

Mexico's Cultural Diplomacy: Analysis of its impact on development and what constitutes an effective strategy

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Table of Contents

1. Introduction:
 - To what extent does a State strategy for cultural diplomacy has a positive impact on a country's development?*
 - What elements constitute an effective strategy?*
2. Overview of concepts regarding Culture and Development
 - 2.1. Definition of Culture and Cultural Capital
 - 2.2. The value of Cultural Diversity
 - 2.3. The need of Cultural Identity
 - 2.4. Culture and Development
3. Cultural diplomacy in the international relations
 - 3.1. What the world is doing under different scopes
 - 3.1.1. Soft Power
 - 3.1.2. Nation Branding
 - 3.1.3. Cosmopolitan Constructivism
4. Methodology
5. Mexico's cultural diplomacy
 - 5.1. Overview on Mexico's cultural diplomacy
 - 5.2. The Mexican Cultural Institutes
 - 5.3. An analysis of what the scholars and diplomats think on
 - 5.3.1. Cultural Diplomacy for creating dialogue and understanding
 - 5.3.2. Cultural diplomacy for a better image promotion
 - 5.3.3. Cultural diplomacy for international cooperation
 - 5.3.4. What's currently happening with the Mexican Cultural Institutes and how they can be improved?
 - 5.3.5. Should Mexico's cultural diplomacy strategy be designed from the State or by each government administration?
 - 5.3.6. Does cultural diplomacy have a positive impact on Mexico's development?
6. Findings
7. Limitations
8. Conclusion:

1. Introduction

Culture understood in the sense of cultural identity and symbolism (Throsby, 2010) implies diverse issues ranging from tangible to intangible cultural heritage as well as customs and traditions. Culture, understood as a nation's identity, can serve to strengthen ties with other nations, establishing friendly relations. The promotion of national culture abroad can generate many benefits for the country in question, such as improving the image of the country. In that sense, culture can serve as a tool for the diplomacy carried out by countries in their international relations. This has been called cultural diplomacy.

This thesis seeks to analyze the relationship between cultural diplomacy and the development of a country, using a broad definition of development that is not limited to economic growth, in order to shed light on the potential positive impact that the former has on the latter. For this purpose, this research will analyze the value that the culture of a country can represent for international relations. The theories of Soft Power, Nation Branding and Cosmopolitan Constructivism will be reviewed in order to examine how they conceptualize the uses and benefits of cultural diplomacy and what results can be achieved through its practice. Likewise, through the review of these theories, this research will seek to identify possible elements that should form part of an optimal strategy for cultural diplomacy. This exploration aims to verify the positive impact that the cultural diplomacy contributes to the development of a country, specifically analyzing Mexico's cultural diplomacy as a case study.

In addition to reviewing key concepts in cultural economics and international relations theory, this research will include a brief review of Mexico's cultural diplomacy work and will base its analysis on guided interviews with scholars who are experts on the subject, as well as interview with cultural attachés to Mexican embassies, and directors of Mexican cultural institutes abroad, in order to gauge their impressions regarding the importance of cultural diplomacy for the country, the effectiveness of the work currently being carried out, and what elements should be considered to improve the country's cultural diplomacy strategy.

The interviews made it clear that whereas the research participants did not overwhelmingly assert that cultural diplomacy has a direct impact on Mexico's economic development, they affirmed the importance of other benefits of cultural diplomacy such as a positive image of Mexico and interest in Mexican culture abroad, strong alliances and friendly relations with other nations, and educational exchanges among countries, which in turn are beneficial to Mexico's economic, social, and cultural development over the long term. Perhaps most importantly, the research participants also drew on their firsthand experience to highlight what elements constitute an effective cultural diplomacy strategy for Mexico and how Mexico's current practice of cultural diplomacy could be improved.

The next chapter will present an overview of culture and its relationship to development, defining key relevant concepts and drawing on theory from the fields of Economics and International Relations. Chapter 3 will present and

analyze three theoretical approaches that can be used to understand the use and benefits of cultural diplomacy for foreign policy and how it relates to development: Soft Power, Nation Branding, and Cosmopolitan Constructivism. Chapter 4 will provide a brief overview of the qualitative methodology used in this research, before moving on to the analysis presented in Chapter 5 of original interviews regarding Mexico's cultural diplomacy strategy with Mexican cultural attachés, academic experts in the field of cultural diplomacy, and directors of several Mexican Cultural Institutes. Chapter 5 will also present a brief review of what the recent Mexican governments have done in regards to cultural diplomacy through various strategies including the Mexican Cultural Institutes, which constitute a concrete example of a strategy that the State has established for this purpose. This analysis will take into account the perspectives of the research participants in addition to incorporating the theory presented in the previous sections. Finally, the last section will summarize the main conclusions of this research.

2. Overview of concepts Culture and Development

2.1. Culture and Cultural Capital

The term *cultural diplomacy* refers to doing diplomacy through the promotion of the national culture. A deeper examination of the meaning of cultural diplomacy will be discussed in the next chapter, so for now, let's begin by reviewing the definitions of some key relevant concepts, beginning with the concept of culture itself.

One of the most common and well accepted definitions of culture is the one found in UNESCO's Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001): "Culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals, laws, customs, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by [a human] as a member of society". Considering this to be a universal concept, agreed by all of the member countries of UNESCO, culture seems to be a social matter in the sense that *is acquired by a human as a member of society*. This means that culture also provides some sort of identity to those who are part of the same society. For example, Egyptians recognize themselves as Egyptians, as long as they were born and/or raised inside Egypt's society. This sense of identity strengthened by culture will be analyzed further ahead in this thesis.

While UNESCO's definition of culture is more anthropological, for the purposes of this research it is also important to define culture as it is understood in the field of Economics. In this regard, authors like Klamer highlight some important aspects of the concept of culture in order to understand it better in its relationship with economics, referring to culture as the whole of "values and beliefs that people share", which is necessary to understand "the role that values play for the economy" (Klamer 1996). Montalvo and Reynal-Querol also refer to culture as a "set of shared values and beliefs that social groups hold and transmit across generations" (2014). Economist Keith Acheson (2011) also provides a similar definition, stating: "culture establishes values, obligations and beliefs about the responsibility of members to each other and to nonmembers". It is clear that beliefs and values are common terms that UNESCO's definition and these three economic approaches share as fundamental to defining culture. In fact, "values" is a particularly important concept that will be referred to later on in this research, as values are essential to the establishment of a strong national cultural identity, which is a prerequisite for carrying out effective cultural diplomacy in the sphere of international relations.

At the same time, authors in the field of Cultural Economics have also analyzed culture and the arts as goods and services that contribute to the economy. For example, in his book *Pricing the Priceless*, Grampp examines the importance of arts for economics and he concludes that "the activity –the making, the acquiring, and the using of [art]- is a certain kind of behavior. Behavior of all kinds entails choices, and all choices entail returns and costs. The two are what economics is about".

In regards to exploring the "profitable" aspects of culture, we come to another important concept for this research: Cultural Capital. According to Throsby, this concept can be considered in its tangible and intangible forms:

“Tangible cultural capital occurs in the form of artworks and artefacts such as paintings and sculptures, and heritage buildings, locations and sites. Intangible cultural capital comprises artworks that exist in their pure form as public goods, such as music and literature, and the stock of inherited traditions, values, beliefs and so on that constitute the culture of a group, whether the group is defined in national, regional, religious, political, ethnic or other terms... (in its intangible form) it also exists in the cultural networks and relationships that support human activity, and in the variety of cultural manifestations within communities that is, in cultural ‘ecosystems’ and cultural diversity” (2011. p. 143).

He also adds two more statements to consider for this definition, saying that cultural capital has **cultural value** independently of its economic value, and that represents a form of **capital stock** held by a country, state or city. Although culture is valued by the social group that owns it, it can be also valued by ‘*The Other*’ (Reijnders, 2010). Throsby’s definition of cultural capital provides a really useful approach to better understand what culture can represent for a nation: a form of potential capital or stock.

2.2. The Value of Cultural Diversity

As was the case with the definition of culture, the best way to start defining *Cultural Diversity* and its importance for humanity is by referring to UNESCO’s convention on this topic. The 2007 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions states that cultural diversity is “a defining characteristic of humanity”, asserting that “cultural diversity creates a rich and varied world, which increases the range of choices and nurtures human capacities and values, and therefore is a mainspring for sustainable development for communities, peoples and nations” (UNESCO, 2007). This last part about how cultural diversity is a mainspring for sustainable development for nations is particularly relevant for this research.

UNESCO’s Convention also provides objectives to be followed by the global community in order to ensure cultural diversity. This set of objectives could be summarized as follows: to ensure respect and permanence of every ethnic group’s culture as part of humanity’s richness, and as a matter of human rights, while at the same time ensuring harmonic exchange and coexistence among different cultures, building bridges to value the importance of cultural diversity.

As is the case with culture in general, in order to fully understand what cultural diversity is and what it represents for development, it is necessary to analyze the concept through the lens of economic theory. In this respect, economist Paul Streeten (2006, p. 403-404) lists seven reasons regarding why cultural diversity is desirable:

1. “First, diversity is valuable in its own right as a manifestation of the creativity of the human spirit.
2. Second, it is required by principles of equity, freedom of choice, human rights and self-determination.
3. Third, in analogy to biological diversity, it can help humanity to adapt to the limited environmental resources of the world. In this context diversity is linked to sustainability.

4. Fourth, it is needed to oppose political and economic dependence and oppression.
5. Fifth, it is aesthetically pleasing to have an array of different cultures; so, for example, people enjoy consuming cultural expressions such as music originating from cultures other than their own.
6. Sixth, it stimulates the mind and encourages creativity.
7. Finally, it can provide a reserve of knowledge and experience about good and useful ways of doing things”.

This list highlights several concepts that are particularly useful for this analysis, such as: sustainability, opposing economic dependence, consuming cultural expressions, and knowledge production; all of them are aspects that highlight the importance of cultural diversity for the economy and even more so for development. Indeed, nations that engage in cultural diplomacy are motivated by recognition of the value of cultural diversity and cultural exchange for national and global development. As Sen states, “one of the most important roles of culture lies in the possibility of learning from each other” (2004, p. 38).

Continuing with our current analysis of cultural diversity through Streeten’s approach, in addition to the reasons previously mentioned he points out that thanks to cultural diversity and exchange, there has been “the international spread of ideological and cultural impulses” (Streeten 2006, p. 405). This spread enriches the global society by providing it with shared values and beliefs, such as belief in the importance of world peace, which engender unity. Mutual understanding and dialogue between nations, both of which are key objectives of cultural diplomacy, are possible when shared values exist. Although historical encounters between different cultures and nations have sometimes included violent clashes, these encounters usually lead to cultural exchange that allows each nation and culture to evolve and improve through the resulting knowledge production and establishment of common values and principles, such as those established in the United Nations Charter signed after the second world war, aimed at promoting unity among nations and preventing a similar conflict from occurring in the future.

Before moving to the next section, it is worth making the following clarification. Despite these positive considerations about cultural diversity and its importance for humanity and development, in economic theory there are also some other approaches that show some skepticism about such diversity, even going so far as to argue its possible negative impact on economic development. These arguments consider that it is difficult to find agreement among a plurality of ethnic groups inside of the same society. Nevertheless, one of the conclusions reached by Montalvo and Reynal-Querol is that “in countries with sufficiently good institutions, however, ethnic diversity does not reduce growth or worsen other outcomes” (2014, p. 491). In other words, when cultural diversity is well managed through effective (State) institutions, including well-designed policies and strategies, cultural diversity is not an obstacle but rather can serve as cultural capital and facilitate development.

2.3. The Need for Cultural Identity

This section will aim to define *Cultural Identity* and justify its relevance for development and cultural diplomacy work. This discussion will not focus solely on economics but will also touch on perspectives from the fields of politics and sociology.

Some economists have also explored the issue of cultural identity. In his study about the economics of cultural policy, Throsby highlights four sources of cultural value that matter for Cultural Economics: “arts production and consumption; cultural identity and symbolism; cultural diversity; and cultural preservation and continuity” (2010, p. 42). In *Culture and Public Action* (2004), economist Klammer notes: “cultural goods matter insofar as they affect culture as identity. And culture as identity matters insofar as it affects development” (p. 139). However, most economists tend to study cultural identity in relation to the aspects mentioned previously in the section on cultural diversity: how cultural identity has an impact on the way we produce, consume, organize and work. This research will not focus on the impact of cultural identity on individual behavior and choices (which in turn has an impact on economic development) but will rather explore how cultural identity can be used as a tool for development through the work of cultural diplomacy in the international arena.

