



Sociological Briefing

Diplomacy in Colombia?

The study of diplomacy in sociology is limited. Doing a quick search with the keywords “diplomacy” and “sociology” in scientific databases, the results obtained can be around 70 article contributions. However, doing the same search with the keywords “migration” and “sociology” or “tourism” and “sociology”, the result of the search can be more than 800 or 300 articles for each. It seems contradictory that being one of the fields of study at the core of postgraduate programmes in universities around the world, diplomacy is still an underexplored topic in our discipline. This sociological briefing addresses the role of cultural diplomacy of South Korea and Japan in the specific case of Colombia, in particular in the fields of trade and cooperation, which has been studied by Alexandra Pérez Jiménez and Carolina Urrego-Sandoval.

The authors of “Cultural Diplomacy in Cooperation Agencies and Chambers of Commerce. The Cases of South Korea and Japan in Colombia” published in *Colombia International* identify and argue that the dissemination of cultural diplomatic practices has an impact on the convergence of agendas. In the analyzed case, the institutions studied have become cultural diplomats achieving to blend their own interests with the objectives of foreign policies of the states they represent.

Diplomacy in the global sphere

The authors introduce the research topic by explaining the changes affecting diplomacy in the global sphere, which transformation influences the ways we understand and conceptualize diplomacy. The traditional views consider the elitist nature of diplomacy and assume the existence of secret meetings or diplomacy being only developed by state actors. However, this view can be expanded and updated by analyzing the transformations of contemporary diplomacy. There are new diplomacies that in the practice of diplomacy, recognize the existence and influence of international companies. Furthermore, innovation also influences the topics and areas developed by the practice of diplomacy. In this vein, the authors argue the need to differentiate the concepts of soft power, public diplomacy, and cultural international relations.

The need to unveil the relations or interconnections between diverse spheres, actors, and diplomatic practices is at the core of the contribution. To this aim, the authors explore the diffusion process, understood as the movement and later adoption of similar aspects in diverse environments of the practices of cultural diplomacy on trade and cooperation. Specifically, the authors analyze the diffusion of practices of cultural diplomacy towards spaces of economic and commercial diplomacy in the case of diplomacy of South Korea and Japan in Colombia.

Colombian-Korean and Colombian-Japanese relations

The cultural and cooperative relations between Colombia, South Korea, and Japan have been positive overall, but they have limitations in the economic and commercial dimensions. Taking into account this aspect, the authors deeply analyze the cases in terms of political dialogue, commercial connections, and the role of international cooperation agencies, among other aspects. They conclude that the cooperation agencies and chambers of commerce have integrated cultural diplomacy as they perceive them as positive ones. Because of this inclusion, they achieve to balance their own interests with the agendas of foreign affairs of the states they represent.

The questions underlying the contribution are the following: 1) What is the origin of cultural diplomacy practices in South Korea and Japan? 2) What mechanisms facilitate the diffusion process?, and 3) What has been the result of the dissemination process of Japanese and Korean cultural diplomacy practices in Colombia between 2009 and 2018? By responding to each of these questions, the authors highlight that the practices of the agencies are imbricated in a way that

they become cultural diplomacy. There are emerging questions that require to be further explored, such as the consequences for the non-state actors and to what extent commercial associations can be benefitted from governmental initiatives for private purposes. In any case, the authors argue that the study of the diffusion practices of cultural diplomacy constitutes a relevant issue for global studies and the international political economy.

The international scenario is increasingly diverse and more connected than ever before. In the emerging and changing context, the possibilities for cultural diplomacy need to be explored. Contemporary diplomacy can be also benefitted from the study of cultural diplomacy, in particular the role of the diffusion of practices. To this aim, it is important to create interdisciplinary dialogues that contribute to a better understanding of the current diplomatic programmes, paying special attention to Asia, Latin America, or Africa.