

Nation Branding and Public Diplomacy in Argentina: Capitalist Insertion or Survival Strategies?

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Abstract

In the present global interdependent system, the relationship among Nation-States has intensified. In pursuit of capitalist insertion and to bolster their position in the national arena, governments have been implementing Nation Branding and Public Diplomacy strategies to attract investments, tourism and qualified labor. But under the inherent inequalities of the capitalist system, are underdeveloped countries truly jockeying for strategic positions or are they enacting strategies to ensure their own survival?

This thesis combines Complex Interdependence Theory and Soft Power with Core-Periphery Theory to explain the nation branding and public diplomacy strategies of peripheral states. Argentina is the Nation-State selected to illustrate the struggles of a developing country with the autonomy vs dependence choice and the implementation of international insertion strategies depending on the narrative different governments are aiming to portray. The period selected for analysis encompasses the last 4 administrations that followed the profound 2001 economic, political and social crisis in Argentina encompassing the administrations of Nestor and Cristina Kirchner and Mauricio Macri.

Keywords: Nation Branding; Public Diplomacy; Argentina; Kirchner; Macri.

Dedication

“To my family who, despite the distance, are my unconditional support.

To my Vancouver friends who became the family that you can choose.”

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Chapter 1.

Introduction

The sovereignty that nation-states have been fighting for since Westphalia has become eroded by globalization. In this new global scenario, the level of political and economic interdependence between Nation-States has increased. The interconnectedness at every level positions communication at the core of the system. But, questions of global social justice arise: Are these relationships sustained between “equals”? Who dictates the rules of the game? Are these rules “fair” for everyone or only for the “rule makers”? Are certain countries band of choice more restrained by the system than others?

According to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, in 2015 slightly over 50 percent of the global Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflows were directed to developed economies, that only represent 20 percent of the countries in the world. From 2014 to 2015 the FDI inflows to developed economies increased almost 90 percent, whereas the inflows to developing economies only increased 5.3 percent. The largest recipient in 2015 was the United States with an increase of 314 percent from 2014 (US\$384 billion) (Global Affairs Canada, 2016). Flows of money keep twirling in the same circles and peripheral countries aim to partake in the global financial dance.

Public Diplomacy and Nation Branding are relatively new global interdisciplinary fields, born out of the need to overcome the aftermaths of the catastrophic world wars of the last century, the accentuation of economic driven relations and the increased appraisal of concepts like “brand” and “image” as assets in both private and public spheres through communication. Nation Branding and Public Diplomacy have emerged as responses to the increasing problems Nation-States currently face: blurred borders, weakening of sovereignty and national legitimacy and the interdependence of domestic economies with global economic and financial flows. The development of the current national self-understanding is in the hands of corporate and governmental design. Nation Branding and Public Diplomacy intend to address these issues by utilizing national identity and foreign affairs information to coopt and stand out in the international arena.

In “Global Communication: Toward a Transcultural Political Economy” (2008) Chakravartty and Zhao criticize neoliberalism and how this doctrine is intrinsic to modernity and globalization. They also address the problems of inequality, democratization and power focusing on countries mainly from the global South, as a way of decentralizing the debate around North America and Europe. Likewise, the intention of this paper is to escape the exclusive Eurocentric viewpoint by providing a peripheral perspective through the adoption of Latin American scholars’ (Puig, Escudé, Russell and Tokatlian) theoretical frameworks and analyzing the adoption of Nation Branding and Public Diplomacy for capitalist insertion from a developing country standpoint.

This capstone aims to analyze the birth and evolution of Nation Branding and Public Diplomacy as by-products of globalization, capitalism, communication and soft power. I intend to explore how these disciplines were born in the western and hegemonic bloc of countries and have become the new up-and-coming institutions adopted by States to position themselves and/or survive the inclemency and structural global injustices of capitalism. These characteristics will be examined through the lens of Argentina, a “developing”, “peripheral” country and I will focus on its communication insertion strategies attempted since the economic debacle of 2001. I will compare the application of these communication tools through an analysis of the narratives of the Nestor and Cristina Kirchner Presidencies and the current one under President Mauricio Macri.

After exploring the country’s historic oscillations between left and right, the choices of autonomous or dependent insertion, I argue that even though the Kirchners were more tilted to the left and Macri is to the right, Argentina’s economic development is nevertheless always struggling. The band of choices available for to a peripheral country is narrower and, at times, what is meant to be a strategic insertion within a global capitalist system becomes a survival one focused on maintaining the nation-state in the face of both internal and external dissention.

In Chapter 2 the theories adopted as a framework are explored. The adoption of the Theory of Complex Interdependence (Keohane and Nye, 1987) serves as background to explain the current interdependence of the global system and the concept of Soft Power (Nye, 2004). Secondly, I enunciate the Core-Periphery theory, especially from the perspective of UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (UN-ECLAC), offering Argentine authors’ concepts of Autonomy. Chapter 3 investigates the

birth and evolution of both Nation Branding and Public Diplomacy to determine their globalization, capitalist and hegemonic ties as well as the interdisciplinary convergence between the two spheres. In Chapter 4 a depiction of Argentina's relationship with hegemony is done, followed by the implementation of both Nation Branding and Public Diplomacy strategies after the economic debacle of 2001. At the end of the chapter a comparison of the narratives of the "Kirchner era" presidencies and the current one under Macri is done. Lastly, the conclusions arrived from this capstone analysis are depicted in Chapter 5.

Chapter 2.

Soft Power Dependencies in an Interdependent Global System

The Peace of Westphalia, which ended the Thirty Years War in 1648, gave birth to the primary units of political organization on the planet, the Nation-States. From the treaties of Westphalia emerges what is known as a classical, multi-polar international system whose order was secured through a balance of power. In this international scenario, relations were produced only between States, which had a low degree of interdependence (Pearson and Rochester, 2000).

Over time, certain aspects of this system were modified, while others have remained relatively constant, as is the main role of the State in international relations. One of the characteristics of the international transition system - 1789 to 1945 - is the increase in the degree of interdependence of its actors, principally in the economic aspect (Pearson and Rochester, 2000). This process began to present itself more vigorously at the end of the nineteenth century, and was considered by some analysts as the *belle époque* of interdependence (Briggs, 1968 in Pearson and Rochester, 2000). In this period, there was a passage from the national to the international and later to the global in all areas. While the economic aspect has been further integrated, the political one has fragmented. This can be observed in the creation of new States, International Organizations, Non-Governmental Organizations and transnational corporations.

This globalization of politics and the advent of capitalism fits within the “globalist” and “idealist” Complex Interdependence Theory. Outlined by Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye in the 1970s, this theory emphasizes the rising role of non-state actors in the current international relations in which one cannot speak exclusively of a society of States with relations limited practically to the diplomatic and military field (Keohane and Nye, 1987). Among the main postulates, we find that international relations correspond to a model based on cultural, technological, economic and political factors, against the exclusively conflicting interstate model of the realist paradigm (Morgenthau, 1993).

The three main characteristics of Complex Interdependence are:

- Multiple channels connect society: interstate, trans-governmental and transnational between other governments, international (public and private) organizations and non-governmental organizations.

- Absence of Hierarchy among Issues: Military security are not constantly on top the agenda. Many issues arise from the domestic arena and the lines between domestic and international issues become blurred.

- Minor military role: Military force is not used by governments toward other governments within the region, or on the issues, when complex interdependence prevails.

The next important definition to explore is the concept of “Soft Power” elucidated by Nye in 1990s. Soft Power is the ability to attract and co-opt by shaping the preferences of others through appeal and attraction rather than by coercion (hard power), the use of force or utilizing money as a means of persuasion. The currency of soft power is culture, political values, communication and foreign policies. Soft power can be wielded not just by states but also by all actors in the international arena, such as NGOs or international institutions. In Nye’s own words "Seduction is always more effective than coercion, and many values like democracy, human rights, and individual opportunities are deeply seductive" (Nye, 2004; 40). From this perspective, Nation Branding and Public Diplomacy are the techniques that seek to “seduce” other countries or international organizations to attract resources and power using national identity, cultural heritage and communication of international affairs.

The main reason for adopting the Complex Interdependence theory lays in the acknowledgment of soft power as an instrument of influence. This choice does not intend to deny, nor disregard Realist International Relations Theory (Morgenthau, 1993). Recent shifts to nationalism, right winged governments and the revival of neoliberalism in some governments in Latin America, Europe and the United States, have indeed been happening.

Despite the relevance of Realism, I believe the interconnectedness of the global system as depicted by Keohane and Nye in the Complex Interdependence Theory serves as better anchor for the concept of Soft Power which works as the basis of Nation Branding and Public Diplomacy. Also, the Realist paradigm, by mostly focusing on military and economic issues, fails to recognize the prominent role of Communication, International

Public Relations and Advertising agencies in the development of a national visual identity and the relevance of country reputation management as an asset in the international arena.

