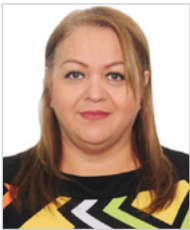


The use of Social Networks as a means of citizen participation in validating positions and interests of international politics in the context of digital public diplomacy. Case studies

Aprovechamiento de las Redes Sociales como medio de participación ciudadana para validar posiciones e intereses de política internacional en el contexto de la diplomacia pública digital. Estudios de caso



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Received: 17/01/2019- Accepted: 17/05/2019

Abstract:

The objective of this research is to analyze the role of social networks in digital public diplomacy as well as citizen participation in validating the positions and interests of States and governments. It is based on three phases of content analysis: a) internal analysis of the content or publication b) causes c) effects (Alonso, Volkens and Gómez, 2011). For one year (2017-2018), the posts of four States, two European and two American, were followed up as case studies. Special attention was paid to the social networks of heads of state in relation to issues of international interest, and a comparison was made through content analysis. From July 2017 onward, a systemization of the posts encountered was initiated. The main results show an active, participatory role on the part of

Recibido: 17/01/2019- Aceptado: 17/05/2019

Resumen:

El objetivo de la investigación es analizar el rol de las redes sociales en la diplomacia pública digital y la participación ciudadana para validar posiciones e intereses de los Estados y los gobiernos. Se fundamenta en tres fases de análisis de contenido: a) análisis interno del contenido o publicación b) causas c) efectos (Alonso, Volkens y Gómez, 2011). Durante un año (2017-2018), se dio seguimiento a las publicaciones de cuatro Estados, dos europeos y dos americanos, como estudios de caso. Se presta especial atención a las redes sociales de jefes de Estado, en relación con temas de interés internacional y se hace una comparación por medio de análisis de contenido. A partir de julio 2017 se inició una sistematización de los posts encontrados. Los principales resultados arrojaron un rol activo, par-

How to cite this article:

Hernández Pereira, R. (2019). The use of Social Networks as a means of citizen participation in validating positions and interests of international politics in the context of digital public diplomacy. Case studies. *Doxa Comunicación*, 28, pp. 55-77.

<https://doi.org/10.31921/doxacom.n28a03>

public users– citizens. We can speak of the phenomenon of the global citizen (Martínez, 2004). For their part, decision makers/ government leaders have an active role in social networks and seek to communicate and validate their actions, almost from the moment they make or announce their decisions, in order to know the reactions of citizens. States make use of social networks in the context of what is defined as digital public diplomacy.

Keywords:

Digital public diplomacy; global citizen; Internet.

ticipativo, por parte del público usuario -la ciudadanía, puede hablarse del fenómeno del ciudadano global (Martínez, 2004). Por su parte, los decisores-gobernantes, tienen un rol activo en redes sociales y buscan comunicar y validar sus acciones, casi desde el mismo momento en que se toman o se anuncia la decisión como forma de conocer las reacciones de los ciudadanos. Los Estados hacen uso de las redes sociales en el contexto de lo que se define como diplomacia pública digital.

Palabras clave:

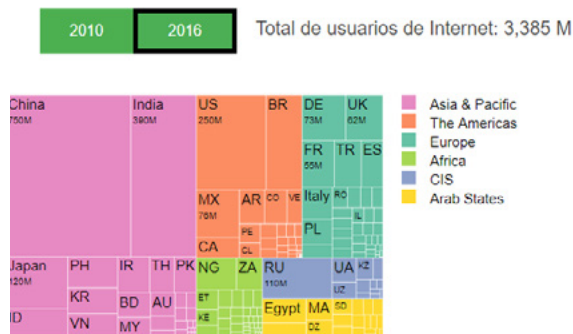
Internet, diplomacia pública digital, ciudadano global

