

COMMUNICATION, PERSUASION AND LOBBYING IN PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

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Abstract

Persuasive communication by diplomatic *lobbyists* often has a significant impact on international relations, due to its direct influence on the political decisions of other states and on how the state they represent is perceived on the international stage. The aim of this paper is to demonstrate whether diplomats use a variety of strategies, such as promoting agreements and treaties, persuasion, negotiation, and *lobbying*, in order to exert influence in international public diplomacy.

The research is informative with an analytical methodology, as it starts from a general understanding of a reality, diplomatic *lobbying*, in order to distinguish, understand, and classify the different essential elements that form part of it.

It was found that diplomatic missions engage in *lobbying* as a legitimate part of the political process and on important issues to ensure that the interests of the state they represent are heard, given that public diplomacy allows for the effective communication and projection of a state's positions on major international issues and initiatives.

The conclusions corroborate the initial hypothesis that diplomatic *lobbying* has a significant impact on international relations due to its direct influence on the political decisions of other states in the way another state is perceived on the international stage.

Keywords: *Lobbying*, communication, persuasion, public diplomacy, international relations, lobbying.

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1. Introduction

Diplomacy and international relations are fundamental pillars for coexistence and cooperation between nations in an increasingly interconnected world. Throughout history, diplomacy has served as the primary means for negotiation and peaceful conflict resolution, allowing countries to establish and maintain relationships, define their interests, and cooperate in areas as diverse as security, trade, human rights, and the environment. International relations, for its part, studies these complex interactions, exploring how states, international organizations, non-state actors, and other global factors influence each other. In a global context marked by transnational challenges such as climate change, economic crises, coups, revolutions, and armed conflicts, diplomacy and the analysis of international relations have become more crucial than ever to promoting peace, stability, and sustainable development.

Public diplomacy, international relations, and *lobbying* form a dynamic trio in the management of global influence and the promotion of national interests on the international stage. In a globalized world, where interactions between international actors are constant and complex, understanding and using these instruments is essential for managing contemporary international relations.

In recent years, international relations theorists from various schools of thought have shown greater interest in recent history, influenced in part by the development of diplomatic relations. For Reus (2018), this trend began years ago with the end of the Cold War and the disintegration of the Soviet Union, reinforced by the events of September 11, 2001, and the disappearance of bipolarity. September 11 led scholars of diplomacy and international relations to reconsider the central assertions of existing paradigms, creating a need for a new approach and a renewed interest in the history of diplomacy as a discipline. This included a reassessment of the Westphalian norms of international governance, established in Europe in 1648, which have been fundamental to international dialogue and relations for centuries. Taking an interdisciplinary perspective, psychologists, politicians, diplomats, liberal institutionalists, and constructivists have supported the study of recent history with an expanded approach that encompasses political, social, economic, and religious factors, as well as sub-state and supra-state forces. Wherever such dialogue initially flourishes, such a reformulation of the relationship between international relations theory and international history is sure to benefit the international community (Keneddy, 2000, p. 742).

Communication and diplomatic *lobbying* tend to have a significant impact on international relations because of their direct influence on the political decisions of other states in the way another state is perceived on the international stage. , diplomats use a variety of strategies, such as promoting agreements and treaties, public diplomacy, persuasion, negotiation, and *lobbying*, in order to influence activities related to international cooperation. Diplomatic actors and missions that do not make proper use of these communication and persuasion strategies are missing a great opportunity to get their messages across to their target audiences in the best possible way, thereby establishing two-way communication that allows for better strategic positioning and greater recognition (Martín-Herrero, 2023a, p. 595).

2. Research objectives and hypotheses

The main objective of this study is to understand the communication, persuasion, and influence strategies employed by diplomatic *lobbying* in international public diplomacy.

The research aims to achieve the following specific objectives:

- To thoroughly review the extensive literature on *lobbying*.
- To understand persuasive communication strategies in international public diplomacy.
- To analyze real cases of lobbying in public diplomacy.

The study is based on the hypothesis that persuasion, communication campaigns, and pressure exerted by powerful diplomatic interests at the international level shape and condition global decision-making, significantly impacting the dynamics and relationships between states and international public diplomacy.

3. Research methodology

This research is informative in nature, as it presents a topic or research results in a way that is accessible and understandable to a wide audience, beyond the circle of specialists in the field of international diplomatic *lobbying*. While maintaining academic rigor, the language used is clearer and less technical, with the aim of facilitating the understanding of complex concepts by people who are not experts in the subject under study: international public diplomacy. The aim of this research is to disseminate knowledge and make scientific and academic findings available to a more diverse audience or professionals from other disciplines.