In UNESCO’s 1977 Program of Culture, the organization establishes the link between cultural identity and economic and social development, setting forth the following aims: “promotion of cultural identity as a means to achieve independence and solidarity; promotion of cultural identity in the framework of a global development strategy; and promotion of respect for the cultural identity of individuals and groups, particularly those who are marginalized in developed and developing countries” (Walton, 2004, p. 174). In regards to the first aim, independence and solidarity could seem contradictory; however an autonomous national identity allows nations to come together as equals and engage in a form of solidarity that is mutually beneficial to all parties.

In order for a nation to position itself in the international arena, a clear national cultural identity is necessary, therefore making it a prerequisite for effective cultural diplomacy. To have an identity is simply to have certain ideas about who one is in a given situation. These beliefs in turn help constitute interests (Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, 1999; in Villanueva, 2007, p. 57). Countries have tried to construct an identity that would represent them best in the international arena for hegemonic reasons, for self-defense and/or cooperation (Villanueva, 2011, p. 24).

As mentioned previously, values also play a key role in the formation of a national cultural identity. For example, honor is an extremely important value in Japanese culture and has characterized its national cultural identity. The definition of values that form part of a national cultural identity also allows nations to identify values they have in common, which in turn contribute to peaceful relations among countries. In general, the dissemination of knowledge about a nation’s cultural identity (including its history, its traditions, the different cultures that constitute its nation, its language(s), etc.) facilitates dialogue and mutual understanding among the nations, which once again helps for facilitating cooperation among them.

2.4. Culture and Development

Finally, it is time to talk about *development* and its relationship with culture. It is difficult to try to define the complicated term of development because this concept means different things for different, often including vague, broad definitions.

Let's begin with Schumpeter's definition, which is probably one of the most analyzed in economic theory and understands development as: "only such changes in economic life as are not forced upon it from without but arise by its own initiative, from within" (1932, p. 63). He continues by saying that development has not to do merely with economic growth but also with other factors, and that the economy actually serves to measure these changes that may not have arisen from the economic sphere. Development therefore originates from internal causes (at the country level, for example) and includes causes that do not necessarily have to do with economy, including the production of culture. By saying that development means changes that have to do with more than just economic growth and does not necessarily arise from the economic sphere, Schumpeter provides a whole panorama of possibilities of change (ideally improvements) in people's lives that can be caused by various factors.

The challenge of relating "culture" to "development" was taken up for the first time by governments at the World Conference on Cultural Policies held in Mexico City in 1982. This conference established an international working concept based on a broader anthropological definition of culture: "the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize a society or social group. It includes not only the arts and letters, but also modes of life, the fundamental rights of the human being, value systems, traditions and beliefs." The Mexico City Declaration highlighted the cultural dimension of development, stating that "Balanced development can only be ensured by making cultural factors an integral part of the strategies designed to achieve it. These strategies should therefore always be devised in the light of the historical, social and cultural context of each society". (UNESCO 1982, 42), (Arizpe, 2004, p. 174)

Streeten's study (2006), referred to in the previous sections, also explores the relationship between development and culture, arguing that there are two ways of looking at it: "one way is where economic growth is the objective and culture a means to promoting it; and the other way, where economic growth is the means to reach freedom to live the way one values it and that way of valuing life is a matter of culture". This research will focus mainly on the former; nevertheless, it is evident that a symbiotic relationship exists between development and culture. Indeed, Sen has asserted that "the freedom and opportunity for cultural activities are among the basic freedoms the enhancement of which can be seen to be constitutive of development" (2004, p. 39).

There are a number of studies that analyze the different effects of culture on development, viewing culture as a factor that contributes to development. For example, some studies (Montalvo and Reynal-Querol, 2014...) have analyzed how

some social groups have their own ways of developing according to their culture (how they produce, organize, work, etc.), while other studies (Thorsby, 2011) analyze culture as an input or as capital. The first approach relies on *determinisms*, imposing a rigid way to perceive societies and nations, and the way in which they will perform in the economy, as when Montalvo and Reynal-Querol (2014) refer to “different cultural traditions, and their effects on expectations, preferences, and decisions that generate economic consequences” (p. 486). In contrast, the second approach, which will be the approach used in the analysis presented in this thesis, understands culture as a set of expressions, activities and goods that contribute to development, either directly or indirectly. The next chapter will focus on how this is achieved, examining the ways in which the practice of cultural diplomacy can facilitate the positive impact of culture on national and global development.

3. Theoretical Framework

3.1 Cultural diplomacy in international relations

In recent years the concept of Cultural Diplomacy has become an increasingly popular field of study. Scholars and diplomacy experts have successfully positioned the concept in order to give it more importance in the field of international relations. In this regard, Fabiola Rodríguez Barba states: “culture is increasingly present in the international relations of countries as it is one of the dimensions of social life that generates greater identity, recognition and exchange” (2010, p. 10)

This increased relevance that cultural diplomacy has acquired can be observed in the distinct forums in which the concept has begun to be discussed. The Institute for Cultural Diplomacy (ICD) has been working since 1999 to carry out “research, programs and practices in the field and create a platform to promote and sustain inter-cultural dialogue at all levels”¹. Every year the ICD brings together people from all over the world, ranging from diplomats, politicians, scholars and specialists in the field of international relations, with the aim of discussing and sharing their experiences in cultural diplomacy.

Today, the study of cultural diplomacy even includes the practice of cultural diplomacy by non-State actors. David Clarke (2016) identifies four main categories of actors to consider when studying cultural diplomacy:

1. **“Policy-makers**, politicians in the governments and legislatures responsible for cultural diplomacy activities, and in charge of creating a financial context.
2. **Agents**, institutions and individuals charged with implementing cultural diplomacy policy. These may be private, government-funded organizations or independent non-profit cultural institutions.
3. **Cultural practitioners**, artists, writers, performers
4. **Individuals** engaging with cultural products, which are produced for or used in cultural diplomacy: consumers.”

However, this concept, just as its practice, is not recent and the specialists in the field have defined it previously. The way in which scholars and diplomats

¹ http://www.culturaldiplomacy.org/index.php?en_abouticd

have referred to cultural diplomacy has changed throughout time and the way to practice it has evolved as well. Ang, et al. refer to how the practice of cultural diplomacy “was originally used to refer to the processes occurring when diplomats serving national governments took recourse to cultural exchanges and flows or sought to channel them for the advancement of their perceived national interests” (2015, p. 366). For the purposes of this research, cultural diplomacy will be understood in accordance with Milton Cummings’s definition: “the exchange of ideas, information, art and other aspects of culture among nations and their peoples in order to foster mutual understanding” which “can also be more of a one-way street than a two-way exchange, as when one nation concentrates its efforts on promoting the national language, explaining its policies and point of view, or ‘telling its story’ to the rest of the world” (2003, p. 1). More specific understandings of the concept of cultural diplomacy will be presented in the following sections. It is also important to clarify that this research will primarily focus on cultural diplomacy carried out by State actors and will not examine the impact of all of the actors identified by Clarke.

The following sections of this chapter will present three theoretical approaches that have been used to understand the use and benefits of cultural diplomacy for foreign policy. In recent decades, there have been primarily two theories commonly employed in the field of International Relations to study cultural diplomacy strategies, or at least the cultural promotion efforts that a nation carries out abroad: Soft Power (Nye, 1990) and Nation Branding (Dinnie, 2007). Recently, a new theory called Cosmopolitan Constructivism proposed by the Mexican scholar César Villanueva has emerged, which has placed significant value on cultural diplomacy in its own right, prioritizing the importance of peaceful and friendly relations among countries that are mutually beneficial and contribute to the development and advancement of all nations. The following sections will review each of these theoretical approaches, which will be illustrated through the use of concrete examples of cultural diplomacy strategies employed by various different countries.

3.2. Soft Power

Probably the most known of these approaches, even among those outside of the field of international relations, is Soft Power, which is a concept developed by Joseph Nye in 1990 in his work *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power*. Nye’s term brought a new way to study International Relations, and it became necessary to make the distinction between this and other practices like Hard Power, or coercion. Through this lens, cultural promotion abroad was seen as an instrument that allowed the States to further position themselves as diplomatic countries; in that sense cultural diplomacy offered new diplomatic practices that contrasted with direct coercion. However, this section will analyze the extent to which soft power practices actually allow for true cultural diplomacy as defined by Cummings, concluding that the instrumental use of culture to achieve short-term foreign policy goals is actually a form of public diplomacy that should not be confused with a proper cultural diplomacy strategy. In other words, if culture is used merely as a means to an end, without being valued in its own right, this is not truly a cultural diplomacy strategy, although many have misunderstood cultural diplomacy in this way.

In the words of Nye, Soft Power means “the power to set the agenda and attract others in world politics... getting others to want the outcomes that you want... and the ability to shape the preferences of others” (Nye, 2004, p. 5). Among the different ways that the author stated for shaping the preferences of *the Other* (Goffman, 1959), the promotion of national culture is identified as one of these strategies, saying: “the ability to affect what others want tends to be associated with intangible power resources such as culture, ideology, and institutions” (1990, p. 166-167). It is interesting to note that in addition to culture, Nye also highlights ideology as another intangible power resource, referring also to values and citing the United States as a case study. Indeed, the United States has maintained its supremacy in recent decades through the promotion of values like liberalism, democracy and the free market as its banners, which has not always included cultural promotion as such.

A concept that is often referred to in international relations and in relation to soft power theory is that of Public Diplomacy. Several authors who have studied the theory of soft power, refer to public diplomacy as the means by which soft power is exercised. Craig Hayden (2012), for example, states that "Soft power's currency is most readily observable in the spread of public 'diplomacy' initiatives and similar policies." It is necessary for this research to examine this concept, since it is often conflated with cultural diplomacy, which is incorrect since they are different practices. For example, according to Simon Mark, public diplomacy is “a government’s communication with foreign audiences in order to positively influence them” (Mark, 2009, p. 1). This communication, as Mark would assert, finds different channels (primarily the mass media) to succeed and does not necessarily always involve a State’s culture. He also adds that the most important aspects of public diplomacy are the message and the target audience (2009).

Furthermore, public diplomacy has been considered similar to propaganda in terms of the messages that a State sends to its counterparts for a concrete purpose regarding foreign policy. However, propaganda has always been seen as a negative action in Soft Power theory. Authors like Kevin Mulcahy (2002) try to justify the use of propaganda, saying that it “has an admittedly negative connotation, but as used here simply refers to the range of information and psychological activities that seek to explain to other people what American foreign policy is about. Such informational diplomacy has an explicit, immediate political content”, (Feigenbaum, 2002, p. 30). The fact that there is an intention to send a message with explicit and immediate political content differentiates propaganda from public diplomacy, in the sense that the former seeks to achieve short-term goals. Havey Feigenbaum will highlight this difference in his research titled *Globalization and Cultural Diplomacy* (2002), which also refers to the fact that U.S. efforts have served as a kind of propaganda (in the short-term) and/or efforts within public diplomacy (in the long-term) but that “the U.S. lacks a well-designed strategy in cultural diplomacy” (2002, p. 38). The author points out the main objective of this discussion: cultural diplomacy goes beyond propaganda and public diplomacy.

In order to clarify the aforementioned concepts, it is worth reviewing a few concrete examples. Continuing with the example of the U.S., culture has not been a matter of public promotion for this nation. As Feigenbaum has pointed out, “The United States has tended to view cultural products and services in the same way

as other traded goods and services. This has been the U.S. policy in multilateral and bilateral trade negotiations” (p. 34) when defending its cultural industries. Without question, the American creative industries have an international presence and enjoy a broad range of consumers all around the world, and they do so without direct subsidy (Feigenbaum, 2002). This means that the government has engaged in a minimal effort in order to promote its creative industries and as Feigenbaum has pointed out, the U.S. does not have an explicit cultural diplomacy strategy; at times it has carried out public diplomacy strategies and other times has promoted propaganda.