1. Introduction

Internet can be defined in many ways. It can be seen from a technological point of view, or as the connection between computers by means of a network, and it can also be seen as a new means of communication; or it can be seen as a space where diverse types of relations are created, (Forte, et al, 2012). All of the meanings mentioned are valid. For this study, Internet is considered as a medium that promotes citizen participation in issues of political interest such as those related to international politics. Since its birth in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the Internet has evolved from being a network that connects computers to a network of people that facilitates virtual spaces for interaction. Technological limitations have been overcome and access has expanded, broadband services have grown, the use of mobile and smart phones has spread massively, and there has been technological convergence (Internet, television and fixed telephony). The preceding “makes it mandatory to expand and renew the initial definitions of access and citizen participation –within an analogic media context– in order to update their operability in the process of digitization of diverse signals” (Linares, 2016: 39). Citizen participation through the use of Internet leads to the main topic of participation by citizens in issues of national-international-worldwide interest that have traditionally been carried out through diplomatic relations. In order to create a framework of the concept of citizen participation on the Internet, the vision of Pineda (2010) is acknowledged. It refers to the communication that Internet facilitates, understood as follows: “dialogue, as a space for negotiation and symbolic mediation of parties...which expresses in itself the essence of a democratic climate that makes tolerance, opinion and agreement possible, but also dissent” (Pineda, 2010): 32-33). In addition to information and communication technologies, “this role has broadened and multiplied due to the fact that through the network of Internet it is possible to establish more dynamic, bilateral alternatives for information, communication and political participation” (Pineda, 2010: 36). This has meant the emergence of a plurality of power sources with regard to political action directed at public issues”.

It is important to review Internet access data, and it is increasingly easy to connect. Moreover, mobile phones or smart devices facilitate interaction. For the last decade, there has been sustained growth in the availability of communications, especially thanks to mobile cellular telephony, mobile broadband, and the development of fixed broadband infrastructure, which has boosted the access and use of Internet (International Telecommunications Union (ITU), 2017a). In January 2016, there were 4.2 billion users worldwide (Statista, 2016: 1). See Figure 1 regarding the distribution of Internet users.

Figure 1. Internet users by region and country, 2010-2016



Source: ITU (2017b) at <https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Pages/stat/treemap.aspx>

It is clear that the increased utilization of Internet affects the use and access of social networks worldwide according to the number of users. As of 2018, Facebook had 2.3 billion active users per month, YouTube 1.9 billion, WhatsApp 1.5 billion, Twitter 330 million users, Instagram 1 billion, and LinkedIn 575 million, (Statista, 2018a). Therefore, it is clear that a lot of information will be disseminated by these networks and that politicians as well as citizens are now taking advantage of exposing their criteria, expressing their opinion, and validating their position, and will continue to do so.

1.1. Public diplomacy and digital public diplomacy

Public diplomacy has made use of traditional tools for establishing contact with the public and communicating issues of the international policy of each state. By their very nature these tools provide information in a single direction from those who define policy or perform specific actions toward the public. This format has made it difficult for citizens to express their views simply and plainly regarding the actions of decision-makers, especially on issues as profound as those that are discussed at the diplomatic level. With the appearance of Internet and the interaction provided by Web 2.0, spaces for discussion and analysis have been opened. At the same time, a concept called digital public diplomacy is being developed, and within the framework of this research, it is necessary to address this idea in order to define its meaning.

The concept of digital public diplomacy cannot be understood without resorting to the concept of public diplomacy. Some references cite the concept of Public Diplomacy within the framework of the Cold War. It has been mentioned that with the creation of the Information Agency of the United States in the decade of the 1960's of the twentieth century, there were signs of a new way of conducting diplomacy by using the media to approach different audiences (Azpíroz, 2011). For his part, Oviacionayi (2004) points out that public diplomacy as an instrument of soft power used by states to promote foreign policy and their national image arose thanks to the general spread of democracy and the technical and sociological advances of social communication media, and also as a result of the good intentions of President Wilson with the Open Covenants. In this way, diplomacy would not only be considered in its traditional sense as an activity between governments, as an instrument of occidental-style national states, the fundamental actors of which were diplomatic agents (Saenz, 2016)

as envisioned since the time of the Congress of Vienna 1815-1818. Instead, it became necessary to resize the concept, either by enlarging it or by generating new outgrowths from it together with the reality that was constructed at that moment; in this way, the new spaces of international relations and new actors are considered. When use of the term public diplomacy is reviewed, the origin of the concept is attributed to Edmund Gullion. In 1965, during the speech that inaugurated the Edward R. Murrow Center of Public Diplomacy, Gullion pointed out that public diplomacy is about influencing public attitudes on foreign policy beyond traditional diplomacy (Cull, 2009). In this context, he was referring to the attention and care of public opinion in third party countries, the interaction with citizens, private interests, interest groups, the dissemination of information on international relations, the intense communication with journalists and professionals of foreign affairs, and the improvement of intercultural communication.