The research method is analytical, as it starts from a general understanding of a reality—*lobbying* in public diplomacy—in order to distinguish, understand, and classify the different essential elements that form part of it and the relationships between them (Calduch, n.d.). Using the analytical method allows us to discover the main causal relationships that exist between the events or variables of the reality under investigation, diplomacy and *lobbying*. It is a fundamental methodology for scientific and academic research and essential for conceptualizing the exercise of diplomatic lobbying and classifying its influence on international public diplomacy.

Searches were conducted in various databases such as *Google Scholar*, *Dialnet*, *Leisure and Tourism*, *Academic Search Complete*, *Scopus*, *Redalyc*, and *ResearchGate*, using the following descriptors: *lobby*, communication, persuasion, public diplomacy, international relations, and lobbying. Books, popular science and scientific research journals, academic texts, social networks, *websites*, and specialized *blogs* were reviewed.

4. Results

Traditional diplomacy is the attempt by actors to manage the international environment through engagement with other international actors. therefore, it is the attempt by an international actor to manage the international arena through engagement with a foreign audience, that is, the way in which states, pressure groups, or citizens directly or indirectly influence the attitudes and opinions of citizens of other states that weigh on the foreign policy decisions of their respective governments, as well as on international relations.

Diplomacy encompasses all the mechanisms deployed by an international actor to manage international relations between states in the international environment. Currently, this actor can be a state, a multinational corporation, a non-governmental organization (NGO), an international organization, or any other actor on the international stage, such as pressure groups and *lobbyists*.

Wolf and Rosen (2005) explain that the objective of public diplomacy is to influence foreign public opinion. British politician and writer Leonard (2002, p. 48) defines public diplomacy as a country's task of communicating with foreign audiences. For Marini, public diplomacy is aimed solely at foreign audiences; however, this does not imply that local citizens are not informed. In any case, the main objective is to promote the national interest through adequate information and to influence foreign audiences and achieve mutual understanding (2008, p. 4). For Mannheim (1994, p. 9), it encompasses all programs aimed at influencing foreign public opinion and includes all activities by state or non-state actors that contribute to maintaining or increasing a nation's soft power. Cull (2008), a historian and expert in public diplomacy, in turn, specifies that it is the attempt by an international actor to manage the international environment through engagement with a foreign audience.

The impact of persuasive communication strategies and lobbying in international public diplomacy continues to be a subject of debate. De Urbina (1991) argues that the diplomatic mission engages in *lobbying* as a legitimate part of the political process and on important socioeconomic issues to ensure that the interests of the state they represent are heard, given that public diplomacy allows for the effective dissemination and projection of a state's positions on major international issues and initiatives. In this sense, *lobbying* can have a negative impact on a state's foreign policy, as it can skew decision-making in favor of particular interests to the detriment of the general public interest. It is important for governments and their diplomatic missions to be transparent and accountable in relation to lobbying and for *lobbyists* to be transparent about their objectives and *methods*. Furthermore, it is important for citizens to have access to complete and accurate information about the role of *lobbying* in their country's foreign policy in order to participate in public debate (Oliver-González, 2022a).

The decline of the state monopoly on political and administrative sovereignty in favor of shared sovereignty in economic matters and, above all, communication raises the need to rethink traditional diplomacy in international relations. It does not seem possible to return to a closed international system monopolized by state activity, but rather the trend is towards a more open diplomacy mediated by the media (Taylor, 1984). Along these lines, Manfredi (2011, p. 215) argues that communication provides new tools that complement the classic functions of informing, educating, and entertaining. Without overlooking cultural diplomacy (literature, cinema, music, educational programs, or professional training) or international radio and television programming, foreign policy requires the inclusion of communication as a strategic axis for the production of messages, specific training, and the professionalization of such activities. Communication strategies in public diplomacy have replaced the cultural diplomacy actions that used to lead this field of work. New technologies have reduced production costs, facilitating an increase in the number of messages and channels, while eliminating geographical barriers to the broadcasting of content. New media, characterized by their global impact in real time, have changed the design of public diplomacy in contrast to the long timeframes of conventional actions, and with it, the exercise of lobbying. For Oviacionayi, the global era of communications marks a new diplomacy that is little or not at all reflected in the modest information campaigns of (2004, p. 216).