Similar to the U.S. strategy has been South Korea’s experience with its ‘Korean wave’. The so-called Asian phenomenon, just like most of the products promoted by American cultural industries, is not exactly a result of cultural diplomacy policies carried out by the Korean State. The Korean wave is a collection of famous cultural pop products including TV soap operas, pop musicians, cartoons, novels and other types of pop art, mixing Korean traditional culture with an ingredient of pop consumption, similar to American pop products. Jang and Paik, in their study *Korean Wave as Tool for Korea’s New Cultural Diplomacy* (2012) have analyzed the great impact of the Korean wave for enhancing a favorable image of Korea among other countries and mainly among its neighbors, highlighting the positive impact of this phenomenon on Malaysians, for example. The reaction of the Korean government after this boom was to start developing a public diplomacy strategy, taking advantage of its success in order to achieve other foreign policy interests. Ien Ang, et al., in their study *Cultural diplomacy: beyond the national interest*, recognize this:

“Korea’s cultural diplomacy efforts have long corresponded to [an implicit cultural policy], aimed firstly at the internationalization of Korean culture, at pursuing cultural recognition equivalent to its rising economic status, and later at advancing the recognition – and marketing – of its cultural goods and services, notably those associated with the ‘Korean wave” (2015, p. 374).

The impact of the cultural industries of these countries and the efforts carried out by their governments, have been perceived by other countries as soft power strategies. In the case of the U.S. this is well known and countries like France have policies to counter the presence of American films in its theaters and France’s television. In the case of South Korea, the Korean wave has also faced some opposition to its penetration in China from the Chinese government; Jang and Paik have even suggested that “South Korea’s government should not take a forefront of its promotion” (2012, p. 201). The authors argue that the governments of some neighboring countries of South Korea (particularly China and Japan) are beginning to negatively perceive the import of Korean Wave products supported by the Korean government, now that South Korea’s public diplomacy strategy is clear.

There are many other countries that have designed policies in public diplomacy under the scope of the soft power theory that employ the use of culture. Another example is China’s strategy with its so-called *Charm Offensive* (the term itself implies that the Chinese State seeks to implement a soft power strategy) that

aimed to rapidly extend the presence of the Confucius Institutes all around the world (Ang et al., 2015, p. 373).

These examples demonstrate that public diplomacy has traditionally been the way in which soft power operates, and even sometimes through propaganda. However, it is not entirely correct to say that soft power is exercised through cultural diplomacy, although many have viewed it this way, because soft power actually just takes advantage of successful expressions of art and culture for use in diplomatic strategies, mainly for economic and political purposes, without truly promoting an official strategy for cultural promotion that values culture in its own right. Jang and Paik (2015) could therefore be using the term of cultural diplomacy incorrectly and might instead be referring to public diplomacy in their analysis of the case study of South Korea and the Korean Wave, when considering that many academics are now seeking to refine the definition of cultural diplomacy. In other words, the instrumental use of culture through a soft power strategy that situates culture solely as a means to achieve foreign policy goals may often be effective, but this does not truly constitute a cultural diplomacy strategy. In this sense, Mark affirms: "cultural diplomacy has the potential to contribute much more effectively to foreign policy goals, to diplomacy, and to governments' domestic objectives" (2009, p. 1).

3.3 Nation Branding

Another theoretical approach that helps to understand cultural diplomacy, or cultural promotion abroad, is Nation Branding. This concept is more strongly linked to Economics and Marketing, which is also relevant for the purposes of this research.

The term was developed by Keith Dinnie in his book *Nation Branding: Concepts, Issues, Practice* (2007), in which he states: "a nation brand should derive from the culture of the country, rather than merely taking the form of a superficial advertising logo or campaign" (Dinnie, 2007, p. 5). In this sense, this approach is distinct from soft power and concepts like propaganda. The author assigns culture a central role in nation branding theory and also defines it as a prerequisite for creating a well-designed strategy on "branding a nation". For Dinnie and other authors (Fan, 2006; Aronczyk, 2008; Anholt, 2002) that use this theory, a strong national cultural identity is necessary when designing an effective strategy for cultural promotion. This would seem to point to the fact that this approach is closer aligned with cultural diplomacy, as long as the goal includes promoting the cultural identity of the country abroad.

Much of the Nation Branding strategy constitutes "an effort to embrace both the past heritage and present living culture... so that outdated images do not obscure consumer perceptions from what may be vibrant modern societies" (Dinnie, 2008, p. 139). This idea also points to the relationship between Nation Branding and the promotion of tourism.

Under the scope of nation branding, cultural diplomacy work finds a stronger direct link with economic development, in comparison with the soft power approach. Cultural diplomacy becomes part of the set of a State's strategies in its image promotion. As Simon Anholt asserts, "the intelligent and judicious

application of marketing and branding techniques upon countries can be a powerful force for global wealth distribution and cultural as well as economic development” (2002, p. 59). Under this logic, Spain and Sweden represent clear examples of State strategies in nation branding: Sweden has a council dedicated to the promotion of the country, made up of different State entities, that supervises its cultural diplomacy work. Spain on the other hand, has a State program titled *Marca España* (Spanish brand), which is responsible for improving the image of the country, both within and beyond its borders. This program plans and coordinates all of the actions in which public institutions and private partners engage in order to promote Spain’s national image, including those that engage in cultural diplomacy². Dinnie recognizes these efforts saying, “Nations are making increasingly conscious efforts to hone their country branding in recognition of the need to fulfill nationally important objectives in terms of trade, investment and tourism” (2008, p. 17).

In recognition of the importance of cultural diplomacy, Sweden perceives “the making of culture a goal in itself” (Villanueva, 2007, p. 151). According to Villanueva (2007), Sweden has various channels for developing its cultural diplomacy. One of these channels is through its ministry of foreign affairs, which oversees its work to promote global development through the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), as well as through the Council for the Promotion of Sweden and its diplomatic delegations. Sweden uses international development aid policies to promote development in areas such as gender equality, human rights, democracy, the environment, health, agriculture, and cultural promotion in developing countries. “*The Swedish way*” of cultural diplomacy, as Villanueva (2007) calls it, is possible through SIDA, which sponsors various cultural activities abroad to promote Swedish culture while also promoting development in these countries. In other words, SIDA’s efforts contribute towards aligning Sweden’s national image with the promotion of development in developing countries, including financing cultural projects that have the theme of development, allowing for cultural exchange. Although Sweden’s culture may not be explicitly present in all of these activities, this work allows Sweden to collaborate and position itself with governmental and civil society institutions as well as the private sector in the countries where it has a presence.

One of the other institutions that the Swedish State has established to lead its cultural diplomacy strategy is the Swedish Institute, which provides information about the country, promotes the national culture and artists, and facilitates educational and research exchanges. Much of this work is carried out through the Institute’s website³ (the Swedish Institute owns offices in only four countries and additional work is done through its diplomatic delegations); however the strategy goes far beyond mere marketing. Although the work of this institute is less explicitly linked to development than that of SIDA, the two institutions have common goals and frequently work together.

To promote its culture abroad, Spain has six different State entities in charge of diverse activities. One of them is the Office for Cultural and Scientific

² <http://marcaespana.es/que-es-marca-espa%C3%B1a>

³ <https://eng.si.se/areas-of-operation/>

Affairs (DRCC, by its acronym in Spanish) that is part of the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation for Development (AECID, by its acronym in Spanish). The agency coordinates Spain's international cultural relations carried out by the various diplomatic representations and cultural centers abroad. The Spanish cultural centers coordinated by the DRCC carry out numerous artistic and cultural projects around the world, which employ the approach of using culture as a tool for social change and development. It is worth mentioning that the agency is attached to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation but is also an autonomous State body that maintains its own budget and legal status.

Additionally, since 1991 the well-known *Instituto Cervantes* has promoted the dissemination of the Spanish language, in addition to other cultural activities as well. The *Institutos Cervantes* differ from the other Spanish cultural institutes, which do not offer Spanish classes because they are primarily located in Spanish-speaking countries, thereby allowing these two types of institutions to have distinct and complementary roles. It is worth highlighting that, like Sweden, one of Spain's primary nation branding strategies also relates to cultural diplomacy through cooperation with many other nations, aligning its national brand with institutions that promote development and education.

One of the most common concerns about nation branding relates to the strong role of the private sector in matters like national culture promotion. Melissa Aronczyk (2008) refers to "the transfer of decision-making in the area of culture from the political to the corporate sphere" (p. 45) as one of the four paradigms of nation branding. Aronczyk will see with this a risk of "transposing authority from elected government officials to advertising and branding professionals, by replacing accountability with facilitation, and by fitting discussions of the nation into categories that privilege a particular kind of collective representation over diverse expression, nation branding affects the moral basis of national citizenship" (2008, p. 43).

While it is true that one of the risks of adopting cultural diplomacy strategies aligned with the nation branding approach is that private sector partners may prioritize their own interests, States can take measures to mitigate this risk and the others mentioned by Aronczyk. In the Swedish case, for example, the State has involved other independent and non-traditional entities in its cultural diplomacy work, such as the Council for the Promotion of Sweden, the Nobel Foundation, some Swedish companies and famous Swedish icons (Villanueva, 2007, p. 149). In contrast, in the case of Spain, instead of the government asking the private sector to get involved with the State's cultural diplomacy work, the Spanish government takes an active role in promoting the internationalization of the country's cultural industries. The State provides advice, guidance and support to those cultural industries, artists and museums in the achievement of their cultural projects abroad. For both of these countries, there has not been a significant conflict between the government and the private sector in working together to promote their national brand.

In the case of both of these countries, it is clear that the control of their nation branding strategy remains primarily in the hands of the State. The State allows for the participation of the private sector; however the State maintains the responsibility over the policies to be implemented. However, not all countries

have had successful results in their nation branding efforts. Ang et.al.(2015) point this out in regards to Australia's efforts to promote a cultural diplomacy strategy toward its neighbors and other countries. Even though the *Australian Made*⁴ website announces that "the world looks to Australia for nation branding", in the words of Ang et al., "Australia's nation-branding exercise, Brand Australia and its digital platform Australia Unlimited, are now largely inactive" (2015, p. 376). This example highlights a second risk associated with the Nation Branding approach, which is that unless it forms part of a broader cultural diplomacy strategy, it runs the risk of being a superficial, short-term endeavor with limited potential to contribute to the nation's development. Indeed, the authors mention that Australian cultural diplomacy is disperse and suffers from continual budget erosion (Ang et al., 2015), a symptom of the lack of a coherent, State-led cultural diplomacy strategy.

Aronczyk (2008) points out that for a nation-branding strategy to succeed, two conditions must prevail:

- "It is a very long-term thing and it involves a very comprehensive strategy bringing in all the players: government, tourism authorities, and private companies,
- And brand strategies are not like advertising campaigns... it has to be brought alive through actions that are 'on brand'."

Australia's unsuccessful nation branding strategy could perhaps have been due to the lack of coordination on the part of the federal government with all of the actors involved. The Australian government also should have invested in a State policy that could prevail over the long term. In contrast, considering again the two European cases referred to previously, Spain and Sweden, both coincide in having State entities that maintain their long-term goals and objectives with each new government administration. Moreover, their nation branding is not just perceived by outsiders as a set of marketing strategies, because their institutions are committed to carrying out real cultural diplomacy work, with strong supervision by the State. For the purposes of this research, this distinction is critical: although Nation Branding provides a useful approach to understanding and engaging in cultural diplomacy, it must form part of a State strategy that includes long-term goals, strong institutions and sufficient funding in order to have a lasting impact on foreign policy and development.

Although only a few examples are examined in this thesis, many countries have had successful cultural diplomacy strategies through a nation branding approach. In fact, there is a worldwide ranking called the Anholt-GfK Nation Brands Index that annually qualifies the countries of the world in terms of their 'nation brand'. This ranking evaluates multiple aspects related to a nation's brand such as: 1) the reputation of the citizens of the country, 2) level of interest in the country's tourist attractions, 3) appreciation for the nation's heritage and contemporary culture, 4) the country's ability to attract investment and immigration, 5) perception of the products and services exported by the country, and 6) public opinion regarding the nation's governance and commitment to

⁴ <http://www.australianmade.com.au/latest-news/2014/the-world-looks-to-australia-for-nation-branding/>

global issues. Nation branding programs that form part of a broader cultural diplomacy strategy, as opposed to a short-term marketing campaign, have the potential to have a positive impact on all six aspects.

3.4 Cosmopolitan Constructivism

Cosmopolitan Constructivism is a more recent theory developed by Mexican scholar César Villanueva, which seeks to allow for a deeper study of cultural diplomacy in the field of international relations.