The second main theory adopted in this paper is Core-Periphery Theory which explains the structural social and economic inequalities of the global system by differentiating core/central developed economies and peripheral underdeveloped countries. Even though Immanuel Wallerstein portrays this concept at a global level in his World System Theory (1974), a Latin American perspective will be adopted by evoking the work of Latin American economists in the UN Economic Commission for Latin American and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and international relations scholars mainly from South America.

In the report “Economic Development of Latin America and its principal problems” (ECLAC, 1951), which was highly influenced by the late Argentine economist Raul Prebisch, Latin American development is defined as another phase of organic world economic development. A critique of the universalism of classical and neoclassical theories of international trade is made, as well as the theory of deteriorating terms of trade. This report also stated:

“By definition, peripheral economies specializing in agricultural and mining activities lack adequate development of their industrial and service sectors capable of absorbing the unemployed or underemployed population from the primary activities. If the prevailing international division of labor continued to reserve to the centers the task of generating technical progress and taking charge of industrial development, a surplus of the labor force that could not be absorbed in the economic activities of the periphery would be generated sooner or later” (Di Filippo, 1998 n.p.).

Although the political and economic scenario has dramatically changed since the inception of this theory – with trans nationalization of corporations, internationalization of economies and propagation of information technologies – core-periphery theory still prevails. The focus remains the inequality in the relationship between Latin America and the developed industrialized hegemon, technical progress, the integration of “development” and “social justice”, economic insertion and regional cooperation (Di Filippo, 1998).

Within the Core-Periphery model a crucial concept arises and it is of outmost relevance to describe Argentina's relationship with hegemony: Autonomy. Several Latin American authors aim to develop a more "autonomous international insertion" and produce analytical frameworks outside the hegemonic scope and agenda (Bernal-Meza, 2016). Three such these theories originate from Argentina which I will review on continuation:

First, Puig (1984) in his "Doctrine of Autonomy" defines the autonomy of a State in a "classic" way as: "the maximum capacity of own decision that can be achieved, considering the objective constraints of the real world" (Bernal-Meza, 2016 n.p.). This represents the "classic" perspective of autonomy.

On the other hand, during the nineties Escudé (1992) equates autonomy with "cost":

"autonomy should be re-conceptualized in terms of capacity and relative costs of confrontation with the hegemonic power. Autonomy is no longer the ability to have an own decision - as Puig interpreted it-, but the relative cost of exercising the ability of confrontation, which was implied by such interpretation of autonomy" (Bernal-Meza, 2016 n.p.).

Finally, Russell and Tokatlian, define autonomy from a neoliberal relationist perspective as: "the ability of Nation-States to make decisions without following the desires, preferences or orders of other states" (Bernal-Meza, 2016 n.p.). According to the authors, autonomy is no longer defined by the power of a country to isolate and control processes and external events, but rather by its power to participate and effectively influence world affairs, especially in international organizations and regimes of all types (Russell and Tokatlian, 2010).

The latter definition, within Core Periphery Theory, fits better with the description of the global system portrayed in the Complex Interdependence. The different levels of autonomy, that peripheral countries experience, condition the possibilities for international insertion and economic development, which in turn, determine the possibilities of exerting soft power in the form of Nation Branding and Public Diplomacy strategies. Given this framework, Chapter 3 explores these specific communication and soft power strategies.

Chapter 3.

Nation Branding and Public Diplomacy. History and Interdisciplinary Convergence

In this chapter, I explore how Nation Branding and Public Diplomacy were born after World War II in the Western hegemonic bloc and how they have become the communicative by-products of soft power dependencies in an interdependent global system. What are the texts that provoked the actions that led to the adoption of these new tools? Where were they born and who are their authors? Finally, how do they relate to each other, and how do they condition the soft power strategies of peripheral states?

3.1 Traditional Diplomacy, Public Diplomacy and the New Public Diplomacy

Diplomacy can be defined as the profession, activity or skill of managing international relations, typically by a country's representative abroad (Buckle, 2011). In very simple words, it refers to the art of negotiating between the representatives of states. Among the earliest identified writings and letters reveal that diplomacy began around the Mid-third millennium BC in the ancient Near East. Some of these writings, written on clay tablets, attest to the interstate relations existing at the time, recounting stories about trade, military cooperation, alliances, treaties, etc. (Buckle, 2011).

Modern Diplomacy arose during the Renaissance period in the 13th century in the Northern City-States of Italy where the first embassies were established in Europe. Traditional diplomacy involved the sending of representatives, usually holding the title of ambassador, from one country to another to communicate with the government of that country. In the old world, having national representation in foreign countries was vital for communicating official messages and keeping the world informed of state affairs (Buckle, 2011).

Traditional diplomacy is communication between states which has always been secret and behind closed doors. According to more classical theorists, public diplomacy is the "foreign propaganda orchestrated by diplomats" but the essential difference is that

those confidential negotiations now involve the media to exercise pressure on the decision makers (Pamment, 2013).

In addition, Traditional Diplomacy differs from Public Diplomacy in the actors involved. In traditional diplomacy, the interstate relationship is the dominant one, whereas in public diplomacy, governments, non-governmental organizations, corporations and the civil society are the stakeholders.

Some of the earliest interpretations of Public Diplomacy are connected to the concept of an “open diplomacy”. In 1871, the UK’s *The Times* expressed the idea that “diplomatic negotiations should in principle be carried out with transparency and openness” (Cull 2009a pp 19-20; Pamment 2013).

As Pamment also mentions, Marxists of that period understood diplomacy as a secretive, autocratic, unaccountable “handmaiden of war and imperialism” (2013). Continuing with this critique, Lenin denounced the secret diplomacy of the major powers and in 1917 made the treaties signed by the pre-revolution Russian government public. Open diplomacy equaled Public Diplomacy in this period.

These “open diplomacy” notions are also present during the discussions on how the League of Nations would function as a peaceful international agreement. The concept appears in Woodrow Wilson’s Fourteen Points speech as an idealistic appeal for the openness of diplomacy as part of a critique of the international system (Pamment, 2013).

Pamment argues as well that the rise of the citizen as a key actor in the new Public Diplomacy theories mentioned later, could be traced to this period. The purpose of public diplomacy was to create empowered publics through accurate information about foreign affairs. The emergence of international news bureaus enabled citizens to understand more about world affairs (Pamment, 2013) which would also make governments accountable.

One of the most successful public diplomacy/propaganda strategies at the time was the one implemented by the British to encourage US entry into the First World War. The strategy was aimed at American elite publics, i.e. key US citizens like policy makers, academics, teachers, business leaders and newspapers to support the lobby for the US intervention in the war. Even though communication was reasonable and factual, it also

contained misinformation including news of atrocities perpetrated by German soldiers that were purely fabricated (Pamment, 2013).

Another example of the use of Public Diplomacy as a soft power tool in the United States is observed during the 1920's with the emergence and export of Hollywood motion pictures. The US State Department had a very close relationship with the up-and-coming industry and utilized it to promote American culture and values. After WWII, Hollywood was nicknamed "Little State Department" and Swann (1991) tries to demonstrate in his work how commercial motion pictures functioned both as cultural commodity exports and as US "ambassadors" overseas. He also refers to Herbert Schiller's work *Mass Communication and American Empire* (1992) and *The privatization and Transnationalization of Culture* (1989) who argues that the U.S. film industry spearheaded the globalization of American culture in the 1920's and was also the forefront of the free flow of information movements in the late 1940's and 1950's. Schiller makes the connection between the U.S. State Department and film industry, describing how by the mid 1920's American films were shown on screens all over the world and the industry had developed a global distribution apparatus that rivaled the size of the U.S Foreign Service (Swann, 1991).

There is ample evidence that the State Department and the "little State Department" had very close ties as the president of the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) Eric Johnston and many of his subordinates were recruited from or by the State Department and vice versa (Swann, 1991). Films from the United States have become ever since a magnificent public diplomacy tool that helped construct the social and cultural values and policies of the country for audiences overseas.

These methods of US propaganda during the war set the scene of the Public Relations industry in the 1920's. The incipient field had a few principles that are very important to understand public diplomacy, such as the position of the media as influential carriers of information, the importance of cultivating press relations and setting the news agendas. Media was the way of controlling discourse, framing issues and protecting interests (Pamment, 2013). Public Relations are born to intervene in public debate to shape opinion.

The efforts of the United States in the Public Diplomacy field were mainly motivated to counteract Nazi propaganda. The purpose of Public Diplomacy then was to help define a national identity and ensure this was projected abroad (Pamment, 2013). Nation branding uses this sense of national identity and crystalizes it in a coherent visual identity.

To resist Nazi expansion and to improve the frowned upon relations with Latin America, the “Good Neighbor Policy” was launched by Franklin D. Roosevelt. The promotion of cultural relations followed agreements signed in 1936 at the Pan-American Conference celebrated in Buenos Aires. The United States government created for the first time a series of agencies dedicated to the advancement of cultural relations: the “Division of Cultural Relations” - within the State Department -, the “General Advisory Committee on Cultural Relations” whose aim was to set objectives and encourage coordination with private agencies that were already working in cultural and educational exchange programs (Delgado, 2014).

