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Культурная дипломатия: построение сети международного сотрудничества

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Аннотация: Статья посвящена проблемам в сфере коммуникации между государствами. В ней рассматривается роль языка в современном обществе, его воздействие на понимание и имидж страны в целом. Автор проводит анализ понимания языка реципиентами и адаптацию полученных навыков через язык. Изучение и понимание языка очень важно для лучшей работы в сфере торговли, культуры и обмена опытом. Рассматривается такое понятие как "культурная дипломатия" и её роль между странами-участницами на международной арене. Раскрывается понятие "мягкая сила", её конкретная роль в сфере тесного кооперирования и создания международной сети сотрудничества.

Культурная дипломатия может показаться более неопределенной, чем другие традиционные дипломатические практики, связанные с экономико-коммерческим или политическим сектором, существует четко и также практиковалась годами, по крайней мере, на двусторонней основе.

Культурная дипломатия находится в ведении Европейского Союза с поощрением культурного разнообразия.

Основная логика заключается в том, чтобы поставить культурное сотрудничество в центр дипломатических отношений Союза с третьими странами-партнерами. В более широкой перспективе эта стратегия также способствует приоритету внешней политики, заключающейся в превращении ЕС в более сильного глобального игрока на мировой арене.

Ключевые слова: взаимодействие, культурная дипломатия, мягкая сила, сотрудничество, совместная работа

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CULTURAL DIPLOMACY: BUILDING AN INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION NETWORK

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Abstract: The article is devoted to problems in the field of communication between the states. It investigates the role of language in modern society, its impact on understanding and the image of the country as a whole. The author analyzes the perception of the language by the recipients and adaptation of the acquired skills through the language. Learning and understanding the language is quite important for the best work in the field of trade, culture, and the exchange of experience. The concept of "cultural diplomacy" and its role between the participating countries in the international arena are considered. The author explains the concept of "soft power", its specific role in the field of close cooperation and the creation of an international network of collaboration.

Cultural diplomacy may seem more indefinite than other traditional diplomatic practices related to the economic-commercial or political sector, exists clearly and has also been in practice for years, at least bilaterally.

Cultural diplomacy is operated by the European Union, with the promotion of cultural diversity.

The underlying logic is to place cultural cooperation at the center of the Union's diplomatic relations with third partner countries. From a broader perspective, this strategy also contributes to the foreign policy priority of making the EU a stronger global player on the world stage.

Keywords: interaction, cultural diplomacy, soft power, cooperation, collaboration

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Introduction

The interaction between economy and culture finds its bridge in the "cultural diplomacy". Through the concrete action of official and non-official diplomats in the field of culture and education, there can be a mutual and deeper understanding of two or more countries. The possibility of giving concreteness to the so-called "soft power", enlarges the perspective of a profound cooperation and the creation of an international network.

Over the centuries, "official" diplomacy has also made use of explorers, travellers, traders, teachers, and artists. These professionals, having brought their culture around the world, can be considered examples of «informal ambassadors», the first "cultural diplomats".

In fact, every person who interacts with different cultures, today as in the past, facilitates a form of cultural exchange, which can take place in various fields.

Among these "cultural diplomats", perhaps the most famous example is that of Marco Polo. But we also think of the architects Aristotele Fioravanti and Antonio Solari, invited to Russia by Tsar Ivan III.

Cultural diplomacy and "soft power"

In the last decades, cultural diplomacy has received more attention, a thinner third instrument in addition to military strength or economic levers that could produce effective results, sometimes superior to those obtainable with traditional "hard power" tools.

We talk about "soft power", or the ability to influence the behavior of others to get what you want through persuasion and attractiveness rather than through coercion or payment.

"Soft power", therefore, avoids the high costs associated with exercising military or economic leverage ("while "hard power" pushes, "soft power" is pulling") [Nye, 2009].

Cultural diplomacy also has political implications or (in agreement with Cummings) it must only allow "the exchange of ideas, information, art and other aspects of culture between nations and their citizens, with the aim of promoting mutual understanding".