Cosmopolitan constructivism bases its analysis on three core concepts: *multilateral diplomacy*, *constructivist politics* and *cosmopolitan theory* (Villanueva, 2007). In order to understand this theory, it is necessary to understand each of these core concepts. In regards to multilateral diplomacy, it should be understood that inclusion is key; for example, the United Nations is a forum in which multilateral diplomacy occurs and world matters must be discussed by all of the member States. In constructivist politics, it must be understood that diplomacy usually leads to jointly establishing a set of global principles based on justice (Zehfuss, 2002), or in other words, common values of goodwill that should be embraced by all nations in order to achieve improved dialogue and relations among them, based on mutual understanding. Finally, in regard to cosmopolitan theory, it is necessary to consider the idea that every individual is part of a whole cosmos or global community guided by universal principles, which celebrates its similarities while at the same time respecting diversity in line with the 'live and let live' premise (Hoffe, 2006). In summary, cosmopolitan constructivism includes aspects such as inclusion, universal values and humanism.

Villanueva (2010) affirms that while the theory itself is recent, the aim of Cosmopolitan Constructivism, peace among nations, is nothing new. As he emphasized in an interview for this research, "there was a need to theorize on the common interest of the nations to ensure peace in the world: looking at peace as global good". The author goes on to assert that in order to achieve peace, universal values must prevail among nations, such as those considered in the United Nations charter: freedom, human dignity, equal rights, respect and justice⁵.

Taking into account the conjunction of theories and approaches referred to above, Cosmopolitan Constructivism postulates that: "the community of states matters and governments collaborate in the inter-subjective construction of their identities (intercultural dialogue) via cultural diplomacy" (2010, p. 48). With this statement Villanueva positions cultural diplomacy at the core of international relations by asserting that the practice of this type of diplomacy generates cultural exchanges among the nations.

In the scholar's aim to suggest that States engage in cultural diplomacy under the approach of cosmopolitan constructivism, he states that "public and cultural diplomacies are constitutive camps that can help attain universalistic and normative foreign policy objectives, like befriending other nations, the building of sound communication channels with societies abroad, and the understanding and appreciation of cultures different from ours" (Villanueva, 2010, p. 46). As was

⁵ <http://www.un.org/en/sections/un-charter/preamble/index.html>

suggested previously when discussing the importance of values for the study and practice of cultural diplomacy, Villanueva underscores the importance of understanding and appreciating different cultures, aspects that Soft Power and Nation Branding do not explicitly highlight.

In defining cosmopolitan constructivism, Villanueva concurs with other scholars such as Cummings (2003) regarding the fact that cultural diplomacy must go beyond just messaging and image promotion; and would concur as well with authors like Alexander Wendt (1999) on the need to strengthen ties of friendship among nations to achieve peace. For Cummings and Villanueva, according to the definition provided at the beginning of this chapter, understanding among nations is highlighted as one of the aims that cultural diplomacy must reach, which in turn contributes to peace and development.

There are several countries whose strategies align with these definitions of what cultural diplomacy should achieve. The United Kingdom, for example, with its long tradition of cultural diplomacy, has a determined and evident State intervention for this purpose. Ang, et al. point out that the U.K. recognizes the importance of cultural diplomacy and the State has therefore made efforts to have “arms-length bodies like the BBC World Service and the British Council to provide ‘global public goods,’ based on a stance of independence and impartiality” (2015, p. 372). Independence and impartiality are good ways to reach understanding with other nations, based on respect. Since its early years of creation (1934), the British Council had a clear mission of promoting the U.K.’s cultural diplomacy, stating: “the Council’s aim is to create in a country overseas a basis of friendly knowledge and understanding of the people of this country... which will lead to a sympathetic appreciation of British foreign policy”⁶.

The British Council’s mission to create a basis of friendly knowledge reflects the practice of cultural diplomacy according to cosmopolitan constructivism, but Villanueva would also add that in this idea of consolidating durable friendly relationships, “addressing their societies [of the nations in question] in the construction of cosmopolitan cultural attitudes” is also important. This means that in order to consolidate friendly relations between nations, it is necessary that the adoption of certain universal values not only remain at the level of governments or leaders, but that entire societies adopt them, so that the nations as a whole establish these bonds. For example, for Latin American countries, sharing a common historical past, language and culture generates a shared value of solidarity among them, which not only occurs between governments but has also permeated among their societies.

Another country whose cultural diplomacy strategy aligns with Cosmopolitan Constructivism theory is Germany. One of the three pillars governing its foreign policy is *foreign cultural relations and educational policy* (AKBP, by its acronym in German). Among the main objectives of AKBP is cooperation and dialogue, as well as conveying values (Amt, 2011). In addition, in 2016 Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier mentioned in a report that for Germany, values play a relevant role in its foreign policy, asserting: “Other countries should not only be convinced that the values of a free, democratic

⁶ <https://www.britishcouncil.org/organisation/history>

society constitute an essential basis for the development of a country; they should also be shown that these values help in preventing conflicts, or when conflicts have already broken out, in solving them peacefully and constructively”⁷. Germany carries out its cultural diplomacy work through the following institutions: the Goethe-Institut, the German Academic Exchange Service, the Institute for Foreign Cultural Relations, the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, and the German UNESCO Commission⁸.

The construction of a peaceful community of States matters as the highest goal for diplomacy, and, under the scope of cosmopolitan constructivism, governments can make use of cultural and public diplomacies as mechanisms to collaborate in the common understanding of their own cultures, diversities and differences (Villanueva Rivas, 2010). Furthermore, contributing to this promotion of cultural diversity by “celebrating the cultural differences” is an important component of cultural diplomacy under the scope of cosmopolitan constructivism (2007, p. 55).

In matters of cultural diplomacy, Villanueva offers a minimum program of six aspects to consider in Cosmopolitan Constructivism:

1. “Making the creation of peace and friendly relations with other nations one of the most important goals of foreign policy
2. Investing in international educational exchanges targeting groups in foreign societies that have the talent but may not have the resources
3. Creating a solid infrastructure for international cooperation, in which money and human resources can flow together and address important and urgent common topics with other nations
4. Establishing institutions abroad as a platform for sharing knowledge about your own country, and engaging foreign publics in sharing your own national ideas about lifestyles, welfare, and the arts or to teach languages
5. Building the necessary channels to communicate with foreign publics, to listen to their concerns, and to create mutual ways to involvement (radio, TV)
6. Educating young people in school programs related to international solidarity, mutual understanding and sensitivity for diversity and multiculturalism”.

For the purposes of this research, it is worth analyzing these aspects and contextualizing them with some examples. The first aspect, as mentioned previously, is the core of this theory: the establishment of diplomatic relations based on peace-making and friendly relations with other nations. Considering the case study of this research, these aspects are central to Mexico's foreign policy, as referred to in its Constitution, and were defended by the State during a great part of its foreign policy work carried out in the twentieth Century. One example is the Treaty of Tlatelolco that aimed to maintain Latin America free of nuclear weapons and thus maintain peace in the subregion. As for the establishment of friendly relationships between nations, it has already been mentioned that the United

⁷ <https://www.goethe.de/en/kul/ges/20723017.html>

⁸ <http://www.culturalpolicies.net/web/germany.php?aid=342>

Kingdom has established this as a principle to be achieved through the British Council. For logistical reasons, this research will not analyze more cases but it would be interesting to review the core axes and principles that govern the foreign policy and cultural diplomacy strategies of other countries.

The second aspect can be illustrated through the investment in scholarships to foreign students, which is particularly common among developed countries with the best ranked universities in an effort to attract intellectual talent and establish alliances with current and future leaders from other countries. In creating a solid infrastructure for international cooperation, the aforementioned cases of Spain and Sweden in that sense are two successful examples.

Although each of these six components included in a Cosmopolitan Constructivist approach to cultural diplomacy indirectly contributes to a country's development, there is less emphasis on the economic development of individual nations in this approach, in comparison with Soft Power and Nation Branding. Instead, Cosmopolitan Constructivism prioritizes the importance of peaceful and friendly relations among countries based on respect, understanding, and cultural appreciation and exchange. This form of cultural diplomacy is mutually beneficial and contributes to the economic, social, and cultural advancement of all nations.

4. Methodology and Methods

In order to analyze in what ways a State strategy for cultural diplomacy can have an impact on a nation's development and what elements constitute an effective strategy, this research employed a qualitative research strategy, using Mexico as a case study. Drawing on the review of the literature and theory presented in previous sections of this thesis, the analysis is based on the opinions of academics, in addition to the practical experience of diplomats in the field in cultural diplomacy.

The theory helped to interpret the answers provided by the research participants, in order to determine which of the three theories reviewed in this thesis (soft power, nation branding and cosmopolitan constructivism) is most relevant for Mexico's case in order to identify the elements that must be included in order to strengthen the nation's cultural diplomacy strategy. The revision of economic concepts was carried out to justify the value that culture, understood as identity, has for a country in its international relations. For these reasons, this qualitative research was carried out through a deductive approach, in which it was anticipated that the findings of the interviews would largely coincide with the theory.

As this research seeks to understand the impact of cultural diplomacy on development (understood in its broadest sense, not only focused on economic development), a qualitative approach was deemed more appropriate, in order to gain a more nuanced understanding of this issue based on the perspectives and experiences of diplomats as well as the research carried out by academics. If this research had sought to verify the impact of cultural diplomacy on Mexico's economic development based on specific data or statistics, it would have been

necessary to carry out a quantitative investigation; however, this option was discarded due to in part to a lack of available data and in response to the preliminary conversations carried out with experts in the field, who pointed to the importance of a understanding the impact of cultural diplomacy more broadly.

While the group of research participants is too small to be considered a representative sample in quantitative terms, the selection of participants for this qualitative study aimed to reflect a diversity of relevant perspectives including academics and practitioners working in different types of institutions in several regions of the world. This research can be considered representative due to the following reasons:

- A balance was sought among the profiles of interviewees (9 in total), including three people from group (cultural attachés, academics, and directors of Mexican Cultural Institutes). Due to time limits for carrying out the interviews and analyzing their content, it was not possible to select more participants, but an odd number of people were chosen in each group, in order to be able to identify possible differences of opinion within each group.
- The aim was to include experts on cultural diplomacy, including academics who have published research papers on the subject. The directors of the Mexican Cultural Institutes were also included, taking into account the level of responsibility they have and their broad understanding of the role of these institutes in Mexico's cultural diplomacy strategy. Finally, in the case of cultural attachés, the aim was to include those who are assigned in cities with a close relationship to Mexico in addition to ensuring geographic diversity.
- In the case of the directors of the institutes, the goal was to include cities or countries of strategic interest for Mexico. For example, the director of the Mexican Cultural Institute in San Antonio, Texas was invited to participate because this institute has the longest history and is located in a city with a large Mexican and Mexican-American population, whereas the institutes in New York and Madrid are located in cities that are considered to be important cultural hubs by the global community. It is also worth pointing out that the United States and Spain are important trading partners for Mexico, and both countries also have long histories of cultural exchange with Mexico.
- Variety was also sought in regards to the selection of the cultural attachés. Both the United Kingdom and The Netherlands are also important European trading partners for Mexico and are countries in which knowledge of Mexican culture appears to be growing, whereas Thailand is an Asian country with very little presence of Mexican culture, once again allowing for a diversity of perspectives. As mentioned in the cases of New York and Madrid, it was also important to include the United Kingdom due to London's status as one of the most important cultural hubs in the world.

- In terms of the academic scholars, Cesar Villanueva was invited to participate because he is currently the most recognized Mexican scholar in the field of cultural diplomacy, and the other two scholars (Eduardo Cruz and Carlos Ortega) have practical experience working as diplomats in many different Latin American countries in addition to their strong academic analysis of Mexico's cultural diplomacy.

Regarding the validity of the interviews, separate questionnaires were developed for each group of research participants (directors of the Mexican Cultural Institutes, cultural attachés and scholars). The questions included in these questionnaires sought to specifically gauge a better understanding of the following issues: the importance of cultural diplomacy, its relationship with development, the elements that constitute an effective cultural diplomacy strategy, as well as the effectiveness of the strategies carried out by the Mexican State in this regard. The formulation of these questions was informed by preliminary conversations regarding these issues with Carlos Enríquez, Deputy Director of the Office of Cultural Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and with Alberto Fierro, current Director of the Mexican Cultural Institute in Washington, who has had a long career in Mexican cultural diplomacy. The consistency and compatibility of the questions included in each questionnaire, and the relevance of the questionnaires in relation to the research question was validated by the supervisor assigned to the review of this thesis. The interview guides are attached to this thesis and the full transcriptions of the interviews are available upon request.