Rodríguez (2013) explains that public opinion is currently a relevant factor in international relations. Public diplomacy is linked to the development of diplomatic activity at new and different levels, such as influencing the behavior of other states through their public opinion, interacting with private groups and interests in a third state, through persuasive and intense communication with members of diplomatic missions. It is crucial for international public diplomacy to know how to listen to citizens, given the decisive role played by new actors in international relations, such as companies, representatives of sectoral groups, NGOs, and civil society. These changes in society allow information to be global and *lobbying* in public diplomacy to move towards transparency.

The opacity with which *lobbying* is often viewed in traditional diplomacy contrasts with the transparency of public diplomacy, i.e., cooperation and dialogue versus one-way communication. The sending state is responsible for planning, formulating, directing, executing, and evaluating public diplomacy actions, which are a factor in achieving national objectives in international relations, especially in times of crisis or conflict in certain states. The public diplomacy strategy must be consistent with foreign policy strategies as a decisive complement to the foreign policy present in diplomatic missions and the *lobbying* they carry out, as it is aimed at public opinion and society in general, through flows of contact that provide feedback between actors in the international system and national or foreign citizens (Lippmann, 1992).

Lobbying in public diplomacy aims to pave the way for states in international relations, while also being closely linked to conventional diplomatic activity (Oliver-González, 2022b). The most frequent instrumental actions of public diplomacy are world fairs, major sporting events, cultural and educational programs, among many others, not to mention the dissemination of information through international media, often mediated by the handling of privileged information from traditional diplomatic *lobbying* (Habermas, 1998).

Diplomacy is a practice that has been carried out since the first entities with sovereign power existed and needed to interact with each other. Modern diplomacy, as it is currently known, was born with the first nation states. Spain is one of the oldest nation states. The first diplomatic relations in Spain as a unified entity arose during the reign of the Catholic Monarchs and were strengthened during the reign of their grandson Charles I and his son Philip II, due to the need to protect the international interests of the Spanish Empire. From these protectionist origins arose the first strategies of persuasion and diplomatic influence in international politics (Pumar-Vázquez, 1995).

Lobbying in public diplomacy involves activities designed to influence decision-makers in other countries or international organizations. Unlike traditional *lobbying*, which tends to focus on directly pressuring legislators or officials, *lobbying* in public diplomacy may involve mobilizing international public opinion to put pressure on governments. This is achieved through strategic communication campaigns that seek to align interests, build coalitions, or even activate diasporas to influence the policies of their countries of origin. For this reason, diplomatic *lobbying* is a common practice in international relations, involving pressure groups, companies, organizations, and other non-governmental actors attempting to influence the decisions of governments and other international bodies. The objectives of *lobbying* at diplomatic conferences are varied, ranging from promoting commercial interests to defending specific social or political causes. Diplomatic *lobbies* can operate openly or covertly, and their effectiveness depends on the quality of their relationships with decision-makers and their ability to influence public opinion and the media.

An effective message strengthens the company's reputation, builds strong and lasting relationships that underpin its commitment to different stakeholders, etc. (Acero and Alcalde, 2012, p. 152). Diplomatic *lobbying* is a very useful tool for promoting legitimate interests

and defending just causes, as long as it is carried out in an ethical and transparent manner (Champagne, 2015). However, it can also be a questionable practice when it is based on corruption, manipulation, and opacity. It is important that states, institutions, and other international organizations have effective mechanisms for transparency and accountability to ensure that legitim *ctivity* is carried out responsibly and transparently.

Pumar-Vázquez (1987) explained that public diplomacy actors can be both public and private. In a broad sense, all institutions, organizations, and even individuals that have some kind of external projection are actors in public diplomacy, with coordination being the greatest challenge of diplomatic conferences.

4.1. Communication, persuasion, and lobbying in international public diplomacy

Current events provide us with an example of persuasive communication and *lobbying* in international public diplomacy, namely the *lobbying* surrounding the current conflict between Ukraine and Russia since the Russian invasion in 2022. This conflict has triggered a series of international *lobbying* activities by both sides, as well as other interested actors, to persuade and influence the policies and decisions of the international community.

