example, it has been estimated that the U.S. investment in artistic diplomacy between 2003 and 2007 was only about 26 million dollars, whereas Voice of America, which maintains an active presence in the Middle East, had, in 2008, a budget of 675 million dollars (Ayers 2010: 14). This new strategic approach also provides evidence of the great capacity of the American popular culture industry to successfully transmit values and a national image without a systematic intervention of the state.

During the 1990s, both the adoption in Europe of the term public diplomacy (Cull 2009: 17) and the extension of city branding to national branding (Kotler et al. 1993) manifested the new relevance of transnational communication for cultural diplomacy (Bélanger 1999: 677; Wiesand 2007: 5). The importance of international cultural exchanges was also revealed in new supra-national negotiations such as in the Uruguay Round between 1986 and 1993 (Singh 2008: 117). In this context, two opposite positions about the regulation of cultural industries were confronted–one in favor of "cultural exception" and the other maintaining those transactions in the current trade liberalization climate, with the exception of the ones already regulated by various enforced international agreements and conventions (Chartrand 1992; Feigenbaum 2010: 80). Both the liberalization of cultural exchanges and the dynamization of transnational communication led to cultural diplomacy oscillating between intellectual and artistic exchanges and propaganda and the use of marketing and the Internet.

Moreover, in the context of all the diverse political, economic, and technological transformations that paved the transition from the Cold War to a multipolar world (Bound et al. 2007: 16, Castells 2009), new government agencies and institutions were created with the specific purpose of managing national heritage in the international sphere, especially countries in Eastern Europe (Andreescu 2009) and Asia, with a significant recent development in China and their worldwide network of the Confucius Institutes (Hsiao and Yang 2008: 13). In addition, diverse social and institutional changes in the developing world transformed traditional receptor countries of cultural diplomacy into organizers of such actions themselves, as in the case of Argentina (Giacomino 2009). This reconfiguration of power decentralized cultural diplomacy from the traditional political and cultural centers to a complex dialogue scheme. The supra-national level–mainly UNESCO and the European Union–still has a significant role promoting and mapping priorities for states as well providing the space for representational exchange. However, while the European Union has been trying to develop several programs and a shared strategy in this field (Wiesand 2007: 8), cultural diplomacy is a pending matter for other multilateral organizations, such as the cultural branch of the South American customs union and the trading bloc MERCOSUR (Getino 2009).

The current international cultural policy is characterized by multilateralism and an embryonic rebalancing of North-South relations. Although Western European countries and the U.S. continue to lead the world with respect to cultural diplomacy and cultural industry, significant parallel processes are challenging this state of affairs. This transformation can also be observed in terms of the international participation of local agents and agents of culture (Saddiki 2009: 113) that promote the growing "glocal" character of cultural policy (Dewey and Wyszomirski 2004). The present situation requires the consideration of the correlation between cultural diplomacy, its new logic of geopolitical development, as well as its methods of territorial insertion. I will now analyze how the concept of soft power helps explain such complexity.

Soft power and cultural diplomacy analysis

The study of cultural diplomacy–of which the most abundant production comes from the U.S.–is a multidisciplinary field. Relevant investigation comes from international relations (Finn 2003; Kennedy 2003) and international law (Nafziger et al. 2010), analyses linked to cultural economics (Chartrand 1992; Singh 2010), polito-logical approaches and case studies (Bélanger 1999; Dewey and Wyszomirski 2004), as well as a certain predominance of historical texts (Paschalidis 2009; Sadlier 2012; MacKenzie 2013). We also find transdisciplinary examinations as in the field of cultural studies about the case of Latin America (Miller and Yúdice

2004: 223). From a methodological point of view, there is also a growing output of comparative studies (Bélanger 1994; Wyszomirski et al. 2003; Wiesand 2007; Mark 2008).

In contrast with this disciplinary diversity, most of the studies in the field, which are commonly carried out by diplomats, are dominated by soft power conceptualizations. Since the 1990s, under the enduring influence of the Hobbesian approach commonly called realism, where the "fight for power" (Keohane 1972: 9) between states in an anarchic system is the dominant model (Morgenthau 1990), rationalism–convergence of neorealist and neoliberal theories–has sought to consider the transition from the world of high politics, centered on hard power dispute and national security, to low politics, determined by social and cultural variables (i.e., policies related to issues that do not directly threaten the existence and stability of the nation state). In this new conceptualization, the previous focus on capabilities (material capacities) of realism is extended to the intentions of international agents (not only states but also other diverse geographically based units such as local governments). Even in the frame of a constant tension between neorealism and neoliberalism, manifested in the importance given to each of these variables (material and symbolic manifestations of power), soft power acquired growing theoretical importance. Thus, the soft power concept, already developed during the Cold War (Keohane 1972), secured its position as the main instrument to analyze cultural diplomacy and as its prescriptive framework (Bélanger 1999: 678).