All three of the interview guides included the following two questions: *Why is it important for a country to work on cultural diplomacy?* and, *why is it important for Mexico?* The first question aimed to gauge their understanding or commitment to the concept of cultural diplomacy more broadly, whereas the second question sought information specifically related to how they understand the Mexican case study. All three questionnaires also asked the participants their opinions regarding the impact of cultural diplomacy on Mexico, and what aspects of Mexico's cultural diplomacy strategy they thought should be changed or improved. In the case of the questionnaires used in the interviews with diplomats, the aim was to identify successful practices in cultural diplomacy, to understand the different reasons why this work is strategic in different country settings, and to identify the potential deficiencies in the current cultural diplomacy strategies carried out by the Mexican government. Finally, regarding the interviews with academics, questions such as *Which aspects should be considered or changed regarding the Mexican Cultural Institutes and regarding Mexico's cultural diplomacy?* were chosen in order to promote an honest critique of current strategies, taking advantage of the fact that the academics have the freedom to speak their minds, whereas the diplomats may have to be more discrete due to their positions in the foreign service.

While a few of the interviews were carried out during site visits, most of them were conducted via telephone. All of the interviews were recorded, and the information provided by the interviewees was analyzed and compared through

the use of coding to identify key concepts that proved to be useful for the analysis, such as: image/reputation, development, Mexico’s cultural richness, dialogue and understanding between countries, among others. The purpose of these interviews was to understand the opinion of the different participants regarding the possible impact of cultural diplomacy on Mexico’s development and to what extent this is being achieved in practice. These interviews made it clear that whereas the research participants did not overwhelmingly assert that cultural diplomacy has a direct impact on Mexico’s economic development, they affirmed the importance of other benefits of cultural diplomacy such as a positive image of Mexico and interest in Mexican culture abroad, strong alliances and friendly relations with other nations, and educational exchanges among countries, which in turn are beneficial to Mexico’s economic, social, and cultural development over the long term. Perhaps most importantly, the research participants drew on their firsthand experience to highlight what elements constitute an effective cultural diplomacy strategy for Mexico and how Mexico’s current practice of cultural diplomacy could be improved.

The coding for the analysis was made as follows:

Image/reputation	Development
Cultural cooperation	Tourism/investments
Dialogue	influence
Understanding	

The interviews were transcribed in order to analyze and code the information collected. In addition to the words and concepts highlighted from the coding, aspects like ‘lack of resources’, ‘use of media’, ‘AMEXCID’, and ‘principles’ were also considered and adapted over time.

Additionally, the following table provides a list of the research participants and their respective codes:

Name	Profession/position	Code
Cesar Villanueva	Scholar	SCV
Eduardo Cruz	Scholar	SEC
Carlos Ortega	Scholar	SCO
Pablo Raphael	Director of a Institute Madrid	DPR
Roberto Campos	Director of a Institute NY	DRC
Monica Del Arenal	Director of a Institute Sn Antonio	DMD
Sandra Lopez	Cultural Attaché The Hague	ASL
Cynthia Moreno	Cultural Attaché Bangkok	ACM
Stephanie Black	Cultural Attaché London	ASB

5. Mexico’s cultural diplomacy

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the work that the Mexican State has carried out in cultural diplomacy, in two regards. First, this chapter will provide a brief overview of Mexico's recent history in regards to its cultural diplomacy strategies as part of its foreign policy. In addition, this chapter will present analysis of these efforts, highlighting the achievements and outstanding issues, according to the perspectives and experiences of diplomats working in cultural diplomacy as well as scholars who are experts on the topic. Some initial conclusions will be presented regarding to what extent cultural diplomacy represents an opportunity for the country's development.

5.1. Overview of Mexico's cultural diplomacy

In the twentieth century, Mexico's foreign policy was well recognized among other nations as one of the most prestigious. Mexico has provided the rest of the world with two main contributions to the field of international relations: the *Estrada Doctrine* regarding non-intervention, peaceful resolution of conflicts and the self-determination of all nations (Berridge, 1994); and the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which promotes the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons originally in Latin America and the Caribbean, and that also set the tone for the international treaty of 2005⁹.

The first contribution is also part of Mexico's foreign policy principles, set forth in the tenth paragraph of article 89 of the Mexican Constitution, which establishes most of the president's responsibilities. The same paragraph also establishes that the president must carry out international cooperation for the country's development (Carbonell, 2008). This cooperation for development will come to be understood as including cultural cooperation, among other various actions.

Although efforts were made in terms of cultural policy for the country at the beginning of the 20th century, one of the first real attempts in regards to cultural diplomacy (or at least in the promotion of the country's culture abroad) was achieved in the 1960's with chancellor Jaime Torres Bodet, who created the Office of Cultural Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This office officially set forth a real interest on the part of the State in positioning cultural diplomacy as fundamental for Mexico's foreign affairs (Ortega, 2013, in Villanueva, 2015). It is worth mentioning, that Torres Bodet worked as director of UNESCO from 1948 to 1952, and participated actively in the formation of this organism of United Nations.

In the following decade, the Office for Cultural Affairs, together with an active Mexican presidency, contributed to the consolidation of several bilateral agreements with other countries on cultural cooperation, such as the signing of second generation agreements between the European Union and Mexico (Rosales, 2009, p. 353), as well as increased participation in various international cultural forums (Rodríguez Barba, 2010).

During the 1980's and 1990's, Mexican government administrations went on to promote the creation of cultural institutes abroad, mainly in the U.S. where

⁹ <http://www.un.org/en/conf/npt/2005/npttreaty.html>

the Mexican community was larger, and some efforts were carried out to promote Mexico's culture in order to attract more investments to the country. But it was not until the late 1990's that another significant milestone was established in terms of cultural diplomacy: the Mexican Institute for International Cooperation (IMEXCI, by its acronym in Spanish) was founded. This organism was created in order to coordinate the joint commissions for educational and cultural cooperation, like those signed through UNESCO, and the establishment of bilateral programs in this field (Rodríguez Barba, 2010). However, although the core mission of the IMEXCI, which was to promote cooperation for development, was primarily understood as the generation of more economic deals for the country, the institute put efforts into cultural cooperation as well. This also happened as a result of the background and interest of the chancellor at the time, Jorge Alberto Lozoya, a diplomat who believed in the opportunities that cultural diplomacy brings for development (Villanueva, 2010). During the same decade, several exhibitions were presented abroad, like the magna exhibition *Mexico: Splendors of Thirty Centuries*, that was presented during 1990 and 1991 in different museums in the U.S.¹⁰; as part of the government's efforts to totally insert Mexico into the era of globalization by carrying out a more ambitious cultural diplomacy strategy. In fact, the Mexican Cultural Institute in New York was created following the "Thirty Centuries" exhibition.

At the turn of the century, Mexico experienced a critical democratic transition, electing an opposition party to the presidency after over 70 years of one-party rule. The new administration proposed ambitious policies and aimed to show a more modern image of Mexico. The administration also sought to give a core role to cultural diplomacy in Mexico's foreign policy through a plan that was titled *Mexico's Cultural Image Abroad Program*. Among the different strategies planned by former chancellor Jorge Castañeda, the Office for Cultural Affairs was moved under the supervision of the chancellor's office, which was a signal of the importance that cultural diplomacy represented for that administration. The chancellor also aimed to consolidate the network of the existing Mexican cultural institutes abroad in addition to opening more institutes in other cities, which will be discussed in the next section (Rodríguez Barba, 2010).

Later in 2011, after being almost forgotten and with a weak operational capacity, mainly due to budget limitations and the absence of legal autonomy, the IMEXCI became the Mexican Agency for International Development Cooperation (AMEXCID, by its acronym in Spanish). AMEXCID remains in existence and currently has a bigger budget than its predecessor.

With the exception of efforts carried out in 2000-2003 and the current work of the Mexican Cultural Institutes, most of this cultural promotion has been done under the strategy of cooperation via bilateral collaboration with individual countries, although some regional cooperation has carried out (mainly with Central America and Latin America) and in some instances under the different agreements signed through forums like UNESCO

¹⁰ http://articles.latimes.com/1991-09-29/entertainment/ca-4830_1_mexican-art-history

5.2. The Mexican Cultural Institutes

Starting with the oldest venue in these days, this Mexican cultural institute that was created many years ago and that still operates today, is the one in San Antonio, Texas, U.S.A. Founded in 1958 as a gallery that functioned with the support of the Mexican consulate, a few years later the center became an institute promoting cultural exchange between Mexico and the United States. In 2001 the center changed its name to the current one, *Mexican Cultural Institute*, since that time the institute has focused more on mainly promote the Mexican cultural and artists, and has also received a more mixed public that also includes American citizens (Interview with Monica Del Arenal, 2017). In 1972 an agreement for cultural and educational collaboration was signed between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mexico and the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM, by its acronym in Spanish) to carry out activities in San Antonio. The university holds an office in this city that promotes the dissemination of Spanish language classes, among other activities. What seems interesting is the fact there has not been an agreement yet between the two entities to jointly promote the dissemination of Spanish in a more ambitious strategy beyond San Antonio.

The modern version of the Mexican Cultural Institutes began between the late 1980's and early 1990's with the increase of immigrants from Mexico going to the U.S. In addition to providing more migratory services for its citizens in the U.S., Mexico's consulates and the embassy increased the number of cultural events carried out. In this regard, the 1990's saw the opening of the first modern cultural centers of Mexico, which carried out different cultural and artistic events mainly among its co-nationals. The result of this phenomenon were the venues in Washington, D.C., Chicago, Dallas, Houston and New York, in addition to a venue in San Jose, Costa Rica, and one more in Guatemala City, both founded by Carlos Ortega, interview with him on that also opened during this time.

As it was referred before, in 2000 chancellor Castañeda planned "to unify all the cultural institutes and centers that were promoting Mexico's culture under a single denomination and legal framework, to become the greatest showcase of the modern and democratic Mexico"¹¹. Part of this plan was the creation of a central office and a staff to manage the central office and oversee the plan to create the *Instituto de México*. There were also some initial efforts carried out in order to give legal autonomy to the project, which would be linked to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mexico, but with an independent budget and legal registration. The project also included a network of members that were going to be in charge of identifying corporate sponsors and funders among Mexican and foreign companies; these members included representatives of national universities, various state ministries, the president's office, the National Bank for Foreign Trade and the artistic and intellectual community in Mexico.

Finally, at the moment of its creation the *Instituto de México* also held the following goals:

- Promote the richness of the cultures present throughout Mexico,
- Explore the diversity of its people,

¹¹ Working paper for the Instituto de México. 2002. Cultural Affairs Unit's Archives. Ministry of Foreign Affairs Mexico

- Present Mexico as a country with a culture of quality, to promote exports,
- Emphasize the importance of Mexican universities, and
- Promote the dissemination of Spanish

Unfortunately the project did not succeed; chancellor Jorge Castañeda had to leave the position in 2003 for political reasons. The next chancellor, Luis Ernesto Derbez, an economist, had other priorities for Mexico's foreign policy and therefore the unity of the cultural centers was not achieved. Some of the recently created cultural centers that had formed part of this ambitious project were forced to close, cancelling any chance of becoming a reality.

Since the frustration of Castañeda's plan, the cultural centers that survived continued working independently and still promote Mexico's culture and contemporary artists in the cities and countries where they are located. These institutes keep working together and in direct coordination with the Office for Education and Cultural Cooperation (DGCEC), which, as mentioned previously, forms part of the AMEXCID. The DGCEC not only provides financial resources to the different institutes but also provides them with a catalogue of cultural projects to present at their venues, thereby attempting to establish a program of activities in coordination with the institutes and different Mexican cultural attaches. In addition to this catalogue, the institutes run their own projects based on agreements established with different national museums and galleries, with independent artists and with the local partners. Despite this coordination regarding the activities that are promoted and the funds received, there is still a lack of a strategic plan that concentrates the mission, goals, and activities of all the institutes as a collective initiative.

There are several differences between the institutes. Some of them have their own building while others do not and instead are located inside of an embassy or consulate; some others have a non-profit status so that they can receive donations; some only promote Mexican culture and artists, while others promote any cultural expression that can be shared between Mexico and the host nation; not all of them have their own website; and finally, not all of them share the same name but apparently this is something that the current administration wants to homogenize.

