

САНКТ-ПЕТЕРБУРГСКИЙ ГОСУДАРСТВЕННЫЙ УНИВЕРСИТЕТ
Магистерская программа «Международные отношения (на английском языке)»
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Цифровая дипломатия Мексики и России: транснациональный сравнительный анализ

Digital Diplomacy of Mexico and Russia: Cross-National Comparative Analysis

Диссертация
на соискание степени магистра
по направлению 41.04.05 «Международные отношения»

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Санкт-Петербург
2018

Аннотация

В данной диссертации рассматривается использование цифровой дипломатии в рамках стратегий внешней политики, используемых правительствами Мексики и России. Цель работы - показать роль социальных сетей, особенно использование Twitter, при применении стратегий цифровой дипломатии для продвижения успешного национального бренда этих стран. Анализ исследования с использованием официальных аккаунтов России и Мексики сыграет большую роль в выявлении восприятия, ценностей и общего образа продвигаемого обеими странами. Актуальность этого исследования основывается на понимании того, как Мексика и Россия используют Twitter, и его коррелированное воздействие в реальной политической жизни. Наконец, результаты по окончании исследования смогут внести свой вклад в постоянное развитие дипломатии в области международных отношений как науки.

Ключевые слова: Цифровая дипломатия, брендинг нации, Мексика, Россия, внешняя политика, Twitter.

Abstract

This dissertation examines the use of Digital Diplomacy as part of the Foreign Policy strategies used by the governments of Mexico and Russia. This paper aims to reveal the role that social media and especially Twitter when applying to Digital Diplomacy strategies to promote a successful Nation Branding image of Mexico and Russia. Case-study analysis using official accounts of Russia and Mexico will play a great role to reveal perceptions, values, and images promoted from both countries. The urgency of this work relies on understanding how Mexico and Russia use Twitter and the correlated impact in real policy life. Finally, future horizons prospects will be added to contribute to the constant evolution that demands the study of Diplomacy in the field of International Relations.

Keywords: Digital Diplomacy, Foreign Policy, Nation Branding, Mexico, Russia, Twitter.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Abbreviations

INTRODUCTION	1
<i>RESEARCH QUESTIONS</i>	2
<i>EXPECTED RESEARCH CONTRIBUTIONS AND LIMITATIONS</i>	3
METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK	5
LITERATURE	7

CHAPTER 1

DIPLOMACY AND THE NEED OF HAVING DIGITAL DIPLOMACY	10
1.1 TRADITIONAL DIPLOMACY	10
1.2 SOFT POWER AND PUBLIC DIPLOMACY	12
1.3 DIGITAL DIPLOMACY	13

CHAPTER 2

THE RELEVANCE OF NATION BRANDING	19
2.1 COUNTRIES, IMAGE, AND PERCEPTION	19
2.2 DEFINING NATION BRANDING	20
2.3 SOCIAL MEDIA IMPLICATIONS	24
2.4 RISKS AND CHALLENGES OF NATION BRANDING	25

CHAPTER 3

RUSSIA'S FOREIGN POLICY: GLOBAL LEADERSHIP AND TWITTER INFLUENCE;ERROR! MARCADOR NO DEFINIDO.	
3.1 RUSSIA'S NATION BRANDING AND TWITTER	27
3.2 RUSSIA'S FOREIGN POLICY CONCEPT 2012-2018	35
3.3 RUSSIA'S DIGITAL DIPLOMACY AND GEOPOLITICS INFLUENCE IN TWITTER	40
<i>Russia and Western countries</i>	41
<i>Russia, Middle East, and African countries</i>	50
<i>Russia and CIS countries</i>	55
<i>Russia and Asian countries</i>	57

CHAPTER 4

MEXICO'S FOREIGN POLICY: NEIGHBORHOOD CHALLENGES BY USING TWITTER	60
4.1 MEXICO'S NATION BRANDING, POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS AND TWITTER INFLUENCE	60
4.2 MEXICO'S FOREIGN POLICY GOALS 2012-2018	66
4.3 MEXICO'S DIGITAL DIPLOMACY AND GEOPOLITICS IN TWITTER	71
<i>Mexico, the United States, and Canada</i>	72
<i>Mexico, Latin America, and the Caribe</i>	77
<i>Mexico and Asia</i>	79
<i>Mexico and Europe</i>	81
<i>Mexico, Africa, and the Middle East</i>	83
CONCLUSIONS	85

LIST OF PRIMARY SOURCES AND LITERATURE

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

List of Abbreviations

APEC	Asian Pacific Economic Countries
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BRICS	Brazil Russia India China South Africa free trade association
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CPTPP	Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership
EU	European Union
FPC	Foreign Policy Concept
GDI	Global Digital Index
ICT	Information Communication Technologies
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MIKTA	Mexico, Indonesia, South Korea, Turkey and Australia Partnership
MOD	Ministry of Defense
NAFTA	North America Free Trade Agreement
NDP	National Development Program
NDS	National Diplomatic System
OCDE	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
TPP	Trans-Pacific Partnership
UN	United Nations
USA	United States of America

Introduction

In diplomacy, there is a current balance between old and new techniques which are constantly evolving and adapting to the international environment. Modern state and non-state actors are involved in networking of public-private environments which demands faster and personal interactions on a digital environment. Hence, there is no widely accepted term that covers all the concept of Digital Diplomacy it mainly refers to those diplomatic activities using the Internet and new Information Communication Technologies (ICT). As tools to reinforce traditional Diplomacy with the use of new platforms such as social media, so that; it would be possible to create successful strategies of state and non-state actors to achieve specific Foreign Policy Goals by reinforcing its image and reputation.

Digital Diplomacy throughout the Soft Power conception of Joseph Nye, is defined as the ability to set the agenda in world politics through persuasion, influencing other countries behavior through the force of one's beliefs, values, and ideas. At the same time, Digital Diplomacy considers how interactions in geopolitics need to consider Hard Power issues such as military and economic coercion.¹ Also, Digital Diplomacy is a current highly involved theme in the field of International Relations, its study brings an opportunity to reinforce the ability "to get others to want the outcomes that you want" and especially to "achieve goals through attraction rather than coercion."² The art of applying Digital Diplomacy depends on its ability to change the traditional Foreign Policy environment, enhancing the velocity of interactions through non-hierarchical means of policy and utilizing the Internet and other digital technologies to manage diplomacy in a more resource-efficient way.³

Nation Branding is a correlated concept used in this paper as part of the Soft Power influence that countries are using to promote their Foreign Policy and as a consequence its image abroad. Having in account that each country perception interacts into a multi-dimensional blend of elements, Nation Branding strategies goes beyond than merely treating a nation as a brand or product. One of the main

¹ Nye J. Soft Power: The Means to success to world politics. // Public Affairs. 2004. P. 191

² Nye J. op. cit.

³ Hocking B. Melissen J. Diplomacy in the Digital Age. // Clingendael Report. 2015. P. 26

objectives in promoting a good structure for Nation Branding relies on the creation of collaborative inter-institutional strategies that need to be coordinated successfully to compete in a globalized world, in which respect and trust help to create an image of a country as its most valuable and powerful asset.

To manage a country's reputation, it is also necessary to explore and understand gaps between national and international reality, identity, culture, historical heritage, perception, as well as other sociological and ethical imperatives that in sum create a complex understanding of brand identity. Nation Branding is a very sensitive political issue that may try in not to exclude certain groups or perspectives that creates the identity of a country. With the development of social media, Mexico and Russia are countries that are using Soft Power as part of their diplomatic strategies in Twitter to respond to current challenges of the International Relations dynamic in Foreign Policy issues. Digital Diplomacy and Nation Branding are part of those tools that traditional Diplomacy needs to encourage to create competitive advantages in the construction of the perception and image of a country abroad.

Research questions

The chapters in this paper reflect how Digital Diplomacy and Nation Branding are mutually interconnected to provide effective Foreign Policy strategies in a digital world. Looking ahead, the purpose of this work is to bridge a relation between Nation Branding and Digital Diplomacy. While exploring both relevant cases of Mexico and Russia, this work has no pretensions in bringing generalizations. The effort of this study consists in characterized with facts arguments that may respond the following question:

Why is important to have both a Digital Diplomacy and Nation Branding strategies to implement an efficient Foreign Policy strategy for each country? What is the role of social media in real life situations of the Foreign Policy of Russia and Mexico? Which direct implications brings the use of social media and especially Twitter for Russia and Mexico as part of their Foreign Policy Goals?

While exploring specific considerations for Mexico and Russia active role on their current Foreign Policy goals, developing cooperation and building blocks of confidence will be part of the narrative analyzed with the use of social media messages of specific official accounts. Disclosing current political issues, the framework of this paper supported by criteria in which social media and especially

Twitter, are treated as relevant tools for encouraging determined political actors to promote specific messages to impact massive audiences by well supported institutional state strategies.

This research will also encourage the use of metrics, specialized software and previous academic investigations to consider social media as a relevant tool for Foreign Policy. Digital Diplomacy and Nation Branding relation consist in one of the most distinguishable topics argued on this paper, considering the need for governments to have specialized and professional diplomatic personnel that combine both traditional Diplomacy and new technologies. As already explained, this paper regards an intrinsic correlation of time and space strategies, on a digital era that is evolving and continuously adapting. To have a clear explanation, the relevance of traditional Diplomacy will not disappear, it will only adapt to new circumstances.

Expected research contributions and limitations

One of the key elements of this research consists in considering the study of Digital Diplomacy and Nation Branding as a social process in the sphere of International Relations. Collecting information from different texts and narratives will help to approach concepts that will provide definitions, thematic and academic vocabulary with the main purpose of achieving objective academic analysis. However, the issues and problematics analyzed in this paper differ in a world that is having constant changes of sources, data, and interpretations. As part of a social study, this paper contributes by having results that could vary in different context and time analysis.

One of the main contributions of this research relies on bringing special attention to the use of Soft Power through Twitter. Having in account that this social media is considered to be one of the most horizontal channels where real people could interact in real time with different actors in a digital world. This paper also emphasizes the idea to empower the voice of the audience as a real challenge for those professionals in the diplomatic areas that participate in decisions of Foreign Policymaking. By conferring to Digital Diplomacy and Nation Branding a broader spectrum in Diplomacy, this paper explores further possibilities in which Soft Power conceived the idea to achieve Foreign Policy goals with both regional and global implications.

When a country manages to have an efficient National Digital Office specialized in creating inter-institutional, governmental efforts with the active participation of civil society, inputs and outputs may reflect a broader spectrum of national interest issues according to an image that a country wants to project abroad. Although Soft Power reflects the increasing participation of different actors in the new digital era, the diplomatic sphere is still bringing a powerful connotation issue that needs to be controlled by the state. Despite there are advantages and disadvantages in the use of Soft Power and Hard Power, this paper tries to contribute by bringing a pragmatic perspective when comparing both Mexico and Russia Foreign Policy Implications.

A limitation when doing this paper was that all the information analyzed from the Russian official accounts of Twitter were in the English language version, and in some specific circumstances Russian official accounts in the Russian language were considered regarding Retweets or mentions. On the other hand, the official accounts from Mexico analyzed were in the Spanish language in most of their tweets. However, it was also common to find English tweets during this analysis. Knowing that part of the success in promoting the image of a country abroad also relies on the accessibility of information, was inferred that influence depends among that audience that interacts using a common language that Mexican and Russian Twitter official accounts use.

As a result, it was necessary to analyze most of the data of Russia from previous studies based on academic reports, official documents, and analytical dossiers. While analyzing Twitter official accounts and its Foreign Policy influence, it was highly relevant to use information from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Embassies of both countries. Another limitation of this study was in having a timeline based on analyzing the current presidential term of Enrique Peña Nieto, considering that he will finish his mandate until the first day of December 2018. In the case of Vladimir Putin's this research was based during his third presidential mandate, knowing that his fourth term started on the 7th of May of the current year.

An additional contribution of this paper relies on doing qualitative and quantitative research instead of just describing possible stereotypes or creating generalizations. The relevance of doing this paper will try to reveal how Social Media through Twitter exports the image of a country according to its main Foreign Policy strategies following a good design campaign in which the audience plays a

relevant role when interacting. As a result, Mexico and Russia are both exporters of a Nation Branding image through their Digital Diplomacy strategies using Twitter.

Methodological framework

Changes in media and communication research had evolved during the last decades for the implementation of Foreign Policy. This paper argues that the study of Digital Diplomacy and Nation Branding demands complex use of software and traditional methods analysis with the essential support of multiple methods of analysis to have a broader perspective. As a result, the methodological framework for this research will use both qualitative and quantitative analysis research methods considering that the degree of the participants in virtual communities may respond to different considerations. By having merely virtual observation is not enough to explain the degree of sensitivity in which Digital Diplomacy and Nation Branding affect the study of International Relations directly.

A multi-method approach was used for this paper to obtain a richer analysis that compares information gathered from social networks, specialized metrics, surveys, software and other social sciences based on data analysis, to provide greater certainty and reliability in the results. This perspective does not necessarily imply that virtual observation should be participatory, nor is an observation in real contexts. When analyzing two countries, there is no common methodology and unique approach to explaining their respective Foreign Policy strategies. For that reason, one central approach of this study relies on using a multi-method approach trying to avoid generalizations.

Digital Diplomacy and Nation Branding definitions use complex relationships between many factors with diverse academic and socio-political factors. According to Mingers,⁴ using multiple-methods helps to obtain full answers and gaining knowledge from different aspects of a phenomenon under study with a better overall explanation. By comparing qualitative and quantitative results, the research could enrich the understanding and expand the scope of study that could lead to future research studies.

As Yin argues, the central tendency following a multi-method approach consists in trying to illuminate a decision or set of decisions responding to the questions why and how without manipulating the

⁴ Mingers, J Combining is research methods: Towards a pluralist methodology // Information Systems Research. 2001. P. 240-259.

behavior of those involved in the study.⁵ The variables analyzed in this paper were according to the main strategies of each country official concept of Foreign Policy, has a special tendency in those related to Soft Power, Digital Diplomacy and Nation Branding. As already explained, to limit the timeline of a multi-method analysis this paper was following specific political and socio-economic circumstances during the presidential terms of 2012-2018 that contributes for both Russia and Mexico Foreign Affairs issues during their presidential administrations.

Qualitative document analysis was used in all the chapters of this paper to justify the argument that specific concepts and data need the support of primary and secondary literature. For that reason, in the next section will be explained all those different types of literature used. Qualitative social media analysis was implemented in chapter 3 and 4 when analyzing official accounts of high ranked profiles of Foreign Policy actors of the government of Mexico and the Russian Federation; bringing a particular emphasis to the Twitter platform to exemplify how Mexico and Russia use its Foreign Policy concept to disseminate its messages.

Descriptive case study analysis was also used in chapter three and four considering that Mexico and Russia are regional emergent economic countries that currently follow an agenda of domestic and foreign interests. One of the biggest challenges in using descriptive case study analysis relied on how data was used to exemplify Foreign Policy situations, so that was possible to provide insights that may help to explain the relevance of Nation Branding and Digital Diplomacy for both countries.

A quantitative comparative analysis used in chapter 3 and 4, considered the use of specialized software and manual work that helped to dissect specific algorithms of Twitter to quantify followers, mentions, retweets, hashtags and other mechanisms that helped to understand the impact of this social media platform. Different metrics from credit rating agencies were also indispensable to analyze and explore the impact of the image of Mexico and Russia according to their Digital Diplomacy and Nation Branding strategies. Governance, open data, perception, prosperity, development, corruption,

⁵ Baxter P. Jack S. *Qualitative Case Study Methodology: Study Design and Implementation for Novice Researches.* // The Qualitative Report. 2008. Vol. 13

transparency, civil society participation, criminality, among many other issues were part of those variables that helped to compare and describe advantages and disadvantages of Mexico and Russia.

Following a systemic level of analysis, this paper explained in chapter 3, 4 and the conclusions; how Mexico and Russia defined their Foreign Policy concepts according to their own national, regional and global interests. According to Robert Jervis, a system involves a set of units and elements that are interconnected, so that changes in some elements or their relations produce changes on parts of the system.⁶ As part of that system, both Mexico and Russia are countries that need to consider internal elements of their own social, economic, political and geographical circumstances to create a comprehensive Foreign Policy definition that will affect its national interests. States in the international system are view as “organized actions which are constantly maintained by exchanges and interactions in the environment.”⁷

Literature

By analyzing primary documents from governmental websites helped to understand the current relevance of Digital Diplomacy and Nation Branding strategies of Mexico and Russia. Most of the information obtained from the Russian Government was in the official English version of Kremlin, the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other sites of media that are sponsored by the state. Regarding to the information of Mexico, most of the data obtained in this research was by accessing to the main portal of the Government of Mexico in Spanish version, which at the same time links to other official websites and links. In order to understand the Foreign Policy of both countries, accessing to official documents was a key aspect while doing this research.

Using secondary literature was also implemented in this research by comparing analytical reports, previous academic research studies, social media reports, news reports, videos, surveys, and different academic literature both in English and Spanish Language. Joseph Nye and its famous academic contribution of Soft Power, motivates the following research as part of current International Relations fields of study. Considering the relevance to explain the evolution of Diplomacy, Manfredi served to

⁶ Baxter, op. cit.

⁷ Astrada M. Martin F. *Russia and Latin America. From Nation -State to Society State.* // Palgrave McClelland. 2013. p. 15.

explained the relevance of understanding the path towards a Modern Diplomacy. With other academic contributions such as Cooper and Takhur, this research pursues the objective of having a solid background to understand the urgency of studying Digital Diplomacy and its implications with Foreign Policy.

This paper also considers Simon Anholt as a pioneer of Nation Branding issued both in practice as advisor of many countries in this field. Anholt, as well as Avlonitis, Dinnie, Fan and O'Shaughnessy contributions on defining the relevance of Nation Branding as an urgent part of the Public Policies of states to promote its image abroad were also a relevant factor in this research. The use of specialized software and metrics played a relevant role for analyzing Twitter as the breakpoint to bridge the relation among Nation Branding and Digital Diplomacy. Accounts of Mexico and Russia linked to the official governmental discourse of Foreign Policy were used having a relevant role those associated with their head of state profile, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other governmental official accounts.

According to Bowen, documents are “non-reactive data sources, meaning that they can be read and reviewed multiple times and remain unchanged by the researcher’s influence or research process.”⁸ Following this statement, different specialized studies from different areas such as cibersecurity, big-data, social development, human rights, transparency, and many others topics, were analyzed with the main purpose to explain a comprehensive study to link both Nation Branding and Digital Diplomacy in the field of International Relations.

Chapter one focused a brief explanation of Diplomacy from a historical perspective by addressing the five pillars in which a Foreign Policy conceived from its classical perspective. Represent, negotiate, inform, protect and promote⁹; by doing a relevant process in which digitalization concedes to Diplomacy with the use of technologies. Chapter two explained the importance of consolidating a Nation Branding strategy as part of a Digital Diplomacy Foreign Policy of each nation. An adequate internal and external projection of each country image brought a better competitiveness perception as

⁸ Bowen, G. A. Document analysis as a qualitative research method. // Qualitative Research Journal. 2009.P. 27-40

⁹ Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations [Electronic Resource] // United Nations. 1961. URL:

http://legal.un.org/ilc/texts/instruments/english/conventions/9_1_1961.pdf

part of a Public Diplomacy strategy or international campaign in which the main role relies on increasing its influence and active participation in the geopolitical sphere.

The establishment of relations between countries in a global environment seems to require new strategies that transcend the traditional state diplomacy. The influence of persuasive techniques to international audiences, with the use of social media, focused the objective to tackle a competitive national identity transformed into a nation brand. The sum of people's perception, as Simon Anholt established, was addressed in this research with the support of other experts to explain why do matters to promote and consolidate a Nation Branding strategy.

Chapter three held a case study about the Russian Federation and Chapter four focused by doing a similar case study based on Mexico. On this two chapters, the main intention was on exemplifying whether or not both countries are currently promoting a Nation Branding strategy, and if so showed their positive or negative impact following their Foreign Policy guidelines. Also, in Chapter three and four were introduced respectively how historical cooperation and conflicts become a great activity as part of the Foreign Affairs issues. Considering a repositioning of Russia and Mexico Foreign Policy issues became a great role in understanding how the international environment changed and as a consequence, both countries adapted to this new circumstances. Fake news, elections, trade, sanctions, and security issues were some common features that both Mexico and Russia shared their geopolitical perspective by using Twitter. Punctual distinctions and other similarities were tackle regarding the impact of their own Digital Diplomacy and Nation Branding position.

In the Conclusion section, this research brought personal considerations, while at the same time analyzed and gave future horizons which are expected to consider for the development of Digital Diplomacy and Nation Branding on the field of International Relations. This last section brought new ideas about the urgency to develop and increase the participation of civil society, transparency, use of big data, cybersecurity and other different topics as part of an inclusive agenda to consider for both Mexico and Russia Foreign Policy issues. Considering a constant innovative and diversifying international society, Digital Diplomacy and Nation Branding tend to adapt and evolve permanently to respond to new global trends.

Chapter 1.

Diplomacy and the need of having Digital Diplomacy

1.1 Traditional Diplomacy

It is well known that states have been the most relevant actors in the study of International Relations (IR) due to its constant adaptation to new interactions which pursue specific objectives by following both foreign and domestic policies. However, with the rapid transformation of the international society new actors had emerged constructing new levels of interaction in which Diplomacy plays a key role in the study of International Relations as a social factor that cannot be explained without considering its relevance from a classic to a modern interpretation of Diplomacy.

Traditionally, diplomatic engagement consisted largely of government-to-government interactions.¹⁰ The importance to discuss the use of Diplomacy since ancient civilizations brings its relevance to the creation of networks which embraced to have a wide range of states and non-state actors. It is important to highlight that it could be too pretentious to cover all the historical linkage of the study of Diplomacy in a few pages. Therefore, in the following chapter, this research will try to demonstrate the relevance of Diplomacy as a dynamic institution that is constantly evolving and adapting.

Through different periods of the history, it is said that Diplomacy in its early days responded to different circumstances and challenges. According to the Oxford Handbook of Modern Diplomacy, “traditional Diplomacy takes place mainly with the participation of the states but also multiple actors are included in different levels of power and influence of their own Foreign Policy. As a basic essence, the study of Diplomacy is the conduct of relationships, using peaceful means, by and among international actors, at least one of whom is usually governmental.”¹¹

Understanding Jonsson and Hall¹², which argues that the concept of Diplomacy refers to an institutionalized structure where a common language shares relations between politics and practitioners through mutual expectations and rules. It could also be explained at the same time the

¹⁰ Sharp P. Wiseman G. American Diplomacy. // Martinus Nijhoff Publishers. 2012. P. 218

¹¹ Cooper A. Heine J. Takhur R. The Oxford Handbook of Modern Diplomacy // Oxford University Press. 2013. P. 2

¹² Jönsson C. Hall M. Essence of Diplomacy // Palgrave McMillan, 2005. P. 40

relevance of studying International Relations and Diplomacy as complementary fields. Both concepts have a “special role in the new international order with the participation of new international actors (state and non-state), help to frame a new interaction when sharing closer values and ideas to prevailing international norms by the principle of law in International Relations.”¹³

Through history, it is difficult in not to imagine a changing world constructed by social actions such as alliances, intrigues, negotiations, threats, cooperation, betrays and many other social actions that bring different connotations in the field of Foreign Policy. Regarding trying to understand such social framework, it is also important to have a clear distinction between Foreign Policy and Diplomacy. According to Cooper, “Foreign Policy relies on the use of that political influence to induce other states to exercise its law-making power in a manner desired by the states concerned: it is an interaction between forces originating outside the country’s border and those working with them.”¹⁴

As explained, Foreign Policy is assumed to be an instrument of cooperation and understanding among the countries in the international community to manifest, defend and harmonize their interests with those of the rest of the states. It could also be understood that Foreign Policy is part of the domain of policymakers that regulate the intercourse of relations among states according to specific principles and values. According to Hill, Foreign Policy is the sum of official external relations conducted by a state in International Relations.¹⁵ As a result, Foreign Policy is in charge of defending the national interest according to historical and geo-strategic principles.

About Diplomacy, it could be also explained as the management of International Relations by highly educated professionals such as ambassadors, envoys, and officials attached to foreign missions as part of a public service permanent mission of one state in other countries. As Nicolson defined “Diplomacy as the ordered conduct of relations between one group of human beings and another group alien to themselves.”¹⁶ As a practical reference, it should be stressed that, according to each country

¹³ Melissen J. *Beyond the New Public Diplomacy* // Palgrave MacMillan. 2005. URL: https://www.clingendael.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/20111014_cdsp_paper_jmelissen.pdf

¹⁴ Cooper A. *op. cit.*

¹⁵ Hill C. *The Changing Politics of Foreign Policy*. // Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. 2003

¹⁶ Cooper A. *op. cit.*

legislation, the formulation and implementation of its foreign policy usually correspond to the head of State. In this order, diplomacy is the executing channel, par excellence, of Foreign Policy.