Since the beginning of the conflict, Ukraine has carried out an intense diplomatic and *lobbying* campaign on several fronts:

- The Ukrainian government, led by President Volodymyr Zelensky, has *lobbied* hard and conducted media campaigns to get Western countries to impose severe sanctions against Russia. Through direct diplomacy and an intense media campaign, Ukraine has persuaded European Union member states, Canada, Japan, and the United States, among others, to adopt economic sanctions that isolate Russia from the global financial system, including the exclusion of Russian banks from the SWIFT system.
- Ukraine has made a significant effort to secure military and financial support from the international community, including high-level diplomatic visits, speeches in foreign parliaments, and the mobilization of the Ukrainian diaspora to put pressure on Western governments. As a result, countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, and EU member states have provided billions of dollars in military aid, including advanced weaponry and defense systems.
- Intense work in international organizations such as the United Nations, the European Union, and the International Criminal Court (ICC) to gain support for its cause and condemn Russian aggression. For example, *lobbying* for the UN General Assembly to pass resolutions condemning the invasion, as well as efforts to have the ICC investigate war crimes committed in the conflict.

Russia, for its part, has carried out its own *lobbying* efforts to counteract the sanctions and defend its actions in Ukraine. It uses its diplomatic network, state media outlets such as Sputnik, and strategic alliances with non-Western countries such as China and India to avoid complete isolation. Russia has also attempted to influence international public opinion and the policies of countries that have been reluctant to align themselves with Western sanctions.

Russia has used its position as one of Europe's main suppliers of gas and oil as a form of *lobbying*, attempting to divide European countries in their response to the conflict. The threat of cutting off energy supplies has been a key tool in its pressure strategy.

As a result, *lobbying* around the conflict has had significant impacts:

- Thanks to *lobbying* by Ukraine and its allies, Russia has faced unprecedented sanctions and significant diplomatic isolation in the West. This includes the freezing of Russian assets abroad, trade restrictions, and the loss of access to advanced technology.
- Ukraine has received massive military and financial support, which has been crucial to its resistance to the Russian invasion. In addition, it has managed to keep its cause on the international agenda, ensuring a steady flow of assistance and diplomatic support.

The Russia-Ukraine conflict demonstrates how *lobbying* in international public diplomacy shapes international responses to conflicts and crises, with significant geopolitical consequences, especially at international diplomatic conferences.

Lobbying at international diplomatic conferences involves interest groups trying to persuade and influence the decisions and policies of diplomats and representatives of diplomatic missions who participate in and have interests in the conference agenda. In turn, diplomatic *lobbying* attempts to influence the decisions of other diplomatic missions by informing and arguing the position of the state they represent, persuading and pressuring their colleagues to take certain measures in favor of their own government, in the decisions of other governments and interest groups in their country or other countries (Maira, 1987). It is important to note that *lobbying* must be practiced ethically and transparently to avoid conflicts of interest or improper practices. Many international diplomatic conferences have transparency and regulatory measures in place to ensure that *lobbying* is conducted in a fair and transparent manner, with institutionalized rules and procedures regulating the behavior of actors and controlling their effects, thereby reducing any controversy or conflict (Krasner, 1982, p. 186).

A clear example of this was the 12th Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization (WTO) held in Geneva, the headquarters of the WTO, which was attended by ministers from around the world to review the functioning of the multilateral trading system, make general

statements, and adopt measures on the future work of the WTO. A large number of members of diplomatic corps also attended, lobbying for the interests of their states.

This study reports on fieldwork at three global diplomatic conferences, where half of the 232 *lobbyists* interviewed devoted more than 50% of their advocacy efforts to external strategies (Hanegraaff et al, 2016). In line with these observations, several international relations scholars have documented that global policy-making processes are increasingly surrounded by protests, parallel events, media campaigns, and contentious political activities (Barakso, 2010; Bob, 2005; Dür and Mateo, 2014; Linklater, 1981; Peñas-Esteba, 2005).

At first glance, the widespread use of external lobbying by transnational *lobbyists* seems puzzling. The international level lacks a coherent audience that can be mobilized, as the relevant audiences are located within countries, and there is no global public opinion to influence and engage in *lobbying* activities. External *lobbying* is also puzzling because international policy-making is largely a matter of state, with governments negotiating in settings that remain remote from domestic audiences (Zahrnt 2008). Furthermore, policy change is difficult to achieve because some key features of international negotiations (the many players with veto power and the requirement for unanimity) mean that policy-making risks ending in deadlock or lowest common denominator outcomes (Underdal, 2012).