Latin America represented for the United States one of its main raw material suppliers and allies therefore, when WWII started, the hemispheric cohesion became primary US diplomatic focus (Delgado, 2014).

In the summer of 1940 the Office of Commercial and Cultural Relations between the American Nations under the direction of the Counsel of National Defense was funded with the purpose of providing technical help to the region. The office name was changed to the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs in 1941 with the idea of opening different North-American cultural centers and libraries, the offering of scholarships and distributing films, documentaries and radio programs. In sum, the office’s aim was to improve hemispheric solidarity to deter the subcontinent to develop relations with Axis powers. One of the main results was seen in the spread of the English language as a second tongue in Latin America and the replacement of French for Spanish as a second language in the United States universities and colleges (Delgado, 2014).

After the Pearl Harbor attack in late 1941 the Voice of America was funded. It consisted of a multimedia news resource and it represented the official external broadcasting institution of the United States. This constituted one of the mechanisms that the US government utilized during the Cold World as part of their “persuasion machinery”.

By the end of 1944, the position of Assistant Secretary of State in Charge of Public and Cultural Affairs was created due to the expansion in this area.

In the post-war international scenario, with the allied triumph, the US found themselves as one of the main architects of the New World Order. The American nation symbolized democracy, economic progress and social wellbeing and different debates around whether to promote these values or not, where and how, took place in the American Congress and the State Department (Delgado, 2014). The popular initiative for intercultural exchange, proposed by the Senator William Fulbright, was approved and became - until the present - one of the most prestigious American scholarships for foreigners. The Fulbright Program, designed for foreign professors and students, represents one of the ways for the US to showcase their ideals and institutions to students from all over the world.

In 1953, the United States Information Agency (USIA) was established with the aim to keep foreign audiences informed about US policies and American society. As the cold war intensified, the USIA grew and importance in fighting communism (Buckle, 2011). It oversaw bi-national centers and libraries, English as a second language programs, artistic exhibitions and musical tours that were used to shape the US image abroad and promote the “American Way of Life”. Jazz and Rock and Roll, along with comics and films became the tools that made American culture feel “closer” and desirable. The values promoted behind these Public Diplomacy strategies were: access to modernity, consumerism, technology and democratic ideals (Delgado, 2014). USIA had presence in over 300 cities in Eastern Europe, Asia and Africa, making them the most geographically dispersed Washington Agency then or since (Dizard, 2004).

In 1961 Kennedy was elected president and the need to increase the influential strategies was raised again. The spectrum of the US influence reached Europe, but there was minimal presence in Asia and Africa and in the newly independent post-colonial countries. Also, Latin American countries started to show a significant aversion to the US due to the lack of economical support after WWII and the success of the Cuban Revolution in 1959 in the US’s own “backyard”. As a response, the Alliance for Progress was launched which consisted in a considerable economical and technical aid for Latin American countries that also pretended to change the “imperialist” image among them.

Modernization and western progress were treated as synonyms and portrayed as the “ideal to achieve” as a society, which was “impossible” to attain under a communist system. The United States were aiming to gain the Third World’s hearts with the promise of development. This is also witnessed again in the 1990’s with the recipe of neoliberal strategies formulated in the Washington Consensus. Critics towards this “economic and cultural imperialism” were not long in coming. We can perceive this in Argentina during the 1990s which lead to its economic, political and social crisis in 2001 (explored in Chapter 4).

By the 1980’s and early 1990’s, Public Diplomacy was considered the “international manifestation of political communications approaches associated with domestic American politics” (Pamment, 2013). Manheim argues that Public Diplomacy was the result of both ‘scientific methods of Public Relations companies and the way in which PR firms and lobbyists had become part and parcel of domestic American politics (Manheim, 1994).

With the globalization of the system and the convergence of media technologies, geopolitics and public expectation contributed to the emergence of international public relations in the 1980’s in overlapping interests between states and multinational actors, mainly corporations (Pamment, 2013).

The study of Public Diplomacy is very recent and there is no agreement on a universally accepted definition. The term “Public Diplomacy” was coined by Edward Guillon, the Dean of the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy in 1965 as a need to differentiate from “propaganda” which started to have a negative image and connotation after World War II. The Edward Murrow Center for Public Diplomacy from the Fletcher School defines it as:

“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 public opinion in other countries, the interaction of private groups and interests in one country with those of another; the reporting of foreign affairs and its impact on policy; communication between those whose job is communication as between diplomats and foreign correspondents, and the process of inter-cultural communications” (About US Public Diplomacy, 2017 n.p.).

Public Diplomacy concerns the role of the press and other media in international affairs, cultivation by governments of public opinion, the nongovernmental interaction of private groups and interests in one country with those of another, and the impact of these transnational processes on the formulation of policy and the conduct of foreign affairs (Pamment, 2013).

In 2002 the Washington-based think tank the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) reported that changes in communication technology have affected the way Public Diplomacy actors can reach target publics. In other words, “new” public diplomacy is basically public diplomacy carried out by the “new media” (Pamment, 2013).

It is safe to say that public diplomacy consists of the management of communication to reach foreign publics through different channels to promote national interests. Moreover, contemporary Public Diplomacy focuses on relationship cultivation with key foreign publics (Snow and Taylor, 2009).

One of the major shifts in the perception of public diplomacy is given by the management of communications. One-way transmission and one-sided broadcasting techniques are being replaced by focus on relationship management and two-way mutual communication. This relationship-centered paradigm is observed in Snow and Taylor (2009) and the adoption of a Public Relations two-way symmetrical communication is shown in Grunig (2001).

This is where Public Diplomacy meets International Public Relations. This connection manifests in public relations functions like relationship management, crisis management, campaign evaluation, etc. but, unlike Public Relations, Public Diplomacy's goal is to gather support for the nation's foreign policy both domestically and internationally.

The “New Public Diplomacy”, reinforced by Jan Melissen (2005) is the term that depicts the post 9/11 approach on Public Diplomacy that was dominated by post-Cold War US centered and focus on international security and Western-Islamic issues. Melissen places the focus beyond the United States and expresses the belief that to properly understand the “new public diplomacy” one should look at big, medium and small democratic and non-democratic countries and this new form of ‘outreach’ in foreign relations (Melissen, 2005).

In the New Public Diplomacy, the hierarchic state-centric image of international relations is replaced by a network model. This also coincides with the idealist view of Keohane and Nye's Complex Interdependence theory explicated earlier.

Pamment argues that there is no 'old' Public Diplomacy in binary distinction from the 'new' Public Diplomacy but different motivations in the reconceptualization can be identified. In the 'new' Public Diplomacy there is an emergence of new actors in the international politics arena, communication involves listening and dialogue, "a two-way street of communication" and a new geopolitical context (Pamment, 2013). Both policy makers and historians blame the 9/11 attacks as a failure of the US government in recognizing the importance of public diplomacy after the end of the Cold War which culminated in the abolition of the USIA in 1999.

A few scholars have associated the new public diplomacy with post-effects communication scholars like Carey who was more interested in the social meaning of media than whether media actors achieved the effects they desired. His well-known ritual model - as opposed to traditional transmission model- examines "the actual social processes wherein significant symbolic roles are created, apprehended and used" moving away from the simplified notion of sender-receiver (Carey, 2009).

Bruce Gregory further explains this phenomenon:

"Public Diplomacy in the 20th century was viewed as a state-based instrument used by foreign ministries and other government agencies to engage and persuade foreign publics to influence their governments. Today, Public Diplomacy has come to mean an instrument used by states, association of states, and some sub-states and non-states actors, to understand cultures, attitudes and behavior, to build and manage relationships; and to influence thoughts and mobilize actions to advance their interests and values" (Gregory, 2011; in Pamment, 2013; 2).

The differences between Traditional Public Diplomacy and the New Public Diplomacy are soundly explained in the following chart by Szondi (2008):

Image removed due to copyright.

Table 2.1. Szondi (2008) Traditional and 21st century public diplomacy compared. In *Public Diplomacy and Nation Branding: Conceptual Similarities and Differences*. Clingendael Discussion Paper in Diplomacy, No. 112

The New Public Diplomacy research is interested in foreign cultures and differences and how meaning is made (Pamment, 2013). This is a point where Public Diplomacy and Nation Branding coincide by using national identity as the motor and base of their strategy. This convergence will be explored in 3.3.

3.2 Nation Branding

In the case of Nation Branding, there are several authors who adopt a critical posture and consider nation branding as part of the neoliberal way of commoditizing national identities for further development. There is also a tendency to disdain the term “brand” as something only appealing to the corporate world, that the intrinsic nature of a nation cannot be branded.

On the other hand, some scholars argue that nation branding has existed even before the term was coined as such. Wally Olins (2002) in his work provides the history of the nation as a brand and tries to counteract the ideas of branding nations that many people find intolerable.

He cites the example of France that has had five republics, two empires, and at least four kingdoms. France has been royalist, imperial and republican. It has also been egalitarian and absolutist. He explains that in less than a century France has lived with three republics and a dictatorship called Vichy.