1.2 Soft Power and Public Diplomacy

As part of the new communications use between states and a mass audience it was how the term Public Diplomacy emerged in 1965 for the first time by Edmund Guillon, summarizing his conception in the following:

“Public diplomacy deals with the influence of public attitudes on the formation and execution of foreign policies. It encompasses dimensions of international relations beyond traditional diplomacy; the cultivation by governments of public opinion in other countries; the interaction of private groups and interests in one country with another; the reporting of foreign affairs and its impact on policy; communication between those whose job is communication as diplomats and foreign correspondents; and the process of intercultural communications.”¹⁷

With the end of the Cold War and the diminishment of an ideological war under a bipolar system, brought the opportunity of moving from a state-based relation into a broader spectrum with the inclusion of corporations, individuals and other non-state actors. As a result, Diplomacy ceased to have the exclusive concern of governments and diplomatic officials. Consequently, modern transportations and communications increased the level of how national leaders foster a new kind of Diplomacy. This progressive transformation, expansion, and specialization of diplomatic functions, together with the substantial increase in the number of states and weakened the role of state-centric traditional Diplomacy.

As previously explained the origin of diplomatic relations is as old of the history of human societies, following an Aristotelic vision of a ‘*zoon politicon*’ where politics have always played a key role in the human evolution and its social interaction. When Joseph Nye created his powerful essay of ‘Soft Power,’ it was around the beginning of 1990’s when started to embrace the use of information society and recognize the power of citizens to communicate, relate and establish connections.¹⁸ While conventional forms of Diplomacy still dominate both the domestic and Foreign Policy landscape, an

¹⁷ Chahine J. Public Diplomacy: a conceptual framework. [Electronic Resource] // McGill University. 2010. URL: http://www.culturaldiplomacy.org/academy/pdf/research/books/public_diplomacy/Public_Diplomacy_-_A_Conceptual_Framework_-_Joumane_Chahine.pdf

¹⁸ Manfredi Sánchez J.L. Taxonomía de la Diplomacia Digital. [Electronic Resource] // Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha. 2014. URL: <http://revistas.ucm.es/index.php/HICS/article/view/47299>

increasing number of governments began to use technology as a new tool for communication, information gathering, and the promotion of values both at home and abroad.¹⁹

Nye also argues that Public Diplomacy by itself not produce Soft Power. As explained by Tsvetkova: “Public Diplomacy is an instrument that governments use to mobilize three resources of Soft Power—culture, political values, and foreign policy and attract the people of other countries by drawing attention to these resources through broadcasting, subsidizing cultural exports, arranging exchanges, and so forth. However, if the content of a country’s culture, values, and policies is not attractive, public diplomacy that ‘broadcasts’ these cannot produce soft power.”²⁰

1.3 Digital Diplomacy

With the advent of the Internet and specifically the use of social media with the rapid growing of mobile technologies, the engagement of digitalizing government platforms to communicate with people bring an area of opportunity to start managing of what now is conceived as Digital Diplomacy, network Diplomacy, e-Diplomacy, Cyber Diplomacy, Diplomacy 2.0, web Diplomacy, Twitter Diplomacy, among other definitions used by scholars. Today there is a widely use of different definitions that cover the concept of Digital Diplomacy.

As shown in the following examples, in most of the cases there is a common factor in which ICT’s act as a key tool implemented in current Digital Diplomacy:

“According to Manor and Segev, digital diplomacy refers mainly to the growing use of social media platforms by a country in order to achieve its foreign policy goals and proactively manage its image and reputation.”²¹

“Lewis defines digital diplomacy as the use of digital tools of communication (social media) by diplomats to communicate with each other and with the general public. To Potter, digital diplomacy mainly refers to the diplomatic practices through digital and networked technologies, including the Internet, mobile devices, and social media channels.”²²

“Hanson defines it simply as the use of the Internet and new Information Communications Technologies to help carry out diplomatic objectives.”²³

¹⁹ Adesina O. Foreign Policy in an era of digital diplomacy. [Electronic Resource] // Cogent Social Sciences. 2017. URL: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/23311886.2017.1297175>

²⁰ Tsvetkova N. Russia and the World. Understanding International Relations. // Lexington Books. 2017. P. 245

²¹ Adesina op. cit.

²² Adesina op. cit.

²³ Adesina op. cit.

Following the previous basic historical perspective there are three important factors that this research took into account when referring to Digital Diplomacy:

First, Digital Diplomacy is conceived as a tool that complements traditional Diplomacy as an institution of international society rather than individual efforts of states or other actors. Second, Digital Diplomacy relies on the professionalization of professionals that use new technologies and specifically social media as part of the interests of each state regarding Foreign Policy. Third, Digital Diplomacy efficiency relies on having a better communication linkage between the state and other actors in international society with a constant flow of challenges and opportunities in a digital society.

Diplomacy has always evolved and adapt, and Digital Diplomacy becomes a better-equipped tool with the main task to observe, analyze, report and act with the goal of promoting a country's interest. Regarding the importance of the process of digitalization, one of the first foreign ministries to establish a dedicated e-Diplomacy unit was the U.S. State Department, which created the Taskforce on e-Diplomacy in 2002. The Office of U.S. eDiplomacy was established to overcome knowledge barriers contributing to the 11 September 2001 attacks and improve the ability of the State Department to communicate and share knowledge.²⁴

Other countries with relevant geopolitical participation like France which carries out a strong tradition of promoting worldwide its image, use strong digital diplomacy to mainly targeting its political values, culture, and language to young people interested in visiting or studying in the country.²⁵ In the case of German Government, with the use of the term '*auswärtige Kulturpolitik*' to describe its efforts in the field, Germany establish Digital Diplomacy with two strategic objectives. First, to establish a dialogue between German and the Arab world in the Middle East. Second, to create a new image of Germany through the use of nation brand.²⁶

²⁴ Adesina op. cit.

²⁵ Tsvetkova N. Yarygin G. Veebel V. Soft Power on the Internet: Assessing Digital Diplomacy of the United States, Iran, China, France, Germany and Russia. // Valdai Group. 2013.

²⁶ Tsvetkova N. Yarygin G. Veebel V. op. cit.

There is no doubt that the 21st century has evolved the use of Diplomacy and how global leaders should hold it. As Tstvetkova suggests, “Digital Diplomacy is the activity of a state, a government, or a non-state actor that aims to influence a target audience of active users through direct engagement.”²⁷ With the use of digital platforms distributing news, promoting ideology and advertising campaigns has demonstrated to bring a huge relevance with the use of social media to disseminate at the same time nation branding strategies having global attention.

Diplomacy in modern times continues to rely on its ancient foundation of secrecy and confidential communication. Today we have new actors that shape the foreign policy of the states, operates on a more dynamic and complex global environment. Diplomacy today takes place among multiple sites of authority, power and influence: mainly states but also including religious organizations, non-governmental corporations, and even individuals.²⁸ The relevance innovation of modern Diplomacy relies on the impact that digitalization brings to both the practitioners and the audience.

Currently, the importance of Digital Diplomacy is disrupting debates of legitimacy and efficiency in how new tools can enhance the performance of policy leaders and diplomats. A broader step when states pursue an overarching strategy to digitalize its government is shown in the creation of National Diplomatic Systems (NDS) which is the total “of departments and agencies involved in the shaping and implementation of international policy.”²⁹ With the appearance of NDS, social media becomes a central part of being not only a tool to improve the public communication but also playing a key role for advanced purposes in recognizing more complex management of governments. According to Hocking, the NDS reflects a growing involvement of agencies outside the MFA, recognizing at the same time an upper linkage where states are responding to major changes with a broader bureaucratic system.³⁰

The image below argues the relevance in which diplomat’s digital competencies are dependent on three pillars according to the Head of Media of the MFA of Israel. “The first is the need for a

²⁷ Tsvetkova N. Yarygin G. Veebel V. op. cit.

²⁸ Jönson. op. cit.

²⁹ Melissen. op. cit.

³⁰ Hocking B. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the National Diplomatic System. [Electronic Resource] // URL: http://archives.cerium.ca/IMG/pdf/Hocking2013_The_MFA.pdf

conceptual shift within MFA's which may bring about an institutional culture that is conducive to the use of digital tools by diplomats. The second relates to institutional competencies. These differ from those of the diplomat but may help him to utilize digital tools best. The third pillar relates to the training a diplomat receives at the MFA and on which his digital competencies most rely."³¹

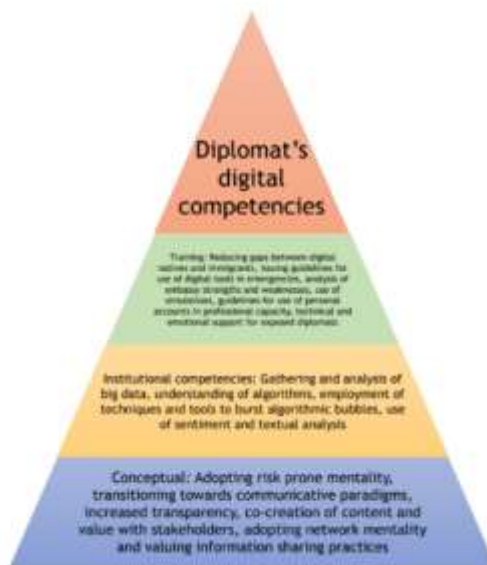


Image 1. Hierarchy of Digital Skills in MFA's

Digital Diplomacy is becoming a more participative, open and transparent process where top-down policies “can create virtual spaces in which governmental and non-governmental actors can come together and shape powerful debates with bottom-up solutions.”³² Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and other social media are creating a more horizontal world in which there are no hierarchies, considering that power by itself is on the existence of the web.

According to the report, ‘*Twiplomacy*’ Twitter is the current social media channel of choice for governments and foreign ministries with about 856 accounts that belong to heads of state, 178 to foreign ministries and 92 to UN members states which in combination have a total audience of 356 million followers.³³ In the same report, Facebook is a second-most popular network with about 169

³¹ Digital Diplomacy Conference Summary. [Electronic Resource] // Tel Aviv University. 2016. URL: https://digdipblog.files.wordpress.com/2017/04/digital-diplomacy-conference-summary_final.pdf

³² Shaun R. Digital Diplomacy 2.0: Beyond the Social Media Obsession. [Electronic Resource] // CPD. 2016. URL: <http://uscpublicdiplomacy.org/blog/digital-diplomacy-20-beyond-social-media-obsession>

³³ Twiplomacy Study 2017. [Electronic Resource] // Twiplomacy. 2017. URL: <http://twiplomacy.com/blog/twiplomacy-study-2017/>

countries using the platform with about 606 pages which have a combined audience of 283 million likes. As seen below in image 2, Twitter has become a diplomatic barometer, a tool used to analyze and forecast international relations.

Platform	Accounts	% of World Leaders	Followers, Likes, Shares	Mentions (Average)
Twitter	456	50%	358,838,416	16,848
Facebook	406	48%	283,217,235	38,891
Instagram	130	37%	51,560,879	2,823
Google+	261	16%	11,884,591	55
LinkedIn	134	17%	5,585,308	2,526
YouTube	343	76%	4,254,018	734
Facebook Messenger	157	43%	1,308,955	470
Snapchat	30	11%	914	970

Image 2. Twiplomacy 2017 ranking of social networks

As the last report of ‘*Twiplomacy*’ argues, “there is a growing digital divide between governments that are active on social media with dedicated teams and those that see digital engagement as an afterthought and so devote few resources to it. There is still a small number of government leaders who refuse to embrace the new digital world and, for these few, their community managers struggle to bring their organizations into the digital century”.³⁴ Previous social networks should be considered among the most popular due to its global impact and number of users. However, according to Practical Ecommerce, there are more than 100 social networks in which some of them ought to be considered according to its constant growing or high impact interaction as a regional trend.³⁵

In the case of Russia, VKontakte remains the top social network in the country with about 90 million monthly active users around the world, almost 70% of whom live in Russia. Kakaotalk maintains its lead in South Korea, with the platform's latest earnings release reporting that the messenger service

³⁴ Twiplomacy Study 2017. op. cit.

³⁵ Mehra G. 105 Leading Social Networks Worldwide [Electronic Resource] // Practical Ecommerce. 2017. URL: <https://www.practicalecommerce.com/105-leading-social-networks-worldwide>

now has almost 42 million monthly.³⁶ LINE remains the number one social platform in Japan, with national penetration surpassing 50% of the population in 2016.³⁷

According to the 2017 Global Overview report, there has been incredible progress in Internet connectivity and social media use; considering that there are 3.77 billion global Internet users in which more than half of them prefers to use smartphones.³⁸ There is a long way in which Digital Diplomacy may offer new tools for developing Diplomacy, and social media becomes an opportunity to engage but also a risk that with a minimum mistake could encourage a misunderstanding. As the former Ambassador of the UK Tom Fletcher argues in Miller, “getting it wrong could start a war (...) getting it right has the potential to rewrite the diplomatic rulebook.”³⁹

Hard power, regarding the use of force, is always rejected by broad sectors of global civil society, unlike soft power, which seduces and attracts subtly and profoundly. A key element in moving the behavior and decisions of others is the legitimacy with which the objectives and actions of those who deploy power are perceived. With effective use of strategies in social networks and especially in Twitter, Soft Power acts as an emotional spring that influences good perception, achieving at the same time voluntary and even satisfactory assimilation of what is and what influences.

³⁶ Kemp S. Digital in 2017: A global overview. // WeAreSocial. 2017. URL: <https://wearesocial.com/special-reports/digital-in-2017-global-overview>

³⁷ Kemp S. op. cit.

³⁸ Kemp op. cit.

³⁹ Miller N. Getting it wrong could start a war: welcome to the age of Digital Diplomacy. [Electronic Resource] // The Sydney Morning Herald. 2017. URL: <https://www.smh.com.au/world/getting-it-wrong-could-start-a-war-welcome-to-the-age-of-digital-diplomacy-20170811-gxtzt9.html>

Chapter 2.

The relevance of Nation Branding

2.1 Countries, image, and perception

The evolution experienced by technology in recent years has increased the speed of connection and brought a radical change in many paradigms in the study of IR. Countries are expanding different possibilities to develop better relations with different actors, to achieve different goals and purposes. With the objective of obtaining political, economic and cultural influence with the use of Soft power, countries have been using Public Diplomacy strategies as an important role to create an attractive image that can improve some desirable outcomes.

As Joseph Nye argued, *“power is the ability to influence the behavior of others to get the outcomes one wants. However, there are several ways to affect the behavior of others. You can coerce them with threats; you can induce them with payments, or you can attract and co-opt them to want what you want.”*⁴⁰ The use of Public Diplomacy and positioning the image of a country in the world, has become an increasing platform in which countries decided to invest in creating positive management of their image. Creating the conditions to establish good relations between countries in a global environment requires the use of traditional state diplomacy lines, and at the same time to be innovative on an era in which technologies and social media brings additional tools. Public diplomacy then becomes a stronger ally as a unifying device in which states can inspire dreams and desires of others by the mastery of attracting.

This research is interested in those connotations associated with the impact that Mexico and Russia are bringing as part of those countries that use nation branding strategies with the purpose to gain confidence and to promote their own identity in the international arena. For that, it is relevant to deconstruct the concept of nation brand as a multidisciplinary and inter-institutional framework. Envisioned by Anholt, “brand image can be managed, and over time improved, but success in this endeavor rests on developing good policies that resonate with a country’s values and beliefs - the image can only be earned; it cannot be constructed or invented.”⁴¹

⁴⁰ Nye J. op. cit.

⁴¹ Anholt S. Place branding – is it marketing or isn’t it? Place Branding and Public Diplomacy. [Electronic Resource] // Springer Link. 2007. URL: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1057/palgrave.pb.6000088>

Social media has become one of the most participative tools in which states can effectively promote its Nation Branding strategies to produce Soft Power effects. Then, image projection of a specific embassy, diplomatic endeavor or governmental office will have direct implication as an asset of a country perception. A growing concern for a country's external image is expressed in the country brand offices. Public Diplomacy strategies or international campaigns to attract investment, an initiative that mixes public and private action. It is not new that the diplomat deals with the image of his country; The novelty is that now he does it professionally and systematically, included in his list of tasks.

2.2 Defining Nation Branding

According to Fan, a Nation Brand and Nation Branding are two different concepts, regardless whether branding is taking place or not a nation already has a brand formed by the perception, stereotypes, and opinion held by the public.⁴² A brand is a “significant and structured perception in the mind of a consumer, with the ability to trigger associations of spontaneous ideas that condition their decision process and subsequent transaction with a specific product and service.”⁴³

Considering Simon Anholt, “brand can mean at least three different things in the world of marketing: first, it can refer to the designed identity of a product (the look of the product itself, it’s packaging, its logo, its livery, its communications, and so forth); second, it is sometimes used more ambitiously to refer to the culture of the organization behind the product; and third, it can refer to the product’s or corporation’s reputation in the minds of its target audience. As for branding, this may take place to try and reform, repair, enhance or remake the existing image for the country in question to be viewed as being more attractive and competitive.”⁴⁴

⁴² Fan Y. Branding the Nation: What is Being Branded? [Electronic Resource] // Brunel Business School. 2006. URL: https://www.academia.edu/5185448/Branding_the_nation_what_is_being_branded

⁴³ Moneris Tormo A. Place branding: consideraciones y reflexiones iniciales. [Electronic resource] // Brain Ventures. 2008. URL: <https://www.slideshare.net/Moneris/place-branding-planteamientos-y-enfoques-bsicos>

⁴⁴ Simons G. Nation Branding and Russian Foreign Policy. [Electronic Resource] // Swedish Institute of International Affairs. 2013. URL: <https://www.ui.se/globalassets/ui.se-eng/publications/ui-publications/nation-branding-and-russian-foreign-policy-min.pdf>

It is also important to understand that there is no universally agreed term for nation branding process, deriving to the extensive literature of the topic and its popular use in contemporary issues. As a multi-dimensional term, Nation Branding uses the support of different fields of study such as marketing, economics, politics, sociology, psychology, anthropology, and many others. As Mselle suggests, the relevance of nation branding as a way of achieving their socio-economic and political aspirations.⁴⁵ Nation Branding will be used as a tool to attract economic advantages in the global market, but also as an option for countries in gaining reputation and influence in the political, economic and cultural fields.

Following Joseph Nye first ideas, Soft Power of a country rest primarily on three resources: “culture (in place where it is attractive to others), its political values (when it lives up to them at home and abroad), and its foreign policies (when they are seen as legitimate and having moral authority).”⁴⁶ According to Doyle in Dinnie, “a successful brand is a name, symbol, design, or some combination, which identifies the ‘product’ of a particular organization as having a sustainable differential advantage.”⁴⁷

As Kotler and Keller explained, “a brand is defined as a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors.”⁴⁸ Quoting Ying Fan “nation branding is concerned with a country’s whole image on the international stage covering political, economic and cultural dimensions (...) nation branding, in essence, is to align the nation’s image to the reality”.⁴⁹ The adequate internal and external projection of its image of the country brings high potential in the marketing and management area, but it could also be a simple and ordinary way that nation branding is seldom considered.

⁴⁵ Mugobo V. Ukpere W. Is country branding a panacea or poison? [Electronic Resource] // Cape Peninsula University of Technology. 2011. URL: http://digitalknowledge.cput.ac.za/bitstream/11189/4814/3/Mugobo_Virimai%20V_Ukpere_Wilfred%20I_Is%20Country%20branding%20a%20panacea%20or%20poison_pdf

⁴⁶ Nye J. od. cit.

⁴⁷ Dinnie K. Nation Branding: concepts, issues, practice // Routledge. 2008. P. 4

⁴⁸ Kotler P. Keller K. L. Marketing management. [Electronic Resource] // Prentice Hall. 2012. URL: http://socioline.ru/files/5/283/kotler_keller_-_marketing_management_14th_edition.pdf

⁴⁹ Fan Y. od. cit.

However, the aim of integrating a nation branding into a new global geopolitical stage does not understand administrative limits or mental borders to collaborate with different disciplines. Many governments, consultants, and scholars considered a negative and naive connotation in bringing an adequate correspondence to the study of ‘nation branding’ inside the field of the IR. Arguing that this effort consists of a standard product or promotion, public relations, business promotion or simple propaganda, using the image of a country as it should be another simple product in the market.

As Riordan established “an image of a nation is far more simplistic than reality and cannot capture the complexities and diversity of people and opinions within its boundaries – trying to do so may well undermine these characteristics as well as a country’s credibility.”⁵⁰ According to the opponents of nation branding, comparing a country to a commercial product or a service to be manipulated and sold to consumers is deceptive and demeaning. As O’Shaughnessy manifests, managing a nation’s image is too complex because a nation has too many other characteristics that are difficult to control.

A nation has a variety of characteristics which lack controllability, and therefore it is far much easier to give a unity of purpose and uniqueness to a product than to a nation.⁵¹ However, one of the most plausible challenges for successfully apply a nation branding strategy relies on shifting economic competitiveness. Co-optive power relies on the possibility to manipulate the agenda to achieve political choices when strong economies not only provide resources for sanctions and payments but can also be a source of attractiveness.⁵²

As Avlonitis suggest, a nation branding connects to the competitiveness of a country at a global level and could be used as a strategic planning tool by any government that wishes to maintain or improve its country’s international competitive position.⁵³ Recognizing economic factors, Porter claimed that “in a world of increasingly global competition, nations have become more, not less, important.

⁵⁰ Riordan S. Dialogue-based Public Diplomacy: A New Foreign Policy Paradigm. [Electronic Resource] // Netherlands Institute of International Relations. 2004. URL:

https://www.clingendael.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/20041100_cli_paper_dip_issue95.pdf

⁵¹ O’Shaughnessy J, O’Shaughnessy N. Treating the nation as a brand: Some neglected issues.[Electronic Resource] // Columbia University. 2000. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0276146700201006>

⁵² Nye J. op. cit.

⁵³ Avlonitis G. The linkage between Nation Branding and Nation Competitiveness. [Electronic Resource] // The London School of Economics and Political Science. URL: <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/greeceatlse/2018/01/15/nation-branding-and-nation-competitiveness/>

Regarding Anholt proposals by its recent project ‘Brand New Justice’, he established that when “providing the governments of those least developed countries with the techniques to build a positive and powerful nation-brand.”⁵⁴ As Anholt suggested, there are six issues in which nation branding should commit a responsible issue to each country strategy to have a good perception of its image and reputation.



Image 3. Simon Anholt’s six issues for Nation Branding

It may be convenient to remember that there is also no universal template for having a successful Nation Branding strategy, as a permanent and relatively recent engaged option for those countries that are currently exploring different options to engage their own nation brand goals. As a result, one of the challenges of nation branding consists in the need to mix multiple disciplines and an inter-institutional effort considering that countries are the most interested actors in promoting its image abroad. At the same time, nation branding is considered for many countries as a controversial and highly politicized activity that generates passionately held and frequently conflicting viewpoints and opinions.

The scope of the definition of ‘nation branding’ shows that for governments there would never be a purely related reason to manage an image regarding marketing. The main purpose and most important one should be done in terms to adequate the internal and external projection of its image of a country, not only to attract tourists but with the aim of integrating into a new global geopolitical image, without constraining any interinstitutional effort. Avoiding the risk of being insincere, ineffective, and perceived as propaganda may be a constant challenge regarding having an effective Nation Branding.

⁵⁴ Anholt S. Brand New Justice. [Electronic Resource] // Butterworth-Heinemann. 2005. URL: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/jtr.456>

As Simon Anholt suggested, to manage a country's reputation, it is also necessary to explore and understand gaps between national reality, and the internal and external reputation of a country.⁵⁵ The internal view of the country held and to some extent, shared, by a country's citizens may differ from that held by multiple external groups, such as potential foreign investors and tourists to the country. Arguably, effective nation branding management hinges on establishing a convincing national reality and reducing the perception gap between reality and its perception as well as between internal and external views.

2.3 Social Media implications

IT advances had also created that governments have lost their near monopoly over the control of information: through the internet, 24-hour television and mobile telephony, information is now available instantly to vast numbers of people around the globe.⁵⁶ An important aspect for governments to successfully engage to their audience depends in creating bilateral communication efforts, in which the message will prevail into a horizontal conversation. Brands have a story to tell, and enduring brands have been successful in telling that story by creating deep and sustained differentiation and relevance information.

Advances in technology imply that countries may target a Nation Branding through social media with messages composed on a vast way with something that the audience did not already know, or at least offer them a fresh insight into something of which they already know. It also means that when seeking to develop a nation branding strategy on the social media the speech should be constructed, and delivered, in such a way as to keep the audience engaged. Ideally, they should be stimulated and entertained: at a minimum, they must never be bored. A good diplomatic effort will be in having specialized professionals in governmental offices, embassies and other representatives abroad that will successfully apply this kind of strategies.

The growing participation of civil society increased at the same time the possibilities of interconnection and intervention in public affairs provided by the digital environment. The renewed options of informative access to the so-called "public affairs" provoke the appearance of a new map

⁵⁵ UNITAR. Introduction to Public Diplomacy in the 21st Century. [Electronic Resource] // United Nations. 2016

⁵⁶ UNITAR od. cit.

of users interested in State issues'. While understanding the relevance of image and reputation, social media becomes a highly effective tool to engage with foreign publics with different communicational means and methods.

Countries are taking an increasing interest in the use of social media, and Nation Branding can be expected to engage with the ever-increasing numbers of users, many of whom use different social media platforms. Social Media offers enormous opportunities for communication with large numbers of people, for targeting specific interest groups and for engaging in constructive debate. One difficulty about the participation in social networks by governments is the tension between, on the one hand, the need for all their representatives to speak with one voice and, on the other, the democratic and open spirit of such networks.