5.1. What the scholars and diplomats think

As mentioned in the description of the methodology, this section is based on interviews carried out with academic experts in the field of cultural diplomacy, two of which, Eduardo Cruz and Carlos Ortega, previously served as cultural attachés of Mexico in countries in Latin America. In addition, this section includes analysis of interviews with current cultural attachés at various Mexican embassies, as well as staff from three Mexican Cultural Institutes.

The guided interviews with the scholars generated interesting insights in terms of their perception of the performance of the last three Mexican federal administrations, in regards to their foreign policy strategy and the work carried

out in cultural diplomacy. All three scholars also provided interesting information regarding Mexico's past practices in foreign policy, highlighting specific accomplishments and actions that took place in much of the 20th century. The three academic experts acknowledged the efforts of Foreign Minister Jorge Castañeda (2000-2003) to provide unity to Mexico's cultural institutes abroad and seek to consolidate a network of State entities for cultural diplomacy, but they also lamented the misfortune that the project was abandoned after the resignation of the minister. They also made interesting recommendations regarding the future of Mexico's foreign policy and in terms of cultural diplomacy, referring at times to the successful experiences of other countries.

During the interviews carried out with diplomats, they expressed agreement regarding the need to allocate more resources for cultural diplomacy and adopt new schemes to ensure sufficient funding. All of the diplomats pointed out the achievements of their delegations and cultural institutes, also pointing out the particularities presented by each country or city in which they are stationed: for example, it is incredibly different to promote Mexico's culture in Thailand where little is known about the nation's culture, as compared to carrying out this work in San Antonio, Texas in the United States, where about 50% of the population of the city is of Mexican origin (interview with Monica Del Arenal, 2017).

Both academics and diplomats acknowledged some of the successful tools and strategies that Mexico has employed for cultural diplomacy, such as: the Mexican Cultural Institutes, the different bilateral agreements for cultural cooperation, the existence of the Office for Cultural Affairs, among others. Likewise, and perhaps the most relevant point of convergence for the purposes of this research, all of those interviewed expressed certainty that Mexico possesses a great deal of cultural wealth. The director of the Mexican Cultural Institute in Madrid asserted: "Mexico is a cultural power", whereas César Villanueva described Mexico as a "medium power with the highest recognition of cultural heritage declared by UNESCO. Several interviewees referred to the cultural heritage that Mexico inherited from pre-Hispanic civilizations, which span millennia. Most of those interviewed identified Mexico's cultural wealth as the primary reason why cultural diplomacy is so important for the country. Therefore, Mexico's cultural capital has a high cultural value which represents a great capital stock possessed by the country (Throsby, 2011).

5.1.1. Cultural Diplomacy for creating dialogue and understanding

One of the main points on which both academics and diplomats agreed was the importance of Mexico's cultural diplomacy work, in order to foment dialogue with other nations, establish better understanding among countries. According to most of the diplomats, including directors of cultural institutes as well as cultural attachés, the creation of dialogue and better understanding with other countries are among the most important aims for Mexico to follow through its cultural diplomacy work.

As mentioned previously not all countries have policies or strategies specifically designed to reach these goals; rather, there are many examples of cultural promotion strategies that focus only on promoting a positive image (nation branding) or achieving other foreign policy goals (soft power). In the opinion of most of the diplomats interviewed for this research, cultural diplomacy in general, and the cultural diplomacy strategies employed by Mexico, helps to "find similarities and affinities" (ASL) with other nations, and to "generate dialogue based on tolerance and mutual recognition" (DMA). These opinions coincide with the cultural diplomacy aims of the Cosmopolitan Constructivism approach, which also includes an "appreciation of cultures different from ours" (Villanueva, 2010, p. 46). These opinions are interesting because they suggest that these advances or achievements that Mexican cultural diplomacy seeks, are the result of values such as peace, justice and respect, and which seem to be assimilated into the actions of Mexico's diplomatic representatives.

These assimilated values could constitute part of the identity of Mexican diplomats. To confirm this, it would perhaps be necessary to carry out personality tests or psychological exams; however, it is also not unusual that these representatives have adopted these traditional values in Mexican foreign policy as their own, after seeing them expressed in official documents. In summary, this relates to what it means to have a clear national or cultural identity: "having an identity (or a national identity) includes having beliefs and these at the same time constitute interests" (Wendt, 1999). One could argue that these interests are the result of beliefs, and therefore the interests of Mexican foreign policy are the product of belief in values such as peace, tolerance, openness to other cultures, which Mexican citizens have assimilated as part of their identity. Just as the cultural attaché of Mexico in Thailand referred to these values when discussing the bad impression that some neighboring countries have about Mexico due to the current situation of violence experienced over the last decade, as a result of the war against organized crime: "It is so important to continue to tell neighboring countries that Mexico is not a country of violence, that Mexico is a country of peace, that Mexicans enjoy their country, and that its government structure, economic structure, and cultural structure are so solid".

What the cultural attaché mentions could serve as evidence to justify this. Today in the international media there is only talk of high levels of violence in Mexico, the result of a war against organized crime¹². As such, the interpretation of an outsider would be contrary to that of the diplomat: Mexico would not seem to be a country of peace. However, if the diplomat has the "firm belief" that Mexico is in fact a country of peace, it could be due to Mexico's actions in the sphere of international relations, in which the country has always advocated for the peaceful resolution of conflicts. Villanueva tells us that in order to really establish lasting relationships of friendship among nations, States must "address their societies in the construction of cosmopolitan cultural attitudes". The Mexican State appears to have already achieved this among its society through education that demonstrates the country's history in its international relations, as well as the professional training of career public servants for the Mexican Foreign Service, through the

¹² <http://edition.cnn.com/2017/05/09/americas/mexico-second-deadliest-conflict-2016/index.html>

Matías Romero Institute¹³. If a diplomatic representative, outside of any official discourse, personally believes that Mexico is a peaceful country and laments the negative image of the country as a result of the widespread violence currently experienced, this tells us that the Mexican State has already succeeded in generating in its society a cosmopolitan cultural attitude in which peace, or the peaceful resolution of international conflicts, is an acquired value.

Related to this, all three scholars expressed discontent with the fact that the three most recent federal administrations have abandoned the aforementioned principles of Mexican foreign policy which were adopted by most of the administrations of the twentieth century, and which had characterized the Mexican State's actions in the sphere of international relations. They will argue that the abandonment of these principles has disfigured the Mexico's foreign policy. This indicates that while it could be said that Mexican society has adopted certain cosmopolitan cultural attitudes, represented through values such as the pursuit of peace, at the same time a number of Mexican administrations have abandoned these cosmopolitan cultural attitudes in the practice of their foreign policy.

The task for the next Mexican administrations should therefore be to resume the practice of the foreign policy principles established in the Constitution, which represent how the State should act in its foreign policy and how these principles should be reflected in its cultural diplomacy work. Specifically, Mexico's cultural diplomacy should generate dialogue and a better understanding with other nations, which contributes to consolidating friendly relations with them over the long term.

Most of those who were interviewed affirmed the importance of cultural diplomacy for generating this dialogue, promoting better understanding among nations and defending these basic principles of peace, that are part of the principles that rule Mexico's foreign policy. In addition to being in agreement regarding Mexico's cultural richness, they also agreed that Mexico's culture is the best tool for furthering its foreign policy goals. Culture is viewed as a tool for opposing political and economic dependence and oppression.

5.1.2 Cultural Diplomacy for a better image promotion

In addition to increased dialogue and understanding, the second most common answer provided by the research participants when asked why cultural diplomacy is important was the need to generate a positive image of the country. This issue was particularly highlighted among the scholars.

In this sense, many interviewees referred to the importance of disseminating information about the country, defining Mexico's national identity and making it known among other nations. The Mexican cultural attaché in Thailand also spoke of the great opportunity to generate knowledge about Mexico in a "virgin" country in which little is currently known about Mexican culture. In contrast, in countries in which knowledge of Mexican culture is already widespread, the Mexican cultural attaché in the Netherlands notes that "there is a

¹³ <http://www.gob.mx/imr/acciones-y-programas/servicio-exterior-mexicano>

great admiration for our culture ... [and] for our ancient civilizations". The director of the Mexican Cultural Institute in San Antonio, Mónica Del Arenal, additionally highlighted the importance of conveying knowledge through cultural promotion to break with stereotypes, even in a neighboring country like the U.S. In that sense, it is interesting to identify the differences in public opinion regarding Mexico as held by the societies of the countries in which Mexican diplomats are stationed. While there tends to be a positive opinion regarding Mexican culture, this is combined with negative impressions rooted in stereotypes and the violent image of the country that has spread due to the recent war on organized crime, as mentioned in the previous section and corroborated by the diplomats during interviews.

Interestingly, both the cultural attaché of Mexico in the Netherlands and the academic Carlos Ortega asserted that Mexico must be present in high-level discussions on international relations. This presence is particularly relevant to the construction of a national image that portrays Mexico as a dignified country that carries out its actions related to international relations with conviction. The academics interviewed for this research firmly agreed that the abandonment of its previous foreign policy principles has diminished the country's effectiveness in the area of international relations. It is interesting to note the perception held by the scholars and the cultural attaché in the Netherlands regarding the fact that Mexico's diminished activism in the arena of international politics has had a negative impact on the country's image. This assumes that the country must also play an active, engaged role in relevant international forums and discussions. For example, if genocide were currently being committed in Syria, Mexico would have to take a stand to condemn these atrocities before the United Nations, as previous Mexican administrations have done. In this sense, Carlos Ortega asserted that these debates also form part of the "construction of culture". Taking into account the information provided in previous sections regarding Cosmopolitan Constructivism and cultural identity, it is worth adding that adherence to certain values aids in the construction of a national identity and national image, ideally one that gains the respect of other nations.

RC also made an interesting point regarding the promotion of the country's image through cultural diplomacy. He affirmed how important it is to position a positive image of the country, referring to cultural diplomacy through the lens of nation branding and recognizing "all of the positive effects that this has regarding tourism and in terms of attracting investment". As mentioned during the review of nation branding theory, it is very common to focus specifically on the benefits generated by promoting a good image for the country. However, it is worth noting that there is a symbiotic relationship between a good image (or reputation) and building trust abroad. As demonstrated in the same section, the Anholt-GfK Nation Brands Index bases its ranking of the best nation brands on several different factors such as governance, exports, and investment.

5.1.3 Diplomacy for international cooperation

In the area of cultural cooperation, the diplomats interviewed for this research recognized the benefits of cooperation and specifically highlighted achievements with the countries where Mexican diplomats are currently assigned.

While the academics also recognized the importance of investing in cultural diplomacy via international cooperation, they also mentioned that the efforts carried out in this regard by almost every Mexican administration have been insufficient.

Most of the diplomats who were interviewed referred to the importance of academic cooperation, citing various agreements that exist between Mexican universities and foreign universities, such as the University of Groningen (The Netherlands) and Chulalongkorn University (Thailand). For example, the cultural attaché in the Netherlands referred to an annual scholarship program available to Dutch students interested in studying a postgraduate degree at a Mexican university. One of the aspects that Villanueva recommends that States take into account when designing a cultural diplomacy strategy that aligns with Cosmopolitan Constructivism is investment in "international educational exchanges targeting groups in foreign societies that have the talent but not the resources". The examples provided by Mexican diplomats reflect the fact that this aspect has been covered by current efforts by the Mexican State, which can also be corroborated in official communications put out by the AMEXCID¹⁴.

Another diplomat who also referred to the topic of bilateral cooperation between Mexico and another country, in academic but also cultural terms, is the director of the Institute of Mexico in Madrid. PR mentioned "the enormous academic and cultural exchanges that exist with Spanish institutions, from universities to the Royal Spanish Academy [the official royal institution responsible for overseeing the Spanish language], among 22 other joint projects involving investment from both Spain and Mexico", which are supervised by The Committee for Educational and Cultural Cooperation. PR explained that in regards to Mexico's investment, a large percentage of these projects are funded by resources that come from AMEXCID. In fact, 100% of the resources that the institute receives for its operation are funded by the agency.