Soft power is defined as the capacity to obtain a benefit without the use of economic or military means but by generating a positive attraction that facilitates the accumulation of other forms of power (Nye 2004: 5). Because soft power is based on intangible resources and relies mainly on persuasion, it cannot resort to restrictive mechanisms. While hard power is easy to identify and deploy, Nye emphasizes that in today's multipolar world, with an interconnected economy and an increasing power of international financial system, it is important to "affect the behavior of others" (Nye 2004: 2). Hence, the power of an actor adopting changeable forms based on the relational context where it is exercised will be determined for the most part by the knowledge of other agents' preferences (Nye 2004: 2). The assets that put soft power in action are a) the aspects of culture that are attractive for the interlocutor, b) the national politics when it is seen as legitimate from abroad, and c) the political values when it is recognized as positive by others (Nye 2008: 97). The correct administration of these resources, aimed at attaining power in the framework of globalization, would require government intervention in the areas of communication and information (Nye 2002).

Following this logic, smart power has been suggested as a term for the capacity to combine hard and soft resources in an efficient way and according to a

specific foreign strategy (Nye 2004). This rationale is exemplified in an assessment made by several analysts regarding a certain imbalance of power after the U.S. invasion of Iraq (Schneider 2006: 2). In this respect, converting capacities into concrete power, defined as desired outcomes, would require leadership and strategy as well as an identification of those capacities that offer the best conditions for the "power of behavior" to be exercised in a particular context (Nye 2004: 3).

Typically, current cultural diplomacy is analytically and politically integrated in the theoretical scheme described above. On the one hand, it is employed separately from hard power, limiting it to a group of possibilities and methods. On the other hand, it is normatively inserted into the group of elements that form the national security strategy (Lenczowski 2007). But cultural policies in their external dimension tend to be less attached to specific goals and social expectations than cultural policies at a local level, which could potentially favor greater economic and political instrumentalization. Taking the above into consideration, "constructing preferences" (Noya 2005: 5) from foreign politics became a goal of cultural diplomacy that favored propaganda that would enable ideological formation (Rosendorf 2000) or territorial marketing.

Cultural diplomacy as an instrument for attaining symbolic power

As noted above, the close relationship between state power and external perception (Watson 1991: 42) has promoted various forms of action and analysis of cultural diplomacy. In this last regard, the distinction between a symbolic and a constrictive mode of governmental international power has had multiple derivations for this policy. Taking into account the classic differentiation between material or structural power and symbolic power (Gramsci 1984), I will now analyze, from the soft power conceptual approach, how cultural diplomacy is commonly reduced to a means for accumulating power.

Beyond the relevance of economic, educational, and social (relational networks) capitals for social relations, Bourdieu considered that a fourth form of power, symbolic power, lay across all the others, acting as a legitimate device (Bourdieu 2000). The French sociologist also pointed out that symbolic violence happens when power "manages to impose meanings and impose them as being legitimate by concealing the power relations that are the basis of its force, adds its own symbolic power, to those power relations" (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977: 44). Likewise, seeking to avoid substantialisms, Foucault defined power as a "form of relation between agents" (Foucault 1992: 80). This relational nature of power, as well as its capacity to conceal the coercion rapports in which it operates through some of its "symbolic manifestations", as emphasized by Bourdieu, could be used

to analyze cultural diplomacy (e.g., considering the relationship between cultural diffusion processes, its ideological forms, and its capacity to mask material relations) and the geopolitical and economic conditions of a specific conjecture, or considered keeping in mind that the capacities of the studied entities are themselves part of a network of relations that define them.