2.4 Risks and challenges of Nation Branding

When a crisis occurs such as a serious conflict that may affect the image of a country with internal and external implications, governments ought to respond with their machinery as fast as possible with a quick operation involving all their machinery. A golden rule in a crisis is to have an immediate response to a credible story which will not compromise that image of the country.⁵⁷ As already explained and according to Subramanian, "Nation Branding needs long-term strategies in which newly elected government should avoid to roll back those predecessor's ideas which are having good results, or at least not trying to change the nation branding campaign in terms that the audience may not feel a connection, or may even rebel against it."⁵⁸

Then, Digital Diplomacy and Internet activities as a whole can greatly assist in projecting a country foreign policy positions to foreign audiences. Having assertive and informative foreign ministry websites are also another way to engage potential audiences. Texting, for example, is another way of driving target audience towards websites. The relatively small size of mobile screens imposes inevitable limits to the complexity of the messages that can be delivered by texting.

⁵⁷ UNITAR od. cit.

⁵⁸ Subramanian S. How to sell a country: the booming business of nation branding. [Electronic Resource] // The Guardian. 2017. URL: <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2017/nov/07/nation-branding-industry-how-to-sell-a-country>

As explained previously, the projection of a positive image is equated to an exercise diplomatic policies, with the consequent implication of having professional public servers that will accomplish the assets of a full territorial entity. As seen, many authors agree that Nation Branding should focus on increasing the competitiveness of a territory and its tourist attraction, favoring the levels of foreign investment or achieve a certain geostrategic positioning, among other objectives. Strong leadership from the head of states is also a relevant issue in considering when trying to promote a countries image.

Among the main benefits of having a Nation Branding are the development of strengths and attributes of the country, the improvement of the reputation, national pride, internal confidence and the promotion of tourism, investment, and exports. Having a powerful and coherent Nation Branding strategy requires the comprehensive support of different governmental levels, so that, a country may strengthen its international competitiveness and positively impacts all productive sectors. Taking into account a heterogeneous and complex international scenario, chapter 3 and chapter 4, will focus its attention trying to explain how Nation Branding is strongly correlated to Digital Diplomacy efforts of countries such as Mexico and Russia.

Chapter 3.

Russia's Foreign Policy: global leadership and Twitter influence

3.1 Russia's Nation Branding and Twitter

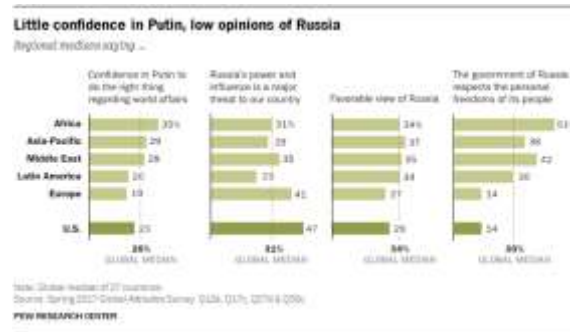
When talking about Russia, it is also inevitable to appoint that President Putin is a relevant factor to analyze, considered to be one of the most powerful men in the world and regarding an ambivalent understanding of his diverse critics. For a vast population in his country, he represents a new Russia of what was previously characterized in the early post-communist era. Since arriving at the presidency in the year 2000, Putin substantially modified the country's external image, from a strategy whose cornerstone was subordination to the West. Still, for many others, mainly from the western countries, he has been strongly criticized to impose specific policies which somehow counterbalance western ambitions.

Part of his new internal and external managing policies are focused on defending the interests of the Russian state and the aspiration to be considered as a relevant global actor on equal terms with the western powers. Also, President Vladimir Putin has also been recognized for defending the right of Russia to have a stronger and independent position in the international relations. Russia is living a process of redefinition, and the role of President as part of a complex governmental structure may define not only the agenda of the country but also of a new multipolar world. As part of the new Russia, since 2000 it has joined the list of the countries that seek to use Nation Branding to fulfill politically determined and directed nation ambitions.⁵⁹

Likewise, Putin has also repeatedly commented that Russia is following an agenda of cooperation and dialogue to construct a better relationship in a globalized world. He has also been directly criticized for having an anti-U.S. imperialist ambitions and especially against those decisions from Washington as the increasing expansion of NATO and its position from the Ukraine conflict has increased. According to the last survey of Pew Research Center of Global Attitudes and Trends, the image of Vladimir Putin has an unfavorable perception.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Simons G. od. cit.

⁶⁰ Vice M. Public Worldwide unfavorable toward Putin, Russia. [Electronic Resource] // Pew Research Center. 2017. URL: <http://www.pewglobal.org/2017/08/16/publics-worldwide-unfavorable-toward-putin-russia/>



Graph 1. Vladimir Putin’s perception according to Pew Research Center 2017

However, as seen in the graph above, President Putin’s perception does not necessarily coincide with the perception of Russia as a security risk. According to the same Pew Research Center survey, Russia’s image is more negative than positive; particularly from the U.S and European countries when referring to Russian government’s commitments to civil liberties and skepticism the respect of the rights of its citizens. In the same research, views from Asia-Pacific, Middle East, and Latin American countries had some more mixed results.

Considering the institutional framework, Russia follows a speech which defends a balanced world and where international law prevails respecting the sovereignty of the states, giving a centrality role to the UN as the body in charge of maintaining the current international political order.⁶¹ However, at the same time, Russia clarifies that the very process of globalization has developed serious imbalances capable of expanding contradictions and social stratification, eroding the system of international relations and increasing the risks of open conflict with other states. The balance of power is changing, as are international institutions, technologies, the resource base for economic development and the cultural and civilization landscape.

Considering the perception of Russia following the Future Brand study, Russia is constantly in the lower ranking places of those countries who are experiencing troubles with corruption.⁶² As seen in the table below Russia’s image according to Transparency International is showing a constant

⁶¹ Kremlin. Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation. [Electronic Resource] // Ministry of the Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. 2013. URL: http://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/official_documents/-/asset_publisher/CptlCk6BZ29/content/id/122186

⁶² Country Brand Report America Latina 2017-2018. [Electronic Resource] // Future Brand. 2018. URL: <http://cbramericalatina.com/>

behavior considering that the research use a scale 0 to 100 points, in which 0 is very corrupt, and 100 is very clean.⁶³

Table 1. Russia in Transparency International's "Perception of Corruption Index" (1998-2014)

Year	Rank	Score
2017	135 of 180 countries	29
2016	131 of 176 countries	29
2015	119 of 167 countries	29
2014	136 of 174 countries	27
2013	127 of 175 countries	28
2012	133 of 174 countries	28

Source: Prepared by the authors with data from Transparency International.

Nowadays, Russia is considered to be an active geopolitical actor in which its Foreign Policy is facing new challenges and opportunities. In addition, following what Greg Simons suggests when quoting Fyodor Lukyanov (editor in chief of *Russia in Global Affairs Magazine*) in the article 'Nation Branding and Russia Foreign Policy', there are three identified goals in the foreign policy area – the first is “to promote Russian culture, the Russian language and the Russian education system as attractive and competitive.” The second goal is “to counter foreign media’s negative depiction of the country’s policies and the Russian way of life.” Thirdly, is to “create a group of Russia’s friends around the world.”⁶⁴

Having in account the first goal, the activity of '*Rossotrudnichestvo*' and its foreign missions “aims at the implementation of the state policy of international humanitarian cooperation, promotion abroad of an objective image of contemporary Russia.”⁶⁵ According to the official website nowadays, '*Rossotrudnichestvo*' is represented in 80 states of the world by 95 representative office: 72 Russian centers of science and culture in 62 states, 23 representatives of the Agency serving in Russian Embassies in 21 states⁶⁶. Depending from Russia’s MFA, one of the principal guidelines of '*Rossotrudnichestvo*' relies on promoting the language, culture, politic, public, scientific, business affairs and educational life of the Russian Federation abroad.

⁶³ Corruption Perceptions Index 2017. [Electronic Resource] // Transparency International. 2017. URL: https://www.transparency.org/news/feature/corruption_perceptions_index_2017

⁶⁴ Simons G. od. cit.

⁶⁵ Rossotrudnichestvo. [Electronic Resource] // Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. 2018. URL: <http://rs.gov.ru/en/about>

⁶⁶ Rossotrudnichestvo. od. cit.

Depending from Russia’s MFA, one of the principal guidelines of ‘*Rosstrudnichestvo*’ relies on promoting the language, culture, politic, public, scientific, business affairs and educational life of the Russian Federation abroad. By using its official Twitter profile (@rsgov) created since March 2010 and linked to the official website <http://rs.gov.ru>, it has more than 103 thousand Followers currently by sharing more than fourteen tweets. A relevant factor of this account to consider is that most of its tweets are given in Russian language but sometimes also use the English language without having a specific account focused in this segment.

In the tourism field, with the use of ‘*The Whole World Within Russia*’ Russia implemented a national competition in the year 2015 by the Federal Agency for Tourism of the Russian Federation and the Association of Branding Companies of Russia, in which different companies participated to create a new brand image of the country. So that, this new image of the country incorporates the term ‘*Suprematism*’ by referring to a cultural phenomenon that “evoke strong associations with Russia, and today serves as its icon in visual aesthetics”. The winner project referred to the country as:⁶⁷

“Russia is tremendous and vast. It has everything one can imagine: from subtropical to Arctic regions and climates, from the deepest lakes to the highest peaks. The truth is, Russia is not only huge in sheer size, but in other aspects as well – it stretches from the past to the future, comprising multiple cultures and preserving thousands of stories and memories. Traveling across Russia is more than just a travel. It is an endless discovery!”

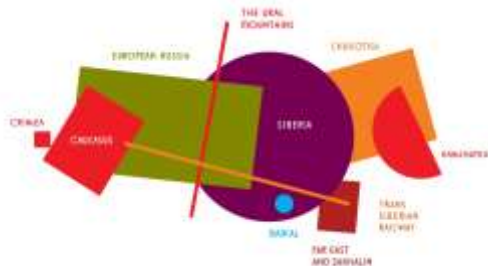


Image 4. Capture took by on Russia Brand project



Image 5. The Whole World Within Russia official image

‘*Made in Russia*’ official project from state-owned Russian Export Center JSC (REC) sum to this effort in promoting a new image of the country, done as a global communication project for promoting of Russian exports, business and culture through the National brand, international media, and industry catalogs. As established on its webpage www.madeinrussia.ru its goal is “to create a platform to

⁶⁷ What is Russian Tourism Brand About? [Electronic Resource] // Federal Agency of the Russian Federation and Association of Branding Companies of Russia. 2017. URL: <http://russia-brand.com/en/#rec41916678>

promote Russian business and culture worldwide.”⁶⁸ This project of certification currently manages the official Twitter account @ru_madeinrussia with 155 followers, 167 following accounts and with only 131 tweets since its creation on September 2012.

By using @Russia the official account of Russia powered by Russia’s MFA, shows a better behavior than previous projects, considering that while doing this studying the Twitter account has around 283 thousand followers since its creation in November 2014 and by doing more than 1,800 tweets. By analyzing this tweeter account, it is also relevant to comment that it has 17 lists following other ‘Country accounts’. However, the account @Russia_travel which depends from the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation has a lower number of Followers despite a relatively similar number of tweets comparing with the official account empowered by @MFA_Russia. Also using ‘*Twitter Audit Report*’ a popular tool for measuring how many followers are real it showed that @MFA_Russia⁶⁹ has a 70% of real accounts as Followers, while @PutinRF_eng⁷⁰ has a 91% of real account Followers.

Following the second goal, the Russian government has implemented an official strategy since the beginning of 2017 with the Russian MFA announcements on its website, dedicated to flagging media reports that are considered as ‘fake news’. On a bid to counter accusations that the Kremlin has been spreading its disinformation online to meddle with politics in the U.S, and Europe. So that, the Press service website of the Russian MFA has used the site for publishing materials that contain false information about Russia.”⁷¹ At the same time, different publications in Twitter disseminate part of this official campaign of the Russian MFA. (See image 6; Appendix A)

With the support of official media channels such as Russia Today, Sputnik and Tass News Agency; the Russian Federation has found a great opportunity by efficiently using social media impact in different languages and platforms to disseminate alternative information from western media.

⁶⁸ Made in Russia. [Electronic Resource] // Ministry of Economic Development of the Russian Federation. 2018. URL: <https://madeinrussia.ru/en/about>

⁶⁹ MFA_Russia Twitter Audit. [Electronic Resource] // Twitter. 2018. URL: https://www.twitteraudit.com/mfa_russia

⁷⁰ PutinnRF_eng Twitter Audit. [Electronic Resource] // Twitter. 2018. URL: https://www.twitteraudit.com/putinrf_eng

⁷¹ Kremlin. Published materials that contains false information about Russia. [Electronic Resource] // The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. 2017. URL: <http://www.mid.ru/en/nedostovernie-publikacii>

According to Tass network, the agency has 70 regional centers and offices in Russia and 68 foreign bureaus in 63 countries.⁷² As for Sputnik, its official website informs that the media work in more than 30 languages, including English and currently has offices abroad in U.S., China, Germany, Egypt and the UK.⁷³ For RT, the 24-hour network channel information that has 100 million viewers from 47 countries over 100+ countries where RT broadcasts are available using English, Spanish, Arabic, and more recently French language.⁷⁴

Considering the impact in English of the three main media channels on Twitter, according to the information in that social media @rt_com holds more than 2.7 million followers, with about 629 following accounts and more than 253 thousand tweets. About @SputnikInt it has 218 thousand followers, 287 following accounts, and 244 thousand tweets. For @tassagency_en it shows to have more than 46.8 thousand followers, 208 following accounts, and 48 thousand tweets. However, as seen in the next image despite the three media shows to have a great number in followers and tweets in the English version, accordingly to www.twitteraudit.com, the Russian version of TASS using @tass_agency is an account that supposed has negative numbers when analyzing interactions between real and fake accounts for followers.



Image 7. 'Twitteraudit' analyzing real and fake followers for @rt_com

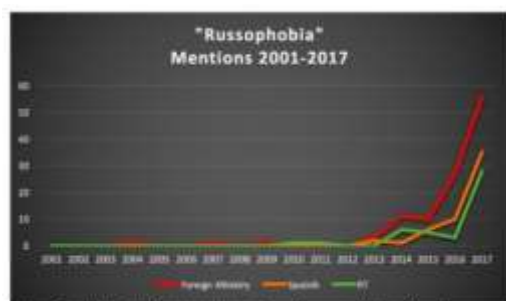
As an example of how western media and Russia have a war media use of hashtags in Twitter, foreign critics of the Russian government, especially those from Canada, the European Union, and U.S. Congress. By using the term '*Russophobia*' to alleged supposed illegal actions according to them, in

⁷² Tass today. [Electronic Resource] // Tass. 2018. URL: <http://tass.com/today>

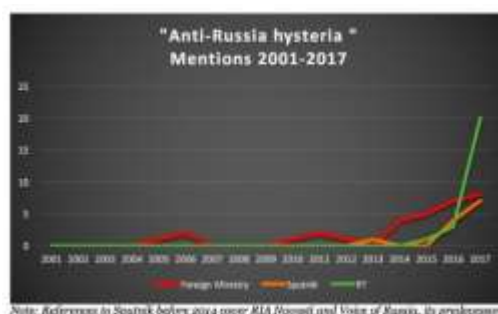
⁷³ About us. [Electronic Resource] // Sputnik. 2018. URL: <https://sputniknews.com/docs/about/index.html>

⁷⁴ About RT. [Electronic Resource] // RT. 2018. URL: <https://www.rt.com/about-us/>

what Russia has been involved since the annexation of Crimea.⁷⁵ As a response, according to RT information, denouncing ‘misinformation’ – and making up their own stories – underqualified and overzealous Kremlin critics are bringing back decades-old suspicions and stereotypes. In the following graphs, it shows how ‘*Russophobia*’ was used after Crimea annexation, and how ‘Anti-Russia hysteria’ viralized when western media alleged a supposed intervention in the U.S. presidential elections.⁷⁶



Entries for Sputnik before 2014 refer to its predecessor, Voice of Russia
Graph 2. Mentions of word ‘Russophobia’



Note: References to Sputnik before 2014 cover MIA Moscow and Voice of Russia, its predecessors.
Graph 3. Mentions of words ‘Anti-Russian hysteria’

As seen, the international image and reputation of Russia have big challenges to fight. Following ahead with Lukyanov’s third objective in creating a friendship group around the world. According to the information given by the President of Russia website, during the third presidential term of Vladimir Putin, there have been around 112 official trips abroad in which the President of the Russian President held different high-level meetings with another head of states and leaders.⁷⁷

Therefore, Russia has been actively participating in different international and massive events, to propose innovative measures to encourage a positive image abroad.⁷⁸ With the celebration of the Sochi Winter Olympiads in 2014, Russia had the opportunity to encourage the creation of a successful image and reshape a stereotyped perception that western countries have from the Soviet era. According to the daily newspaper Moscow News, 81% of the Russian population was in favor of the Sochi Olympic bid, considered to be the highest level of support among all the candidate countries,

⁷⁵ #Putinatwar: How Russia Weaponized ‘Russophobia’. od. cit.

⁷⁶ Reuters. Russophobia: RT rates the 10 top Kremlin critics & their hilarious hate campaigns. [Electronic Resource] // RT News. 2017. URL: <https://www.rt.com/uk/404930-russophobia-kremlin-critics-paranoia/>

⁷⁷ President of Russia. Trips. [Electronic Resource]. // Kremlin. 2018. URL: <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/trips>

⁷⁸ Ostapenko N. Nation Branding of Russia through the Sochi Olympic Games. [Electronic Resource] // University of District of Columbia. 2010. URL: <http://www.na-businesspress.com/JMPP/OstapenkoWeb.pdf>

and almost 99% of young Russians (between the ages of 25 and 34) show an extremely high degree of interest.⁷⁹

Also, according to the President of the International Olympic Committee Thomas Bach said in an interview, "We arrived with great respect for the rich and varied history of Russia. We leave as friends of the Russian people." So, as we can see, hosting international world-class sports championships is an essential part of Russian nation branding aimed at promoting its message of openness to the world and, judging by the scale of these events, of its great power status.⁸⁰

In this sense, the Sochi Winter Olympic Games of 2014 were remarkable regarding Russian efforts aimed at shaping a positive image abroad and at the same time an opportunity for applying '*Sports Diplomacy*'. The Sochi Winter Olympics were a unique opportunity for countries to assert a global presence and earn admiration from other countries while from other analysts represents a chance to have China as a strong backing of bilateral relations with Russia, as Chinese President Xi Jinping attended to the opening ceremony by invitation of President Putin.⁸¹ Unfortunately, the global financial crisis and continuously falling crude oil prices severely impacted the Russian financial potential and economic outlook.⁸²

Based on the results of Country Brand Index, on its last report of 2015, it establishes that not all countries qualify as brand meaning by people having stronger dimensions according to the quality of life, values, and business, as they do for its culture, history, tourism and '*Made in*' expertise.⁸³ By this Russia increased a positive image from 63% to 80% awareness year on year since 2012, suggesting that it must be a correlate international coverage by hosting massive sports events. However, Russia also performs the worst out of all 30 countries for "welcoming to tourists" according to '*The Soft Power 30*'.⁸⁴

⁷⁹ Ostapenko N. od. cit.

⁸⁰ Ostapenko. od. cit.

⁸¹ Xi wins at Sochi with 'Sports Diplomacy'. [Electronic Resource]. // Global Times. 2014. URL: <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/840920.shtml>

⁸² Ostapenko. od. cit.

⁸³ Country Brand Index. [Electronic Resource]. // FutureBrand. 2015. URL: <https://www.futurebrand.com/uploads/CBI2014-5.pdf>

⁸⁴ The Soft Power 30. [Electronic Resource]. // USC Center Public Diplomacy. 2017. URL: <https://softpower30.com/country/russian-federation/>

3.2 Russia's Foreign Policy Concept 2012-2018

The world is undergoing radical transformations since the end of the cold war. These transformations have adopted a new dimension in recent times, when the transition of the last 25 years has given way to a deterioration of the international system, with serious confrontations in the international system. The conflict between Russia and the West is one of the most outstanding examples of this reality. Russia is one of the main centers of world politics and its influence in the global politics cannot be undermined when talking about new multilateral relations among states and actors in the current international environment.

It cannot be possible to understand the vastness of the post-Soviet space that gave rise to 15 independent republics, without first trying to understand Russia and the way in which this gigantic country was historically configured. Russia has managed to overcome the threat of disintegration and the most difficult political consequences of the fall of the Soviet Union while trying to maintain an active foreign policy. Regarding the process of globalization and its current orientation, Russia's post-soviet Foreign Policy reflects the impossibility of a unipolar world and the need to build a new architecture of international relations.

A new vision of the contemporary world in which the drastic transformation of international relations, the end of ideological confrontation and the constant overcoming of the legacy of the Cold War and its prejudices and stereotypes, the strengthening of Russia and its international position, have contributed to the significant improvement of global cooperation. An important resource in this international environment has been the Russian foreign policy and its ability to participate in several areas at the same time actively: in the Euro-Atlantic region, Asia-Pacific, the Middle East, Central Asia and the Arctic. Russia is also an established and active actor in various functional areas - nuclear non-proliferation, arms control, peaceful use of nuclear energy, cybersecurity, counterterrorism, among others.

The confrontations with the West as a whole are one of the significant characteristics of the current Russian foreign policy. The Ukrainian crisis has caused a worsening of the accumulated differences in Russia's relations with the West since the 1990s. The country has managed to overcome an attempt

at diplomatic isolation, adapt to the sanctions regime, strengthen its relations with China and other partners and actively participate in the Syrian conflict. Currently, there are numerous challenges to Russia; the underdevelopment of the economy and institutions poses a much greater threat to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country than any real military threat, against which Russia is well protected.

Participating in a globalized system and pursuing a foreign policy that benefits the development of the country, while preserving independence in strategic security, is the priority objective of Russia's global positioning which is manifested in the FPC of the Russian Federation. Aware of the fragile situation of post-Soviet Russia, Vladimir Putin came to power in 2000 after a decade of shock crisis with Boris Yeltsin, with a clear goal that materialized in the 'myth of return' to Russian values and prestige.

One element that has shaped the projection of Russian Foreign policy in the third presidential period of President Putin has been the way in which its FPC has focused on a prevailing understanding of realism. With the creation of the FPC of 2013, the current international relations of Russia consider the West as a source of increasing instability and a cause of many problems. In contrast to the Foreign Policy of 2008 which was established by Dimitry Medvedev during his presidency, Vladimir Putin began his third presidential mandate reflects deeper anxiety regarding an increasingly threatening international environment.

Regarding of current Russian PFC, President Vladimir Putin designated to Digital Diplomacy among the most effective Foreign Policy tools. At the same time, Putin has urged Russian diplomats to have a more intensively use of new technologies across multiple platforms, including in the social media, to explain the positions of the state.⁸⁵ Therefore, Kremlin only recognized an official website of the President⁸⁶, as well as other official links to an official 'YouTube' channel account, there are many other accounts which replicate the information using the image of the President in social media.

⁸⁵ Adesina od. cit.

⁸⁶ Kremlin. Vladimir Putin personal website. [Electronic Resource] // Kremlin. 2018. URL: <http://en.putin.kremlin.ru/>

Aimed with the intention of strengthening Russia's power capabilities, one of the central goals of Vladimir Putin's consisted in the repositioning of Russia as a key player in the International Relations field. In addition, Putin issued on the very first days an executive order 'On Measures to Implement the Russian Federation Foreign Policy' which aim consisted to "implement a coherent foreign policy of the Russian Federation that would protect its national interests based on the principles of pragmatism, transparency and a multiple-vector approach in forming a new, polycentric system of international relations."⁸⁷

There are multiple discourses given by Putin recognizing the desire of having Russia as a more active and dynamic country on the world stage by peaceful meanings. Also, many discussions have been created in the world in how Russia has perceived abroad and how the country is engaging its Soft Power. In July 2012, Putin defined Soft Power as "all about promoting one's interests and policies through persuasion and creating a positive perception of one's country, based not just on its material achievements but also its spiritual and intellectual heritage."⁸⁸ Then Putin continues stressing that Russia's image abroad stressing as part of his discourse:

*"Country's policies often suffer from a one-sided portrayal these days. Those who fire guns and launch air strikes here or there are the good guys, while those who warn of the need for restraint and dialogue are for some reason at fault. However, our fault lies in our failure to adequately explain our position. This is where we have gone wrong."*⁸⁹

The increasing relevance of 'Soft Power' was also involved for the very first time as part of the Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation in the year 2013, which highlighted the problems in which Russia was conceived on a New World Order. As Lukyanov highlighted, with the "introduction of the concept of soft power stands out; in fact, it is a projection of one's own identity onto other countries and the rest of the world. The strong accent on soft power is indirect evidence that Russia intends to shape its ideological and moral baggage in such a way as to be able to offer it as an alternative in the global market of values."⁹⁰

⁸⁷ Kremlin. Executive Order on measures to implement Foreign Policy. [Electronic Resource] // President of Russia Official Website. 2012. URL: <http://en.special.kremlin.ru/catalog/keywords/125/events/15256>

⁸⁸ Kremlin. Meeting with Russian Ambassadors and permanent representatives in international organizations. [Electronic Resource] // President of Russia Official website. 2012. URL: <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/15902>

⁸⁹ Kremlin. Meeting with Russian Ambassadors and permanent representatives in international organizations. od cit.