Certainly, through the glue of cultural ties, it becomes possible to foster mutual understanding between the communities of two different countries, creating fertile ground for relationships that also touch the economic and perhaps political sphere.

Diplomacy and culture can provide a sort of mutual aid by helping to strengthen the image of a country.

Thus, for example, the Italian artistic and natural heritage can become a magnet capable of attracting millions of foreign tourists to Italy producing revenue for the benefit of the Italian economy. Similarly, the Italian language can be the subject of a targeted dissemination campaign abroad by the foreign diplomatic representations of our country. Concrete evidence we can find in the PRIA Program for the dissemination of the Italian language in Russia, promoted by the General Consulate of Italy in Moscow, with a conspicuous number of training activities for teachers, student competitions, cultural exchanges, twinning projects, courses of Italian provided by the Istituto Italiano di Cultura, lots of exhibitions, film festivals and cultural events organized by the Embassy and Consulate.

There are different areas of Italian culture, but all united by a single common denominator, which once again becomes evident when we are abroad. I refer to the Italian language. Unlike other languages such as English, for example, Italian is not only a container language but also a content language. This feature allows the Italian to be studied specifically as a cultural phenomenon since the form becomes inseparable from the content. In fact, when we speak Italian, we are already speaking the language of art or work for example. Dante's language, therefore, becomes a vehicle and expression of Italian culture appreciated all over the world. It is no surprise that our language is studied abroad by about two million non-Italian-speaking people, becoming, according to the data of the Sil Ethnologue publication (Summer Institute of Linguistics, Dallas, Texas), the fourth most studied language to the world after English, Chinese and Spanish, thus surpassing French. An extremely important result, for a country with just sixty million inhabitants and without colonies which is a witness of the profound attraction that the culture of Italy has on foreigners who choose our language as a starting point to get closer to our culture. So here is the concrete proof that Nye is right, language and culture can therefore really amplify the country's presence far beyond its borders, population or economy. This statement seems to have been further confirmed in the annual Soft Power-30 report, an annual publication that draws up the ranking of the 30 most influential powers from the point of view of soft power. In 2019, Italy ranked 11th place (France, UK, Germany, Sweden, US, ... Holland, Italy / Russia 30th).

The role of language in cultural diplomacy

However, Italian is not only the language of beauty or tourism, but it is also the language of numerous highly qualified professions such as architecture, medicine, robotics, design, and fashion. In this case, it is not only the cultural aspect that pushes foreigners to start studying this language, but also the work perspective that may perhaps favor the intensification of economic-commercial relations between the two countries.

Regardless of the fact that the interest in the Italian language arises for the job opportunities it opens or for the passion for its content (music, art, cinema, etc.), in any case, studying Italian allows millions of foreigners to enter, and hopefully understand, not only the Italian culture but the western one, which founds part of its roots in the Renaissance, the cradle of which was Italy. From here comes the fundamental significance of the language, therefore, the mutual understanding of the culture of two nations.

Knowing the language, you can increase the quality of the dialogue and better appreciate the products of the culture of a particular country [Carta, Higgot, 2019].

The amplifying action of cultural diplomacy on the image of a country is evident when the country in question is Italy. If we compare to Russia, the United States, or China, Italy is a "small" country in many aspects.

If countries like Russia or the United States and China have large quantities of traditional hard power tools available, such as material, military and economic resources, countries like Italy are in a somewhat different position, but not for this reason so disadvantaged. As compensation, the very rich and

heterogeneous cultural Italian heritage is a fantastic resource: figurative arts, classical music, architecture, cinema, cuisine, landscape, fashion and design, literature. All different areas, but together they contribute to shaping a powerful appeal to the full advantage of our country.

In Russia, for example, words like "Italy-Italian" become synonymous with beauty and good taste, that are the most used definitions of "Made in Italy", the link between the economic-commercial power and the soft power of Italy.