However, diverse interrelated operations tend to focus the studies of this policy towards bureaucratic-descriptive methodological approaches or to instrumental definitions frequently based on antagonistic[9] conceptions of culture (Feigenbaum 2001; Appel et al. 2008: 56; Ryniejska–Kiełdanowicz 2009; Ayers 2010). In this context, the autonomization of culture becomes a frequent derivative. Just as the neoclassical theory promoted the analytical split of economics from social and symbolic relations, diverse methodological approaches to cultural diplomacy from the point of view of soft power foster the displacement of cultural politics outside society. Therefore, through the lack of consideration of the relation between symbolic and material powers, these approaches tend to ignore the symbolic violence of various processes that occur in the context of international cultural policies.[10] Similarly, this interpretation of the soft power concept promotes a "deculturization" of the coercion methods by limiting them to material relations and omitting the fact that they can be part of imperialist or colonialist policies, which are noticeably cultural (Ferguson 2005). So, from these approaches, cultural diplomacy is reduced to a mere exchange of art and cultural heritage between nations outside of its complex nature, which implies its position in a strategic foreign agenda, its underhanded aims, or its forms of insertion in a specific relational network composed by many political actors, such as transnational corporations, social organizations, or lobby groups.

Along the same lines, diverse international "culturally based" conflicts which, as suggested by Saddiki (2009: 114), are prescribed by the theory on the clash of civilizations, are reduced to a "culture vs. culture" phenomenon (Hervik 2012: 66) and therefore as an immanence to be solved through strategies of hegemony. This thesis has legitimated international confrontation and promoted the redesign of foreign agendas on the basis of a definition of cultural and religious identities as major sources of conflict in the post-Cold War world (Russett et al. 2000). From a rationale based on these assumptions and on soft power, cultural diplomacy has been approached as a twofold strategy: the escorting or "explanation" of hard power interventions (i.e., invasion of other countries) to facilitate its success and convince populations in those territories involved and the improvement of national image in the international arena, which might be affected by interventionist, imperialists, or other illegitimate policies. Culture understood this way, that is to say emptied of its sociopolitical nature, promotes an interpretation of cultural diplomacy as a weapon of political confrontation (Lenczowski 2007).

As a consequence, by bending cultural diplomacy in a political and conceptual way towards the accompaniment and escorting of hard strategies, which present cultural differences under the light of national security matters, the existence of multiple cultural collaborative and dialogue-oriented international mechanisms is obscured (Le Duc 2009). Furthermore, another consequence of this rationale is the consideration of cultural diplomacy as a residual category of foreign policies (Bélanger 1994: 423).

In brief, I understand that soft power–a concept initially developed within the United States foreign policy agenda–is today limiting the methodological consideration of culture instrumentalization in the international arena and legitimates such instrumentalization under the pretext of security or economic interests. Hence, soft power conceptualization focuses cultural diplomacy on its positioning as a tool to exert power while contributing to mask its manipulation role in the "smart" power strategies. But culture as a symbolic resource, although it always implies legitimization and power, is an inseparable component of the economic and sociopolitical relations (internal and external) where it is displayed. As per our historical description, culture in international relations can be conceived and managed in many directions, from interstate order to construction of national hegemony, exceeding the direction suggested by the conceptual framework of soft power.

Ideal types of current cultural diplomacy and theoretical prescriptions

Villanueva (2007:38) has identified three rationales in contemporary cultural diplomacy: a) reflexive, centered in the value of culture; b) nation branding, focused on the international use of culture as a territorial branding resource; and c) soft power, based on the theoretical framework in question. Similarly, Chartrand (1992: 2) differentiated a cultural diplomacy "intended to obtain advantage in a foreign country" from cultural relations based on arm's length principles and focused on cooperation. In addition, Zaharna (2009) differentiates policies intended to create mutual knowledge from others seeking to satisfy the national interest. Along these lines, I see two types of cultural diplomacy: culturalist and neo-propagandist.

The culturalist, or reflexive type, is characterized by policies belonging to diverse models (centralized or delegated) and representations of territorial culture (ethnic, national, pluri-national, etc.) that focus its actions on the artistic, intellectual, and cultural-pedagogic areas, using diversified organizational schemes such as cultural centers abroad, exchange programs, and diaspora politics. Similarly, its mechanisms are basically horizontal with long-term favorable shared ef-

fects such as mutual recognition (Schultz 1997, Leonard 1997, Sablosky 2003: 2). For example, the culturalist policies that followed the Balkan conflict were coordinated collaborations with the former Yugoslavia heritage reconstruction policy launched from various supra-national spheres that contributed to "ethnic reconciliation and cooperation" (Kostadinova 2011: 13).