When the Third Republic collapsed in 1940 under Vichy, the ‘liberté, fraternité, égalité’ slogan was replaced by ‘travail, famille, patrie’. After that came the Fourth and Fifth Republic which constitutes France’s current political and social system. Olins explains that every time reality has changed, the symbolism has changed with it creating a new version of the country domestically and abroad.

Olins further explains the reason why countries continue both implicitly and explicitly to rebrand themselves and that is because their realities change and those changes need to be symbolically projected to all the audiences to whom they relate.

Dominic Lieven in his book ‘Empire’ (2000) describes that the 1789 French Republic was much more “self-conscious a nation, more self-aware and more determined to create homogeneity” which Olins translates into ‘consistency’ and ‘coherence’, the two characteristics branding is all about.

In regards national identity, Lieven mentions the nascent German nationalism. The German Romantics put a heavy stress on ethnicity and language as the essential

elements that define a community identity (Lieven 2000; Olins 2002). Some countries add religion to the mix, other countries invent a new language – like Israel’s modern Hebrew.

When former colonies declared their independence, giving birth to a plethora of new non-aligned third-world countries, they found themselves in need to redefine their national identities and new “image”. This necessity is recognized by the MacBride commission and expounded in its first recommendation: “The development of third-world countries so that they become truly independent and self-reliant and develop their cultural identities” (Carlsson, 2003; 46).

In the independence process of the former colonies, many countries started by giving themselves new names. Ceylon became Sri Lanka, Southern Rhodesia became Zimbabwe, the Dutch East Indies became Indonesia, the former Belgian Congo became Congo, then Zaire and Congo Again. Bangladesh had three names since its independence from the British Indian Empire: East Bengal, East Pakistan and finally Bangladesh.

Olins is trying to portray the aversion to the word “brand”, but the process of “branding” itself it has been implemented long before “Branding” and “Nation Branding” existed as disciplines. With the advent of globalization, the tendency to homogenization presented a threat, hence the focus on national identity to differentiate countries so they would stand out. The importance of communication in the nation-building process is well stated by Anderson (1983).

Contemporary Nation Branding practices developed in the UK in the mid 1990’s with the rise of the New Labor and the so-called Third Way of Politics which transformed the ideology of social democratic parties throughout Northern Europe (Valaskivi, 2016). Third Way politics intended to navigate historical contradictions of political right and left, conflicting interests around capital and labor, and its British incarnation, the New Labor. This approach insisted that knowledge capitalism knows no contradictions, all interests were aligned (Valaskivi, 2016). In the Third Way, social processes and progressive change are driven by the market. According to Valaskivi, Nation Branding grows from this ideological setting as the industry started to develop in the late 1990’s in the UK when a discussion around renewing the country’s image began.

In 1997, a pamphlet called “Britain TM” was created by the think tank Demos that referred to the British ‘brand’. As initially the idea was met with opposition, marketing and

branding consultants stood up in defense arguing that nations have always branded themselves depending on the historical situation and if corporations can do branding, so can nations (Anholt, 1998; Olins, 2002). 10 years later, the concept became 'normalized' (Aronczyk, 2013) and many countries have developed nation brands and utilized them with their communication and Public Diplomacy strategies.

The following definitions depict the amalgamation of national identity and marketing practices that contribute to the concept of Nation Branding:

“Nation Branding occurs when a government or a private company uses its power to persuade whoever has the ability to change a nation’s image. Nation Branding uses the tools of branding to alter or change the behavior, attitudes, identity or image of a Nation in a positive way” (Gudjonsson, 2005: 285 in Szondi 2008).

Other definitions portray Nation Branding independently from branding, like Simon Anholt’s who is considered one of the fathers of Nation Branding:

“Country Branding occurs when public speaks to public; when a substantial portion of the population of the country - not just civil servants and paid figureheads - gets behind the strategy and lives it out in the everyday dealings in the outside world” (Anholt 2003, 123).

Finally, with a focus on national identity, Keith Dinnie, author of the most comprehensive and academically sound book about Nation Branding defines the discipline, in his second edition, as: “(...) the unique, multidimensional blend of elements that provide the nation with cultural grounded differentiation and relevance for all its target audiences” (Dinnie 2016, 5). Dinnie clarifies that the brand - nation’s image- already exists in the consumer’s mind rather than being creation of the marketing function (2016). Nation branding intends to shape this already existing image in a more coherent image to influence positively its targeted publics.

A group of branding practitioners, have become foreign policy specialists and advisors. A branding-driven foreign policy approach created business opportunities for British branding gurus Simon Anholt and Wally Olins, and agencies such as Interbrand, that rushed to Eastern Europe to sell their expertise to CEE governments, and ministries of foreign affairs often presented branding as the “panacea” of communicating with foreign audiences. This British nation branding “know-how” was present in the Estonian, Polish, Latvian, Croatian, Slovenian, Bulgarian, and Lithuanian nation branding campaigns (Snow

and Taylor, 2009). Nevertheless, some drawbacks have been raised as the high expectations these countries' officials had were not met in the short term.

3.3 Public Diplomacy and Nation Branding: conceptual convergence

The relationship between Public Diplomacy and Nation Branding is marked by the penetration of marketing and branding concepts into the public sector, and concepts from international relations into marketing. For example, Szondi writes that “audiences need to be targeted, trade wars or wars of ideas are common metaphors, and employees of a company are identified as ‘brand ambassadors’, ‘niche’ diplomacy and ‘brand-states’ (Szondi, 2008; 13).

van Ham mentions a shift in political paradigms; with the emergence of “brand-states”, the modern world of geopolitics and states is being replaced by the post-modern world of images and influences, which would coincide with a soft power approach. He argues that traditional diplomacy is being replaced by “identity politics” (Szondi, 2008).

Szondi provides five different views can be identified in the relationship between Nation Branding and Public Diplomacy where he describes the different levels of integration of the two disciplines.

Image removed due to copyright.

Figure 2.2. (Szondi 2008) The possible relationships between nation branding and public diplomacy. In *Public Diplomacy and Nation Branding: Conceptual Similarities and Differences*. Clingendael Discussion Paper in Diplomacy, No. 112

In the first one, “*Nation Branding and Public Diplomacy are distinct sphere*”, the concepts are totally unrelated and they do not share any common ground. According to Szondi, in this model, Nation Branding and Public Diplomacy are different spheres therefore have different views, actors, audiences and strategies. Branding is very much image-driven, seeking to create positive country images but in the foreign policy of a country there are certain policy goals that are different and do not compete for the attention of all foreign publics.

Nation branding, in this case, behaves as one-way communication where the communicator has control over the message and in Public Diplomacy, especially the New Public Diplomacy depicted earlier in this chapter, the communication is a two-way street creating a dialogue that ultimately aims for understanding and cooperation.

Differentiation is the *raison d'être* of branding, a brand's goal is to differentiate its product from the competitors and this is precisely what Nation Branding does by identifying and featuring the “uniqueness” of the country in the form of culture, landscapes, people, language, national identity. On the other hand, Public Diplomacy tries to identify the elements of history, culture and people that unite rather than separate ‘us’ (Szondi, 2008).

The second model, “*Public Diplomacy is part of Nation Branding*”, represents the most popular view by branding practitioners and scholars. In this view, Public Diplomacy constructs a fully integrated part of Nation Branding, that represents a much broader

concept. According to Szondi, foreign policy advisors, government officials and IR scholars “have jumped the bandwagon” and branding experts have become foreign policy specialist and advisers as a branding-oriented foreign policy has created business opportunities for branding consultants and agencies (Szondi, 2008; 19). Smaller nations like Latvia, Monaco and Estonia are examples of this approach.

Szondi states that one of the great achievements of Nation Branding has been the revitalization of country promotion. The advantages this model can bring are: make public diplomacy more strategic, integrate communication aimed at foreign publics, increase the competitiveness of the nation in the globalizing world, among others. In contrast, an excessive return-on-investment thinking, oversimplifying what the nation stands for in images and catchy slogans and additional financing and human resources can be mentioned as disadvantages.

The third model, “*Nation Branding is part of Public Diplomacy*”, is limited in the academia but many governments adopt it as many countries adopt some form of public diplomacy but nation branding initiatives are not as common. Many Eastern European countries may fall in this category. These nations had high expectations and they thought of it as the panacea for poor images abroad. With time, they have come to see the concept as one of the many communication tools applied in Public Diplomacy (Szondi, 2008).

In this model, Nation Branding can be conceptualized as the economic dimension of Public Diplomacy. On the other hand, the adoption of this approach may lead nation branding to be misunderstood as merely advertising or propaganda and might suffer from lack of continuity from one government to the next.

“*Distinct but overlapping concepts*” is the fourth approach in which nation branding and public diplomacy share some common ground but neither incorporates the other and both have different characteristics.