As can be seen, the concept already goes beyond diplomacy in which the actors are merely states, and has evolved to become diplomacy in which national and foreign public opinion play an important role. Advances in communications can be seen as an accelerator of the practice of public diplomacy. In the origins of the concept, it can be seen as the relationship with the foreign public as a way of validating the actions and decisions of foreign policy of a world power when confronting foreign public opinion. However, its evolution has also led governments to seek the validation of their own citizens for their foreign policy actions. According to Cull (2009), the components of public diplomacy are the following: a) listening b) advocacy c) cultural diplomacy d) exchange diplomacy e) and international broadcasting.

It is important to stop and analyze the interest shown in Internet and Social Networks as important tools in the practice of public diplomacy, and to discuss the widening, or birth, of a new concept, since never before have technologies allowed such active participation of citizens. With the emergence of the Internet between 1968 and 1969 (Siles, 2008), relations and communications between governments as well as between governments and societies, and all other activities within the framework of social relations, have taken a significant turn. The first changes were adjusted to what this technology allowed in the beginning; the capacity to transfer data. Because of the level of development that the Internet had at that time, both in the framework of governments and especially of diplomacy, its use was limited. It continued to remain within the context of political privacy or traditional diplomacy together with new technologies. At the end of the 1980s, the network expanded greatly thanks to the connection of a large number of computers, as well as a system of DNS domains (Domain Name System), until the appearance of the World Wide Web (WWW) in 1989, created by Englishman Tim Berners-Lee and the Belgian Robert Cailliau, known as Web 1.0 (Rubio, 2003). At that time, the information created by all organizations and individuals was not only stored and transferable, but also easily accessed. Internet began to have a public role, its use started to become widespread, and governments began to face the challenge of serving audiences that were more connected and more informed. Digital media have opened significant spaces for audiences to be heard, but also for countries to use these media to endorse their actions. These technologies have also been used for the cultural and ideological positioning of countries.

Digital public diplomacy as a practice is still in development. Cull (2009) points out that risk aversion and anxiety may influence the control of messages shared by many of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, and by the end of the 1990s technology began to play a major role in public diplomacy, which coincides with the technological evolution of the web. This was also the time when country websites started to be created. Later, from 2004 to 2006, Facebook, YouTube and Twitter appeared,

and with these networks new forms of relations between political decision-makers and the public emerged. Cull (2009) points out that 2008 was the key year for these practices and refers to the actions of diplomat David Sarangapara, Israel's Consul for Media and Public Affairs in New York, in using YouTube; Sarangapara was also the first diplomat to hold a worldwide press conference via Twitter in support of his country's war against the Hamas forces in Gaza. This author also notes that U.S. Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy, James K. Glassman, convinced the State Department to work on what he called Public Diplomacy 2.0. Since that time, there has been significant use of digital media, which has been a huge step forward to a level of information and communication that is more public and demands greater interaction with a user-citizen who assumes a more dynamic role by using the media to become even more proactive in matters of diplomacy. It should be emphasized that digital public diplomacy is not only about influencing foreign public opinion, but it is essential to have the ability to listen to what citizens have to say about their country's foreign policy, and to have spaces for interaction to take place; decision-makers must offer appropriate channels for communication that facilitate dialogue and promote the legitimacy of actions in the diplomatic field.