This orientation tends towards reciprocity and to the erosion of national stereotypes and the explanation of identities in greater depth. In its propositional perspective, it is a line of action coherent with the normative approach of cosmopolitan constructivism based on the multilateral promotion of pluralism and intercultural dialogue in the international system (Villanueva 2007). As such, the culturalist type emphasizes the cultural value of heritage, arts, and identities themselves (as opposed to prioritizing their instrumental form), assuming at the same time the relative absence of governmental control over the creative process linked to artistic diffusion. In the same vein, it is characterized by the participation of local actors in foreign policy in order to bring about territorial development in their territory and abroad and by the democratic contribution of governments in supra-national organizations. These processes manifest different methods for the construction of collective power through culture, from the structure of normative frames at a supra-national level to inter-state cultural politics.

On the other hand, although cultural diplomacy has been differentiated from propaganda (Feigenbaum 2001) and from nation branding policies (Noya 2006), I understand that there is also a neo-propagandist type reinforced by soft power theory. In this context, culture tends to be subjected to political and economic instrumentalization by various processes of government management of external cultural representation. These contents are promoted by administrations following symbolic systems of influence emerging from the contemporary relationship between cultural and public diplomacy[11]. These practices, which usually involved the transnational private sector, also lead to a greater dilution of the methods and institutions of cultural diplomacy in the communication strategy of states, which eventually reduces social participation (Rius Ulldemolins and Zamorano 2014).

So, these policies are mainly focused on the unilateral dissemination of cultural content that shows a positive view of the political territory in question. A construction coinciding with an ideological conception is considered optimal for transforming a situational image, managing "difficult" problems, or manipulating international geopolitical scenarios. Various actions can be carried out for this purpose, such as the supra-national negotiation of cultural industries (Yudhishthir 2008: 74)[12], the development and projection of major events and cultural branding (Ndlovu 2010), and the implementation of policies aiming to promote (and relatively control) the mass media. These processes aim to create short-term external social representations, reducing cultural diplomacy to a tool for the coun-

try's image construction (Wyszomirski et al. 2003; Wiesand 2007: 5) or confusing it with the latter (Giacomino 2009). It is worth mentioning that this neo-propagandist tendency suggests, more directly than the culturalist type, that the arts and cultural heritage need to be useful to the strategy of a broad spectrum of foreign policy, including military means. In the following table, I present a summary of this distinction.

Activities / Variables	Cultural diplomacy		Public diplomacy		Propaganda	Branding
Ideal types	Culturalist	Neopropagandist	Soft	Hard		
Aims	Mutual understanding	Power/ Persuasion				
Projection term	Long-term		Short-term			
Pattern of communication	Two ways	One-flow messages				
Control of the message	Less	More	Less	More	High	
Character of the audience	Active	Passive	Active	Passive	Passive	
Results	Relative	Specific	Relative	Specific	Specific	
Social participation	More	Less	More	None	None	

Source: Own elaboration

Concluding remarks

Cultural diplomacy, initially linked to neocolonial expansion and to propaganda, has gradually acquired new characteristics and has manifested several institutional forms and methods as well as dissimilar goals. Currently, there is no academic consensus on its definition; however, I have considered it as an area of government intervention and, based on various temporal, communicative, and political participation variables, my analysis considers its boundaries in relation to other activities such as public diplomacy and propaganda.

Several processes occurred in the context of postindustrial globalization, such as technological development and trade liberalization, favoring the evolution of cultural diplomacy and facilitating its inclination towards cultural branding and the establishment of new governmental forms of intervention. Facing the development of cultural globalization (a process that sets local logics and identities off-center), cultural diplomacy promotes emblems and cultural representations that seek to synthesize a specific way of "being" in the world. Herein is the fundamental importance given to language as a central mechanism of political expansion. This policy is currently creating tensions between territorial politics and glo-

balization, wrapped in the powerlessness of a strategy to contain and promote a representation in a context of constant changes and cultural interactions (Bélanger 1999: 677). In this way, these changes have also boosted the construction of cultural diplomacies that aim to increase the competitiveness of nations and cities through creativity and innovation. All these factors influence the "glocal" character of territorial cultural politics that now incorporate new demands, actions, and goals.