Facilitating cultural diplomacy

To support the initiatives brought by the private sector, universities, academies, and civil society, however, it is necessary to create a clear strategy designed at the central level and made operational at the local level in a systemic way.

Clearly, all activities must comply with the directives established at the intergovernmental level by the governments of two or more countries in bilateral or multilateral forums.

As an example, it is worth mentioning some of the numerous agreements between the governments of Italy and the Russian Federation in the academic and scientific-cultural fields such as the Agreement on the study of the Italian language in the Russian Federation and of the Russian language in the Republic Italian (signed November 5, 2003); the Agreement on the mutual recognition of qualifications issued in the Italian Republic and in the Russian Federation (signed on December 3, 2009); and, finally, the recent Protocol of the Italian-Russian Joint Commission on the Collaboration Program in the field of culture and education for the three-year period 2019-2022 (signed on July 4, 2019).

In addition to the exchange of knowledge and opinions, these agreements also provide mutual support for their own cultural institutes (IIC and Russian Center of Science and Culture) through the exchange of highly artistic exhibitions, the promotion of film festivals, dance shows and theatre, book festivals and the organization of weeks dedicated to the Italian language or cuisine. Furthermore, the agreements form the basis for the promotion of academic exchanges of higher education, professional development courses, university conferences, language teaching programs abroad, the provision of scholarships and the creation of programs, double-degrees, etc. Young people, therefore, become one of the main targets of cultural diplomacy. But young people are not simply the passive recipient of cultural diplomacy; on the contrary, they themselves can become the vectors. In fact, in current university environments it is increasingly common among young people to move around in search of new academic or work experiences. Traveling, young people with brilliant academic results become worthy representatives of their country by indirectly promoting its image.

Moved by the desire to expand academic mobility and to develop direct contacts between educational institutions of the two countries, these agreements are also parts of the desire to contribute to the further consolidation of a common European training space (see European Higher Education Area EHEA ministerial meeting in Rome in June 2020).

With regard to intergovernmental efforts in the field of cultural diplomacy, it is also worth mentioning the Council of Europe's multilateral platform, the main common European format, which also includes Russia, for intergovernmental collaboration in the areas of intercultural dialogue, cultural heritage, and sports. Indeed, it was the European Cultural Convention of 1954 that advocated the concept of cultural diplomacy, well before it became popular with Nye's theses on "soft power" in 1990. As evidence of this, Article 1 of the Convention states: "Each Contracting Party will take measures to safeguard and encourage the development of its contribution to Europe's common cultural heritage", and Article 2 further specifies: "Each Contracting Party:

– encourages the study of the languages, history, and civilization of the other Parties and grants facilities to promote this study in its territory;

– will disseminate the study of its language, or its languages, its history and civilization on the territory of the other Contracting Parties and facilitate the carrying out of such studies on its territory".

The existence of such agreements with concrete practical implications, therefore, shows us that the potential of language and culture in a broad sense are real and significant.

Cultural diplomacy, therefore, if at first glance it may seem more elusive or indefinite than other traditional diplomatic practices related to the economic-commercial or political sector, exists clearly and has also been in practice for years, at least bilaterally.

Promoting cultural diversity

Cultural diplomacy is concretely operated by the European Union, with the promotion of cultural diversity.

The underlying logic is to place cultural cooperation at the center of the Union's diplomatic relations with third partner countries. From a broader perspective, this strategy also contributes to the foreign policy priority of making the EU a stronger global player on the world stage [Ang, Isar, Mar, 2018].

Particularly, in this renewed interest in cultural diplomacy at European level, in the text of the Proposal we read "the Strategy proposes three main strands to focus the progress of cultural cooperation with partner countries:

– supporting culture as a driving force for sustainable social and economic development;

– promoting culture and intercultural dialogue to ensure peaceful inter-ethnic relations;

– strengthen cooperation in the field of cultural heritage". The European Union, part of "a continent rich in cultural heritage and pulsating with vibrant creativity", seems resolute to proceed in this direction by doing teamwork.

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