The variation in the relative use of internal and external strategies by transnational advocates at these international diplomatic conferences stems from the fact that *lobbying* strategies are shaped both by the pursuit of influence and by maintenance-related purposes. While it may be less effective in achieving political influence, external *lobbying* can still serve as a fruitful strategy for addressing resource needs. This means that the costs associated with external *lobbying* must be weighed not only against its potential political benefits, but also against the potential advantages in terms of organizational maintenance and resource needs. More specifically, Hanegraaff et al's (2016) analysis of the *lobbying* strategies of 232 *lobbyists* at high-profile diplomatic conferences shows that the effect of group type on the choice of *lobbying* strategies is conditioned by the resources that organized interests have at their disposal and the competition they face in securing resources. For example, they observed a clear connection between external lobbying and the level of competition faced by NGOs and research organizations. This means that *lobbying* strategies are not just a matter of group type or policy at stake, but are significantly affected by the scarcity of resources faced by organizations (). The strategies reported by 232 transnational activists in the fields of trade and climate change were analyzed. The data was collected at several events, three global diplomatic conferences in 2011 and 2012: the 2012 session of the World Trade Organization Ministerial Conference in Geneva (hereafter MC) and the 2011 and 2012 sessions of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference of the Parties (hereafter COP) in Durban, South Africa, and Doha, Qatar. These locations were chosen because they are the most important decision-making forums in two key areas of international policy. Convention on Climate Change (hereinafter COP) in Durban (South Africa) and Doha (Qatar). These locations

were chosen because they are the most important decision-making forums in two key areas of international policy, trade and climate change. Furthermore, the policies developed in these areas affect a wide range of stakeholders and, because they attract many different types of international interest groups, they interviewed representatives of both commercial and non-commercial interests (Oliver-González, 2022c).

At these three diplomatic meetings, a small team of three to four research assistants randomly asked *lobbyists* and government delegates to participate in a fifteen- to thirty-minute interview. During the interviews, respondents were asked to name a specific issue they were working on, the events they were attending, and to report on their *lobbying* strategies in relation to this issue. In total, they interviewed 348 *lobbyists*, but in their article they analyze the responses of only 232 interviewees. Interviewing *lobbyists* at global diplomatic conferences offers some important methodological advantages over other types of data collection (Hanegraaff et al, 2016). First, it provided an opportunity to speak face-to-face with a large group of *lobbyists* from a wide range of countries (59 in total) in a relatively short period of time (three to ten days) during the diplomatic conferences. Second, because the interviews were conducted on site, i.e., at the very moment the lobbying was taking place, response bias due to memory effects was minimized. Third, the *lobbyists* interviewed were active on similar issues in two different political fields. Therefore, the design keeps much of the specific idiosyncrasy of the policies under control, which increases the robustness and reliability of its findings that better diplomacy does not replace bad foreign policy. Aguilar García (2024, p. 77) explains that it is often political representatives who request *lobbying*, as this provides them with solid information that would otherwise take time and effort to gather.

These consequences have major implications for the literature on diplomatic *lobbying*, negotiation communication, political influence, transnational advocacy, and international relations. Two important contributions:

- Communication strategies for lobbying in public diplomacy receive considerable academic attention, but most studies remain at the national level, mainly within democracies, rarely comparing countries or at the EU level. However, in contrast to democratic politics, external *lobbying* by transnational advocates is quite puzzling given the difficulty of influencing global policies and the costs involved in such activities. More specifically, while some studies on transnational advocacy have shown that the issue priorities of transnational advocates affect resource acquisition, this analysis adds to this that resource dependencies also severely affect the type of *lobbying* strategies that transnational activists implement.
- They demonstrated that the connection between group type and diplomatic *lobbying* strategies is not as simple as has often been claimed. Future analysts should avoid overly simplistic claims about group type that assume that some groups are naturally predestined to rely on a particular lobbying strategy. For example, the analyses in this study demonstrate that, depending on resource

endowment and competition for resources, the differences between business interests and NGOs in how they balance internal and external *lobbying* are less pronounced than is often assumed. Furthermore, they showed that there is significant variation among NGOs when it comes to how they balance internal and external strategies, as the most powerful voice of an international actor is not what it says but what it does.

However, at the national level, there is a clear example in the case of DiploCat “Catalan diplomacy.” The Foreign Action Plan of the Government of Catalonia establishes “deploying a public diplomacy strategy in cooperation with different social and economic actors and national and foreign opinion leaders to contribute to improving the image of Catalonia abroad” (2010, p. 21).