This is the approach taken by professor Melissen in the New Public Diplomacy – Soft Power in international relations where he states that nation branding and public diplomacy have similar activities and best work in tandem (Melissen, 2005). Positive image creation is the end goal for both as well as the utilization of identity. Culture and values are a common segment between the two, especially if cultural diplomacy is in

practice. According to Szondi nation branding and public diplomacy as part of international public relations as their central concept is “relationship management”. (Szondi, 2008)

The fifth model is “Nation Branding and Public Diplomacy are the same concepts”. In this last approach, Szondi affirms that “equating public diplomacy and nation branding is the least beneficial model because it would ignore important differences and neither concept would be utilized in its full potential” (Szondi, 2008; 29).

By investigating both strategies of Nation Branding and Public Diplomacy we can assess the different policy narratives that guide Argentina’s insertion into the global arena in the past fifteen years. Argentina’s policy narrative is intrinsically linked with the relationship the country sustains with hegemony and its level of autonomy. This level of autonomy is connected to the country’s ability to manage its national project internally, and also its ability to make gains on the global stage.

Chapter 4.

Public Diplomacy and Nation Branding in Argentina

The adoption of these communication tools in Argentina will be explicated in the present chapter, as well as the level of integration between the two of them and the narratives behind the use of Nation Branding and Public Diplomacy in the country. The chapter will commence with a background of Argentina's history of international affairs, its left-right alternation and the country's relationship with hegemony after WWII. Subsequently, the focus will be from 2001 onwards as Nation Branding and Public Diplomacy strategies were implemented for the first time after the 2001 crisis. The "Kirchner era" administrations and the current Macri presidency and their narratives will be analyzed.

Also, how is the concept of autonomy relevant to the adoption of both Nation Branding and Public Diplomacy? How broad are the margins the country has to maneuver its own international integration?

4.1 Background

Shortly after achieving independence in 1816, Argentina replaced the mother country Spain with the United Kingdom as the new commercial partner and hegemonic figure. The Treaty of Friendship, Commerce and Navigation was signed in 1825 in which the characteristics of the international division of labor were emulated and kept the nation isolated from the rest of the world (Figari, 2004). The relationship with hegemony continued being dependent and therefore asymmetric, even with the birth of Argentina as a new independent Nation-State.

It is believed that the principles of No Intervention and Autonomy originated here due to the United Kingdom attempt to invade the territory twice (1806 and 1807) and due to the Malvinas/Falkland Islands occupation in 1833 (Figari, 2004). It is important to highlight that the economic relationship with the UK continued normally during this period despite the occupation.

This period is characterized by Figari as “monist dependence” that was justified by the need for investments to build the new country. The next phase would be the “dualist” where the debate around dependence and autonomy was first installed in Argentina (Figari, 2004). During the late 1800s and beginning of 1900s, while the United States confronted the United Kingdom for the hegemony in Latin America, Argentina starts its contestatorial relationship with the US at the Pan-American Conferences. When the United Kingdom withdrew its influence in the hemisphere after WWI the United States took their place but implemented the “Good Neighbor” policy which swapped the military intervention for an economic one (Figari, 2004).

The 1929 Great Depression and WWI reduced 2/3 of world trade which forced Argentina to change its productive process from an agriculture based model to an industrialized one along with an imports substitution model. Nevertheless, the agriculture landowners still held national power (Figari, 2004).

Ferrari outlines the constants of Argentine foreign affairs up to 1976 as: 1) Pacifism (interrupted in 1982 with the Malvinas/Falkland Islands war), 2) Isolationism, 3) Evasion through the law (the use of the law was preferred over socioeconomic issues), 4) Moralism, 5) Confrontation with the United States and European rapprochement (Anglophilia) and 6) territorial dismemberment (since its Independence Argentina lost half of its territory) [and the Malvinas/Falkland islands issue can also be added] (Ferrari, 1981).

Domestically, after WWII, Argentina was marked by a political polarization between “populist” projects that were carried out through three left-leaning Peron presidencies, and the right leaning “anti-Peronist” parties. In this period, international insertion projects were marked by a struggle between autonomist models – carried out mostly by democratic (or left leaning) governments – and models of alignment with the United States - carried out mostly by de facto (or right leaning) governments (Simonoff, 2010). The democratic governments, without completely dismissing the western conception, adhered more to a “Latin-Americanist” project whereas the de facto governments were pro-Western (Figari, 2004). A similar distinction will be seen between the Kirchners and Macri (to be discussed in section in 4.2).

The first autonomy model attempted after WWII was the “Third Position” implemented by Peron. The Third Position was presented as an alternative to capitalism and communism. Peron’s government would sustain pacifism, evasion and moralism (as outlined by Ferrari’s constant numbers 1, 3 and, 4 above) and regarding 5, confrontation, there was an effort of trying an autonomous international insertion but reverting the distrust in the USA to improve the relationship with the hegemon (Granato and Oddone, 2005) without completely aligning with it.

In regards the Malvinas/Falkland Islands, after WWII “as the influence in the country was declining, the conflict over the sovereignty of the islands was rising quickly on the national agenda” (Simonoff, 2007; 165 in Simonoff, 2010). In 1950, Argentina formally declared its sovereignty over Malvinas/Falkland Islands. Meanwhile, the British crown expanded the limits of its sovereignty over the islands, by including the same year under its control the submarine platform, the marine bottom and the contiguous subsoil (Simonoff, 2010). Over the second half of the century Argentina elevates all its claims over the Islands to the United Nations.

The cyclical crises Argentina suffered after 1929, the numerous and sudden changes between very intense alignments with the US to serious intents of autonomy provoked the discredit of the country and undermined foreign investments (Simonoff, 2010). The Malvinas/Falkland Island war in 1982 was the culmination of this insertion crisis.

Since the democratic restoration in 1983 with Alfonsín, the foreign affairs have built taken up an “interesting balancing game between the autonomist tendencies that privileged the region as the main subject in their agenda and a restrained insertion with hegemonic powers” (Simonoff, 2010; 329). The first autonomist tendencies searched for a relationship with Brazil and the dependent ones aimed for a relationship with the United States creating a triangular structure. In Alfonsín the relationship with the US was based on the “re-actualization of the principle of non-intervention through mature and moderate negotiations with the United States” (Figari, 1993; 220 in Simonoff 2010). The same principle of “mature relationships with all countries” is proclaimed by Macri and will be explained in section 4.2. below (La Nación, 2016, March 1st)

In 1989 Menem was elected and with him a neoliberal decade took place in Argentina. For the followers of the Western tradition, such as Escudé, the cut did not occur in 1983 but with Menem's policy new foreign policy which brought "an abrupt turn with respect to the politics of the government of Alfonsín and a 180 degree turn of 180 degrees of the away from the highly confrontational politics of the dictatorship military". The differences that Escudé found were in the policies of Alfonsín and his team that "always led to confrontation with the powerful" and that would have generated costs. Menem, Cavallo and Di Tella policies have "a realistic acceptance of the leadership of the United States" and therefore would hopefully "have no costs and may eventually generate significant benefits" (Escudé, 1992; 36-38 in Simonoff, 2010).

4.2 Argentina's relationship with hegemony. Economic and political scenario since 2001.

In 2001, Argentina suffered a severe economic, political and social crisis as the result of the adoption of a set of top-down imposed neoliberal economic policies during the 90's with President Carlos Menem. The over-indebtedness crisis caused a fractured and devastated economy, a high-devaluated currency, an impotent state, a wounded society, skyrocketed unemployment and a wiped-out middle class.

The failure of the Washington Consensus recipes and western hegemonic economic models finds in Argentina a perfect example. The penetration of the IMF, a general regional crisis, massive tax evasion, money laundering, flight of capitals blended with rampant corruption for almost a decade of the Peronist President Menem, provoked the economic debacle in December 2001. During Menem's administration if neoliberal recipes were adopted domestically, the international affairs were marked by a peripheric realism (Escudé, 2012). Menem's realist approach in international affairs assumed (and respected) the hierarchies of world powers that has led to the so called "carnal relations" period and consented dependence with the hegemon. There is a clear adherence to the western alliance and the principles of democracy and free market during these administrations. Menem also restored the relationship with the United Kingdom after the Malvinas/Falkland Islands war.

After the crisis, Eduardo Duhalde, along with 4 predecessors, served as acting president until new democratic elections took place. On May 25th, 2003, Nestor Kirchner

became Argentina's president with only 22 percent of positive votes, initiating the "K era". The noticeable low number of votes displays a fractured society and the pronounced political crisis. Nestor Kirchner's presidency is marked by a twist to the left and opened a period of "relational autonomy" (Russel and Tokatlian, 2011) in regards Argentina's international affairs.

His open criticism to the Breton Woods systems finds its expression in the payment of the total IMF debt in 2006 to achieve economic independence. It also becomes evident in Kirchner's speech to the UN General Assembly where he states the "need and urgency of a structural redesign of the IMF so it can prevent crisis and aid in the solution, changing its direction that took it from development lender to creditor with demanding privileges" (UN General Assembly, 2004).

The early meetings with his peers from Cuba, Brazil, Venezuela and Uruguay and the complete rejection to the FTAA (Free trade Agreement of the Americas) also attest to the hegemony contestation profile his administration was adopting. The focus was the South American integration by developing a community of Nations that translated into UNASUR and the reinforcement of Mercosur.