Despite the achievements that PR highlighted in regards to cultural cooperation due primarily to the role of AMEXCID, the three academics that were interviewed (Villanueva and Cruz in particular) criticized the way in which the agency was set up, which, in their opinion, has limited its effectiveness. They recognize that carrying out cultural diplomacy work through cultural cooperation is a good strategy, particularly when this forms part of a broader policy of international cooperation for development, as it is mentioned in broad terms in the Constitution and as AMEXCID was originally planned. However, they also added that in practice these efforts have been limited and a solid State strategy that could enjoy continuity between federal administrations has not been achieved. They criticize the fact that the agency is not autonomous but instead is completely dependent on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mexico, which also limits its budget. Cruz regrets that this agency was "born weak", lacking the independence and strength enjoyed by similar agencies in other countries. When citing examples of agencies from other countries, both academics referred to the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID, by its initials in Spanish) as an agency that indeed reflects a State strategy with legal status

¹⁴ <http://www.gob.mx/amexcid/acciones-y-programas/becas-para-extranjeros-29785>

independent of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation (which itself also already includes the term 'Cooperation') which also has an ample budget..

Included in Villanueva's recommendations regarding the design of a cultural diplomacy strategy in accordance with Cosmopolitan Constructivism is the creation of a "solid infrastructure for international cooperation, in which money and human resources can flow together and address important and urgent common topics with other nations". In that sense, in the case of Mexico, AMEXCID would not currently represent the core of a solid infrastructure for international cooperation, since it does not currently have a sufficient budget nor continuity in its work (according to Villanueva and Cruz, who have studied in detail the operation of the agency). Recalling the examples of Spain and Sweden, which have cultural diplomacy strategies more closely aligned with a nation branding scheme, both of their agencies are governed by State policies. In contrast, in the words of Eduardo Cruz, when referring to the action of AMEXCID, "has been left to the whim of each government administration", causing the priorities of the agency to change every six years.

Finally, another issue that stood out during the interviews is the importance of generating more collaboration between artists. The Mexican cultural attaché in the United Kingdom, Stephanie Black, stated that it would be "ideal to have more collaboration between Mexican and British artists that could result in joint artist residencies...[because] there are few initiatives that promote genuine collaboration and dialogue between artists". This perceived lack of collaboration contrasts with the achievements mentioned by (DPR) in Madrid. However, SB is not referring to institutional collaboration but rather to direct collaborations with individual artists and among artists from different countries, which is something Villanueva does not contemplate in his recommendations for a cultural diplomacy strategy aligned with cosmopolitan constructivism. In matters of cooperation, two different kinds of agreements exist: on the one hand, cooperation/collaboration agreements exist between autonomous, private entities and individuals, and on the other hand, official cooperation agreements exist between the agencies of the State. Likewise, in matters of cultural cooperation, both cultural and artistic projects are considered, as well as those that are academic in nature.

5.1.2. What's currently happening with the Mexican Cultural Institutes and how can they be improved?

As for the opinions expressed regarding the current operation of the Mexican Cultural Institutes, almost all of the interviewees, including diplomats and scholars, recognized the importance of these institutes and the need to "maintain and strengthen them" (ACM). The cultural attachés who were interviewed, with the exception of the attaché assigned in Bangkok, expressed the importance of having a cultural space or institute in the countries in which they are located (The Netherlands and the UK), since they represent the opportunity to offer more cultural content to the public and the convenience of having a separate space dedicated to cultural diplomacy. Two of the three directors who were interviewed even expressed their longing to have their own facilities. These were the directors of the institutes in Madrid and in New York, which are housed inside

of the Mexican embassy and consulate, respectively. While recognizing that the lack of a physical space has pushed the entities to engage in collaborations with other cultural centers that do have their own facilities, the directors consider that having a building for the institutes would not detract from their ability to continue forming alliances. At the same time, they referred to the strong presence the institutes have among the population living in the cities where they are located, particularly those based in Madrid and New York. The director of the venue in Madrid would go on to state that “the Institute of Mexico is a physical space but it is also an entity whose cultural diplomacy reach is not limited to the city in which the institute is based; rather the institute represents the cultural arm of the Embassy that has representation throughout the country” (DPR).

Furthermore in this regard, it is worth highlighting that these cultural attachés agreed on the need for a multipurpose space; the cultural attaché for the Netherlands mentioned the possibility of having a space, as is the case with the Mexican Cultural Institutes that serve as cultural centers, to discuss other issues outside the merely cultural in order to generate dialogue. This once again demonstrates the strong role of cultural diplomacy for promoting ‘intercultural dialogues’ (Villanueva, 2007), and having a physical space provides the enabling conditions for this work. As mentioned previously, the importance of generating dialogue and greater understanding among nations was emphasized repeatedly. In fact, during the interview with the director of the institute in San Antonio, Texas, Monica Del Arenal, she mentioned the word ‘dialogue’ eight times. The director asserted that the importance of generating dialogue is even more critical in the current political climate, which is rife with tension between Mexico and the United States. Along the same lines, Eduardo Cruz affirmed that if there were a greater presence of these institutes in the United States, along with a better cultural diplomacy strategy, the tensions between the Mexican government and that of Donald Trump would not have reached the current levels and perhaps the U.S. government would have a more positive perception of Mexico.

These opinions reflect what Villanueva suggests regarding “establishing institutions abroad as a platform for sharing knowledge about your own country, and engaging foreign publics in sharing your own national ideas about lifestyles, welfare, and the arts or to teach languages”. Those interviewed for this research pointed to the importance of disseminating knowledge about a country through the promotion of its culture, as the Cosmopolitan Constructivism approach proposes. This has been thoroughly understood by the United Kingdom, which through the British Council seeks to “create in a country overseas a basis of friendly knowledge”.

Among some of the cons that the cultural attachés identified in regards to the Mexican Cultural Institutes and their potential expansion was the sense that this initiative “requires a lot of resources, not only financial but human resources as well, because the space needs to constantly carry out events to justify its existence” (ASL). However, contrary to this argument, Carlos Ortega acknowledges the work of the Swedish Institute, examined here through Villanueva's analysis of how their work is carried out without the need for major investments. Ortega mentions that the success of the Swedish Institutes lies in an ongoing State policy and a professionalization of those responsible for the strategy. The scholar asserts that all that is needed is “simply an emblem that is

present in all of the activities that are carried out in conjunction with the local cultural institutions of the host country, through different collaborations and alliances, in addition to an internal network of communication and information exchange among all of the cultural attachés that is cultivated and sustained by the Mexican State". Just as Villanueva (2007) would suggest, "building the necessary channels to communicate with foreign publics". In this regard, the representatives of the institutes in New York and Madrid highlighted the important work they have carried out to attract the public through social media and the considerable coverage they obtain in traditional media as well, with the director in Madrid referring to "approximately 1,500 news stories per year" (DPR).

Moreover, the directors of the institutes in Madrid and New York emphasized the importance of obtaining funding from sources other than the Mexican State. Pablo Raphael, the director of the institute in Madrid, affirmed that the Mexican State must allow the Mexican private sector to participate and invest in cultural projects promoted in Spain, pointing out the business ties and strategic relationship between the two countries. At the same time, Roberto Campos of the New York institute, which is registered in the United States as a non-profit organization, praised the model that this institute has taken advantage of the strong philanthropic culture that exists in the United States. Campos explained that the New York institute organizes an annual fundraising event that, together with other donations received throughout the year, allows the institute to finance its activities, since the resources provided by the Mexican government are very limited.

Finally, in addition to the promotion of cultural and artistic projects, a number of the research participants recommended incorporating a strategy to promote and teach the Spanish language. The fact that this is not currently done was identified as a missed opportunity, resulting from the lack of a clear cultural diplomacy strategy. This recommendation was not limited to the Mexican Cultural Institutes. The cultural attaché in the U.K. also mentioned the importance of having "a language instruction agenda that allows not only adults to participate, but could also be broadly incorporated into educational programs for children" (ASB). Villanueva highlights this as one of the activities that should be promoted by these cultural centers abroad.

5.1.3. Should Mexico's cultural diplomacy strategy be designed by the State or by each government administration?

Although the question regarding whether a nation's cultural diplomacy should be a State strategy or rather designed by each federal government administration was only explicitly posed to the academics interviewed for this research, the diplomats also pointed to the need for a long-term, State strategy to guide this work. The three academics also emphatically asserted that a State strategy for cultural diplomacy is needed and that this should be explicitly established, as it is currently only mentioned tacitly in paragraph tenth of the Constitution (SCV).

When interviewed, Villanueva stated that it is necessary "to have State guidelines for [cultural diplomacy], that it should be obligatory to do so, that this should go beyond a national policy strategy or security strategy, and that each

administration could provide guidelines regarding the particular focus it wants to give to the State strategy". The academic referred to what is already stipulated in ... Mexican Foreign Policy Law, but also added that there is currently a lack of coordination to make this effective in practice. In addition, Eduardo Cruz pointed out that the guidelines established in the constitution and the historical practice in foreign policy are sufficient to delineate a cultural diplomacy strategy, but that due to globalization and the 'imperative' of the last three administrations, Mexican foreign policy has been 'turned around' and cultural diplomacy has been similarly affected along with it. Finally, Carlos Ortega affirmed that in order to ensure "complete cultural diplomacy, at least two factors are needed: the establishment of a State policy and the professionalization of those who implement it". He added that a clear cultural diplomacy strategy for Mexico currently does not exist and that rather the work has been carried out in a disjointed, case-by-case manner.

The diplomats who participated in this research also expressed the need for the development of a more clearly defined strategy for cultural diplomacy. For example, the director of the Mexican Cultural Institute and the cultural attaché of the Mexican embassy in the United Kingdom said that better planning is needed for the successful execution of cultural projects. The cultural attaché in the U.K. finds it problematic that Mexico's public administration work is divided into six-year periods (the presidential term limit, which does not include the possibility of reelection), which is combined with the added challenge of the annual authorization of public budgets. This limits her ability to engage with certain cultural events that could serve as a platform for promoting Mexican culture, or to establish alliances with institutions in the U.K. that begin to organize cultural events years in advance. At the same time, the director of the Mexican Cultural Institute in Madrid, mentioned that "there is a need for strategic planning systems that help build a clear path regarding where the country wants to go with cultural promotion, and allows you to understand what that role is" (DPR).

Another aspect on which the cultural attachés from the United Kingdom and Thailand, as well as the director of the Mexican Cultural Institute in New York, agreed, is the question of diplomatic representations in 'world capitals', cities that represent a window to the world and are highly cosmopolitan due to the significant international diversity of the cities' inhabitants. The director of the institute in New York added: "[New York] is one of the most important cities in the world in terms of art and culture and therefore the institute's activities have a global impact, beyond New York and beyond the United States". In the opinion of these diplomats, the Mexican government should allocate more resources to allow for greater cultural diplomacy efforts in these strategic cities. On this point Villanueva added that other countries that are at a similar stage in development to Mexico, such as Brazil and India "invest economic resources in the field of cultural diplomacy exceeding hundreds of millions of dollars, [whereas] Mexico contributes 15 or 20 times less than what these countries invest." The interviewees lamented that budget limitations are particularly notable when it comes to cultural promotion, when compared to diplomacy more broadly, despite the fact that, as Wolton affirmed, "every cultural investment can become a political investment" (2004).

Finally, Ortega lamented the lack of State policies and strategies, which is evident in the changes that occur during transitions from one federal government administration to another, and even during an administration's term. The academic stated: "Mexico's cultural diplomacy is still very haphazard in nature; there is no comprehensive strategy: the approaches and guidelines vary with each presidential term, sometimes even several times during a presidential term if the Foreign Minister changes." (CO)

5.1.4. Does cultural diplomacy have a positive impact on Mexico's development?

In response to this question, all of those who were interviewed affirmed that cultural diplomacy does indeed have a positive impact on the development of a country, Mexico included. Their answers differed in terms of how exactly they perceive the impact but in general there are two ways of understanding development: one perspective is strictly linked to economic development that can be measured in numbers, whereas the other perspective focuses on social development. As for the latter, the academic Carlos Ortega delves deep into this subject and provides an interesting analysis.

At the same time, in regards to the impact of cultural diplomacy on development in purely economic terms, Carlos Ortega affirms that the spreading of Mexico's tangible and intangible heritage can contribute to generating more tourism to Mexico and that this would bring a greater influx of foreign investment to the country, create new jobs, etc. As mentioned earlier, RC of the New York Institute also recognized the impact of promoting the country's image on its economic development. In this regard, he described the story of how the institute was created at the same time that the *Mexico: Splendors of Thirty Centuries* exhibition was being shown at the New York Metropolitan Museum, and as a preamble to the signing of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). In RC's words: "this exhibition served as a soft power tool, aimed at opening the way for negotiations". Once the exhibition had concluded, it was decided that an institute should be established so that this soft power strategy could be carried out in an ongoing manner. It is evident from this event that what was then carried out was a strategy in public rather than cultural diplomacy. For the Mexican government at that time, the message was clear, generate a positive image about the country prior to such negotiations, and the audience: businessmen and the American political class. It is clear that the opening of the institute was initially more of a public diplomacy strategy than a cultural one, in the sense that cultural promotion was viewed as a means to reach other goals. At that time, the Mexican government wanted to convey a positive image of Mexico prior to negotiating the trade deal, and specifically aimed to reach the American business class and political class. (CITAR).