⁹⁰ Latukhina K. Makarychev M. Russia Updates its Foreign Policy [Electronic Resource] // Russia Today. 2013. URL: https://www.rbth.com/international/2013/02/25/russia_updates_its_foreign_policy_concept_23211.html

Soft power was then defined by Kremlin in the FP concept as a “comprehensive toolkit for achieving foreign policy objectives building on civil society potential, information, cultural and other methods and technologies alternative to traditional diplomacy, is becoming an indispensable component of modern international relation.”⁹¹ Russia is also conceived as one of the main centers of world politics, and the core of the country's global positioning should be to facilitate the resolution of conflicts and help create a comfortable, democratic, controllable and secure international environment, without restrictions or divisions.

The 2013 Foreign Policy Concept of Russia consists of five sections which include an introduction with a general explanation of the basic principles, objectives, and goals of the policy. As treated previously in 2000 and 2008, the FP concept used a systemic description of the basic principles, priorities, and objectives of Russia’s external action, and therefore its critical evaluation. Beyond the mere exposure of its contents that has already been done in previous articles, its key to anticipating the way in which the country will relate to the rest of the world in the coming years. As Makarychev acknowledges, the 2013 FP takes into account the global changes that have occurred in recent years, in particular, the global financial crisis, the Arab Spring and its aftermath and ever-increasing globalization.⁹²

Considering new international conflicts and developments, on November 30 of 2016, President Vladimir Putin signed a new Russian Foreign Policy Concept.⁹³ In this document, Russia updated its aspirations to pursue an active policy in the field of international security, establishing as a priority the urgency to ensure the security, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country. As well with the creation of the necessary conditions for the growth of the competitiveness of its economy, strengthen the position of Russia as a predominant country in the modern world and regain its influence on stability and security of the global democratic system.

⁹¹ Kremlin. Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation. od. cit.

⁹² Latukhina K. Makarychev M. od. cit.

⁹³ Kremlin. Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation. [Electronic Resource] // Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. 2016. URL: http://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/official_documents/-/asset_publisher/CptlCk6BZ29/content/id/2542248

The new Concept does not prescribe any fundamental changes in the priorities of Russian foreign policy continue to uphold the national interest and to achieve Russia's strategic national priorities. This new FP concept may be perceived as a justification to continuous changing of the international situation knowing that Russia modified almost all major policy documents such as doctrines of war, maritime and information security, relating indirectly to foreign and security policy.

According to Rodkiewicz, as a conditional offer ship in which Russia and the West are facing similar challenges and threats, generated by Islamic radicalism on the one hand, and the rise of Asian powers on the other.⁹⁴ Just a few hours after publishing the new FP concept, President Vladimir Putin argued that “unlike some of our colleagues abroad, who consider Russia, an adversary, we do not seek and never have sought enemies. We need friends. However, we will not allow our interests to be infringed upon or ignored.”⁹⁵

Following the narrative of what Russia aspires to promote abroad, the Global Diplomacy Index (GDI) rank the Russian Federation in the fourth place⁹⁶ out of sixty countries that are part of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). According to this index, Russia has in total 143 Embassies and High Commissions, 87 Consulates-General and Consulates, 10 Permanent Missions and Delegations to multilateral organizations, two other representatives. Also, by considering Digital Diplomacy Review study⁹⁷, Russia's MFA has been cataloged in 2016 and 2017 in the fourth place within the top ten Global Ranking performance. By contemplating a Russian Foreign Policy concept is based according to the Constitution of the Russian Federation, understanding its implications may help to overcome possible interpretations and perceptions of Russian activity in the international affairs.

⁹⁴ Rodkiewicz W. The Russian Federation's Foreign Policy Concept [Electronic Resource] // Osrodek Studio Wschodnich. 2013. URL: <https://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/analyses/2013-02-20/russian-federations-foreign-policy-concept>

⁹⁵ Kremlin. Annual Address of Vladimir Putin, President of the Russian Federation, to the Federal Assembly. [Electronic Resource] // The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. 2016. URL: http://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/2541648

⁹⁶ 2017 Global Diplomacy Index. [Electronic Resource] // Lowy Institute. 2017. URL: https://globaldiplomacyindex.lowyinstitute.org/country_rank.html

⁹⁷ Digital Diplomacy Review 2017. [Electronic Resource] // Istanbul Center for Digital Affairs. 2017. URL: <http://digital.diplomacy.live/methodology-scope/>

3.3 Russia's digital diplomacy and geopolitics influence in Twitter

Russia's interaction on a complex system of International Relations brings many opportunities and challenges as part of an undergoing system which states needs to constantly adapt to a diversity of factors such as international conflicts, economic crisis and social imbalances that affect its diplomacy directly. With the evolving relevance of social media, Russia has active participation through official accounts as part of its Soft Power measures as part of its FPC objectives of 2016.

On the presidential address at the inauguration ceremony in May 2012, President Vladimir Putin gave a clear example of what this new era may bring to Russia Foreign Policy future attitudes:⁹⁸

"We want to live, and we will live in a successful Russia that the world respects as a reliable, open, honest and predictable partner. I believe in the strength of our common goals and ideals, our determination to transform our country, our people's united efforts, and our common desire for freedom, truth, and justice. We are ready for the tests and accomplishments ahead. Russia has a great past and just as great a future."

In social media mentions of high ranks officials from the MFA of Russia has been a constant method used to refer to different discourses, international events, official speeches and many others key elements of current diplomatic circumstances. In the following sections, a social media analysis will be supported with those countries that Russia has more interaction regarding mentions, hashtags, and RTs to compare its influence with those strategies given in the current FPC that has been already explained.

As shown by Twiplomacy⁹⁹, the Russian Foreign ministry (@MFA_Russia) consistently tags its relevant embassies and other influential Twitter users in its pictures and is considered to be among the best connected by mutual peer connections online. As also discussed in the same report "being mutually connected on Twitter is not only a courteous gesture but also allows these leaders to direct message each other and to have private conversations on Twitter, a feature which can also be turned on by default."¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ Kremlin. Vladimir Putin inaugurated as President of Russia. [Electronic Resource] // President of Russia. 2016. URL: <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/15224>

⁹⁹ Twiplomacy Study 2017. od. cit.

¹⁰⁰ Twiplomacy. od. cit.

The net of actors displayed in the 20 lists done by @MFA_Russia managed different kinds of profiles in which it could be found a list of Foreign MFA with 233 members accounts, a list of Russian Embassies with 244 accounts referring to Embassies, consulates, permanent representation, missions, trade & cultural representations. Managing the use of Periscope in Twitter to ‘scope’ weekly press conferences by Maria Zakharova as well as press conferences with the participation of Foreign Minister. Sergei Lavrov; show another way in how the Russian version @MID_Russia display its content of video having around half million of followers on this platform owned by Twitter.



Image 8. Best connected World Leaders by Twiplomacy

The use of personal accounts in social media of the Russian Government also has an important impact. Among the most listed world leaders in Twitter, according to Twiplomacy study 2017 Primer Minister Dmitri Medvedev (@MedvedevRussia) shows to be in the second place with approximately 44,436 times that his accounts appear in lists, just after @RealDonaldTrump who appears in 69,896 Twitter lists. Being a verified account by Twitter, @MedvedevRussia has around 5.47 million followers on his Russian version, followed by @MedvedevRussiaE with 1.13 million followers on the English version and also a verified account by Twitter.

Russia and Western countries

The annexation of Crimea represents a before and an after in the position of Russia in the international system. Unlike the Georgia War of 2008, in which Russia decided to withdraw its troops, leaving only some military units in the "independentist" zones, this time the Kremlin feels strong enough not to back off, even to annex new territory (see image 9; Appendix A). For the first time in many years, Russia acted with the security and autonomy of a Great Power, without fear of reprisals.

The fact that the annexation of Crimea has been consummated without much opposition is a sign that Russia is reaching -and perhaps has already reached- its goal of repositioning the regional and global structure of power, recovering its historical role as the central actor of international relations. Following the twitter behavior, it could be analyzed that during the timeline of the events the account of the President of Russia in English in Twitter (@KremlinRussia_e) got one of its most well-positioned historical tweets with 83 Retweets, 31 likes, and 38 comments.

A few days later, on March 28 the U.S. Department of State launches the #UnitedforUkraine hashtag campaign in conjunction with President Obama's trip to Europe. The hashtag was hijacked by Russia, which in April 2014 offered its interpretation through the Russian Foreign Ministry Twitter account in English (@MFA_Russia). Using the same hashtag MFA account of Russia used it around 115 times in different tweets will promoting at the same time messages urging countermeasures to de-escalate the conflict in the region. During several the weeks, the hashtag was used by the MFA official account in Twitter followed by the hashtag #Lavrov referring to those statements given by Mr. Sergei Lavrov.

Although Mr. Lavrov does not have a twitter account, MFA mentioned him with the hashtag #Lavrov followed by different tweets in which the MFA report the constant violation to guarantees on the human rights of what happened in the city of Odessa on May the second, in which 46 people died and many others results injured. According to the official statements given by the TASS Agency and Sputnik International News, Mr. Lavrov constantly urged on having an open dialogue in the roadmap to establish peace and avoid using ultra-radicals that remembered to Nazism movements.¹⁰¹ A similar case happens to the speaker of Russia's MFA, Maria Zakharova, which also does not have a twitter account but since her appointment, in August 2015 the use of the hashtag #Zakharova has been in constant use. (See image 10; Appendix A)

There is no doubt that the annexation of Crimea has received a relevant part of coverage to the media according to the tensions that have given in the region. Raised as an ethical-legal confrontation, which

¹⁰¹ Russia will not let fascism in Europe-Lavrov. [Electronic Resource] // TASS. 2014. URL: <http://tass.com/world/730718>

puts the United States and the EU, the defense of international legality and on behalf of Russia, respect for the self-determination of peoples, the Crimea conflict implies a diversity of economic, political, social and military consequences. The U.S. and the EU leading efforts to implement multiple sanctions against Russia since the reunification of the Crimean Peninsula with the Russian state in 2014, may pursue the main goal to force the Russian president, Vladimir Putin, and the Russian population, to capitulate, something in which they have failed.

Since then there has been an escalation of sanctions against Russia, promoted by the United States, including its withdrawal from the G-8, to which Moscow has responded with reciprocal sanctions. Also, the Crimean conflict is still an ongoing issue that represents a continues dissemination of information in both traditional and new social media spaces. An analysis of social media content allows having an idea to construct those narratives which frame the image in which Russia and West are portrayed. Following the official accounts of Kremlin and the Ministry of Foreign affairs, there is a strong correlation among that image that a state wants to promote by determining its influence as a proactive state that acts peacefully and does not react aggressively to Western countries.

Some interactions, comments, and Retweets help to promote a standard of success in how a Twitter account could impact on its audience. Consequently, information warfare may produce a permanent flux of images, videos, messages, and discourses in which the narrative consists in promoting state information policy. Considering that current Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation urges “to bolster the standing of Russian mass media and communication tools in the global information space and convey Russia’s perspective on the international process to a wider international community.”¹⁰² Russia’s strategy in social media and especially on Twitter could be defended by arguing the defense of alternative information against the western mainstream.

In addition, as seen in the following table, a predominant discourse against sanctions has been used in Twitter official MFA account, in accordance to the effort that Russia’s FPC which establishes: “taking into consideration how effectively sanctions accomplish the tasks of maintaining international peace and security and preventing the deterioration of the humanitarian situation;

¹⁰² Kremlin. Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation. od. cit.

contribute to eliminating from international relations illegal, unilateral coercive measures adopted in violation of the UN Charter and other norms of international law.”¹⁰³

Table 2. Amount of mentions in Twitter from May 7, 2012, to April 15, 2018.

Twitter account	Sanctions	West	Ukraine	Poroshenko	Crimea	NATO	U.S.A.	Obama	Trump	EU
@MFA_Russia	296	161	96	59	199	589	131	51	22	907
@KremlinRussia_e	17	7	105	8	70	10	1	32	20	11
@PutinRF_eng	1	0	25	18	23	0	3	25	20	0
@MedvedevRussiaE	14	2	16	1	24	2	0	4	4	10

Note: Own table based on information given by Twitter timeline.

The EU and other Western countries alleged that Russia has also been providing a lifeline to separatists in eastern Ukraine, where a conflict has killed more than 10,000 people since 2014. In March 2014, the European Council agreed on the first diplomatic measures in response to Russian actions in Ukraine. EU leaders also set out the second stage of further measures in the absence of de-escalator steps and additional far-reaching consequences for EU-Russia relations in case of further destabilization of the situation in Ukraine.¹⁰⁴

The EU Member States also supported the suspension of negotiations over Russia's joining the OECD and the International Energy Agency. The EU-Russia summit was canceled, and the EU Member States decided not to hold regular bilateral summits. Bilateral talks with Russia on visa matters as well as on the New Agreement between the EU and Russia were suspended.¹⁰⁵ Moscow's foreign policies towards each of the regions, as well as global and domestic variables, must take into account the evolution of the regional dynamics itself, as well as the correlation of national forces in the countries in question, and especially the projection that Russia is pursuing.

Europe is certain to remain at the top of Russia's priorities thanks to the same good old geography. Europe is an essential partner in Russia's economic growth and working relations with the EU are essential for the Eurasian Union to function properly. At the same time strategically, Russia is indispensable for European security. Without constructive engagement with Russia, any kind of

¹⁰³ Kremlin. Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation. od. cit.

¹⁰⁴ European Union. EU sanctions against Russia Ove Ukraine crisis. [Electronic Resource] // European Union newsroom. URL: https://europa.eu/newsroom/highlights/special-coverage/eu-sanctions-against-russia-over-ukraine-crisis_en

¹⁰⁵ European Union. od. cit.

balance of power in Europe will simply not be viable, as demonstrated by the Ukraine crisis.¹⁰⁶ Even though the narrative of the conflict of West versus Russia may give a negative image depending on the audience and the accounts used to promote a specific discourse, the system of sanctions and western social media allegations could be also interpreted as one of the main countermeasures of the Russian side when analyzing Kremlin's official account in English and Russian version.

Among the most virialized messages in both social media official accounts, the coverage of the first visit that President Putin made to Sevastopol on the first anniversary of the Crimean annexation to Russia in 2015 belongs in the top 15 messages with most interaction among its audience. Also, despite questionable measures of troll's accounts or artificial methods for positioning specific messages, there is no doubt that Crimea conflict has become one of the most portrayed messages with vast impact on the Russian audience of Twitter. (See image 11; Appendix A)

For Westerners, the annexation of Crimea and military and economic aid to pro-Russian separatists is not only a condemnable violation of international law. According to the former Ambassador of the USA in Russia, Michael McFaul, the Russian response in Ukraine has nothing to do with the politics of the West, but corresponds exclusively to an internal dynamic and is the result of the fear of the Government of Vladimir Putin that the Russians can catch and demand democratic changes.¹⁰⁷ For years, Russia has been striving to extend its influence to southeastern Europe, where Serbia serves as a foothold for a friendly enclave on a hostile continent. As seen in the Twitter official account of Russia's MFA there is a great interaction in some messages regarding Balkan's region as a relevant position for Russian Foreign Policy. (See images 12, 13 and 14; Appendix A)

One of the main negative turning points in relations between Russia and the West has been the war with Georgia, in which Moscow intervened with the argument of protecting its troops and the civilian population. However, a disastrous action caused by the EU in the Ukrainian political crisis derived from an internal division of the EU and had fomented the confrontation with Moscow. The EU as well

¹⁰⁶ Tsvetsov A. Russia's pivot to the East: to Asia or from Europe? [Electronic Resource] // RIAC. 2016. URL: <http://russiancouncil.ru/en/analytics-and-comments/analytics/Russia-s-pivot-to-the-east-to-asia-or-from-europe/>

¹⁰⁷ McFaul M. Confronting Putin's Russia. [Electronic Resource] // The New York Times. 2014. URL: <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/03/24/opinion/confronting-putins-russia.html>

as the U.S., has imposed a great number of sanctions on a hundred Russian personalities (travel and freezing of assets) and activities in the oil, banking and defense sectors.

In the same way, both the EU and Russia have raised their regional influence in Eastern Europe regarding 'zero-sum' as mutually exclusive options. The fear of the expansion of NATO in Eastern Europe is not without foundation but has obvious historical, political and geostrategic foundations. First of all, it is relevant to remember that NATO is a clear symbol of the rivalry between the two blocs during the Cold War. Also, The Russian political elite has on numerous occasions criticized the growing interference of Western democracies and their international organizations in the national affairs of other countries.

A European discourse based on values -not always endorsed by the facts- is difficult to assume by the Kremlin, which bases its foreign policy on a traditional concept of sovereignty and national interest; and considers principles such as democracy and human rights as a mere justification for the interference of the great powers in the internal affairs of third countries. Social media has been a relevant actor as a merging point on contemporary conflicts, as an example, in September 2015 the President of Ukraine implemented a decree of banning access to Russian social networks were also added as part of the new sanctions that affect more than 1,200 individuals and more than 450 companies.¹⁰⁸

Ukraine President, Petro Poroshenko, argued the need to implement a broader national security strategy to defend a possible intromission of alleged cyber attacks and propaganda, has also become part of a mediatic flag used by western countries. As part of the latest measures taken by the administration of Barack Obama in retaliation for the alleged electoral hack sponsored by the government of Russia, through an executive order Obama ordered the expulsion of 35 officers from the United States and imposed economic sanctions on Russian state agencies. In response, official Russian accounts maintain a posture to evade confrontation during the last days of Obama's administration. (See images 15 and 16; Appendix A)

¹⁰⁸ Forbidden Likes and Shares-Poroshenko's Ban of Russian Social Media Networks. [Electronic Resource] // Democracy Reporting International. 2017. URL: <http://democracy-reporting.org/forbidden-likes-and-shares-poroshenkos-ban-of-russian-social-networks/>

US new President Donald Trump started his tenure commending President Putin's strong leadership attributes. The geopolitical clashes that for decades have confronted the Kremlin with different US governments hoped to give a certain twist after the possession of Donald Trump as president number 45 of the U.S. The first interaction of congratulations on Twitter by the account @PutinRF_eng managed to have 3.9 thousand RT's, 6.4 thousand likes and 593 comments; as it could be inferred many good expectations were on its way. Therefore, the implementation of sanctions remains a burning problem as the Trump government continues to face accusations of Russian collusion in the 2016 US presidential election. What first seemed to be a shift in the Russian-US relations with Donald Trump presidential election victory, has been increasingly deteriorated. (See image 17; Appendix A)

Foreign policy priorities of Trump's administration take place in the midst of a very complex situation, under conditions of serious pressure from its opponents. A leadership with changeable mood and different tones in which nobody knows which is going to be his next move. Trump's Foreign Policy started to ask and dissociated himself from permanent alliances with China, criticized NATO and the intervention in Iraq. He also opted for harsh measures against jihadist terrorists, including torture, and a more aggressive campaign against the self-styled Islamic State (ISIS), along with an increase in defense budgets.

Trump thus forged a niche in which he combined nationalism with tough positions against terrorism, illegal immigration, free trade and permanent alliances, and with criticisms of past military interventions, knowing the great cost they have in the field domestic. There is always a break when a new president arrives, but never last. Only later, with the snowball of supposed revelations about the Russian interference in the elections that Hillary Clinton lost in 2016, the Kremlin regained the vital tone in its counterweight to the West despite the intense US allegations to accuse Russia to weaken it before the world's this.

An official investigation led by Robert Mueller, the Special Prosecutor in charge of investigating the Russian plot that interfered in the 2016 US elections, delivered a first major accusation. Even though all the controversy given by the media about the results of the recent presidential elections in the US and the supposed Russian intervention, the first meeting among Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov,

Ambassador Sergey Kislyak and President Donald Trump took place in the White House. This first meeting according to the Kremlin's twitter account, it had a great diplomatic impact considering that Donald Trump welcomes the Russian delegation just a few hours later Trump fired James B. Comey as director of the FBI.

Another expected meeting, among President Trump and President Putin during the G-20 Summit in Hamburg resulted in social media by showing a unique tweet in which the Kremlin official account suggests a productive and positive meeting.¹⁰⁹ The second meeting of the Russian and U.S. head of states in Vietnam during APEC's leader's meeting brought the opportunity to sign a joint statement on solving Syria issues after the several phone telephone conversations of the head of states. (See images 18, 19 and 20; Appendix A)

A constant radical change of Trump's foreign policy by using intensively his own Twitter account in which his pronouncements and his actions are unpredictable, constantly surprise the geopolitics in which different decisions were taken in great mood against Syria, North Korea, China, Iran and recently Russia. Despite some efforts given during the first months of Trump's presidency, the historical conflict between Russia and the West is one of the most outstanding examples of this reality that may continue. Regarding one of the tweets of President Donald Trump, in which he had threatened the possibility of using harder measures of force against those allies of Russia, the speaker of President Putin answer that Russia is not doing Twitter Diplomacy and prefers to make serious approaches.¹¹⁰

Comparing the current situation with the Cold War, as the most immediate historical reference with similar implications and actors involved, this is a new model, less predictable, more complex in a volatile region, with regional powers that do not act with the rigid bipolar scheme of other times. The UN Secretary-General, António Guterres, warned that relations between Russia and the United States are deteriorating to a situation similar, to a large extent, to what we experienced during the Cold War

¹⁰⁹ Kremlin. Meeting with US President Donald Trump. [Electronic Resource] // President of Russia. 2017. URL: <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/55006>

¹¹⁰ Moscow favor serious approaches rather than 'Twitter Diplomacy'. [Electronic Resource] // TASS. 2018. URL: <http://tass.com/politics/999140>

and called for safeguards to be set.¹¹¹ Despite in not having a direct intervention in Foreign Affairs issues, the impact of the following image shows the impact of a tweet of the current Prime Minister Dmitri Medvedev, referring to an increasingly bad situation with President Trump and having around 2.9 thousand RT's, 4 thousand likes and 4.3 thousand comments of users.



Image 21. Tweet by a verified account of Prime Minister of Russia.

Russia's relations with the West have passed from a brief period of pragmatic acceptance of American unipolarity to an increasingly confrontational line. Same history with Europe, a relationship in which, however, there is a greater intensification of reconciling interests due to the greater degree of interdependence. As for the situation in which the UK directly involved the supposed participation of Russia in poisoning with a nerve agent the Russian citizen and alleged former KGB spy Aleksa Skripal and her daughter, an announced expulsion of a group of Russian diplomats from the United States and a score of 14 countries from the EU, showed a remarkable example of solidarity of western countries against incriminations to Russia.

Taking in account that it occurs at a time of tension in the Relations between the EU and the United Kingdom through the Brexit negotiations, it could be inferred that this impasse context could be a coordinated effort to diminish the image of Russia abroad. In response, Foreign Minister of Russia responds that “The measures would be reciprocal ... They include expulsion of the equivalent number of diplomats and they include our decision to withdraw our agreement to allow the United States' general consulate to operate in St. Petersburg.”¹¹² (See image 22; Appendix A)

For Latin America, Russia both regions face the common challenge of overcoming the influence of the United States among their regions. As established by Davydov, the geographical distance that separates both regions, Russia's foreign policy maintains a diplomatic approach that allows seeing

¹¹¹ UN/Syria. [Electronic resource] / Audiovisual Library. 2013. URL: <https://www.unmultimedia.org/avlibrary/asset/2129/2129190/>

¹¹² Karpukhin S. Moscow gives 60 U.S. Diplomats a week to Leave Russia. [Electronica Resource] // The Moscow Times. 2018. URL: <https://themoscowtimes.com/news/lavrov-says-russia-will-close-down-us-consulate-in-st-petersburg-60992>

more clearly that solutions are only possible within the framework of solidarity, coordinated and truly multilateral action.¹¹³ The interaction on the social media between the Russian official of Kremlin and MFA are having just a few numbers of tweets mentions for Latin American Countries, despite considering Brazil is part of the member states of the BRICS and one of the most important regional agreements in the world.

However, considering the number of RTs and interactions, Venezuela is among the most popular tweets in which the MFA accounts has a relevant respond with its audience (See image 23; Appendix A). The specific case of Bolivia as a current rotating member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), along with the Russian Federation both of them vote against a resolution proposed by the United States, France, and the United Kingdom to condemn the chemical weapons attack perpetrated last week in Syria.¹¹⁴

Russia, Middle East, and African countries

Since the beginning of 2011, Russian diplomacy led since March 2004 by Sergei Lavrov, lived a succession of shocks before the events of the so-called ‘Arab Spring’. The regional changes in the Middle East and specifically in the Arab countries have ended up presenting Russia with a series of opportunities that, to a certain extent, has helped to restore its political and economic influence in the region. Even Syria and Iran, which initially led to significant international wear, have come to legitimize it as a necessary ally.

Following the sanctions imposed by the West during the Ukrainian crisis, Russia has surprisingly accelerated its relationship with the Al-Sis regime. According to Wahid Hanna “the most visible manifestations of the relationship remain the unabashed diplomatic support that Egypt now receives from Putin and the visible cultivation of alternative anchors for its international and regional policy.”¹¹⁵ On August 2014 a first official state visit of President Al-Sisi to Moscow strength new tights with President. On October 31 of 2015, Isis downed a Russian jet killing 224 passengers and

¹¹³ Davydov V. Rusia en América Latina (Y Viceversa) [Electronic Resource] // Coyuntura. 2010. URL: <http://www20.iadb.org/intal/catalogo/PE/2010/05167.pdf>

¹¹⁴ Noticias ONU. [Electronic Resources] // ONU. 2018. URL: <https://news.un.org/es/story/2017/10/1388531>

¹¹⁵ Wahid M. The United States and the future of Egyptian-Russian Relations. [Electronic Resource] // Hoover Institution. 2017. URL: <https://www.hoover.org/research/united-states-and-future-egyptian-russian-relations>

crew on board. Investigations intensified the relation of Russia and Egypt, which also finds its argument in the common objective of the fight against terrorism.