Nestor Kirchner paved the way for presidential succession by leaving his administration with a 35,5% GDP growth during his quadrennial, a constant fiscal surplus and alignment with the biggest and most powerful unions of the country (Infobae, 2013, 24th May).

Cristina Kirchner succeeded her husband in December 2007, becoming the first elected woman to become President in Argentina. Her time in office is marked by conflict and social division. Among the first government measures, "Resolution 125" set the tone for the rest of her tenure. The policy would alter the export rights of soy, corn and wheat and the response from the agriculture sector was not long in coming. It created one of the first deep social conflicts in 30 years of democracy as "el campo" (the rural sector) immediately went on strike but the unions and certain social organizations sided with the government (Infobae, 2013, 24th May). Her (UCR) vice-president voted against the policy creating a crevasse at the core of Kirchnerism and broke the ground for the opposition to start generating alliances. The opposition regained power in the national parliamentary elections and the Kirchnerism lost the province of Buenos Aires.

In an attempt to turn the ship around, Nestor Kirchner resigned to the presidency of the Partido Justicialista (Peronist Political Party), Cristina nationalized Aerolíneas Argentinas (Argentina's airlines), and acquired the rights to broadcast Argentine soccer on public TV, which would cost the state 600 million pesos a year. A new "ley de medios" (Media Law) was sanctioned and a strong policy towards Human Rights became the flagship of her administration which acquired an intense and questionable political (Peronist party) taint. During Cristina's mandate, the Argentine society became more separated, creating more division by a "us vs. them" discourse – "oligarcas" (Oligarchy) vs "el pueblo" – (the people). Also, the economic growth of this period presents different figures (private and public statistics) as the national statistics center (INDEC) has been denounced for manipulating and altering official inflation data. Transparency International local Argentina branch – Fundación Poder Ciudadano (Foundation Citizen Power) published the Global Corruption Report 2009 where it states that the government "would have tampered with official inflation data" through INDEC to alter poverty data (Fortuna, 2009, September 24th n.p.).

Nestor Kirchner's death in 2010 and the absence of another candidate from the Partido Justicialista propelled Cristina's re-election which won with over 54% of positive votes, becoming one of the elected presidents with more votes in the country. But the rampant inflation, the weakening of economic indicators, the breakup with one of the biggest national unions and the corruption accusations and investigations (from this administration and the previous one) would set the tone of this new administration.

Cristina Fernández's international affairs can be depicted as a continuation of her husband and predecessor and as the external expression of the internal economic model (called "the model"). Her periods focused on South American insertion (UNASUR and MERCOSUR), the BRICs and holds the same contestation rhetoric towards hegemony, the relationship with Washington, nor the EU is not at the top of the agenda. The relationship with Venezuela was reinforced, the claim for the Malvinas/Falkland island was present and the recognition of Palestine as a free and independent state was conceded.

Even though Menem and the "K era" administrations have ideological and rhetorical differences, and Macri has been compared to Menem, according to Escudé, the Kirchner couple's international affairs are closer to Menem (Peronist, neoliberal) than to Alfonsín (UCR) (1983-1989).

“Since the 90s, Argentina has been respectful of the Treaty of Nuclear Proliferation, to which it adhered in 1995. It does not develop missiles with members like Saddam Hussein, which is what Raúl Alfonsín did. It maintains the claim of Malvinas but without breaking Diplomatic relations with the United Kingdom, reestablished in 1990. As in the 1990s, it converges with the West condemning Transnational terrorism (in these new times through its annual criticism of Iran at the United Nations). And on the commercial side it remains solidly attached to Mercosur, which was created in 1991. Like Nestor Kirchner later, Menem never adhered to the FTAA” (Escudé, 2012; 10).

This distinction is worth mentioning as the Kirchner era is often regarded as heavily autonomous in the domestic speech, but broadly in the international spheres, the general lineaments of these governments are similar.

At the end of Cristina Kirchner’s mandate, society was more politically divided and levels of insecurity, countless corruption investigations and currency devaluation skyrocketed. In this scenario of recessionary economy, low employment generation and “isolation” from the world (Three different US dollar exchange rates, dollar exchange quotas on citizens, restrictions on imports and exports), Argentina chose to make a right turn and elect Mauricio Macri in 2015.

The new government has had a significant turn, so substantial that Cristina Fernandez did not attend the official ceremony to handover the presidential baton to the newly elected president. As opposed to the “K era’s” approach, Macri’s relation with world powers is more “westernized” or “globalized” (Simonoff, 2016). The visit of President Obama to Buenos Aires and several other European leaders bare witness of this radical shift.

A neo-institutionalist approach is visible in the designation of Susana Malcorra as Minister of International Affairs, whose experience does not come from Palacio San Martin (Argentine Ministry of Foreign Relations) but over a decade in international organisms, especially in the UN as an adviser for Secretary General Ban Ki Moon. Nevertheless, Malcorra recent resignation gave place to a career diplomat to take her place, the former France ambassador Jorge Faurie.

The attendance to the World Economic Forum in Davos in 2016 (where Argentina had been absent since 2003), the meetings with the American vice-president at the time Joe Biden, the British Premier David Cameron, and CEOs from Virgin, Coca Cola and

Google demonstrate the more global and/or western interest. According to Simonoff, MERCOSUR is reduced to be the gateway to the European Union and the Pacific Alliance (Simonoff, 2016) which is very like Peron's idea with the Third Position of "promoting from the government the Latin American union so then, as a bloc, they would conquer the European Common Market, which was a priority" (Simonoff, 2010; 291).

4.3 Nation Branding & Public Diplomacy in Argentina. Kirchners' and Macri's narratives.

This section will be developed through the lens of document analysis. As I stated in the previous section of this chapter, Nation Branding and Public Diplomacy have only been implemented in Argentina after the 2001 crisis. A National Brand was adopted for the first time during Nestor Kirchner's administration (2003-2007) and Public Diplomacy was first implemented by the current President Mauricio Macri (2015).

In a world still ruled by the Westphalian institutions, Nation-States have the prerogative to define a nation's image and more contemporarily a nation's brand. This section aims to depict the adoption of both institutions in Argentina and assess the different intentions of the "K era" and Macri behind the implementation of these communication strategies.

Nestor Kirchner in his opening speech addresses the commercial insertion of Argentina as one central strategic issues of his government (La Nación, 2003 May 25th) and one of his strategies is the creation and adoption of a coherent and integrated nation brand. As the former Minister of Tourism Carlos Meyer expressed, the creation of a nation brand "is a directive from the President (Nestor Kirchner) because to him it is a state's policy." (La Nación, 2004 May 11th).

In its inception, the Argentine Nation Brand was inspired in the Argentine branding and marketing consultant Roberto Occhipinti's work "Marca País" (2003) where he states that "the nation brand is not merely a logo, it is something superior" (La Nación, 2004 May 11th). In May 2004, an agreement between the secretaries of Tourism and Communication gave birth to "Estrategia de Marca Pais Argentina" (EMPA) [Argentina's Nation Brand Strategy]. The goal was to provide the country with a visual identity system and to boost tourism, international trade and national culture. After the public contest

'Concurso para la Identidad Visual' (Contest for visual identity, where 45 proposals were presented, the winners were Guillermo Brea with the collaboration of Alejandro Luna and Carolina. Mikalef (Uriarte, 2013).

Under the "fundamento y utilidad" (Reasons and utility) tab on the Marca País website in the Ministry of Tourism it states the image that Argentina is trying to shape in the rest of the world's mind and a State policy:

"(...) These differential factors are the ensemble of the image that historically relates to Argentina (soccer, tango, meat, etc.) and the other image that we want to spread about our country (innovation, creativity, identity, solidarity). Argentina can be a barbeque, a good soccer match or incredible landscapes to visit all year; but it can also be the place where Oscar-nominated films or web applications are made, where a satellite is built or where a pope comes from. When we say that the Argentine nation brand is a *State Policy*, it is no more or less than a *social construction, a policy of us all.*" (Marca País, n.d., n.p.)

The Argentine Nation Brand was officially institutionalized by Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner in a presidential decree in 2008 (Jefatura de Jefe de Ministros, 2008) and an "Intersectoral Commission of the Argentine Nation Brand Strategy" was created to administrate and manage the EMP (Estrategia de Marca País) [Nation Brand Strategy] and the "Marca País" (Nation Brand). The novelty of this policy is the inclusion of the Ministry of International Affairs in the team already formed by the Secretaries of Tourism and Media and Communications.

As we mentioned in the previous chapter, the "K era" is marked by a contestatorial position towards hegemony and incorporation but double speech is evident. While domestically, with the intention of siding with "el pueblo" (the people), Cristina Fernandez's speech disdains, neoliberalism, "los oligarcas" (Oligarchy) and the hegemon; on the other hand, an almost seven-figure contract was signed with the PR division of the British corporation Bell Pottinger for a better positioning in the US and Europe (MercoPress 2009, March 30th).