One element that enhanced both the development and the vagueness of cultural diplomacy in recent years is the growing dominance of the soft power conceptual approach in cultural diplomacy theory and practice. Initially conceived to improve U.S. external cultural presence (Nye 2004), this approach has led to prescription of unilateralism in the conception and deployment of these policies. The rationale in which this framework is based has also been reflected in a methodological autonomization of cultural diplomacy and in its reduction to a mere instrument of symbolic and ideological dispute. As a consequence of this interpretation, cultural diplomacy is associated with a variety of goals that result from contextualized definitions of national interest and securing of power. In addition, this rationale blurs the borders between this group of activities and public diplomacy, branding, and propaganda. Therefore, this normativity influences political institutional development, legitimizing political and economic instrumentalization.

Nevertheless, the construction of hegemony through culture, as Gramsci pointed out, is developed in a context of multiple tensions and negotiations with subaltern positions within its framework (1975). In this regard, cultural diplomacy is structured following diverse government strategies of bureaucratic, social, or industrial pre-eminence, and the power relations of these spheres in different contexts affect cultural diplomacy in various ways, both culturally and politically. For example, as we saw when analyzing the historical evolution of cultural diplomacy, war and geopolitical tensions often result in cultural diplomacy serving as neo-propaganda. On the other hand, by opposing the mentioned neo-propagandist tendencies, which generally exhibit a corporativist set-up, it is possible to identify recent policies that express in a more balanced way the relation between the managerial state and both social and sectorial participation, as in the case of Canada during the 1990s (Bélanger 1999).

In conclusion, beyond the theoretical differentiation between persuasive and coercive powers proposed by soft power theory, all the cultural diplomacy approaches to culture respond to power relations and should be consequently analyzed both as socio-institutional processes and as outputs. Cultural diplomacy comprises a group of cultural goods that portray delimited values–a "symbolic cutback" inseparable from the relations in which it is manifested. Hence, these representations can be considered as outputs, a capital that prefigures other ways

of capitalization and, at the same time, a way of legitimizing various methods of constructing economic and political power. In order to study all these registers of cultural diplomacy, it is fundamental to retake the analysis of the public nature of the politics of representation and to re-position international cultural action in the context of the local processes of democratic participation (Villanueva 2007:54). This approach will allow us to identify the models and tendencies of cultural diplomacy and the power relations that define them in each case study according to its historical and systemic backgrounds.

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Notes

[1] This periodization takes into account the one proposed by Paschalidis (2009), who distinguished four historical phases: Cultural nationalism (1870s–1914); Cultural propaganda (1914–1945); Cultural diplomacy (1945–1989); and Cultural capitalism (1989–). As Paschalidis states, "I understand that these phases represent a general structure of analysis in which periods share multiple continuities and interrelations. However, it also reveals, through its deep discursive and political differences, the importance of both socio-historical and geopolitical variables for the development of this activity" (2009: 256).

[2] There are currently extensive definitions of such activity where the public sphere claims a more central role: "[I]t represents the attempt to manage an international agent in the international environment through engagement with foreign audiences" (Cull 2009: 13).

[3] According to Watson, the development of diplomacy in the continent and the level of interrelation between the foreign ministries of the European countries led to the structuration of common legal frameworks and some shared political strategies in this field.

[4] This process was supplemented through the organization of its public diplomacy in 1932 when the British Broadcasting Corporation began broadcasting in territories of the British Empire.

[5] In 1942, Roosevelt created the Office of War Information to provide assistance to

Hollywood productions (Koppes 1990, Nye 2008: 98).

[6] "New official agencies–USIA, AID-professional organizations–SSRC, NAFSA-big philanthropic foundations–Ford, Rockefeller–and public and private universities" (González-Chiaramonte 2009: 226) served the same purpose.

[7] According to Wiesand's study, for a third of the 44 countries there is an inter-ministerial responsibility and half of them have cultural centers abroad, and not all of them are under the "arm's length" principle (Wiesand 2007).

[8] The decline in English courses abroad, the gradual closure of its worldwide library network, and its exit from UNESCO in 1983 highlighted this transition.

[9] In this regard, Ferguson (2005) understands soft power as a form of cultural imperialism.

[10] This is observed in various cultural products and media incorporated through cultural diplomacy to war strategy. This conception suggests an orientation for the cultural action, which can be thought of as taking into account the powers of authority–promoting voluntary obedience through belief–and manipulation unconscious power on the part of those who are manipulated (Wright 1966).

[11] In this sense, according to Melissen, "it would be naive to ignore the fact that, in many cases, public diplomacy and propaganda go hand in hand" (Melissen 2006: 7).

[12] Bélanger (1994: 696) has suggested that there is a relationship between the cultural diplomacy inscribed in national security and state protectionism.

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