With this act which was at the same time followed by Moscow on its Twitter accounts to protect the interests of civilians in Egypt, allowed to combine interests and tactics with which to counterbalance other external political forces. Most of the interactions given by both countries were shown by different ministerial meeting in which different Mr. Sergei Lavrov show to have an intense agenda in which most of them relied on promoting humanitarian assistance and ceasefire in Syria. (See image 24, 25 and 26; Appendix A)

The conflict in Ukraine, which began in November 2013 with the demonstrations of the Maidan Square in Kiev, the Russian annexation of Crimea and the Russian military participation in the conflict in eastern Ukraine, have been linked to the events in Libya and Syria, allowing Russia to respond to the EU and the US and play its great world power. The conflict in Syria is a case of critical study of the activity deployed by Russia to prevent military intervention in the country, defended by the US, and the fall of President Assad.

From an international security aspect, Syria is the scenario in which to deal more effectively with the Islamist extremism that also threatens Russia and that overturns the old alliances formed by the US in the area, forcing it to modify or clarify its position before the regime. According to Baunov, “for Russia, the recent diplomatic talks on Syria in Vienna reflected the kind of world it likes to see—a latter-day version of the nineteenth-century Concert of Europe. It was a vision of a multilateral world order in which several major powers came together to do a deal, but no single one was in the ascendant.”¹¹⁶

Syria’s conflict is a microcosm of the great world confrontations and, therefore, the center of many interests for Russia; it is the board of many moves of scopes so different that they go from the top of the world order to problems of Russian internal security. Having in account that the Russian

¹¹⁶ Baunov A. The Concert of Vienna: Russia’s New Strategy. [Electronic Resource] // Carnegie Moscow Center. 2015. URL: <http://carnegie.ru/commentary/61892>

'diplomatic offensive' in the region has increased during the last five years, and in many ways, Russia seems to want to occupy the space left by the United States that would prefer to focus its efforts on the Asia-Pacific region.

Unlike the Libyan case, this time Russia decided to take a firm stance against the direct intervention of NATO, not only deciding to intervene directly in Syria from the bombing of territories controlled by ISIS, but also in keeping his ally, Bashar al-Assad in power. The strategical role Damascus being an important ally of Moscow in the region, also keeps in mind to consider that Syria is the only military installation outside Soviet territory that remained after the fall of the communist bloc.¹¹⁷ Also, the UN Security Council will again become the center of the negotiation between the great powers, situating - on the one hand - the United States, the European Union, Turkey and the Gulf countries (Qatar and Saudi Arabia), supporting the opposition armed to the regime of Bashar al-Assad.

Since the beginning of the conflict, most of the tweets used by Russia's MFA tried to explain the use of military assistance to the government of Bashar Al-Assad, recognizing previous cooperation with Syria years before of the beginning of ISIS problematic. A great part of the tweets during the year 2012, on the political transition of Syria and the Russian demands for Iran to be present in the subsequent negotiations, could be interpreted in the possible complication to set the United States on the table with a good approach. However, communication among Foreign Affairs of Ministers of US and Russia continue in having open bridges of dialogue to achieve in September 2013 a joint effort to eliminate chemical arsenal.

The case of Syria is of vital importance for the existing Russian interests, both in economic terms, focused on the export of arms and energy resources - gas and oil - for an approximate value of 20 trillion dollars by the time the conflict began. As in political-strategic terms, Damascus being an important ally of Moscow in the region and considering that Syria is the only military installation outside Soviet territory that remained after the fall of the communist bloc in the town of Tartus, naval

¹¹⁷ Gvsodev N. Marsh C. Russian Foreign Policy: interests, vectors and sectors. [Electronic Resource] // SAGE. 2014. p. 307

installation logistics that allows repair and supply to Russian ships that transit through the Mediterranean.

Despite the tweet message on December 6 of 2017 in which the Ministry of Defense of Russia (MOD) stated that Syria was completely liberated from ISIS, there are still ongoing situations which make the territory a hotspot in global politics (see image 27; Appendix A). Some media have defined it, with some irony, as ‘the victory tour’ of Vladimir Putin in the Middle East. The official visit of the Russian president to Egypt and Turkey, accompanied by his surprise visit to the ‘*Hmeymim*’ airbase in Syria, has managed to attract the media focus and highlight the trend that many experts have been observing for half a decade. The growing interest of Russia for the region, where it has managed to position itself as a key player. According to Hendawi and Isachenko, the tour highlighted Russia's expanded reach in the Middle East and the global clout of its leader, who announced last week he is seeking re-election for another six-year term in March 2018.¹¹⁸

From the diplomatic point of view, increasing involvement of the Russian MFA counteracted the US hegemony in world affairs, legitimized and accredited the role of Russia as a great power in the sense of a traditional leader relevant to world stability. In the short term, the number of negotiations from a diplomatic and military perspective shown in Twitter by the Kremlin and MFA official account, show an image of Russia facing the division and dispersion of objectives and multilateral decision-making in the West. According to the results of ‘The Soft Power 30’, “Russian Soft Power has seen a boost with its handling of the Syrian peace process, having taken the driver’s seat in negotiations as Assad’s most powerful confidante and helped broker a cease-fire agreement.”¹¹⁹

For a while, there could be found a narrative from the Russian official perspective trying to show Turkish authorities using non-transparent methods in the Syrian conflict, including social media allegations on Russia’s MFA tweets in which Ankara was trying to change the ethnic composition of

¹¹⁸ Hendawi H. Isachenkov V. A confident and upbeat Putin goes on Mideast ‘victory’ tour. [Electronic Resource] // Chicago Tribune. 2017. URL: <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/nationworld/ct-russia-putin-syria-military-base-20171211-story.html>

¹¹⁹ The Soft Power 30. od. cit.

Syria in its interests.¹²⁰ Also, the Russian Ministry of Defense (MOD) also alleged that the same criminal networks which were smuggling oil into Turkey were also supplying weapons, equipment, and training to Islamic State and other Islamist groups.¹²¹ Turkish government even received a confrontation with Twitter when the Kremlin official account shamed by direct involvement with ISIS organization.

The escalation of disagreements in the Middle East between both countries, especially with the so-called ‘plane incident’, the downing of a Russian bomber by a Turkish fighter jet on November 24 of 2015, had direct negative consequences on the almost two-decade-old Turkish-Russian *modus vivendi*.¹²² Moreover, the assassination in 2016 of the Russian ambassador in Turkey by an Isis extremist, summed to boiled up the relations between the two countries with energetic reactions in social media in which the audience in Twitter actively interacts.

However, despite the international disagreements Russia played a key role to realize Turkey’s interests in Syria. The Russian choice also prevented Turkey’s isolation in the region by bringing Iran into the equation on Turkey’s side. Iran had always been a potential natural ally for Turkey when it came to the Kurdish issue. As a result, Turkey’s old rivals, Iran and Russia, though key backers of the Syrian regime, quickly became Ankara’s new allies against the US-led coalition. Therefore, currently, there is an ongoing commercial for having a Russia-Turkey energy project to consolidate Turkey’s first nuclear power plant in the country.¹²³ (See images 28, 29 and 30; Appendix A)

The Middle East may be shown as an instrumental area to recover, and show, a position of strength. Due to its geographic leadership, the Russian footprint in the Middle East in the last years has

¹²⁰ Kremlin. Briefing with Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Maria Zakharova, Moscow, January 14, 2016. [Electronic Resource] // Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. 2016. URL: http://www.mid.ru/en/briefingi/-/asset_publisher/MCZ7HQUMdqBY/content/id/2012916

¹²¹ Brooks-Pollock T. Russia Unveils ‘proof’ Turkey’s Erdogan is smuggling Isis oil across border from Syria. [Electronic Resource] // Independent. 2015. URL: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-releases-proof-turkey-is-smuggling-isis-oil-over-its-border-a6757651.html>

¹²² Celikpala M. Russia’s policies in the Middle East and the Pendulum of Turkish-Russian relations. [Electronic Resource] // The Jamestown Foundation. 2017. URL: <https://jamestown.org/program/russias-policies-middle-east-pendulum-turkish-russian-relations/>

¹²³ Russia starts building Turkey’s first nuclear power plant. [Electronic Resource] // World Nuclear News. 2018. URL: <http://www.world-nuclear-news.org/NN-Russia-starts-building-Turkeys-first-nuclear-power-plant-03041801.html>

increased celebrating treaties with countries like Egypt, Iran, and Algeria; which the U.S. and other western countries have refused to do so. In the following table, it could be seen those mentions that Russian official accounts to those Middle East countries which has more high-level meetings in different kind of topics such as security, the military supply of weapons, oil and gas trade, among others.

Table 3. Amount of mentions in Twitter from May 7, 2012, to April 15, 2018.

Twitter account	ISIS	Syria	Afghanistan	Iran	Turkey	Saudi Arabia	Iraq	Israel	Palestine	Egypt	Algeria
@MFA_Russia	187	2,136	256	487	275	65	272	159	14	205	42
@KremlinRussia_e	4	111	10	43	65	32	25	34	10	55	3
@PutinRF_eng	1	21	20	18	23	8	5	9	7	20	1
@MedvedevRussiaE	3	16	1	0	10	0		1	0	5	1

Note: Own table based on information given by Twitter timeline.

Finally, Russia is one of the key actors on the political settlement of the Syrian conflict. Russia's armed forces have made a decisive contribution to the defeat of Islamic State and another terrorist organizations operating in Syria. The country's stance on all these issues is buffered by the fact that it is a permanent member of the UN Security Council. With 12 vetoes of Russia as a permanent member in the UN Security Council, the U.S. has also argued that Russia is putting in risk the future of Syria; which is being defended by the Russian government for having the same path as Libya, which is considered to be a collapsed state.¹²⁴

Russia and CIS countries

The neighboring countries of Russia that make up the so-called 'near exterior' fall into the circle of priority. One of the top priorities of the Regional Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation relies on "developing bilateral and multilateral cooperation with member States of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and further strengthening integration structures within the CIS involving Russia."¹²⁵ For many critics, the role of CIS has also been conceived to be a paternalistic policy of Russia towards these countries to preserve their position of power, and their actions are focused on restoring their leadership in this organization.

¹²⁴ Borger J. Inzaurrealde B. Russian vetoes are putting UN security council's legitimacy at risk, says US. [Electronic Resource] // The Guardian. 2015. URL: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/sep/23/russian-vetoes-putting-un-security-council-legitimacy-at-risk-says-us>

¹²⁵ Kremlin. Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation. od. cit.

Currently, the CIS serves as a stage for the discussion of topics related to social, economic, political, cultural, educational, health, environmental and informational development. The opportunities and threats that Russia faces in the CIS give this area a priority in Russian foreign policy. The ex-Soviet republics face tasks of modernization and development similar to those of Russia. An important issue that prevails in the CIS cooperation and the discourse given in the social media refers in great part to promote security, as well as to minimize external and regional threats.

The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan and Transnistria conflict in Moldova, have been part of those measures in which Russia’s MFA and Kremlin official accounts of twitter promote the images of actively supporting actions to intermeditate as part of the countries involved to settle peaceful disputes. Along with the cooperation of international organizations like OSCE, Russia’s tweets establish its correspondence to actively promote a compromise that may help the people from Armenia and Azerbaijan. Different high-level meetings which involved the role of the Foreign Ministers and head of states are also promoted in the social media platform, but still, there is an ongoing process to follow. Therefore, as an opposite case, Ukraine president Petr Poroshenko has just announced a presidential plan to quit CIS alleging not favorable measures since Crimea annexation to Russia.¹²⁶ (See images 31, 32 and 33; Appendix A)

Considering that Russia is part of the full members of the CIS along with eight former Soviet republics Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. The One Belt Chinese initiative also brings the challenge to join with the Eurasian Economic Union conception. In principle, it may be possible to neutralize differences with the Chinese economy by establishing a regional system of international relations. However, the fact is that the Asian country has been having increasing participation with CIS countries and getting immersed in the region of influence of Russia.

Table 4. Amount of mentions in Twitter from May 7, 2012, to April 15, 2018.

Twitter account	CIS	Kazakhstan	Belarus	Armenia	Azerbaijan	Moldova	Tajikistan	Uzbekistan	Kyrgyzstan
@MFA_Russia	199	85	97	95	66	74	41	30	51
@KremlinRussia_e	24	62	39	40	40	10	16	27	32

¹²⁶ Ukraine Announces Plan to Quit CIS, Terminate Parts of Russia Friendship Treaty. [Electronic Resource] // RadioFreeEurope. 2018. URL: <https://www.rferl.org/a/ukraine-announces-plans-to-quit-cis-terminate-parts-of-friendship-treaty-with-russia/29161689.html>

@PutinRF_eng	15	29	21	19	11	6	5	6	14
@MedvedevRussiaE	4	3	3	4	3	0	0	2	2

Note: Own table based on information given by Twitter timeline.

Russia and Asian countries

Having in account the geopolitical importance, the case of Asia is a complex issue due to its great diversity of countries and regions in Asia Central Asia, Asia Pacific, and South Asia. That much has been written about Crimea implications, Russia’s ‘pivot’ to the East, ought to be considered as another possible consequence derived from the gravity of the current tensions between Russia and the West. However, almost been exaggerated, Russia’s culture, history, and geography have inextricably been tied to the Western/European world. The results of Putin's official visit to China on May 20 and 21 of 2017 strengthened cooperation with that country and, significantly, reoriented Russia's economic ties in the eastern direction. The agreements concluded are unprecedented in their scope.

The turn towards Asia, especially towards China, has been materializing for some time; in fact, the case of China is atypical within the Russian geopolitics, because Moscow never distanced itself from Beijing. However, the latest interactions between Moscow and Beijing show a faster approach, with greater urgency given the events of commercial, economic and diplomatic cooling of Moscow with the West. Also, cultural factors broadly-speaking, must not be underestimated – generally Russians of all stripes and political persuasions, even those who live in Siberia and the Russian Far East, which is geographically closer to Asia.

For Russia, it is necessary to strengthen as much as possible contacts with the countries of northeastern Asia, specifically Japan and South Korea. As in the case of China, the alliance with these countries is conditioned by the structure of the Russian economy. According to Russia’s FPC, “Russia views strengthening its positions in the Asia-Pacific Region and stepping up relations with its States as a foreign policy area of strategic importance, which is attributable to Russia belonging to this vibrant geopolitical region.”¹²⁷ China's military and economic potential are growing, while its importance in Asia-Pacific increases considerably. South Korea and, in particular, Japan, both key US allies in the region, reinforce each other.

¹²⁷ Kremlin. Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation. od. cit.

At the same time, India enjoys the significant long-term potential for Russia a member-state of BRICS economy. Its economic growth and its internal transformations will inevitably raise the military and political importance of the country. According to social media mentions at Russia's MFA and Kremlin twitter accounts in Twitter, broader relevance issues and ties with Southeast Asia, and a broader Eurasian alliance should be sought. Based on the recent events in the global context, the divisions and confrontations that existed during the Cold War have not disappeared, it has just been modified, transformed, adapted to the new geopolitical conditions and world power.

In the case of the newly created Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU)¹²⁸, Russia's objective is to abolish the internal borders in the Central Asian region completely while retaining its full national sovereignty. The region would also maintain its transparent external economic borders with its neighbors China, Afghanistan, and Iran, which also participate in some way in some of the regional organizations. Even though Twitter is censored in China, both Kremlin and Russia's MFA Twitter accounts published a considerable number of Tweets in support of collaborating with the Asian country..

Each year, Russia and China, conduct joint military exercises incorporating countries of Central Asia and the Caucasus. All this Moscow-Beijing coordination has managed to promote a united front in the Eurasia region, which maintains its positions of caution and balance against the United States and its European allies (see image 34; Appendix A). As shown in the social media of the MOD of Russia, most of the material that is available relies on videos that demonstrate the capabilities of the participants on a well-organized stage. As used before in the times of the Cold War, many of the strategies and structures that these governments use now are combined with the use of social media dissemination.

For the geopolitical zone for China, Japan, North Korea and the Republic of Korea, Russia distinguish this region as Northeast Asia. Having in account the tense situation that occurs in the Peninsula of Korea, many messages that involved this region is based in promoting an urgent issue to promote an

¹²⁸ The Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union is Effective. [Electronic Resource] // EEC. 2015. URL: <http://www.eurasiancommission.org/EN/NAE/NEWS/PAGES/01-01-2015-1.ASPX>

open dialogue of security as the increasing nuclear tests of North Korea in the region and the tense situation in the region with the involvement of USA and UN. As a relevant fact, Russia show on its social media to maintain the possibility to negotiate with those actors involved considering that sanctions or other punitive measures will not help to solve the situation. (See image 35; Appendix A)

Together with Siberia and the western provinces of China have become a central and strategic point of Eurasia. Also, with China’s New Silk Route project, this opportunity is presented as an openly chance to increase the economies of the region without contradicting the interests of neighboring countries such as Russia or India. However, despite the close relation among Moscow and Beijing, there is still not too much information in the Russian official accounts of Twitter, just 13 tweets from the MFA account without any updated information during the current year. A possibility of the latter lack of information could be that option of seeing in protecting first the zone of influence that may impact the billionaire investments that China is already having according to the Belt and Road Action Plan.

As part of its goals on the FPC, Russia uses its Twitter account to “promote mutually beneficial cooperation with Japan, including to ensuring stability and security on Asia-Pacific.”¹²⁹ After the Second World-War Moscow and Tokyo have not settled a peace treaty which may help to resolve the still ongoing dispute over the Kuril Islands, which both countries alleged to have their rights. The last visit of President Putin to Japan was covered with high speculation, yet the results of the meeting did not bring an end to the dispute an economic plan was signed as agreements to explore economic cooperation.¹³⁰

Table 5. Amount of mentions in Twitter from May 7, 2012, to April 15, 2018.

Twitter account	China	India	South Korea	Japan	North Korea	Central Asia	Asia Pacific	Northeast Asia	Silk Belt
@MFA_Russia	236	129	29	127	39	43	64	31	
@KremlinRussia_e	109	33	17	46	3	1	1	0	
@PutinRF_eng	40	34	7	15	0	0	0	0	
@MedvedevRussiaE	12	0	1	0	0	0	0	4	

Note: Own table based on information given by Twitter timeline.

¹²⁹ Kremlin. Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation. od. cit.

¹³⁰ Smith S. Putin’s visit Japan. [Electronic Resource] // CFR. 2016. URL: <https://www.cfr.org/blog/putins-japan-visit>

Chapter 4.

Mexico's Foreign Policy: neighborhood challenges by using Twitter

4.1 Mexico's Nation Branding, political considerations and Twitter influence

All countries have a reputation built over time that is a product of their history, their charisma and the contributions they have made to humanity. At the same time, they are subject (and more so in these times in which the news is known in real time) to momentary attrition due to a crisis, an unpopular government or a badly managed episode that negatively impacts their image. To the extent that its political values, the legitimacy of its Foreign Policy and culture are attractive to other countries, the Soft Power of Mexico will continue to be effective. For this, Mexican cooperation plays a key role, because it strengthens the technical, scientific, economic, cultural and educational capacities of its strategic partners.

In his inauguration speech, on December 1 of 2012, Enrique Peña Nieto defined as the new president of Mexico the objective of the new Foreign Policy and the consolidation of Mexico's position in the world¹³¹. Months later, on May 20 of 2013, the National Development Plan (NDP) was announced. The NDP as the instrument that contains the official route of the Government of Mexico to achieve its national goals, it exposes at the same time the main objective of expanding and strengthening the country's presence in the world.

With the implementation of the '*Pact for Mexico*', the main political forces of the country showed that political discourse could provide tangible results and as seldom in its history, different political strands of left and right could work under a single premise the which consisted of '*Moving Mexico*', a slogan that became the slogan of a communication strategy of the Federal Government for the dissemination of the NDP.¹³² In parallel, the government of Peña Nieto has invested in a strong media campaign to rebuild the image of the country abroad, hit by diplomatic mistakes by previous governments and tainted by internal problems such as insecurity and crime.

¹³¹ Discurso íntegro del Presidente Enrique Peña Nieto a la Nación. [Electronic Resource] // Excelsior. 2012. URL: <http://www.excelsior.com.mx/2012/12/01/nacional/872692>

¹³² National Development Plan. [Electronic Resource]. // Presidency of Mexico. 2013. URL: <http://pnd.gob.mx/>

Published in the ‘*Official Journal of the Federation*’¹³³ the NDP managed a roadmap for the current administration and established the following four objectives of the Foreign Policy in Mexico. First, expand and strengthen the presence of Mexico in the world. Second, promote the value of Mexico in the world through economic, tourist and cultural dissemination. Third, reaffirm the country's commitment to free trade, capital mobility, and productive integration. Fourth, ensure the interests of Mexicans abroad and protect the rights of foreigners in the national territory.

As part of the first goal, the internal and external narratives of the Mexican government have as their main pivot the idea of movement. ‘*Moving Mexico*’ is the central idea; so far it has been moderately successful in changing the coordinates of the international debate on Mexico. The first component of the strategy was to minimize the weight of security issues in the great discourse on Mexico and to focus the country's narrative on the reform process. The administration of Enrique Peña Nieto has been characterized by maintaining an incessant agenda inside and outside the Mexican Republic, seeking to potentiate national and international events with diverse opinion leaders, private initiative and diverse actors of the political and diplomatic sphere.

According to an analysis report done by the Mexican Chamber of Deputies, Enrique Peña Nieto has made 56 official trips abroad, between December 2012 and June 2017, considering that the defense and promotion of the national interest abroad, through close and beneficial relations with other countries, are based on an active foreign policy, through objectives, strategies, and lines of action.¹³⁴ However, it is necessary to mention the agenda of foreign tours, so often criticized, and that has characterized these years of government. Different investigations recovered information from social media in which friends and relatives of the President and the First Lady uploaded photos as part of the official delegation of the government of Mexico.¹³⁵

¹³³ Official Journal of the Federation. National Development Plan. [Electronic Resource]. // Segob. 2013. URL: http://www.dof.gob.mx/nota_detalle.php?codigo=5299465&fecha=20/05/2013

¹³⁴ SEDIA. Viajes Oficiales del C. Presidente Enrique Peña Nieto: Presidente de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos [Electronic Resource] // Mexican Chamber of Deputies. 2017. URL: http://www.diputados.gob.mx/sedia/sia/dir/DIR-ISS-04-17/DIR_ISS_04-17.pdf

¹³⁵ Cabrera R. Huerta I. Viaja EPN con familia y amigos en giras internacionales [Electronic Resource] // Aristegui Noticias. 2016. URL: <https://aristeguinoticias.com/0210/mexico/viaja-epn-con-familia-y-amigos-en-giras-internacionales/>

Additionally, Mexico's MFA carried out external actions, based on a country brand strategy, linked to tourism and the economy, in addition to the traditional cultural promotion actions from the MFA, partially supported by the Council National for Culture. Although Mexico is a country with respectable resources to project soft cultural power and with a good number of global public figures, its reputation is bad when it comes to institutions. It is associated with high levels of corruption and weak institutional capabilities to confront criminal organizations.

Considering the second goal, the promotion of national culture abroad, or through the international exchange of cultural actors, plays a central role for the government of Mexico. In this sense, Mexico's MFA helps to achieve objectives normally related to cultural cooperation, such as: supporting the export of cultural goods and products from the national creative industries, favoring the development of new cultural and educational agreements, attracting foreign tourism, improving the fabric social and strategic partners, and promote a positive, informed and favorable image of the country.¹³⁶

In the third goal, economic issues are prioritized in Mexican Foreign Policy as well as promoting an intense diplomatic mission with Soft Power measures to strengthen the image of Mexico participating in multilateral organizations. About the fourth goal, in addition to consular protection, the government of the Republic seeks to establish a close and modern government for all Mexicans abroad. With the creation of the National Digital Strategy in 2013, the Federal Government set to become the leading country in digitalization in Latin America, as well as to position itself at a level similar to the OECD average for 2018, for having an Open and Modern Government¹³⁷. However, despite the fact that these efforts generated results abroad, the levels of violence caused by organized crime continued to increase as well as other high-level political scandals.

To compete and promote a better image of the country in the international scenario, the National Digital Strategy (NDS) of Mexico created in 2013 contemplates the need for the country to be constantly updated with the use of technological advances and the demands of its citizens. With this vision, the use of the Internet and social networks represent an unprecedented opportunity to unleash

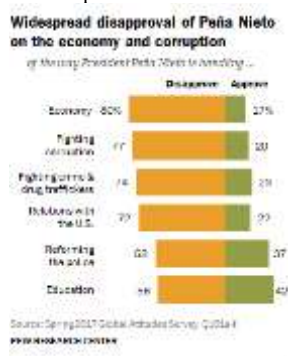
¹³⁶ Amexcid. ¿Qué hacemos?. // gob.mx. 2018. URL: <https://www.gob.mx/amexcid/que-hacemos>

¹³⁷ Estrategia Digital Nacional. Meta al 2018 de la Estrategia Digital Nacional. [Electronic Resource] // gob.mx. 2013. URL: <https://www.gob.mx/presidencia/articulos/meta-al-2018-de-la-estrategia-digital-nacional>

creativity, improve the quality of education and entrepreneurship, promote the image of government policies and thus become an open window in the digital world.