The "Marca Pais" is not merely a brand, it is also a statement of national identity and goal setting. In the document "Plan Estratégico de la Marca Pais 2014-2024" (Nation Brand Strategic Plan 2014-2024) developed while Cristina Fernandez was still in office, I believe the description of the brand itself alludes to the "Argentine" personality:

"[the nation brand] It proposes to us throughout all its programs and actions an infinity of points of contact where it will teach us we can know Argentina through books, films, products, services, events, food, music, and so on. Through the *overflow of our senses* we will understand that its message is one: it makes us feel again and again that there is *nothing more human than being carried away by emotions*, and dares to tell us that this can be a logic that changes things. It will make us feel that there may be a different way - not better, nor worse - to do things.

To carry out this message, Argentina's Nation Brand has an *intense and passionate personality*, marked by the *creativity, ingenuity and practical thinking*; it is a seductive brand, *ambitious and persevering*. (Ministry of Tourism PEMP 2014, p. 8)

By referring to the Argentine personality, the brand intends to represent as much as possible what is like to "be Argentinean" and the characteristics it wants to portray to the world: intense, passionate, creative, ingenuous, practical, ambitious and persevering. All these characteristics are very "appealing" and "spectacular", meant to impress, but from my perspective they lack the human component like: "Buena gente" (good people) tolerance, compassion, peace and respect that Argentina also has.

On the other hand, a criticism to capitalism, neoliberalism, hegemony and the 2008 global crisis is present:

"Part of the melody that sounds [in the global concert] it is composed by the social humor that is product of the absences and necessities of our time. One that for a long time bet on a proposal that showed its cracks in successive crises, especially in financial 2008, which encouraged skepticism towards the "*infallible*" recipes [neoliberalism] that are *written from above* [hegemon]"¹

(...) The world puzzle shows us that this era also brought mixed feelings, contradictions, new complexities and a progressive displacement of the sources of power that begins to involve more strongly the *South axis along with the demand of new actors who seek to raise their voice from below or from the periphery*: put in question the centrality, the imposed truths.

Thus, the contribution that the South axis in which Argentina is inscribed, comes from the periphery and with its emergent character that has to contribute. Latin America with a young spirit comes to bring new ideas based on experiences, crises that forced us to reinvent ourselves, to rise, to challenge the prevailing logic. (Ministry of Tourism PEMP, 2014 p. 8)

¹ *Italics and translation are my own*

In this part of the document, the narrative is clearly contestatorial towards the hegemon/core and highlights the emergent South Axis need to stand up and raise their voice against foreign models or “prevailing logic”. Also, resilient traits of the Latin American and Argentine personality are mentioned like the ability to recover from crises and reinvent themselves.

Even acknowledging that the development and positioning of a brand can take years (both domestically and abroad), one of the main criticisms of Argentina’s Nation Brand is the lack of consideration of civil society’s opinion in the formulation and development of it (Pizarro, 2017 February 10th). After all, it is the collective sense of belonging to a national identity what is being branded.

In Macri, Nation Branding sits at the core of his Government Objectives (Presidency of the Nation, 2015) where the new and different narrative is evident. On the eighth objective: “inserción inteligente al mundo” [intelligent world insertion] we can find:

- Political Insertion: focusing on “mature” relations with key nation-states from the region - South America - and active participation in international organisms and fora.

- International economic agreements: This is one of the main points where both government’s world views collide the most. The website specifically states that “for years Argentina wasted its potential to integrate itself to world trade” The focus is to reach “agreements to enhance international trade, tourism, attract investments and to strengthen institutions” (Presidency of the Nation, n.d., n.p.).

- Incorporation to OECD. The goal is to become a member in three years.

- Hosting in Argentina the WTO ministerial meeting and G20.

- Nation Brand: “the goal is to position Argentina in the world based on values that can transmit the country’s potential and attractions” (Presidency of the Nation, 2015 n.p.).

There is a continuity with the previous government brand image, but instead of merely focusing on “positioning Argentina as the best South American destination” (Ministry of Tourism PEMP, 2014 p 5) it also aims to include the neighbors in the branding process of the region (Apertura, 2016 January 21st).

In regards Public Diplomacy, the implementation of a strategy in Argentina arrived for the first time in 2016 under the Presidency of Mauricio Macri.

In an interview with Telam, the Coordinator for Public Diplomacy Tomas Kroyer, explained the intention of creating a “new narrative that shows where Argentina is heading”. He also mentioned getting in touch with different opinion formers from different countries and the feedback obtained was that “there was no relationship, no agenda (...) they assumed there was no interest in getting to know the foreign policy” (Galvalizi, 2016). Kroyer also mentioned how:

“there is a new direction and Argentina is being welcomed, there was before a very ideologized vision of foreign affairs that limited our options. In the same way, there is a rupture, there is also continuity in, for example, the dense relationship with China and Russia. The current focus is more pragmatic” (Galvalizi, 2016 n.p.).

This “new direction” – western and global friendly – intends to be as different as possible from the previous “ideologized” administration that “limited their options” - the countries it relates with.

In a personal interview with Kroyer, he depicted his office’s understanding of Public Diplomacy as “the actions focused on domestic and international public opinion and civil society to promote Argentina’s foreign policy agenda” (Kroyer, personal conversation 2016, December 14th).

Kroyer also mentioned that the actions they are taking are centered around a series of priorities, which have to do with the type of country that this administration wants to project:

- Commitment to multilateralism, human rights, democracy; the maintenance of peace and international security.
- Dynamization of MERCOSUR as an internationalization platform.
- Support to the promotion of exports and attraction of investments.
- Sustainable development and commitment to environmental protection.

- Leadership in nuclear and space issues; advances in science, technology and innovation.

- Culture and sport; open and integrative profile of our country.

- Affective-emotional bond with Argentines abroad. (Kroyer, personal conversation 2016, December 14th)

The nation brand has also been enhanced utilizing culture, like Art expositions in Madrid (Chatruc 2017, February 23rd) or the use of sports, such as the campaign for Argentina to host the Rugby World Cup in 2027. In a meeting held with Agustin Pichot, the Argentine vice president of World Rugby, Macri stated: "The decision is in line with the objective of promoting large sporting events that allow the country to position itself to attract tourism and investment" (Marca, 2016 May 24th, n.p.).

The leading star of the new Public Diplomacy coordination has been its monthly newsletters. On its first edition, it states the objectives of Argentina's international affairs:

(...) Today, our foreign policy (...) emphasizes a diplomacy based on principles, maintaining peace, defending democracy and respecting human rights. The concern about climate change, the implementation of Agenda 2030, the fight against terrorism, the cooperation on nuclear safety and combating multiple forms of illegal trafficking are some of the global issues in which the country develops a constructive agenda, strengthening multilateralism and existing cooperation mechanisms. At the same time, *we work so that the international community knows clearly that those who trust their investments in our country will find in Argentina a responsible and predictable business partner*" (Boletín de Cancillería, June 2016 n.p.).

Under Macri's current administration, an effort in connecting with the Argentine citizens living abroad is being made. With the launch of the "Argentinos en el mundo" tab on the Argentina.gob.ar website (Argentinos en el mundo, 2017), the current administration is trying to mitigate the brain drain and build a bridge to connect the State with the diaspora.

Lastly, the Malvinas/Falkland island is an ongoing national matter that every administration is obliged to address and defend by the Argentine Constitution. It is a long-lasting, complex and rich subject to address in this capstone, therefore it will only be mentioned superficially. The current administration has featured the Malvinas/Falkland and continental platform issues only twice in its monthly Public Diplomacy newsletters -

June 2016 (Boletín de Cancillería, June 2016) and July 2017 (Boletín de Cancillería, July 2017).

4.4 Comparison and Analysis

In this section, certain aspects will be compared in the use of both Nation Branding and Public Diplomacy by the different governments

	KIRCHNER ERA	MACRI
<i>Citizen consultation in Nation Branding</i>	Not consulted	Not Consulted
<i>Nation Branding</i>	Developed the brand and strategy	Same Strategy as previous government
<i>Nation Branding focus</i>	Trade, Tourism, Investments	Trade, Tourism, Investments and politics
<i>Public Diplomacy</i>	Not implemented	Implemented
<i>Narrative – Ideology</i>	Hegemonic Contestation. Latin American oriented. Leftist	Global and western oriented. Rightist
<i>Diaspora reach</i>	No policy	“Argentinos en el mundo” website
<i>Relationship with US</i>	More distant	Closer
<i>Malvinas / Falkland</i>	Active claim but relationship with UK	Active claim but relationship with UK

Table 4.1 Comparison of Kirchner Era and Macri Presidency in relation to Nation Branding and Public Diplomacy.

In Szondi’s models from the previous chapter (3.3 Disciplinary convergence), Argentina’s nation branding and public diplomacy can be situated under the fourth

approach “Distinct but overlapping concepts”. On one hand, they share a common goal of producing a positive view of the country and they utilize identity and culture as their currency. On the other hand, they both operate under different ministries, there is no policy that situates them under the same umbrella, presently nation branding in Argentina does not utilize foreign policy information to reach their publics and public diplomacy doesn’t even use the nation brand logo in their monthly newsletters.