Catalonia has been exercising powerful public diplomacy at the international level for decades. DiploCat carries out tourism promotion campaigns, has its own cultural agencies, and promotes development cooperation. Private actors in public diplomacy are undoubtedly the least likely to be perceived as political propaganda, influenced by the interests of the Catalan government. First and foremost, the work of regional universities, *think tanks*, Catalan professional associations, top athletes, artists, and members of the Catalan cultural world should be highlighted. Any public diplomacy strategy, therefore, takes into account the collaboration of prominent members of Catalan civil society, who, to a certain extent, are the best ambassadors for the image of Catalonia and its institutional and political propaganda, persuading and trying to influence international relations and diplomacy, known as *lobbying* for the interests of Catalonia, especially in Brussels. Their actions are also aimed at highlighting and promoting their products and services, thereby generating new business opportunities (Martín-Herrero, 2023b, p. 519).

Another notable example of *lobbying* in international diplomacy is the pro-Israel lobby in the United States. This activity demonstrates how diplomatic *lobbying* can significantly influence a country’s foreign policy and international relations. The American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) is one of the most influential *lobbying* organizations in the US, promoting and strengthening relations between the United States and Israel. It works actively to secure political and financial support for Israel in Congress and the US administration. AIPAC presents a message that highlights the strategic importance and shared values between the United States and Israel. It focuses on security, democracy, and common interests in the Middle East region. Through direct lobbying, AIPAC organizes meetings and visits with lawmakers, offers testimony before congressional committees, and provides detailed reports to influence legislation and policies related to Israel. In terms of media campaigns, they use the media to promote their messages and create a positive image of Israel. They publish articles, reports, and studies highlighting the cooperation between the two countries and the benefits of maintaining close relations. In turn, they organize annual events, such as the AIPAC Policy Conference, which bring together political leaders, experts, and community members to discuss and promote policies favorable to Israel. All of this provides it with a network of political and business contacts that

can help mobilize support and resources, and AIPAC collaborates with Jewish and pro-Israel organizations in the US, as well as with political allies in Congress, to strengthen its influence and mobilize support.

The pro-Israel *lobby* has been successful in securing strong bipartisan support in the US Congress for Israel, including military and economic assistance. It has influenced how the United States handles issues related to the conflict between Israel and Hamas and Middle East policy in general. In addition, the *lobby* has contributed to international pressure on certain countries and organizations to adopt pro-Israel positions, illustrating how diplomatic *lobbying* can play a crucial role in shaping international policy and fostering relations between countries through strategic communication and direct influence on key decision-makers.

5. Conclusions

In international public diplomacy, the concepts of communication, persuasion, and *lobbying* play fundamental roles in influencing public opinion and decision-making at the global level. They are key tools in international public diplomacy, used to shape perceptions, persuade and influence policies, and promote the interests of a state or organization on the global stage.

Currently, it is necessary to reformulate global governance, where the new order for the coming decades is conceived with long-term intelligence. It is also important that this new architecture of global governance be aided by diplomatic relations between states. International relations is the discipline that studies the foreign affairs of states and the international system in the economic, political, legal, and diplomatic spheres. States, international organizations, NGOs, transnational corporations, and diplomatic missions are all part of these international relations.

In the contemporary world, countries' foreign policies are designed by heads of state and government and their diplomatic missions, which formulate and implement public policies. Diplomatic *lobbying* is a legitimate and necessary tool in international relations, provided it is carried out in a transparent and responsible manner. Diplomats must act with integrity and respect international norms, and citizens must be informed and participate in public debate on their country's foreign policy. The main objective set at the beginning of the study has been achieved, as the influence of diplomatic *lobbying* in the international sphere and its impact on international relations has been demonstrated.

In a landscape where a multitude of private organizations act individually and in a coordinated manner to persuade and influence the political and financial decisions that affect them, this influence is channeled through a complex, opaque system that is insufficiently controlled by the institutions that should guarantee the objectivity of the decision-making processes and the actors involved. All of these are reasons why international diplomacy is becoming increasingly important in the international system in socio-political and economic terms, highlighting the

great influence exerted by diplomatic *lobbying* on international relations. The hypothesis formulated at the beginning of this paper is therefore validated, demonstrating that persuasive communication, strategies, and diplomatic *lobbying* actions influence international public diplomacy, conditioning decision-making at the international level.

The various examples presented illustrate how non-state actors can influence international public diplomacy through communication, persuasion, and *lobbying* strategies to shape agreements that have a significant impact on the economies and societies involved. Therefore, when used constructively, *lobbying* can significantly influence public diplomacy and the formulation of international agreements.

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