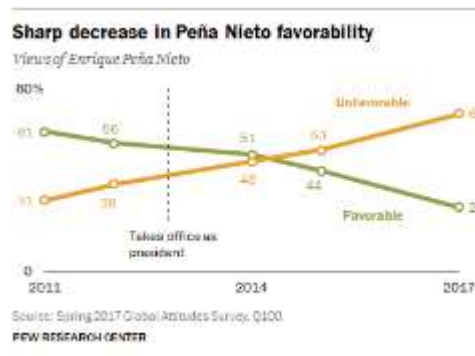
President perception is also another relevant key when talking about Nation Branding, according to ‘Rating World Leaders 2018’ by Gallup, the approval of Enrique Peña Nieto “fell 28 points from 44% in 2016 to 16% in 2017, eight points lower than the previous decade low of 24% in 2008”.¹³⁸ As the following images show, the correlation of the increasing disapproval of the president according to Pew Research Center¹³⁹ relies on how Mexicans perceive a weak job against the violence and corruption in the country.

Graph 4. Widespread disapproval of Peña Nieto on the Economy and corruption



Source: Pew Resource Center

Graph 5. Sharp decrease in Peña Nieto favorability



Source: Pew Resource Center

According to Future Brand study, one of the most important things about Mexico is that it is constantly ranking among the top ten countries in Latin America, within the top of Heritage and culture, tourism and good for business; but got the lowest position ranking ninth regarding quality life.¹⁴⁰ The governmental effort and narrative were in principle credible, but the lack of internal and external credibility of the institutions diminished their intensity. Mexico has one of its worst stigmas in corruption, and a change of reputation must start there. As seen in table 6, the country's position in the "Corruption Perception Index" according to Transparency International is not very encouraging.¹⁴¹

¹³⁸ Rating Leaders: 2018. The U.S. Vs. Germany, China and Russia. [Electronic Resource] // Gallup. 2018. URL: <https://www.politico.com/f/?id=00000161-0647-da3c-a371-867f6acc0001>

¹³⁹ Vice M. Chwe H. Poor ratings for Peña Nieto, political parties. [Electronic Resource] // Pew Research Center. 2017. URL: <http://www.pewglobal.org/2017/09/14/poor-ratings-for-pena-nieto-political-parties/>

¹⁴⁰ Country Brand Report America Latina 2017-2018. od. cit.

¹⁴¹ Corruption Perceptions Index 2017. od. cit.

Table 6. Mexico in Transparency International's "Perception of Corruption Index" (1998-2014)

Year	Rank	Score
2017	135 of 180 countries	29
2016	123 of 176 countries	30
2015	111 of 167 countries	31
2014	103 of 174 countries	35
2013	106 of 175 countries	34
2012	105 of 174 countries	34

Source: Prepared by the authors with data from Transparency International.

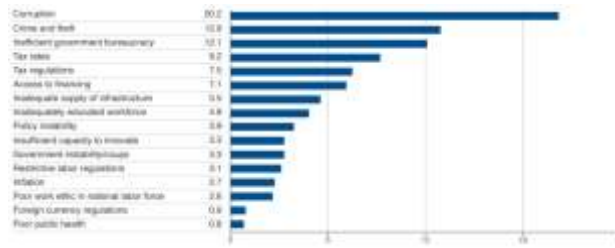
Despite the government of Mexico entered into force an anti-corruption law on July 2017, as part of the structural reforms to create a new national anti-corruption system, this new legal framework has been undergoing substantial changes over the last few years and brings a significant development in Mexico's fight against corruption.¹⁴² Still, the perception of corruption, lack of credibility of politicians and an increasing wave of violence in Mexico is highly associated with current international research such as Transparency International.

A breaking point of this national and international image of Mexico, is linked to the disappearance of 43 students from Ayotzinapa in 2015 and scandals of corruption like 'Casa Blanca', 'Odebrecht', to mention some cases; by exposing internationally a lack of proficiency of different levels of the government and military forces of Mexico; as well as high-level politicians supposed involvement in corruption. According to the World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Report 2017,¹⁴³ Mexico's despite its reduction in poverty and innovative business environment, weakest link to contrast is corruption as shown on graphic 6.

¹⁴² Adams J. Leo C. New Mexican Anti-Corruption Law enters into force July 19, 2017. [Electronic Resource] // Global Compliance News. 2017. URL: <https://globalcompliance.com/new-mexican-anti-corruption-law-20170713/>

¹⁴³ The Global Competitiveness Report 2017-2018. [Electronic Resource] // World Economic Forum. 2018. URL: <http://www3.weforum.org/docs/GCR2017-2018/05FullReport/TheGlobalCompetitivenessReport2017%E2%80%932018.pdf>

Graphic 6 Most problematic factors for doing business



Source: Executive Opinion Survey on World Economic Forum Global Competitiveness Report

Through the Crimson Hexagon data tool, ‘Sopitas’ analyzed the behavior of people on Twitter when they talk about Enrique Peña Nieto.¹⁴⁴ “This includes an analysis of more than 18 million 277 thousand 545 posts made between January 2015 and September 2016 in which the words ‘EPN’ ‘@EPN’ or ‘Enrique Peña Nieto’ appear. The most used hashtags on this analysis were #Ayotzinapa, #Oaxaca, #TercerInforme, #GuarderiaABC; all of them involving a negative connection with the Peña’s administration regarding cases of corruption, violence and social discontent.

Considering a combination of multifactorial consequences about the increase of violence in Mexico, the Global Peace Index (GPI) 2017 found that Mexico holds the place number 142 on a scale in which place 163 is consider to be the worst punctuation, regarding the country of Syria. Some conflicts, deaths by internal conflicts, political terror, violent crimes and number of homicides are some of the factors that Mexico got the most critical punctuations.

Also, GPI found that as part of the international behavior, most of the 163 states analyzed deteriorated their peacefulness after a global financial crisis. Mexico, as a dependent oil economy was severely affected when international oil prices incremented and as a result the so-called ‘gasolinazo’ price hike in 20% gasoline price with violent demonstrations and a decrease of popularity of Peña Nieto. Despite a weak image of Mexico regarding to violence and several travel advisory alerts from the U.S. Department of State showing a level two, which means that on its status visitors should be aware of heightened risk to safety and security due to an increased number of violent crimes, homicides, kidnapping, carjacking and robbery in Mexico.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁴ Salmeron U. Análisis: El descontento contra Peña Nieto a través de Twitter. [Electronic Resource] // Sopitas. 2016. URL: <https://www.sopitas.com/668013-enrique-pena-nieto-twitter/>

¹⁴⁵ Mexico Travel Advisory. [Electronic Resource] // U.S. Department of State. 2018. URL: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories/mexico-travel-advisory.html>

The tourism sector, since 2013, Mexico has gone from 15th to sixth in the rankings on the current year, which are calculated by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (WTO), representing growth of more than 62%.¹⁴⁶ Another successful measure implemented by promoting the reputation, culture, and traditions of Mexico, was done just a few days after Donald Trump's presidential arrival to the White House when the Government of Mexico relaunch the nation brand '*Made in Mexico*'.

The objective for '*Made in Mexico*' as other nation branding campaigns, refers to its main purpose to re-launch the sign of the quality and confidence for consumers inside and outside the country.¹⁴⁷ While difficult political circumstances revolve around the U.S.-Mexico relation, the campaign also serves to promote Mexico's national image, as O'Shaughnessy established: the promotion of national image can help to generate a sense of solidarity with others", so that this campaign helped to infuse a national sense of pride that may help to unite.¹⁴⁸

4.2 Mexico's Foreign Policy goals 2012-2018

The image of Mexico in its foreign policy has enjoyed a solid prestige, thanks to its historical background as a nation that avoids confrontation as well as the use of force. The Mexican diplomatic school has been characterized in turn by promoting the self-determination of peoples, in addition to taking advantage of commercial cooperation thanks to its geostrategic position. The privileged geographic location of the country is one of the great comparative advantages of the nation. Mexico has vast access to international trade through its coastlines and shares a broad frontier with the world's largest economy.

According to the Constitution of Mexico on its Article 89, the existence of seven principles must guide the elemental base to construct the role of Mexico abroad. Despite the following elements do not represent the Foreign Policy of Mexico, these principles incorporate a universal framework that is

¹⁴⁶ Drillinger M. A big year pushes Mexico up tourism rank. [Electronic Resource] // Travel Weekly. 2018. URL: <http://www.travelweekly.com/Mexico-Travel/Big-year-pushes-Mexico-up-tourism-ranking>

¹⁴⁷ Presidency of Mexico. "Hecho en México", símbolo de calidad y confianza: EPN. [Electronic Resource] // gob.mx. 2017. URL: <https://www.gob.mx/presidencia/articulos/hecho-en-mexico-simbolo-de-calidad-y-confianza-epn?idiom=es>

¹⁴⁸ O'Shaughnessy N. The Marketing Power of Emotion. // Oxford University Press.2003. P. 196

conceived as a normative guideline to follow by the President of Mexico when establishing a foreign policy attitude.¹⁴⁹

- *The self-determination of the peoples*
- *non-intervention*
- *the peaceful settlement of disputes*
- *the proscription of the threat or use of force in international relations*
- *the legal equality of States*
- *international cooperation for development*
- *respect, protection, and promotion of human rights and the struggle for peace and international security.*

As previously explained, the NDP describes those specific actions to project to Mexico as a nation that defends its international law, promotes free trade and urges international solidarity as a tool of cooperation with different nations of the world. The NDP also considers Mexico as an emerging power, bringing a special dimension to Mexico in the following sections: a Mexico in Peace, an inclusive Mexico, a Mexico with Education of quality, a Prosperous Mexico and a fifth goal, called a Mexico with Global Responsibility, dedicated specifically to the country's role in international relations. With 'Mexico with Global responsibility' the main strategy was focused in the Mexican government to consolidate the country as an emerging power, using its presence in multilateral international forums and its wide range of free trade agreements.¹⁵⁰

In "Mexico with Global Responsibility", the guiding principles of Mexican Foreign Policy mentioned above give a special dimension to the country's participation in multilateral meetings, recognizing Mexico participation in four objectives, which in turn are subdivided into strategies and lines of action.¹⁵¹ Based on this scenario, the Government of Mexico created in June of 2013 a Constitutional Reform in Telecommunications as part of the Structural Reforms of the "*Pact for Mexico*", in which the country manifested to be a competitive actor in the digital sector, with plans for developing new infrastructure and ensuring equitable access to telecommunications.

With the creation of the NDS as one of the priorities in the Federal Government to define new public policies that will stimulate and maximize the use of ICT digitization of government became a relevant

¹⁴⁹ Constitution of the United States of Mexico. [Electronic Resource] // Segob. 2018. URL: <http://www.ordenjuridico.gob.mx/Constitucion/articulos/89.pdf>

¹⁵⁰ National Development Plan. Od. cit.

¹⁵¹ National Development Plan. od. cit.

part for the development of the country.¹⁵² The NDS considered as a highly relevant task, the importance for Mexico to position itself on the international level with leadership, responsibility, and commitment, where ICTs are key pieces for the development of the global society in the digital era.

With this vision, the Internet and use of social media represent an unprecedented opportunity to unleash creativity, improve educational quality and entrepreneurship, promote the image of governmental policies and become an open window to communicate directly in the digital world. As established on its objectives; “the purpose of the NDS is to increase the digitalization of Mexico, thereby maximizing its economic, social and political impact to the benefit of people's quality of life. As a result, one of the main objectives consists of sharing knowledge between agencies and promote collaboration to ensure a prompt and effective digital transition”.¹⁵³

As part of the objective of Mexico with Global Responsibility, the NDS established the following points:

- i) Integration with developed nations, for the development of digital technology infrastructure; international cooperation that will reduce the cost of regional integration; cultural, scientific and technical cooperation; and the approach with business sectors in the rest of the world.*
- ii) The consolidation of a diplomatic network of representations as an effective instrument for disseminating and promoting cultural contents and the image of Mexico through high-impact activities.*
- iii) Improvement of migration management systems.”*

On January 2015, the creation of ‘*gob.mx*’ by a presidential mandate, established a new period for the NDP as the office in charge of having interinstitutional contact of the Federal Government with electronic systems of agencies and entities of the Federal Public Administration and State productive enterprises.¹⁵⁴ In addition to the concentration of government in a single portal, the NDS defined the following objectives in terms of digitization according to the NDP:¹⁵⁵

“Consolidation of the relationship with the United States and Canada for the promotion of regional competitiveness and convergence Integration with the nations of Central America

¹⁵² National Digital Strategy. [Electronic Resource] // gob.mx.2013.URL: <http://cdn.mexicodigital.gob.mx/EstrategiaDigital.pdf>

¹⁵³ National Digital Strategy. od. cit.

¹⁵⁴ Official Journal of the Federation. Decreto por el que se establece la Ventanilla Única Nacional para los Trámites e Información del Gobierno. [Electronic Resource] // Segob. 2015. URL: http://www.dof.gob.mx/nota_detalle.php?codigo=5380863&fecha=03/02/2015

¹⁵⁵ National Digital Strategy. od. cit.

and the Caribbean. Cultural, scientific and technical cooperation with Europe. The approach of the business sectors with Asia-Pacific. Consolidation of the network of diplomatic representations as an efficient tool for dissemination and promotion.”

As see, Mexico’s digital strategy converge in the use of new tools for promoting its Foreign Policy goals through its NDP. In addition, one of the traditional components of Mexican Foreign Policy is to avoid the use of force and it is very difficult for a president to navigate contrary to this doctrinal principle because of the erosion it implies in terms of public opinion, although it is attractive to modify the position traditional to improve the national position in other fronts. By having an NDP the digital tools the Presidency of Mexico through its official website links to both Facebook and Twitter account. Moreover, the image of Mexico is still particularly tied to its most important trade partner and the socio-political implications that the relations with the United States demand by having a mostly oriented Foreign Policy toward this country.

It is not that the rest of the world does not count: it does count, and a lot, but the concentration of interests in the United States is of such magnitude that much of the effort of diplomacy in Mexican foreign policy has revolved around the relationship with the neighbor. From North. It is possible to say that whether by neighborhood, interest or pressure, for more than twenty years the Foreign Policy of Mexico has been characterized by an orientation towards the interests of the United States, an example of this is the Mexican diplomatic deployment in US territory that remains the largest representation of Mexico abroad, and no wonder because between the two countries there are interests that go beyond foreign trade, security or migration. According to Mexico’s MFA, the Consular Section in the U.S. considers 49 consulates in 25 states which represents the biggest consular section of one country with another in the world.¹⁵⁶

Therefore, according to the GDI study, Mexico’s overall rank out of sixty countries that are part of the OECD, occupied the place number 14 having in total 80 Embassies and High Commissions, multilateral organizations, three other representations.¹⁵⁷ Since the triumph of Donald Trump in the US elections on November 8, 2016, Mexico's foreign policy has taken on new dimensions, since the

¹⁵⁶ The Mexican Consular Network. [Electronic Resource] // Ministry of Foreign Affairs.2016. URL: <https://mex-eua.sre.gob.mx/images/stories/PDF/ConsularNetwork.pdf>

¹⁵⁷ 2017 Global Diplomacy Index. od. cit.

approaches of the diplomatic positions of the United States towards Mexico have reached scenarios that seemed unlikely, and that can be assessed as aggressive compared to the public positions of Barack Obama.

Less than two months after taking a protest, the president of the United States, Donald Trump, has shown that his proposals were not only campaign promises, but that in practice he will implement actions that will become a reality. As a result, considering a new relationship with the United States with the arrival of Donald Trump, the Presidency of Mexico decided to update its Foreign Policy objectives when referring to 'Mexico with Global Responsibility'. Referring to the speech of President Enrique Peña Nieto, the "Foreign Policy in the following years of the Administration will be oriented towards two major priorities: The first: Strengthen Mexico's presence in the world, to diversify our political, commercial, investment, tourism and cooperation ties. The second priority is to build a new stage of dialogue and negotiation in the bilateral relationship with the United States."¹⁵⁸

For the part of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mexico, Luis Videgaray, he added during his participation during the new Foreign Policy objectives appointed by the President that 2016 will be remembered as a year of change of policies in the world and that there will be a change in policy between nations. As part of his discourse, Mr. Videgaray reinforced Peña Nieto's position adding that "given this reality, Mexico is obliged to act in the exercise of its sovereignty from the national interest is therefore necessary that Mexicans have a clear diagnosis, a work route and specific objectives for dialogue and negotiation."¹⁵⁹

As a commonly used political practice in Mexico, movements in the cabinet of the president are mostly seen when drastic changes are needed. Considering this explanation, it is important to resemble that Mexico had had three Foreign Ministers of Foreign Affairs during the current presidential

¹⁵⁸ Presidency of Mexico. Palabras del Presidente de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos, Enrique Peña Nieto, durante el evento: Posicionamiento en Materia de Política Exterior. [Electronic Resource] // gob.mx. 2017. URL: <https://www.gob.mx/presidencia/prensa/palabras-del-presidente-de-los-estados-unidos-mexicanos-licenciado-enrique-pena-nieto-durante-el-evento-posicionamiento-en-materia-de-politica-exterior?idiom=es>

¹⁵⁹ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mexico. Mensaje del Secretario de Relaciones Exteriores, Luis Videgaray Caso durante el Posicionamiento de Política Exterior. [Electronic Version] // gob.mx. 2017. URL: <https://www.gob.mx/sre/prensa/mensaje-del-secretario-de-relaciones-exteriores-luis-videgaray-caso-durante-el-pronunciamiento-de-politica-exterior?idiom=es>

administration. First, led by Jose Antonio Meade who is currently running as a candidate for the presidency of Mexico by the official party PRI. Then, followed by Claudia Ruiz Massieu, who currently holds a high-rank position in the official party PRI. Finally, by the current Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Luis Videgaray Caso who was involved in the political fiasco when inviting Donald Trump as candidate to meet with President Peña Nieto in Mexico, event that despite of being considered a person close to the president compromised his position as Ministry of Finance and Credit Public and renounced his position.

4.3 Mexico's digital diplomacy and geopolitics in Twitter

As previously explained, the new government of President Enrique Peña Nieto had as its main objective to begin his government by propagating the image of Mexico in the world, the image of a safe country for investments, with free trade and empowering its structural reforms. However, Mexico's Foreign Policy in the present administration was caught in the local and external conjuncture. In local terms, the rates of violence and corruption contradicted the objective of improving the image of the country, weakening the prestige projection of Mexico.

As previously explained, having in account that the website gob.mx through the NDS office is the actor in charge of promoting and receiving all the information in the digital sphere as part of an interinstitutional effort. The Presidency of Mexico started promoting through the website www.gob.mx the section 'the week by tweets' which was constantly updated with the most important information of Enrique Peña Nieto activities. However, currently is not anymore available this section since May 2014.¹⁶⁰

According to '*Twiplomacy*', Mexico's leadership holds the first place in Latin American leaders by comparing both personal and official accounts of governments. By referring to this analysis, Peña Nieto or @EPN has more than 6 million Followers which made him a leader profile in this social media platform by comparing with other head of states and official accounts of Twitter in Latin America.

¹⁶⁰ Presidency of Mexico. La semana en Tuits: Tianguis turístico 2014 [Electronic Resource] // gob.mx. 2014. URL: <https://www.gob.mx/presidencia/articulos/la-semana-en-tuits-tianguis-turistico-2014>

In the same report, other influential official accounts of Mexico which manage diplomatic strategies in Twitter are @PresidenciaMX which represent the official account of the Presidency of Mexico, @gobmx representing Mexico's Federal Government body, @LVidegaray by managing the personal account of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mexico, and @SRE_mx representing the official account of Mexico's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

However, according to 'Twitter audit,' the account of @EPN is having a 53% of real account as followers in comparison to the 70% of real account Followers that @SRE_mx has according to this tool. Following the result of the previous numbers given by 'Twitter audit', it could be inferred that despite @EPN has more than 7.2 million of followers just half of them may be engaged on the President's account verified by Twitter.¹⁶¹ Therefore, using the same tool to verify real accounts impact other accounts such as @LVidegaray has 63%, @PresidenciaMx with 57% and @Gobmx with the lowest score with 42% of real accounts percentage of Followers.

Mexico, the United States, and Canada

The relationship between Mexico and the United States is not only commercial because millions of Mexicans live in the United States, but they also represent an important element within the Spanish-speaking population. Barack Obama relation with Mexico did not change drastically when Peña Nieto arrived at the presidency of Mexico. Despite showing a friendly relationship, Obama invested high resources in the border with Mexico and in increasing the number of deportations, famously known as 'deporter in chief' Obama reach the very high number of two million during his term.¹⁶² Moreover, U.S. stressed the willingness to enter into the negotiations of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership negotiate with the European Union.

Therefore, the establishment of binational dialogue forums aimed at setting up cooperation projects in economic matters and higher education, technological innovation and scientific research was to a certain extent the center of relations between both countries. Beyond Obama's visit to Mexico on May 2013 was a significant moment, considering that for the US president was important to send the signal

¹⁶¹ EPN Twitter audit. od. cit.

¹⁶² Chishti M. Pierce S. Bolter J. The Obama Record on Reportations: Deporter in Chief or Not? [Electronic Resource] // MPI. 2017. URL: <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/obama-record-deportations-deporter-chief-or-not>

that in his second term he would pay attention to his southern neighbor and, in general, to relations with Latin America. Some moments with great Twitter impact among Peña and Obama relies on when Enrique Peña Nieto won the presidential election in Mexico, and Obama's reelection is seen in the Twitter message of @EPN.

The Foreign Policy of Enrique Peña Nieto, from 2012 until today argue a strong relationship with the United States as the great key to understanding the foreign relations of Mexico in this period (see image 36 and 37; Appendix A). With the victory of Donald Trump in the elections of November 2016, it brought a clear break with the pattern established in the bilateral relationship of recent decades. Trump's speech since candidate has been calling into question the logic of the 'special relationship' polemic tweets about immigration, security and trading reduced the dialogue into a confrontation of renegotiating NAFTA, building a wall and imposing migration issues. (See image 38; Appendix A)

However, Trump's assertions such as the 2017-Armed Conflict Survey¹⁶³, which referred to Mexico as the second most violent country in the world was responded by the Presidency of Mexico, having a result an IISS declaration on its website saying that due to "methodological flaw in our calculation of estimated conflict fatalities that requires revision".¹⁶⁴ In addition, Presidency of Mexico has been clear that despite the threatening tweets of President Donald Trump (see images 39 and 40; Appendix A); the posture of the Mexican government is that "Mexico will not negotiate NAFTA, or any other aspect of the bilateral relationship, through social networks or the media."¹⁶⁵

One of the most polemical diplomatic situations from the government of Mexico in Twitter was derived from an open invitation done from Enrique Peña Nieto to both of the presidential candidates of U.S., Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton. The Mexican Federal Executive had a positive intention when seeking to link with the two presidential candidates; however, the error arises when it was the

¹⁶³ Armed Conflict Survey. [Electronic Resource]. // IISS. 2017. URL: <https://www.iiss.org/en/publications/acs>

¹⁶⁴ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mexico. Conclusiones sobre el reporte "Armed Conflict Survey" 2017. [Electronic Resource] // gob.mx. 2017. URL: <https://www.gob.mx/sre/articulos/conclusiones-del-reporte-armed-conflict-survey-2017-publicado-por-el-iiss-no-tienen-sustento-en-el-caso-de-mexico?idiom=es>

¹⁶⁵ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mexico. Press release. [Electronic Resource] // gob.mx. 2017. URL: <https://www.gob.mx/sre/prensa/comunicado-de-prensa-123180>

President himself who met with one of the candidates, without having the confirmation of the other candidate yet. (See images 41 and 42).



Image 41. Invitation by the official account of @EPN



Image 42. Acceptance of invitation

Also, Donald Trump received a similar treatment as a counterpart of President Peña and gave a joint press conference, putting the Head of State of Mexico at the same level as a candidate. The result a controversial meeting of Mexico denying the construction of the wall and Donald Trump coming back to the U.S. declaring that Mexico will pay for constructing the wall. (See images 43 and 44)



Image 43. Respond to President of Mexico after meeting With presidential candidate of U.S. Donald Trump



Image 44. Respond to Donald Trump after meeting with President Enrique Peña Nieto in Mexico

For Mexico it has meant challenges and opportunities that have been decanted day by day; tweet after tweet, encounter after encounter. These challenges have become the highest priority of Mexican diplomacy because the U.S. is the main trading partner of Mexico, with which it shares a common border where a symbiosis has been built that is difficult to alter in an untimely and radical way. There are relevant elements and information to argue that the bilateral relationship as a whole benefit both countries and Mexico should socialize them strategically. Also, it could be understood that Mexico's Foreign Policy was not ready to deal with this kind of policy from the U.S.