With the change in government, the nation brand seems to be not more than a logo, coherent fonts and images used in tourism promotion. According to Kroyer, this administration intends to “potentiate/revise the national brand and understand it as a more ample and inclusive concept” (Kroyer, personal conversation 2016, December 14th). Further work needs to be done to integrate the nation branding and public diplomacy strategies in Argentina so it can communicate a more coherent and solid image and message.

We have been able to see how Nation Branding and Public Diplomacy are tools that aid in the development of the country’s insertion in the international concert. But is this insertion more autonomous or more dependent? Nation Branding and Public Diplomacy are the vehicles that deliver a narrative, a message that determines the nature of the relationship a government form with other administrations, but also with its citizens, potential investors, tourists, etc. Even though the political and ideological differences from the K era and Macri, they both seem to recognize the importance of the implementation of both Nation Branding and Public Diplomacy for international insertion and to transmit the narratives of their administrations.

But how are the insertion tools, government narratives and autonomy related? So far it seems that the more contestatorial with hegemonic powers the narrative is, the more autonomy the country gains, which should bring a broader maneuvering margin in exchange. The problem with this logic is also that the more opposition to hegemony, the less options for trade and FDI and “autonomy” becomes “isolation”, isolation translates into lack of development. This seems to be the vicious circle of the system. How does a country search for autonomy without falling in a trap? Is it possible to break free of the peripheral condition? Nation branding and public diplomacy are tools that depend on the authors and their narratives that implement, but can they aid in this quest by communicating and developing relationships?

In total, under conditions of complex interdependence, does Argentina use the soft power strategies of nation branding and public diplomacy to position itself strategically, or merely to survive? The different governments always aim for a strategic positioning but the peripheral condition of Argentina enacts a survival-type of strategy, especially in times of cyclical crises.

Szondi's models in 3.3 portray the different possible relationships that Nation Branding and Public Diplomacy can have. They also aid in the assessment of the state of these strategies at a given time, so they can be improved to do what they are meant to do: deliver a positive and coherent message to influence its publics minds. The transmission of a positive and coherent message is vital for reputation management and to develop relationships that will guarantee international insertion. The difference between the insertion of a core country or a peripheral one is the narrower band of choice in the system, excessive bureaucracy and the lack of resources and expertise.

As we have seen in 4.1, Argentina has oscillated during the past century between positions of Autonomy, focusing more on the region and positions of dependency where the country has searched for a better place among hegemonic powers to ensure development and a better life quality for its citizens. But autonomy and dependency are not black or white and it seems that neither extreme of the spectrum has provided with positive effects, but ensure more isolation. The challenge in an interdependent global system is to find balance between the shades of autonomy and dependency and create a strategic plan for developing and maintaining key relationships with other nation-states.

5 Conclusions

5.1 Argentina's Challenge with Nation Branding and Public Diplomacy

Most peripheral countries oscillate between autonomist and integrationist governments, and Argentina is not an exception. Autonomy in Argentina has had pendulum-like behavior where military facto governments have sided with the United States (like most facto governments in Latin America) and democratic government have sustained a more autonomous position focusing more on the region. Argentina has always suffered cyclical economic crisis but 2001 was significantly low and the need for re-insertion was imperative to bring stability and growth to the economy.

Nation branding (and the later addition of Public Diplomacy) in Argentina started out as international trade-oriented insertion tool with the Kirchner era, but shifted to a more political device over time and afterwards with Macri. During the Kirchner presidencies nation branding served as the vehicle to communicate to the world the wonders of the country in search for of FDI and tourism, but also subliminally it let the world know about the country's contestatorial position towards world powers by making "rogue" friends.

It seems like the present administration is utilizing Public Diplomacy and Nation Branding to reposition Argentina's international image and reputation as western-friendly. Macri's government seems to believe that investments will only come when the world associates Argentina with "openness", somewhat free trade and adherence to the liberal western and capitalist system. This government is doing the system's homework – some overdue domestic legwork -, by removing corruption, fighting drug trafficking, modernizing its institutions, attacking poverty and inflation to move the country forward and regain the world's trust. But who is "the world" and why do we need its trust? "The world" is the western dominated world and apparently, we need it to survive.

There is a critique to be made to both Kirchner administrations and President Macri. Both governments failed to ask their stakeholders what defines "Argentineness", neither of them performed any citizen consultation during the process of development of a national brand. Ultimately, it is the national identity, self-understanding of the people and

their belonging to a particular land that gets branded and used to define the country's image. Without the buy-in of the Argentine public, a branding strategy will be hollow, and will have much less traction and reach among international audiences. Ultimately, a nation is its people, and autonomy or integration is about the relationships of those people to the rest of the world, not just on economic, but also on social and political plains.

Even though current nation branding and public diplomacy strategies in Argentina overlap, they remain unintegrated, without a common policy that allows them to work together under the same umbrella. Perhaps a better integration of both strategies aid to enhance the assertiveness of the message and the coherence of the country's image.

Despite Macri stated the need to develop "mature and prudent relations with all the countries in the world" (La Nación, 2016 March 1st), the question becomes: are we heading towards "carnal relations"/consensual dependency with the hegemon again? Or is Argentina ready to uphold a healthy level of autonomy facing super powers while still maintaining mature independent relations with them?

In a global interdependent world, the pursuit of extreme autonomy by confrontation with global powers produces the opposite wanted effect and leads to isolation, especially for countries in the periphery. Hence Macri's intention to establish de-ideologized and pragmatic diversified relationships where autonomy is the goal without contestation, but through mature relations with a variety of stakeholders.

5.2 Communicating Strategic International Relations from the Periphery

The present globalized and interdependent system, along with Complex Interdependence Theory and the notion of Soft Power, have been the fertile ground for the birth of global communication strategies like Nation Branding and Public Diplomacy.

Through this journey to unveil the nature and birth of these two spheres, I have been able to establish its globalization and western hegemonic roots. Some of the first questions regarding global justice arise from the core with the very birth of nation branding and public diplomacy: How fair is it that the Eurocentric academia is the one that produces most of the texts that inspire the creation of institutions that contribute to the development

of the liberal, western and global capitalist system? It has been difficult to find “texts” in languages other than English or from Universities from the global South that produce this kind of knowledge or from an “original” or different perspective.

With regards to nation branding, it appears that a new trait of globalization is represented by the corporate-like behavior that nation-states have adopted towards their image and reputation management systems, and these “business-y” characteristics aid in the success of international insertion and positioning. Nevertheless, I do agree with positions that try to demystify the term “branding” as it has clearly always been practiced by nations, it has only adopted a more corporate definition recently. In relation to public diplomacy, there has been a sense since its inception that it is a covert form of propaganda, and behaves merely as a tool of proselytism. However, the two-way communication that forms a key feature of “New Public Diplomacy” does serve to level the playing field for the creation of the international narratives that form the basis for processes of international insertion.

Having said this, is it fair that the development of a cultural image and national identity nowadays comes from “specialists” in the private sector and the government? As Aronczyk declares: “the knowledge identified as vital to maintain the ‘nation’ now comes not from national governments, not from historical or social legacies, and not from civic sources of leadership but from branding and marketing experts” (Aronczyk, 2013; 5) Additionally, how just is it that poor / not-so-developed countries must insert or survive in the capitalist and globalized system by employing “specialists” (western multinational PR and/or advertising agencies) to develop their nation brand? Despite the supposed level playing field of complex interdependence, the know-how required to produce those brands still remains in the hands of hegemonic powers.

Regarding the global capitalist system, is it fair that less fortunate peripheral countries must adopt recipe-type policies dictated by western hegemonic powers for development and growth (neoliberalism) and when they do not work, a set of new (western and hegemonic) strategies must be adopted to reinsert the country back in the system?

The Kirchner presidencies tried a more leftist, ideologized, autonomous and closed economy approach but, at the end of the K era, the country was still submerged in inflation, corruption and high poverty rates. On the other hand, Macri with a more rightist approach,

intends to get Argentina out of the isolation by introducing a new global and western friendly narrative, but the country is presently struggling as well as these types of change only occur gradually and their fruits are generally bore in the long term.

In total, from a peripheral perspective, there is a sense of being doomed, despite the choice for left or right, especially if there is any desire to pursue autonomous paths to “growth and development”. The band of choices open to a peripheral country in the globalized capitalist system is narrower than the one available to core countries. Given this, is it possible for peripheral countries to enter a relation with the hegemon and retain autonomy? Are insertion strategies truly for insertion or are they merely survival strategies? Autonomy and dependency are not black or white but shades of the possible levels of international insertion a country can have and we have seen that aiming for either extremes lead to isolation or to an enslaved dependency that brings nothing but a narrowing of options. At both extremes and under unfavorable economic conditions insertion becomes a survival strategy for peripheral countries.

The importance of communication in the interdependent global world is palpable, it sits at the very core of the system. I can only hope for a colective change in the forms of “persuasion”, that allow us to use our communicative potential for more than just “capital attraction” and open up a possibility for a cooperation that encourages trans-cultural understanding and lasting peace.

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