

Nicholas J. Cull, *The Future of Public Diplomacy: Implications for Mexico*

Public diplomacy is constantly evolving and its study has become more complex in recent years. Nicholas Cull analyzes major trends in the practice of public diplomacy around the world, its progress, and some possible directions it may take in the future, as practiced by Mexico and other middle powers. According to the author, in the interests of building a better reputation abroad, Mexico could make more sophisticated use of the tools of public diplomacy and come up with original practices in keeping with its position in the world and diplomatic traditions. Specifically, and provided they are used appropriately, the signification and symbolization tools of modern-day digital communications media could benefit Mexico, given that these are capable of reaching audiences and influencing not just their consumer habits, but ways of creating identity in today's global society.

Jan Melissen, *The Rise of Public Diplomacy: Theory and Practice*

The subject of this article is *public diplomacy*, i. e. diplomatic involvement with the public, discussed in the context of modern diplomatic practices. A multidisciplinary area of knowledge, public diplomacy is currently the most studied branch of diplomacy in academic circles. But while Jan Melissen analyzes public diplomacy as part of the evolution of modern-day

diplomacy, he does not purport to draw up guidelines for its study. In addition to the individual States involved, public diplomacy engages a wealth of actors and fascination with this branch of diplomacy is in no way limited to the West. According to Melissen, academic debate on the subject can only be traced back as far as the early 21st century, which means certain core conceptual and theoretical aspects have yet to be defined. And while public diplomacy has many advocates, it also has its fair share of critics. In short, this particular branch of diplomacy simply underscores how diplomatic practices in general are forever changing.

Simon Anholt, *Myth and Reality: Mexico's International Image*

Simon Anholt invokes the concepts of *nation branding* and *competitive identity* in his reflection on how Mexico is perceived by the rest of the world. Mexico, he says, is capable of designing and building itself an image that reflects a rich, pluralistic reality based on *tangible evidence*, one that offsets the negative press of recent years. In 2010, Mexico was rated 31 out of 50 countries on Anholt-GfK Roper's Nation Brand Index (NBI). Of all the variables taken into consideration, *People*, *Tourism* and *Culture* were the categories in which Mexico scored best. But although Mexico achieved a middle-of-the-range NBI rating, generally speaking, it is a country the world doesn't know a lot about and the little information it does have has been supplied by America's culture and information industries. According to Anholt, Mexico needs to focus on winning the right to be perceived as an international leader when it comes to tackling specific global problems like violence, crime and environmental issues.

Edgardo Bermejo Mora, *The Mexican Cultural Diaspora and the Projection of a Positive Image abroad*

There are a substantial number of Mexican artists and intellectuals who go about their work on the contemporary cultural scene as immigrants, having chosen to reside in other countries for professional or personal reasons. These creators, who make up the Mexican cultural Diaspora, belong to a cosmopolitan tradition of dialogue with other cultures and languages that is characteristic of our cultural endeavors and one of the distinguishing features of 21st century Mexican culture. Edgardo Bermejo suggests a series of actions aimed at incorporating the activities and initiatives of this assorted group into Mexico's cultural diplomacy strategies, based on the notion of *intellectual remittances* that contribute to the country's development and help project a positive image of Mexico abroad.

Peter Landelius, *Soft Power and Public Diplomacy in the Multilateral Context*

Soft power has gained increasing importance in the world that has emerged from the rubble of the Berlin Wall, yet it is a concept that is as hard to implement as it is to define, for diplomacy is soft power par excellence. Historically, says Peter Landelius, soft power has been treated mainly as a subject for bilateral representations and is sometimes confused with traditional types of propaganda or marketing. By way of contrast, multilateral diplomacy —increasingly necessary in today's multi-polar, globalized world— seeks ways to address a growing number of shared problems and its powers are essentially “soft”, although this elusive power has many and varied applications. Small and medium countries are particularly

interested in the subject, but superpowers, too, are beginning to acknowledge its importance. The European Union—the first union of States created in the absence of violence—remains the world's prime example of soft power.

Jaime Díaz and Mónica Pérez, *Mexico Brand: A Strategy to Close the Gap between Perception and Reality*

In 2010, the government of President Felipe Calderón implemented a Nation Brand initiative with a view to improving Mexico's image abroad. The primary goal was to close the gap between the world's perception of Mexico and the country's reality. To this end, international experts, public relations, communications and advertising companies, and government agencies were invited to form a board to discuss the kind of image Mexico needs to project in order to attract tourists, promote investment and improve international perception of the country. Jaime Díaz and Mónica Pérez analyze this major undertaking from its inception and go into details of its more significant lines of action.