As another symptom of the frozen relations with Mexico and the Spanish speaker community, the White House canceled the Spanish version and removed all Spanish content from the official website since the arrival of Trump.¹⁶⁶ Some of the most recent thought measures in the U.S.-Mexico border relation, consisted in the deployment of 4,000 National Guard troops, as President Trump commented

¹⁶⁶ Sonnad N. The White House is ignoring 41 million US Spanish speakers [Electronic Resource] // Quartz. 2018. URL: <https://qz.com/1204953/the-white-houses-spanish-language-site-is-still-missing/>

on a discourse in the White House: “we are preparing to the military to secure the border within Mexico and the United States.” (See image 45; Appendix A)

On the same path, Trump has strongly encouraged a negative discourse continuously against NAFTA and has been pushing for possible renegotiation of the agreement under certain conditions about migration measures. As a result, Luis Videgaray Caso communicated by his Twitter account that the Government of Mexico will follow the official channels to clarify the use the army in the border among both nations (see image 46; Appendix A). After recent aggressive measures against Mexico, President Enrique Peña Nieto reacted by having a motivating discourse which created a unifying response among many sectors of the Mexican society and diverse political groups.

Even a short pause was created among the candidates for the presidency of Mexico from different political parties and independent, to support the message of a president that is commonly attacked by the opponents of the official party. This political and diplomatic effort from the government of Mexico has been part of a Soft Power measure in which sovereignty and respect to the country have found a channel to dignify the image of the country which had more than 52 thousand likes and was replied more than 33 thousand times with around 2.3 million views. (See image 47)



Image 47. The discourse of President Enrique Peña Nieto

Although the presence of the United States remains in relevance, Mexico and Canada have established an unprecedented dialogue and relationship. Between both nations, there is a growing identification of common interests. The shared experience of more than 70 years of diplomatic relations and an intense and asymmetric relationship with the neighbor opened the opportunity for cooperation

between the two countries to be conceived as a counterweight to the U.S. power. Mexico and Canada have found common ground on other issues, such as support for multilateral organizations, the validity, and respect of international law, the peaceful settlement of disputes, as well as the aspiration to play a dignified and independent role in the world.

Likewise, the foreign policy of Mexico and Canada is more active in geographic areas of common interest such as Latin America and the Asian Pacific. (See images 48 and 49; Appendix A) According to the information promoted by @PresidenciaMX, Mexico and Canada rank third among their respective trading partners and bilateral trade maintains a healthy relationship based on the flow of Canadian citizens who visit and decide to settle in Mexico; as well as Mexican citizens who visit Canada thanks to the recent elimination of tourist visa.

Academic and cultural ties are essential components for the relationship between both countries, a factor that can be highlighted in the activity of the @SRE_mx which is constantly promoting high-level summits and meetings among the head of states of both countries and its respective MFA's. The last visit of state of First Minister Justin Trudeau on December 2017, seems to be a fresh air needed for Mexico, considering though negotiation of NAFTA in which Mexico seems to have so far, the most conflictive part considering issues of migration, security, drugs, human rights, etc.

Having Canada's Prime Minister as an active ally who shares common positions and responsibilities with Mexico, has been part of the complementary Digital Diplomacy sphere by Justin Trudeau's sharing hashtags, doing mention of Enrique Peña Nieto and even writing in Spanish language; strategies which impact transcend with thousands of likes, replies and media interaction that helps the image of Mexico. (See images 50, 51 and 52; Appendix A)

As seen in the table below, what in Digital Diplomacy meant to have an ally such as Canada in first place of mentions when compared with the U.S., will bring you in traditional Diplomacy good consequences by realizing the potential of having a stronger ally in Soft Power. Also, despite NAFTA has been the most important topic in Mexico's agenda, it has poor mentions by the personal account of Enrique Peña Nieto but a relatively important use by the official site of the NDS account.

Considering Donald Trump impact by his Tweets, he has been only mentioned by Mexico's MFA twice and a similar poor behavior if comparing with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau who has a better image with Mexican policies and audience.

Table 7. Amount of mentions in Twitter from May 7, 2012, to April 15, 2018

Twitter account	USA	Canada	NAFTA	Donald Trump	Barack Obama	Justin Trudeau
@SRE_mx	200	342	37	2	25	23
@EPN	19	27	2	12	22	9
@PresidenciaMX	263	428	18	14	45	96
@gobmx	89	80	53	6	25	39
@LVidegaray	3	6	7	4	0	3

Note: Own table based on information given by Twitter timeline.

Mexico, Latin America, and the Caribe

The relationship of Mexico with Latin America is less ambivalent, although it is true that the approach to the region has been relegated due to its close political and trade ties to the United States. However, considering the update Foreign Policy objectives of Mexico's government it establishes a greater strategic sense to tight the relations with the countries which belong to Latin America and the Caribbean, pursuing better and stronger trade and investment relations that will create better jobs and more dialogue in the region. The novel aspects of the interest in the region are, first of all, in the relations with Central America region.

According to this repositioning of the Foreign Policy goals, "the relation of Mexico with the countries of Central America, and particularly with those who make up the Northern Triangle: Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador, we will move forward to address common challenges, such as development, peace and safe and orderly migration, and respectful of human rights."¹⁶⁷ Taking into account the current situation on the northern border, Luis Videgaray has also reaffirmed the respect of Mexico in the region for the human rights of migrants, recognize as well the need of development, peace, and security of the Central American countries.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁷ Presidency of Mexico. Palabras del Presidente de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos, Enrique Peña Nieto, durante el evento: Posicionamiento en Materia de Política Exterior. *od. cit.*

¹⁶⁸ Videgaray C. Mexico U.S. united for Central America's prosperity. [Electronic Resource] // Miami Herald. 2017. URL: <http://www.miamiherald.com/opinion/op-ed/article156254869.html>

Based on previous statements, the Foreign Ministry of Mexico has been promoting along with the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of Central America countries relevant information on the measures to be taken from Mexico to protect migrants living in the United States. Human rights, refugees, economic development, trading. The thematic of migrants who are coming mostly from Central America countries by crossing Mexico to get to the United States has been an issue of many years of discussion, but recently with Donald Trump has become a more sensitive topic. By actively promoting a regional discussion, Mexico has been promoting a regional image to concentrate efforts even with the cooperation of the United States of America. (See image 53; Appendix A)

The opportunity of CELAC as a mechanism has been an opportunity for Mexico to relocate in Latin America, is the only forum that brings together 33 countries of a region with greater possibilities of cooperation in several areas. Having said this, CELAC may be part of a regional new approach with dialogues including external countries such as Russia, Republic of Korea, Turkey, China, European Union and ASEAN. Also to be considered as an extra-regional state, Mexico has been promoting as part of his discourse a defense of the Latin American values of innovation and cooperation. (See image 54; Appendix A)

Mercosur as one of the main regional countries is lacking, taking into account the geopolitical importance that it can mean to improve relations with Brazil and Argentina. Considering this region, according to Mexico's MFA official account @SRE_mx, Uruguay has become a strong ally by being the only country which Mexico has a trade agreement. Also, Colombia an associated country of Mercosur and a current member of the Pacific Alliance, has shown its disposition to continue being a historical ally of Mexico. Still, there are pending measures to have better relations with countries such as Chile, Argentina, and Brazil which may bring better trading opportunities.

Participation of Mexico with multilateral groups has been a task of historical diplomatic procedures. During Enrique Peña Nieto administration, special peace groups of United Nations (UN) and the Organization of American States (OAS) brought to Mexico the opportunity to collaborate with other Latin American countries in the process of peace of Colombia with FARC paramilitary group; as seen in image 57 the result of this dialogues of peace brought a Nobel prize award to the President of Colombia, Juan Manuel Santos. (See images 55 and 56; Appendix A)



Image 57. Tweet from the president of Mexico, Enrique Peña Nieto

As a Caribbean country, Mexico has also given to CARICOM a strategic role by managing most of the dialogue about coordination against Disaster Management Strategy against natural disasters, most of them by cyclones and hurricanes. By having a repositioning strategy in Latin America, President Enrique Peña established that Mexico would also have close ties to countries in this region, countries with which according to the Mexican government need to have a deeper and better diplomatic opportunity.

However, a diplomatic crisis in Venezuela led a confrontation among high ranked public servers on twitter. Again, the image of Mexico was questioned by some Latin American countries by serving the interests of U.S. and divided by other countries which alleged that the current condition of the people of Venezuela needed the intervention of observers for having a more democratic electoral process in the country. (See images 58, 59, 60 and 61; Appendix A)

Table 8. Amount of mentions in Twitter from May 7, 2012, to April 15, 2018

Twitter account	South America	Central America	Caribbean Countries	Pacific Alliance	CELAC	OEA	CARICOM	Colombia	Brazil
@SRE_mx	5	29	20	96	64	64	67	61	45
@EPN	1	11	0	0	14	2	1	1	15
@PresidenciaMX	5	31	23	31	105	64	21	244	78
@gobmx	7	16	0	51	56	130	28	24	45
@LVidegaray	0	4	0	0	1	8	0	8	4

Note: Own table based on information given by Twitter timeline.

Mexico and Asia

The Asia-Pacific region is also emphasized in the NDP, recognizing its importance due to the economic dynamism. The particular case of China is a clear example of the above considering is the second largest trading partner of Mexico in the World and Mexico's official Twitter accounts shows a position that the country wants to get even closer with the Asian country using both bilateral and multilateral mechanisms as an important factor in redefining its relationship. Apart from the commercial relationship, there are still many issues in which the bilateral relationship is underdeveloped.

First official visit of President Xi Jinping to Mexico in 2013 open the doors for having better communication with the current administration of Mexico. It is also relevant to remind that while having a presidential travel to China in November 2014, Enrique Peña Nieto was severely criticized due to very close timing of the disappearance of forty-three students in Ayotzinapa, Guerrero and the scandal of corruption of the 'Casa Blanca' started to appeared as well as other cases of alleged conflict of interests of high ranked politicians in Mexico that started to promote a bad image of Mexico. Also, after Mexico cancel a train manufactured from China in 2014 the relations of both countries had a short period of frozen negotiations.

However, the last meeting in Xiamen coincided with the commemoration of the 45th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between both countries. During this last meeting, according to @gobmx, both leaders discussed the progress made in recent years in priority areas of the bilateral relationship. As seen previously, with the NAFTA renegotiation on the board Mexico is working to expand its opportunities abroad, and China as a strong partner that may counterbalance an economic and trading orientation from Mexico to the U.S. Recognizing President Xi Jinping openly by the account of President EPN has been used in different meetings, therefore, the use of careful statements of collaboration is also part of Mexico's Digital Diplomacy. (See images 62 and 63; Appendix A)

Another priority and opportunity to Mexico rely on the continuation of the Transpacific agreement, now known as the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), without the presence and without the participation of the United States, this initiative that has promoted Japan is an initiative to which Mexico has also joined. In Asia-Pacific, there are six member countries of the Group of 20 (G20) and three of MIKTA, which despite its relevant economic reference to Mexico the impact on Twitter official accounts have not reflected the same degree of relevance and impact to promote achievements in the region.

Considering the tension in the Peninsula of Korea, given the nuclear activity of North Korea, the government of Enrique Peña Nieto declared '*persona non grata*' to Ambassador of that Asian country, Mr. Kim Hyong Gil, and gave him a deadline of 72 hours to leave the national territory. By an on an official statement, seen in the image above, by using Twitter Mexico's MFA (view image below, the government briefly commented the official position of the country. At the same time a link to the

official MFA website declared: “with this diplomatic action, Mexico expresses to the North Korean government absolute rejection of its recent nuclear activity, which means a frank and growing violation of international law and represents a serious threat to the Asian region and the world.”¹⁶⁹



Image 64. Official statement from Mexico’s MFA in the reaction of the Nuclear Tests of North Korea

Table 9. Amount of mentions in Twitter from May 7, 2012, to April 15, 2018

Twitter account	APEC	ASEAN	MIKTA	CPTPP	China	Japan	South Korea	India
@SRE_mx	58	9	85	0	204	136	49	72
@EPN	9	0	1	8	17	13	6	4
@PresidenciaMX	182	0	4	24	273	226	49	49
@gobmx	89	0	5	20	133	114	60	41
@LVideoaray	8	1	0	1	4	0	1	0

Note: Own table based on information given by Twitter timeline.

Mexico and Europe

As in other regions, Mexico has maintained a cooperative position despite the geographical distance with Europe. Europe has been qualified as a priority region to promote the strategy of diversification of Mexican foreign policy. Presents, undoubtedly, a favorable space to implement in a very effective way the strategy of diversification of international relations in Mexico. Mexico's ties with that region at the bilateral level are aimed at strengthening contacts with certain countries, that is, selectively, by the priorities indicated in the NDP. At the multilateral level, Mexico intends to achieve the establishment of a new political, economic, commercial and cooperation agreement with the EU.

¹⁶⁹ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mexico. México adopta medidas respecto a la actividad nuclear de Corea del Norte. [Electronic Resource] // gob.mx 2017. URL: <https://www.gob.mx/sre/prensa/mexico-adopta-medidas-respecto-a-la-actividad-nuclear-de-corea-del-norte>

During the 2017 meeting of consuls and ambassadors in Mexico City, the recent Foreign Affairs Minister of Mexico stated that "We will continue to approach our partners and friends in Europe and we will continue working, not only with the countries that make up the Union. European, we will work with the rest of the nations of the region, which includes Russia, where I had the opportunity to be a couple of months ago, and it is a country where we have an opportunity to continue growing with an economic and political relationship."¹⁷⁰

With the purpose of generating a positive narrative about the institutional and normative advances in Mexico, as well as continue working in favor of the development of relations with countries in Central and Eastern Europe; as well as in the Nordic, Baltic and Balkan regions. Mexico has used its Soft Power for having stronger commitments with a great part of the European countries. Considering that Germany is the first commercial partner of Mexico among the countries of the European Union and the 5th worldwide. The government of Mexico decided to implement the "Dual Year 2016-2017" with that country as an initiative that will promote a better understanding between Mexico and Germany through artistic, scientific and gastronomic activities, among others, to achieving a greater rapprochement.

At the end of April, Mexico announced the successful conclusion of many months of negotiations of a new Free Trade Agreement with the European Union, which can be considered as an FTAUEM 2.0 that seeks to deepen sectors that benefit both parties.



Image 65. Tweet by the personal account of President Enrique Peña Nieto about TLCUEM

About Brexit the position of Mexico has been of mutual respect, however, according to declarations of Mexico's Prime Minister of Foreign Affairs, this has been found as an opportunity to have closer

¹⁷⁰ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mexico. El Canciller Videgaray Inaugura la XXIX Reunión de Embajadores y Cónsules. [Electronic Resource] // gob.mx. 2017. URL: <https://www.gob.mx/sre/articulos/el-canciller-luis-videgaray-inaugura-la-xxix-reunion-de-embajadores-y-consules?idiom=es>

relations with the UK (see image 66; Appendix A). As an important issue of what nationalist represents in Europe, the official posture of Mexico in the case of Catalunya has been of respecting the institutions of Spain, by following the legal framework of this country and also having a clear posture that will not recognize any independent possible movement and will always prevail peaceful and political measures for solving differences UK. (See image 67; Appendix A)

Table 10. Amount of mentions in Twitter from May 7, 2012, to April 15, 2018

Twitter account	European Union	Brexit	Crimea	Cataluña	Germany	Spain	France	Russia
@SRE_mx	42	1	0	6	72	58	71	48
@EPN	10	0	0	1	11	19	19	10
@PresidenciaMX	62	0	0	3	159	285	376	18
@gobmx	37	0	0	1	83	63	79	30
@LVidegaray	0	0	0	0	3	1	3	1

Note: Own table based on information given by Twitter timeline.

Mexico, Africa, and the Middle East

Through social networks, Mexico has created a discourse to empower the country as an author with Global Responsibility. About Africa, the Mexican Foreign Policy towards the Continent has not yet reached the level of rapprochement, an example that is equated in its Digital Diplomacy on Twitter by having a low percentage of interaction. Referring to the Middle East, Mexico has chosen to have a position of recognizing self-determination of peoples and to develop a stronger commitment in the human rights respect for current international conflicts such as what is happening in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Syria. (See images 68, 69 and 70; Appendix A)

Another situation that had the attention of the media and involved in having a fast response to the diplomatic channels was when a group of Mexican tourists was killed in Egypt. While expressing his condolences, President Enrique Peña Nieto also used Twitter to public demand an official investigation from the authorities of Egypt. The Egyptian government confirmed that unfortunately “a joint force of the police and the army that persecuted terrorist elements in the zone of oases of the Western Desert tonight, accidentally it was with four vehicles that belonged to the group of Mexican tourists.”¹⁷¹ (See images 71; Appendix A)

¹⁷¹ Ejército mata por error a turistas mexicanos. [Electronic Resource] // BBC. 2015. URL: http://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias/2015/09/150913_egipto_ejercito_mata_turistas_mexicanos_error_ng

Mexico's foreign policy in the Middle East, far from being indifferent or distant, has been risen cautiously. Taking into account the problem between pro-Israeli and pro-Palestinian interests, several academics argue that the position on this dispute has been guided by the 'equidistance principle', based on the balance of both interests. Over the years Mexico has aligned with both sides on different occasions, taking care not to get too far from either. When Donald Trump recognized Jerusalem as Israeli's capital and planning to remove the U.S. Embassy; Mexico responded by its official diplomatic channels and by the personal account of Minister Luis Videgaray that the Mexican government will keep its Embassy in Tel-Aviv despite of the comments of President Trump. (See image 72; Appendix A)

Table 11. Amount of mentions in Twitter from May 7, 2012, to April 15, 2018

Twitter account	Middle East	Africa	Syria	Israel	Turkey	Saudi Arabia	Egypt
@SRE_mx	21	63	24	29	53	21	43
@EPN	0	0	0	3	15	1	13
@PresidenciaMX	67	3	7	110	189	29	50
@gobmx	4	15	12	27	24	11	17
@LVidegaray	0	0	0	2	0	0	0

Note: Own table based on information given by Twitter timeline.

As an additional part of the impact of Twitter in the International Relations of Mexico by having different channels of communication among civil society, the severe damages caused by the earthquake of September 19 of 2017 brought a fast reaction from the International society. The international support by different states was received immediately, considering both official and not-official channels, Twitter played a great role showing that despite cultural differences and language barriers there are no obstacles when having a common goal: to rescue the survivors and to support the victims. The government of Mexico reacts both by receiving the help from other countries and at the same time by giving a public recognition by Twitter and other social media platforms. (See images 73 and 74; Appendix A)

Conclusions

As seen, both Mexico and Russia follow specific Foreign Policy objectives that encourage the use of Soft Power as a relevant part of their national strategies. By considering Digital Diplomacy as a tool that complements traditional Diplomacy on a changeable International politics environment, this effect also makes that Soft Power have to adapt to the needs of the International System constantly. At the same time, this situation makes that countries should have a Foreign Policy concept and objectives that should also evolve to external affairs correlated to internal issues.

As shown in this paper, both Mexico and Russia are using well-structured messages in Twitter following their Foreign Policy objectives. Both countries are rich in culture, history, traditions and both have active diplomatic activities that promote their image abroad through diplomatic representations and offices. Also, 'Made in Mexico' and 'Made in Russia' strategies served to respond to current economic challenges and socio-political challenges. As a result, by consolidating their image and reputation by specific campaigns in accordance to their Foreign policy objectives as emerging economies, this paper considers the need of combining an external narrative to transmit a successful image through real facts. That is, as seen in this paper, the essence of Soft Power.

To the question of why is important to have both a Digital Diplomacy and Nation Branding strategies to implement an efficient Foreign Policy strategy for each country? This study first explained the relevance of both terms in the field of International Relations, so that when applying a case study analysis of Mexico and Russia it may prove how states are implementing Soft Power strategies as part of their Foreign Policy objectives. All societies seek inspiration in others and some cases successful political processes move to hope. That gives a glow to certain countries and opacity to others.

By considering the use social media and specifically Twitter as the most influential social media platform for diplomatic issues, at least during the process of doing this research; this paper proved the relevance of having more open channels to inform a society with better quality and impact messages to interact with its audiences. As already explained, having a nation branding strategy is more than projecting a country as a brand, is to considerate by a comprehensive manner all the social, economic,

cultural and political aspects that a country wants to project abroad without losing its internal dimension.

This research also showed that by having an active role in the objective of a Foreign Affairs policies, social media has to be considered as part of today's dynamic and complex global environment in which digitalization amplifies the spectrum to dissemination efficiently 'offline' and 'online' practices. As offline practice could be understood the real-life activities that traditional diplomacy that most of it is doing at backstage without having a public and free access to the public in general. By online terminology, this study shows the impact of using Twitter regarding acquiring a perspective that actors involved the audience as part of new processes in which diplomacy tends to create new alliances by showing a specific position of the state directly.

Today's relevance of Twitter as a horizontal communication platform with remote and diverse international audiences opens up endless opportunities to countries to spread the different amount of information by increasing its followers in a global context. The great challenge is to connect with them, seek to be relevant or interesting for broad sectors of society. As viewed in the results of this study, both Mexico and Russia are considered themselves as global leaders in the Twitter community by results given on specialized studies focused in researching the behavior of a country in social media such as '*Twiplomacy*'.

In the case of Russia, the official account of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA_Russia) is targeted to be one of the most influential MFA's account in the Twitter paradigm. On the other hand, president of Mexico Enrique Peña Nieto verified personal account (EPN), represents a regional leading verified account in Latin America. At the same time, both Mexico and Russia, consider their own Foreign Policy goals with aspirations to promote its image as global leaders by their own pursuing objectives. Changing or engaging the reputation of a country supposes the projection of determined lines of communication, in which the strength of the country relies on the heart of the message by consolidating images of success to avoid possible weaknesses and vulnerabilities.

By this meaning, Nation Branding interconnection with Digital Diplomacy creates a bridge on a complex world where social networks play a fundamental role in the way of how governments are

communicating. Such change can hardly be left aside without considering the profound impact of geopolitical transformations that directly impact the Foreign Policy strategies of the countries as the main responsible actors of managing Diplomatic relations among states. Using a multi-method approach, this work also showed how Mexico and Russia used specific Twitter accounts to promote its Foreign Policy strategies, according to their specific regional and global purposes according to their national program.

To understand the relation between domestic and external affairs, this paper analyzed different metrics that helped to explain the effect of Nation Branding factors such as people perception, tourism, trade, immigration, culture, and governance. Also, different social media tools were used to complement a quantitative and qualitative analysis given in Chapter 3 and 4 to establish the impact of the chosen Twitter accounts of Mexico and Russia that have been analyzed. Image and perception of the head of states were also considered as a relevant role. Having in account that the executive offices have a great role in the implementation of Foreign Affairs issues of Russia and Mexico, it was also shown the impact of both president Vladimir Putin and Enrique Peña Nieto regarding perception of their image.

To measure the impact of Twitter as a Digital Diplomacy and Nation Branding tool, this research quantified specific mentions of Tweets done by Russian and Mexican Twitter accounts who had a direct impact on Foreign Affairs issues. As seen, considering President Putin's third presidential term and Enrique Peña Nieto's current presidential term as the timeline to do this research, specific accounts were chosen according to the expert report of '*Twiplomacy*'. Considering perceptions, values and political context, by doing an additional interpretative report, this research also showed how different regions of the world are seen regarding importance in accordance to the Foreign Policy objectives of both Mexico and Russia.

Perception of Russia as a country and President Vladimir Putin as head of state, has shown that there is a constant negative view from U.S. and European countries. Additionally, this work suggests that according to a quantitative analysis a great number of mentions were related to European Union countries, has more than 900 mentions and NATO with almost six-hundred mentions, while comparing to other regions in the world (see table 1). Also, as an interpretative result, this could justify the role given in the current Foreign Policy concept of Russia which establishes that the country will

manage an image of cooperation and diplomatic dialogue despite the constant challenges of US and Trans-Atlantic group against Russian interests.

In the case of Mexico, despite that the image of the country has been criticized as one of having a biased Foreign Policy towards United States interests, its NDP responds by pursuing the goal of ‘Mexico with Global Responsibility’ by trying to promote its image of following cooperation and trading as one of the most relevant issues to belong as a global actor in the International Relations sphere. By this meaning, this research found that Canada, France, Spain, and China have a greater impact regarding mentions using previously mentioned Twitter accounts of Mexico. By this statement, the repositioning of the Foreign Policy of Mexico in 2016 could be seen by a Nation Branding of promoting its values while having at the same time a Digital Diplomacy of amplifying possible commercial and cultural ties with different actors.

About similarities between Mexico and Russia, some interesting cases were also found regarding Nation Branding results and Digital Diplomacy. Having in account that both countries have been rated similarly in the corruption index according to Transparency International in 2017. As a result, both countries have the challenge of presenting examples that counterbalance adverse messages. Through the official accounts, both governments have generated a series of messages that seek to position a positive agenda through proposals and government messages that reflect an image of the strategies of current administrations.

Regarding the Nation Branding strategy ‘Made in Russia’ and ‘Made in Mexico’, defends the argument of having an image that effectively promotes national products that represent a ‘trademark’ of good quality and prestige. Mexico’s Nation Branding is not that of an innovative country, but that of a traditionalist country that displays a conventional narrative about its brilliant past and its impressive cultural legacy. However, the case of Russia’s new tourism brand project shows a great project with lack of impact on Twitter platform.

The domain of policymakers is usually considered in the Constitution of each country, as a legal and official framework to regulate the intercourse of relations among states according to specific principles and values, this paper argues that in order to respond to the question *what is the role of social media*

in real life situations of the Foreign Policy of Russia and Mexico? As a first step, it is important to consider the discourse given by official documents and actors involved in the Foreign Policy life of both Russia and Mexico as sovereign states. So that, this research analyzed different levels of interactions among those players that are in charge of the Foreign Policy implementation of both countries.