The cultural attaché in the U.K. also mentioned the importance of cultural diplomacy in terms of economic development, pointing specifically to the promotion of tourism. She asserted that the promotion of Mexico's image helped to "increase the number of British visitors to Mexico by at least 11% each year, which currently amounts to about 500,000 British visitors annually". She added that only the U.S. and Canada generate more tourism to Mexico, with the U.K. in

third place. This phenomenon is more closely related to a public diplomacy strategy that the Mexican State continues to carry out with the U.K. and other countries, which includes a nation branding component. This can be further confirmed through ASB's assertion that the most popular site for British tourism is Cancun, located in the region referred to as the Riviera Maya, which is mainly a beach tourism area. Mexico's touristic campaign was more intense during the dual year in 2015¹⁵.

Along those same lines, regarding the impact of cultural diplomacy on economic development, Eduardo Cruz has suggested an innovative idea to ensure economic development for Mexico through cultural diplomacy. He proposed that through the professionalization of the cultural attachés, these diplomats could then "work side by side with other officials or representations in their assigned country to jointly generate investment ". The scholar added that it is necessary for cultural attachés to be able to do business and engage with local entrepreneurs in the country in which they are assigned, in addition to engaging with Mexicans with interests in the host country and "to view culture also a way of strengthening the agenda", the business agenda of every company with interests in the hosting country.

One potential criticism of Cruz's proposal, which relates to something that he himself has sought to promote within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mexico, is that cultural diplomacy efforts may be ceased in order to instead focus on public diplomacy, in which the main objective may be an economic one. If this idea were developed as a strategy for cultural cooperation, the State could still maintain control over these strategies, but otherwise, the risk is that corporate lobbying could be carried out under the auspices of agreements between countries.

On the other hand, in the opinion of Cynthia Moreno, the impact of cultural promotion in a foreign country can be measured over the long term. She pointed out that in addition to the economic benefits, other types of development are generated. In her words: "there are many similarities between Mexico and Thailand in terms of development needs; development understood as economic development but also as sustainable development and social development; [both countries] face the same challenges". In that sense, she added that exchanges of ideas and information between countries are critical in order to learn from the other's experiences. Regarding the desire to seek similarities among nations posed by Cosmopolitan Constructivism, in this case the common search for development applies.

Despite what he mentioned about the creation of the cultural institute in New York and the possible impact of the promotion of the country's image for development, Roberto Campos affirms at the same time that it is difficult to quantitatively measure the possible impact generated by diplomacy cultural. He states: "this might almost be a hollow idea, trying to measure everything in quantitative terms, when in the cultural arena I think the coordinates [for measuring impact] might be different." In the opinion of various scholars mentioned previously, such as Schumpeter (1932) and Streeten (2006), Campos is right to view the issue this way, as the relationship between culture and

¹⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hz02wYgSW0o>

development must be understood in a broader sense. As also expressed in UNESCO's Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions: "cultural activities, goods and services have both an economic and a cultural nature, because they convey identities, values and meanings, and must therefore not be treated as solely having commercial value".

Carlos Ortega affirmed that "a society that develops culturally also develops socially". This perception of development also reflects Shumpeter's claim that development is not necessarily produced by economic factors, although it is generally measured in economic terms.

If cultural diversity is viewed as valuable, cultural diplomacy represents a good tool for promoting better understanding among nations, and that understanding "can provide a reserve of knowledge and experience about good and useful ways of doing things" (Streeten, 2006), thus facilitating development. This is similar to saying: although it is true that many encounters between different cultures have led to great wars and massacres, such as the discovery of the Americas for example, it is also true that these cultural encounters have facilitated the acquisition of knowledge and learning for each culture. All of humanity has evolved through these encounters and has reached a greater level of development as a result, with each society improving its social development.

6. Findings

6.1. Key findings regarding the impact of cultural diplomacy on development, particularly in the case of Mexico

There are two ways in which cultural diplomacy has a positive impact on development (in general and in the case of Mexico in particular). On the one hand, in purely economic terms, resulting from the promotion of a positive image of Mexico that encourages tourism, investment in the country, and business opportunities for Mexican entrepreneurs. On the other hand, development is promoted in a broader sense (including social and cultural development), which is achieved by consolidating long-term friendly relations with other nations, through the generation of dialogue and improved understanding between them. These relationships will generate cultural exchanges that in turn enrich all parties.

6.2 Key findings regarding what elements must be included in the cultural diplomacy strategy in order for this to be successful

Regarding the elements that should be considered for a successful cultural diplomacy strategy, the opinions of the research participants highlight five of the six components proposed by Villanueva's Cosmopolitan Constructivism theory:

1. Making the creation of peace and friendly relations with other nations one of the most important goals of foreign policy
2. Investing in international educational exchanges targeting groups in foreign societies that have the talent but may not have the resources

3. Creating a solid infrastructure for international cooperation, in which money and human resources can flow together and address important and urgent common topics with other nations
4. Establishing institutions abroad as a platform for sharing knowledge about your own country, and engaging foreign publics in sharing your own national ideas about lifestyles, welfare, and the arts or to teach languages
5. Building the necessary channels to communicate with foreign publics, to listen to their concerns, and to create mutual ways to involvement (radio, TV)

The sixth element suggested by Villanueva (Educating young people in school programs related to international solidarity, mutual understanding and sensitivity for diversity and multiculturalism) is not considered in the findings, because this aspect was not mentioned at any moment during the interviews. In addition to these elements, this research adds two new elements, in accordance with the interviews:

First, a State strategy must be established over the long term, and continued by the different government administrations to ensure its implementation. A State strategy will reflect the nation's cultural diplomacy goals for its international relations and therefore, and it will be easier to measure the development benefits.

Secondly, the strategy must include enough funding if it is expected to achieve success through the entire network of diplomatic relations that the country in question holds. This does not necessarily need to be completely financed through public funds; rather, just like any other international cooperation endeavor, other partners may be invited to engage and invest, including the private sector.

7. Limitations

At the beginning of this research, international cultural cooperation was not part of the main core of the study; instead the focus was mainly on unilateral tools of cultural diplomacy such as the cultural institutes abroad. The problem with not having incorporated a deeper review of cultural cooperation into the initial research plan is that the research presented here was limited in that regard. As such, there were important aspects to consider for Mexico's cultural diplomacy that were left out of the analysis, in order to have a full picture.

Another limitation for this research study is the lack of studies that provide quantitative data regarding the impact that cultural diplomacy has on economic development. Although in cultural matters not everything can be measured in numbers, data regarding the benefits of investing in arts and culture are needed in order to justify increased investment in this area.

Finally, it would be interesting to compare the findings presented here with the current perceptions that key groups of foreigners have about Mexico, in order gauge the impact of the country's current reputation due to the war against organized crime, and to see to what extent cultural diplomacy work helps to counteract this negative image. Furthermore, as pointed out by Carlos Ortega pointed out during the interview carried out for this thesis, if there is excellent

work being done in cultural diplomacy, it does not matter that the country is facing dark moments (for example, he cited that people still have a good impression of German culture despite the occurrence of Nazism in the country's past). (interview with Ortega, 2017) Although due to time constraints this study specifically focused on the perceptions of Mexican diplomats and academic experts, a complementary study with foreign stakeholders such as political and business leaders would serve to confirm or dispute the perceptions of the research participants included in this study.

8. Conclusion

The analysis of the interviews conducted for this research yielded interesting conclusions, as mentioned previously in the section on findings. The primary conclusion is that cultural diplomacy does in fact bring positive benefits to a country. At the initial stages, this includes the construction of a positive image of the country, and in the long term translates into other benefits such as a positive impact on its development. Those countries with great cultural wealth, such as Mexico, have by means of cultural diplomacy a great opportunity to achieve their international relations objectives.

At the same time, any cultural diplomacy strategy must be undertaken responsibly and with a long-term vision. Cultural diplomacy should not simply be seen as a mere tool for the foreign policy goals of a given government, but rather as the public face of the entire country, the whole nation, to the world. What is carried out in terms of cultural diplomacy will affect the reputation of the nation and can endure in the eyes of other countries over the long term.

For countries such as Mexico, in addition to taking advantage of the great cultural capital that it has in order to position itself in the international arena, it is important to maintain a firm commitment to the defense of certain values, since as Carlos Ortega highlights, this is also an expression of culture and can generate respect abroad. (2017) In addition to the defense of certain values, it is also important to identify common points of interest with countries with which there could be ostensibly few cultural similarities. In that sense, the adoption of cultural diplomacy strategies under a Cosmopolitan Constructivism approach appear ideal for what Mexico has historically defended and practiced in its foreign policy.

When determining the best strategies for effective cultural diplomacy, the Mexican State will have to be creative in adopting actions and policies that allow cultural diplomacy to be enacted in a practical, effective, and flexible manner. The resources that are invested must be assigned in an efficient way and always with the possibility of involving new stakeholders, such as businesses and private philanthropists. Within the same elements proposed by Villanueva, there are several strategies that Mexico already carries out, and perhaps it is only a question of improving the implementation. Taking into account the components proposed by Villanueva to carry out a successful cultural diplomacy strategy in line with Cosmopolitan Constructivism theory—which is the approach deemed most relevant for this case study—the research participants highlighted that the Mexican State is already implementing a number of these elements. The task at

hand is to broaden the strategy to more fully reflect the Cosmopolitan Constructivism approach and ensure implementation over the long term.

Finally, any effort in cultural diplomacy must be guided by a clear State policy, to which any subsequent government administrations would pledge to continue through State agencies and institutions. Because of the violence that Mexico is currently experiencing, an effective and ongoing State policy for cultural diplomacy and in favor of maintaining a positive image of the country would help to maintain the good reputation of the country internationally. Although a strong cultural diplomacy strategy is required over the long term to contribute to Mexico's social, cultural, and economic development, in this dark period in the country's history it is urgently needed.

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Appendix

Questions for scholars in the field of cultural diplomacy

- 1. *Why is it important for a country to have a well-designed strategy on cultural diplomacy?***
- 2. *Why is it important for Mexico?***
- 3. *According to you, how should a strategy on cultural diplomacy be designed: as a State strategy or designed by each federal government administration?***
- 4. *What should be the mission or goals of this strategy?***
- 5. *Do you think cultural diplomacy helps to improve a country's development?***
 - 5.a. *How so and to what extent?***
- 6. *Do you think the Mexican Cultural Institutes are, or could be, a TOOL to realize the strategy on cultural diplomacy? And why?***
- 7. *In your opinion, which aspects should be considered or changed regarding Mexico's cultural diplomacy?***
- 8. *And, which aspects should be considered or changed regarding the Mexican Cultural Institutes?***

Questions for the cultural attachés at the Embassies

- 1. Why is it important for a country to work on cultural diplomacy?*
- 2. Why is it important for Mexico?*
- 3. Why would it be relevant for Mexico to carry out cultural promotion of the country?*
- 4. In your opinion, how popular is Mexican culture among the inhabitants of this country?*
- 5. How is the participation of the people here in the cultural activities carried out by the Embassy?*
- 6. Do you think a Mexican Cultural Institute would be convenient in this country, in order to strengthen the cultural diplomacy work? And why?*
- 7. What would be the benefits for Mexico obtained from the work on cultural diplomacy done in this Embassy?*
- 8. In your opinion, what else would you like the cultural attaché of this Embassy to do in this country (in terms of cultural promotion)?*

Questions for the Directors of the Mexican Cultural Institutes

- 1. *Do you think cultural diplomacy is important? And why?***
- 2. *Why is it important for Mexico?***
- 3. *Why is it strategic to host a Mexican Cultural Institute in this city?***
- 4. *Is the Mexican Cultural Institute widely known among the inhabitants of the city?***
- 5. *Do you think people recognize the difference between the institute and the consulate?***
- 6. *How is the participation of the people in this city in regards to the cultural activities carried out by the Embassy?***
- 7. *In your opinion, what would be the impact for Mexico of the cultural diplomacy work done by this institute?***
- 8. *In your opinion, what else would you like this institute to offer to the public?***