As explained before, Twitter offers a horizontal platform of communication which brings a great opportunity to interact with a virtual community. Following that point, this paper also argues that social media could act as a tool to better create and consolidate channels of communication to understand on a simple and more effective way a Foreign Policy agenda given by a state to a broader audience that uses Twitter. Social media interactions by Twitter implies in having a possible direct communication among diplomats and civil society, in which the audience could easily interact with an official account of a country.

Twitter represents a way of promoting an inclusive discourse, which at the same time could become an opportunity to engage the stronger support of specific policies in the agenda of a state. In the case of the Russian Federation, it was shown that the concept of Soft Power, is currently used in the Foreign Policy Concept of 2016 approved by President Vladimir Putin. In the case of Mexico, it was also established that according to the National Development Plan of 2012-2018 the Office of the Presidency of Mexico, tackled the priority to promote the concept of '*Mexico with Global Responsibility*' and by creating by presidential mandate a National Digital Strategy Office in 2013. With this official background, traditional diplomatic activity for both Mexico and Russia use complementary strategies by giving Twitter a great role as part of their official channels to interact and encourage the promotion of its Foreign Policy messages by social media.

As also seen in this paper, Russia and Mexico have developed a sophisticated network of Embassies and diplomatic representations in the world, which according to GDI information Russia holds the fourth place, and respectively Mexico the fourteenth place. By this, it is implied the great opportunity to implement Digital Diplomacy strategies among all the offices that represent both countries diplomatic map in the world. In the case of Mexico, in theory, exists one step closer to achieving this

step by having a National Digital Office which consolidates all the income and outcome information from the government.

Also, this study reveals that considering the direct impact of the declarations of President Donald Trump using his personal Twitter account; both Russia and Mexico had declared as part of their Foreign Policies, they are not pursuing to do a Digital Diplomacy in Twitter. However, while analyzing the number of tweets and interactions done by both countries on their official accounts, it could be implied that the discourse is more focused on avoiding confrontation while using social media. As seen in this study, both countries promote its regional interests while creating some countries which share the same values and policies.

Social media has been a relevant actor by promoting the official statements, official announcements and other official interactions which are supported by being linked to official websites of Russia and Mexico. However, there was not found any evidence that neither Mexico or Russia, used Twitter to do a direct official statement to without mentioning an official position by real documents. For this investigation, instead of denying the use of Digital strategies, a recommendation to consider should be on establishing a clear position by having a Digital Diplomacy assessment to defend both countries position by using social media.

So that it could counterbalance different perspectives by having political arguments in favor of specific Foreign Policy measures. Also, considering the highly attractive use of the term 'Fake news' this research suggests that both Mexico and Russia promote Digital Diplomacy strategies by using their official accounts in order of legitimizing its posture. By having analytical research in this paper, Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 shows which topics are highly influential in the official accounts of both countries considering those topics which are more relevant in the Foreign Policy objectives of both countries regarding their official documents vision.

By having a specialized website under Russia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs dedicated to his job, Russian MFA shows to have a clear leadership to contrast other official and non-official accounts. Doing a countermeasure by establishing an own agenda to promote images and discourses to benefit each country image, it was seen that the English account of Kremlin (Kremlin_eng) and the English

language official account of support of the President of Russia (PutinRF_eng), used the following mentions as one of the most popular: Syria with more than two thousand mentions, European Union with more than nine-hundred mentions, NATO with more than five-hundred mentions and Iran with almost five-hundred mentions. Other mentions were followed by the Western Sanctions, Afghanistan, Iraq, Egypt, ISIS.

Despite that the Foreign Minister of Russia, Sergei Lavrov, and the spokeswoman of Russia's MFA, Maria Zakharova, does not have a personal account on Twitter; a good design strategy of Hashtags was detected when analyzing the account of @MFA_Russia. When using the hashtag #Zakharova and #Lavrov followed by either speech, comment or link to an official statement to MFA's website, it is also used to mention other Twitter accounts or specific hashtags referring to an international issue to get more attention in the Twitter timeline with other users. Also, by using Periscope, the Russian MFA Twitter account in English version not only provide real-time multimedia information but also encourage a low-cost and highly-efficient tool that is accessible to more than 184 thousand followers on its account.

Regarding to the case study of Mexico, by analyzing its official accounts in terms of number of mentions it was found that first place belongs to Presidency of Mexico (PresidenciaMx), followed by official account Mexico's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (SRE_mx), then the official site of Government of Mexico (gobmx), followed by the personal account of the President of Mexico (EPN) and at the end by the personal account of the Foreign Affairs Minister (LVidergay). As a first finding, despite having a National Digital Strategy Office, there is no homogenous participation regarding which account should be in charge of having a leading profile considering Foreign Affairs issues.

The National Digital Strategy office of the Mexican government has done an excellent promotion in including Mexico to an area in which Information Technologies are the key to a more inclusive and diversified country. However, the image of the inter-institutional coordination and civil society networks are still pending to have concrete results. Mexico's National Digital Strategy office is also supposed to be focused on achieving an interinstitutional framework and effective communication with the use of social media. However, as seen in the results given by 'Twitteraudit', the number of fake

accounts in the personal account of Enrique Peña Nieto is almost by half of the total amount of its Followers.

As a result, this could lead to an interrogation of how effective the NDS office is and how is it supposed to change the image of Mexico when even the personal account of its President does not follow basic rules when trying to have a trustful digital image by having real accounts. When talking about social media, users are usually very fond of numbers, especially when referring to a great number of followers. Numbers do not represent everything; however, sometimes they make the difference. This paper suggests that governments or head of states should take care of having fake followers, considering that a good image with real followers can generate trust, which is the opposite of what false followers generate.

By complementing previous questions done during this research, to answer *which direct implications bring the use of social media and especially Twitter for Russia and Mexico as part of their Foreign Policy Goals?* This paper has shown that adverse mentions in Twitter have a direct negative influence by creating a bad reputation of the country. Knowing the results of different specialized surveys which manage to scale increasing levels of violence, terrorism, poverty, corruption, social inequality, and other negative factors that indirectly implies lack of domestic policy measures. When used in social media, it potentializes its impact by becoming viral on a broader international audience which generally does not check facts and consider as real the information which is not even confirmed.

As part of the previous effect, it could be sum the facet of fake news and its direct involvement in the current elections of both Mexico and Russia. For Russia, the most relevant task of the government consisted in having a special site on the Kremlin website to expose with arguments and facts those articles that have been trying to create a negative image of the country. Also, the highly expected good relation between U.S. and Russia after the presidential elections of 2016 didn't arrive. Allegations and a current official investigation from authorities of the U.S. alleging supposed intervention of Russia in the electoral campaign of USA had increased the tension between the two countries.

At the same time, the Syrian crisis and its importance to Russia as a strategic geopolitical country could also be seen with the amounts of mentions done by the Russian MFA Twitter account as

previously explained. With the increasing hostile declarations from Donald Trump against the government of Bashar al Assad had complicated the situation with Russia. The Middle East has become the most relevant zone for Russia according to its social media behavior as well as the current Foreign Policy Concept of 2016.

On the other side, despite Asia is currently considered a pillar of Russia's Foreign Policy objectives, this does not apply in the digital aspect. The mentions were given for the Asian region and particularly to China, do not manifest an impact similar to the number of mentions of topics with the West or the Middle East. At this point, a possible argument that can justify such action by the Russian government is the lack of openness in digital issues for the Chinese government and in particular the use of Twitter.

In the case of Mexico, there is a similar situation with the U.S. Despite being historically the most influential country regarding politics and trading, when analyzing the number of mentions in the Northern hemisphere of America the findings showed that Canada has almost doubled its relevance with Mexico when comparing to U.S. mentions. Regarding likes and retweets, the Twitter account of Enrique Peña Nieto (EPN) managed to have a strong impact while referring to the visit of Justin Trudeau to Mexico and other previous meetings of both heads of states.

Besides of analyzing most mentioned words from Russian and Mexican official accounts considering the regional influence of the country and its leadership by bilateral and multilateral foreign relations, this research also focused its attention to analyzing the political context and how patriotic messages had been used to benefit specific purposes to both countries. By using '*Robofollow*' application it was found that the most popular Tweets of president Peña Nieto by the number of likes and retweets were those in which Peña holds a strong position against Donald Trump's policies of constructing a wall and at the same time defend the image of the Mexican people by referring to respect the sovereignty of the country.

Likewise, during the earthquake of September 2017, Mexico suffered many devastating damages. With the hashtag #FuerzaMexico, the civil society used this slogan to unify as a whole country without any political intervention. Different specialized teams and help from different international organizations and countries sum the efforts to help those people who were affected. However, the

hashtag #FuerzaMexico later evolved to be part of a governmental campaign of reconstruction which involved an interinstitutional effort along with civil society participation regarding transparency.

As a result, the World Summit of the Information and Knowledge Society (WSIS) awarded Mexico by this initiative for the effort of building a stronger society based on promoting Sustainable Development. A similar case happened to the Russian Federation while receiving a prize from the WSIS for launching a project based in having 'Digital Equality' led by Rostelecom. Nevertheless, regarding having a patriotic influence the case of the Syrian conflict could be interpreted as a fertile zone in which both pro-Russian and pro-Western has dedicated to doing hybrid warfare to counter-measure a huge number of messages and propaganda.

Complementary, the Russian Government has strongly defended its role by condemning the use of a negative Russophobia from western countries. By considering common challenges for both Mexico and Russia regarding Digital Diplomacy, official Twitter accounts have recently begun to utilize various strategies to burst algorithmic bubbles, by using hashtags to increase the visibility of a Tweet. Offices in charge of creating Digital Diplomacy strategies need to consider the relevance of increasing the number of potential audiences. Including to have more professional public servers that may know how to use Digital Diplomacy efficiently.

At the embassy level, big data may be analyzed to evaluate which language should be employed in online content. By creating content that also takes into account values, norms, and behaviors of the followers. Diplomats and their institutions may best meet the needs and desires of their followers, so that it could be possible to have a better engagement, interaction and respond according to both needs. Having public policies which use efficiently big data may have better possibilities for implementing domestic policies that could be used for promoting the image of a country abroad.

Soft power alone is also insufficient. Like hard power, it has its limitations. Any government now needs to think far more strategically about how to become a smart power superpower. In the context of new contemporary societies, technology facilitates an interaction process with more constant and dynamic information with the use of the Internet and especially with social networks such as Twitter. For having a modern Diplomacy, it is the need to construct new types of networks, coalitions, and

partnerships of state and non-state actors to manage both conflicts and opportunities to find a closer connection to its audience.

Social media has become a catalyst for social and political action to promote the creation of virtual communities that share common causes, thus creating a favorable scenario to discuss alternative forms of citizen participation, transparency, access to information, implementation of public policies and links between government and society. Countries may now attempt to evaluate their national image or brand more accurately. Twitter survey questions, sentiment analysis, and opinions expressed by networked influencers may all offer insight into how one nation is viewed by the population of another.

As seen in the research, Foreign Policy goals and implementation changes according to determined purposes on a specific context that responds to a particular agenda which main goal relies on both internal and external interests of a country. As a result, Digital Diplomacy and Nation Branding are complementary tools which need to constantly adequate on an evolving system in the International Relations field. Mexico and Russia have both similar strategies by using actively Twitter to promote its own Foreign Policy interests. Additionally, both countries adapt their needs in the international environment by engaging different actors to promote their messages. Therefore, Twitter is currently considered to be the most popular social media tool in Diplomacy, there is the need to be constantly evolving and adapting to the needs of the audience.

In order to project an image abroad, it is necessary to reach the public that politicians represent and that work surpasses diplomacy. Academics, politicians, journalists, artists and opinion leaders in general should project Russia and Mexico abroad. Involving a wider spectrum of actors such as companies, universities, non-governmental organizations and civil society in general, it will be possible to improve the ability to capture what the country says abroad and how to use it in the form of feedback. It is not just about talking good about the country; the most important issue is to have real impact policies in both domestic and foreign issues.

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Appendix

Appendix A



Image 6

Via Official Twitter-account of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation (mfa_russia). “Long before the start of the election campaign, #Russia was accused of interference in the internal affairs of #Italy- The goal was to frighten the #Italian people and set them against Russia in order to sway the elections. Facebook.com/MIDRUssia/post...” 8 March 2018, Tweet.



Image 9

Via Official Kremlin News (KremlinRussia_E). “Meeting to support the accession of Crimea to the Russian Federation” We are together!” bit.ly/1nBeC7f.” 18 March 2014, Tweet.



Image 10

Via Official Twitter-account of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation (mfa_russia). “#Lavrov #Russia will not let revive fascism in Europe en-ittass.com/world/73718 #United for Ukraine” 7 May 2014, Tweet.



Image 11

Via Official Kremlin News (KremlinRussia). “The President visited #Sevastopol ahead of the anniversary of Crimea’s reunification with Russia bit.ly/2FJRHSR” 14 March 2014, Tweet.



Image 12

Via Official Twitter-account of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation (mfa_russia). “Russian Foreign Minister had talks with #Serbia President Qavcic” 21 February, Tweet.



Image 13

Via Official Twitter-account of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation (mfa_russia). “Today is the 19th anniversary of #NATO bombing of #Yugoslavia. NATO targeted infrastructure & civilian areas, used depleted uranium, deployed ‘double-tap’ strikes, returning to bomb targets after rescue & ambulance services had arrived #WarCrimes #Serbia yputu-be/cQmBgNmMMH0” March 24, Tweet.



Image 14
Via Official Kremlin News (KremlinRussia). “#Moscow Russia-Serbia talks, meeting with President of Serbia Aleksandr Vucic bit.ly/2Bf8Vcx” 19 December 2017, Tweet.



Image 18
Via Official Twitter-account of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation (mfa_russia). “#Lavrov-@realDonaldTrump meeting has just started” 10 May 2017, Tweet.



Image 15
Via Official Twitter-account of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation (mfa_russia). “The #US on Thursday expelled 35 Russian diplomats but we are #STILATWORK -35 is not cold enough :)” 30 December 2016, Tweet.



Image 19
Via The official Twitter channel for President of the Russian Federation (PutinRF_eng) “Meeting with US President Donald Trump en.kremlin.ru/events/preside... #g20 #G20HH17 @realDonaldTrump”



Image 16
Via Official Twitter-account of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation (mfa_russia). “#Putin: Moreover, I am inviting all children of US diplomats accredited in Russia to the New Year's & Christmas celebration in the Kremlin” 30 December 2016, Tweet.



Image 20
Via Official Kremlin News (KremlinRussia). “Russian President Vladimir Putin and US President @realDonaldTrump approved a joint statement on Syria following a conversation at the #APEC Economic Leaders Meeting bit.ly/2hrZLAN” 11 November 2017, Tweet.



Image 17
Via The official Twitter channel for President of the Russian Federation (PutinRF_eng) “Congratulations to Donald Trump on winning the #US presidential election en.kremlin.ru/events/preside @realDonaldTrump” 9 November 2016, Tweet.



Image 22
Via Official Twitter-account of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation (mfa_russia). “Sergei #Lavrov meets w/the Russian diplomats expelled by some Western countries due to the British provocative accusations against Russia, that it has allegedly poisoned Sergey Skripal & his daughter Yulia” 9 April, Tweet.



Image 23

Via Official Kremlin News (KremlinRussia). “Vladimir Putin held talks with President of Venezuela Nicolas Maduro in the Kremlin bit.ly/2yoN2FT” 4 October 2017, Tweet.



Image 27

Via Министерство обороны Российской Федерации [Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation (mdo_russia). “#General_Staff: #Syria completely liberated from ISIS s.mil.ru/2AvSirc” 6 December 2017, Tweet.



Image 24

Via Official Twitter-account of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation (mfa_russia). “Egypt FM offered his condolences, promised to provide assistance to establish circumstances of plane crash tass.ru/en/world/833186 @mfaEgypt” 1 November 2015, Tweet.



Image 28

Via Official Kremlin News (KremlinRussia). “On Turkey and ISIS: We will not forget about Turkey abetting the terrorists. There is nothing more dishonourable and shameful than betrayal” 3 December 2015, Tweet.



Image 25

Via Official Twitter-account of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation (mfa_russia). “#Kirpichenko: We cooperate #Egypt in counter-terrorism issues on a multilateral cooperation” 8 February 2016, Tweet.



Image 29

Via Official Kremlin News (KremlinRussia). “The President paid respects to Russian Ambassador to Turkey Andrei Karlov, killed in a terrorist attack in Ankara bit.ly/2hYrsPG” 22 December 2016, Tweet.



Image 26

Via Official Twitter-account of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation (mfa_russia). “#Lavorv: Russia and Egypt want all issues to resuming direct flights to be resolved as soon as possible” 15 March 2016, Tweet.



Image 30

Via Official Kremlin News (KremlinRussia). “The leaders of Russia, Iran and Turkey are discussion the Syrian settlement process in Sochi, taking into account joint efforts in the Astana format bit-ly/2zbmggF” 22 November 2017, Tweet.



Image 31

Via Official Kremlin News (KremlinRussia). “Nagorno-Karabakh conflict: Russia is helping find a compromise but final decision is up to the people of Azerbaijan and Armenia #DirectLine” 14 April 2016, Tweet.



Image 32

Via Official Kremlin News (KremlinRussia). “Presidents of Russia, Armenia and Azerbaijan discussed the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh bit.ly/28J79x4” 20 June 2016, Tweet.



Image 33

Via Official Twitter-account of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation (mfa_russia). “Heads of Delegation of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chair countries remain united in our commitment to mediating a peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict on the basis of the core principles of the Helsinki Final Act” 7 December 2017, Tweet.



Image 34

Via Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation (mod_russia). “The Chinese military rapidly passed the “rope ladder” obstacle at the “Maintenance Battalion” with a slick jump 5 meters down-watch 1:12 episode”. 9 August 2017, Tweet.



Image 35

Via Official Twitter-account of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation (mfa_russia). “USA urged the world to suspend all ties with North Korea. What does Russia think of this idea? #Lavrov: We have a negative view of this idea. We have already noted repeatedly that the sanctions pressure has been virtually depleted mid.ru/en/foreign_pol” 30 November 2017, Tweet.



Image 36

Via Official Twitter-account of the President of the United States of Mexico (EPN). “Thank you very much for your call, President @BarackObama. We agree that our nations have a great challenge of collaboration ahead” 2 July 2012, Tweet.



Image 37

Via Official Twitter-account of the President of the United States of Mexico (EPN). “Congratulations @BarackObama; President, for your re-election. The citizens have endorsed their trust”. 6 November 2012, Tweet.



Image 38

Via Official Twitter-account of the 45th President of the United States of America (realDonaldTrump). “I love the Mexican people, but Mexico is not our friend. They're killing us at the border and they're killing us on jobs and trade. FIGHT!”. 30 June 2015, Tweet.



Image 39

Via Official Twitter-account of the 45th President of the United States of America (realDonaldTrump). “With Mexico being one of the highest crime Nations in the world, we must have THE WALL. Mexico will pay for it through reimbursement/other.”. 27 August 2017, Tweet.



Image 40

Via Official Twitter-account of the 45th President of the United States of America (realDonaldTrump). “We are in the NAFTA

(worst trade deal ever made) renegotiation process with Mexico & Canada. Both being very difficult, may have to terminate?”. 27 August 2017, Tweet.



Image 45.

Via Official Twitter-account of the 45th President of the United States of America (realDonaldTrump). “WE WILL PROTECT OUR SOUTHERN BORDER!”. 3 April 2018, Tweet.



Image 46

Via Twitter account of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Mexico (LVIDEGARAY) “Mexico has requested the U.S. by official channels, to clarify the announcement of @POTUS about the use of the army at the border. The Government of Mexico will define its posture according to this clarification, and always in defense of our sovereignty and national interest” 3 April 2018, Tweet.



Image 48

Via Official Twitter-account of the Office of the Presidency of Mexico (PresidenciaMX). “#Canada is the 4th source of foreign investment in Mexico. ow.ly/tLv1l #http://t.co/Kgqw3d2bnz”. 19 February 2014, Tweet.



Image 49

Via Official Twitter-account of the President of the United States of Mexico (EPN). “Mexico USA and Canada advance along the path of societies that create bridges, collaborates and thrive together: bit.ly/293AEtZ” 29 June 2016, Tweet.



Image 50

Via Official-Twitter account run by the 23rd Prime Minister of Canada and staff (JustinTrudeau). “Greeting Mexico! Sophie and I feel honored for your warm welcome! Happy on our visit to this great city. #FuerzaMexico”. 12 October 2017, Tweet.



Image 51

Via Official-Twitter account run by the 23rd Prime Minister of Canada and staff (JustinTrudeau). “Strong partners. Close friend. Committed to working together for our people’s futures. Gracias Mexico! bit.ly/2g8nJwu” 13 October 2017, Tweet.



Image 52

Via Official-Twitter account run by the 23rd Prime Minister of Canada and staff (JustinTrudeau). “President @EPN and I are focused on strengthening NAFTA so it benefits people in Canada, Mexico, and the US – we’re optimistic negotiators will continue to make progress.” 13 April 2018, Tweet.



Image 53
Via Official-Twitter account of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mexico (SRE_MX). “Mexico wants to work to fulfill its responsibility, strengthening ties with the USA and the North Triangle: @LVidegaray” 15 June 2017, Tweet.



Image 54
Via Official-Twitter account of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Mexico (LVidegaray). “We started the week in Santiago de Chile at the CELAC-China meeting: Working For more development, innovation and cooperation for our people. President Bachelet presides” 22 January 2018, Tweet.



Image 55
Via Official-Twitter account of the President of Colombia (JuanManSantos). “Thank you, President, @EPN for your permanent support for the peace of our country. Mexico will provide \$1 million for demining. #MexicoEnColombia” 27 October 2016, Tweet.



Image 56
Via Official-Twitter account of the Office of the Presidency of Mexico (PresidenciaMX). “Thanks to @A_delPacífico, for their support in the peace process “@JuanManSantos” 30 June 2017, Tweet.



Image 58
Via Twitter account of the President of the Constituent Assembly of Venezuela (DrodriguezVen) “Chancellor @LVidegaray assaults Venezuela to meet their imperial owners. He thinks the Mexican people will forget their treachery” 23 March 2017, Tweet.



Image 59
Via Official Twitter-account of the President of the United States of Mexico (EPN). “I met with @liliantintori to talk about the situation in Venezuela and reiterate the position of Mexico.” 6 April 2017, Tweet.



Image 60
Via Official-Twitter account of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Mexico (LVidegaray). “A moment ago, the president of Mexico @EPN called at the G20 table to pay attention to the situation in Venezuela.” 8 July 2018, Tweet.



Image 61

Via Official-Twitter account of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mexico (SRE_MX). “During their bilateral meeting #LVidegaray and US secretary of state Rex Tillerson exchanged views on regional issues such as cooperation for development in Central America and the situation in Venezuela. bit.ly/2FD030R” 2 February 2018, Tweet.



Image 62

Via Official-Twitter account of Mexican Government (gobmx). “The President @EPN held a bilateral meeting with China’s leader, Xi Jinping MXCN” 4 September 2017, Tweet.



Image 63

Via Official Twitter-account of the President of the United States of Mexico (EPN). “I am sure that under President Xi’s leadership, China will follow the path of prosperity.” 25 October 2017, Tweet.



Image 66

Via Official-Twitter account of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mexico (SRE_MX). “After @Brexit we said: We want a

business relationship with UK because of the importance of this country and how big its market is: #LVidegaray” 19 October 2017, Twitter



Image 67

Via Official Twitter-account of the President of the United States of Mexico (EPN). “Mexico will not recognize the unilateral declaration of independence of Catalonia. We are voting for a peaceful and political solution” 27 October 2017, Tweet.



Image 68

Via Official-Twitter account of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mexico (SRE_MX). “Mexico condemns terrorist attacks in Karrada in Baghdad, Iraq #ComunicadoSRE” 3 July 2016, Twitter



Image 69

Via Official-Twitter account of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mexico (SRE_MX). “Mexico expresses its strongest condemnation of the terrorist attack today in Kabul, #Afghanistan which caused the deaths of more than 95 people and injured more than one hundred and fifty #Comunicado bit.ly/2ndhN9t” 27 January 2018, Twitter



Image 70

Via Official-Twitter account of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mexico (SRE_MX). “On the events of last night in Syria the president @EPB indicated during his speech at the VII plenary session #CumbreAmericas that Mexico reiterates its broadest condemnation of the use of chemical weapons #Comunicado bit.ly/2qwMok2” 14 April 2018, Twitter



Image 74

Via Official Twitter-account of the President of the United States of Mexico (EPN). “In the name of @Mexico gratitude, with deep emotion, we appreciate the signs of solidarity and support from our friendly countries #FuerzaMexico” 20 September 2017, Tweet.



Image 71

Via Official Twitter-account of the President of the United States of Mexico (EPN). “Mexico condemns these facts against our citizens and has demanded a thorough investigation of what has happened to the Egyptian government” 13 September 2015, Tweet.



Image 72

Via Official-Twitter account of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Mexico (LVIDEGARAY). “About the decision of the U.S. government to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of the state of Israel, Mexico will maintain its Embassy in Tel Aviv: bit.ly/2AyHfgU” 6 Dec 2017, Tweet.



Image 73

Via Official-Twitter account of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mexico (SRE_MX). “@SRE_mx appreciates the invaluable support of specialist, canine units and teams @UN” 23 September 2017, Twitter