In this context, the digital expression of public diplomacy should be studied, primarily in relation to the convenience of attending to and influencing national and international public opinion. Moving closer to the concept, it could be said that digital public diplomacy would focus on harnessing the Internet and its applications in communicating foreign policy interests and interacting with the target public by using digital media. It is important to note that it is precisely the Internet that has developed since Web 2.0, or in other words Web 3.0, which has allowed for spaces of interaction, collaboration and the creation of content, and has opened spaces to discuss the new diplomacy through social networks, something that was not possible with Internet 1.0. In forming the concept of digital public diplomacy, some refer to twitter diplomacy, or Twiplomacy, as Matthias Lüfkens called it in 2011; others call it public diplomacy 2.0 (Terrés, 2011). For Bassante (2014), digital public diplomacy can be understood as the incorporation of virtual social networks in the exercise of diplomacy as a fundamental tool for achieving foreign policy objectives. It is interesting to note that this concept is not limited to the use of tools, but is oriented to an analysis of use according to its objectives, in this case the foreign policy objectives; according to this author, no diplomat or Ministry of Foreign Affairs should disregard the use of these new tools. In the beginning, these technologies were used for promotional purposes and were unidirectional. Moreover, there was very little progress in promoting the relationship with audiences. As Bjola (2017) points out, it is important to recognize the immediacy of communication and interaction that digital diplomacy allows; in this sense, those who practice diplomacy must be prepared to deal quickly and accurately with matters of interest regarding the foreign policy of their countries; however, as the same author also indicates, mistakes could be made that would have to be corrected later. This technology also changes the ways of communicating and requires the use of more horizontal ways doing so. For Bjola (2017), there is an adaptation process that has three dimensions, namely the following: a) the digital capability dimension; b) the level at which acceptance or commitment is analysed; and c) the stage at which these technologies are adopted in the context of foreign policy. The digital capability dimension refers to the access and use of devices, and then there is the level at which acceptance or commitment to digital communication standards is analysed, and finally the phase at which these technologies are accepted in the context of foreign policy. The views of Bjola (2017), have been considered in this paper as a broader concept of digital public diplomacy, since it is not only the access, but also the use and appropriation of this

technology for foreign policy purposes that has been pondered. According to this author, planning is required to define standards of form and use of technologies and communications aligned with the foreign policy of each country, and all of this would be within the framework of what is digital public diplomacy. Up to this point, the contributions to the concept of digital public diplomacy have been outlined; however, it is a concept in development and in full evolution. Thus, from a broad perspective, this study proposes that digital public diplomacy can be understood as the access, use and appropriation of resources for interaction, communication, collaboration and creation of content that Web 2.0 and 3.0 provides to those responsible for state diplomacy who seek to approach their national and international audiences, offering them spaces to express their opinions regarding issues in the diplomatic field.

1.2. The global citizen

Martínez (2004) pointed out that a type of global community citizen was being developed in the area of serious problems regarding human life, among which were Human Rights, Development, Discrimination, War, Globalization, and the Environment. These issues were no longer the exclusive concern of states and official institutions or the media; along these same lines, he pointed out the concept of the communicative ecosystem of Martín (1999) and indicated that this was invigorated by the use of new information and communication technologies that promoted new ways of coming together and new sensitivities, but also the interconnection of conflicts and causes. For his part, Araya (2001) evaluated new and distinctive features of groupings and citizen activism that were supported by virtual communication, and the most relevant aspect was that the analysis of citizenship had to incorporate those new forms of associativity. This author considered that the communicative exchanges induced by these technologies promoted a new structure of social systems.

Moreover, Araya (2001) paid special attention to the transnationalization of social networks and the exercise of citizen practices beyond the territory defined by a state. Using this approach, it is considered that the global citizen is one who acquires a transnational character, and that his reality is not only framed by what happens within his borders. Instead, he acquires consciousness and knowledge of new realities and is interested in issues that affect humanity and the planet in general. The Internet has helped information to flow more quickly and with less control by governments and the traditional media. In addition, communication is less vertical and has become more horizontal. Colombo (2005) analyzed the influence of Internet on the political domain, especially its potential for citizen participation in public decision-making. According to his work, communication and information technologies, especially the Internet, are facilitating these practices by advancing new ways of carrying out politics, with more extensive and direct information and greater communication between representatives and those represented. Castells (2000) also made reference to how the international scene was being aided by the Internet in the dissemination of information and in the organization and mobilization of transnational movements that emerged to defend women's causes, human rights, environmental conservation, and political democracy. Thus, it is clear that the global citizen is one who accesses, uses and takes advantage of the Internet with global consciousness, and who has a particular way of practicing her citizenship. This citizen also expresses herself on the net and "seeks to exercise a kind of counter-power and pressure for the achievement of common objectives of social and collective interests that even surpass politics in the strict sense of the term, encompassing more global concerns that go beyond the vote and the election of leaders" (Pineda, 2010): 32). Moreover, within the framework of what is analyzed in this work, the spaces on

Internet (especially social networks) that states and governments use to communicate international political issues and validate positions and interests of states, and that give a voice to the citizen within the framework of this digital public diplomacy, are examined.

2. Methodology

For this work, content analysis was carried out in three phases, namely the following: a) internal analysis of content or posts b) causes c) effects (Alonso *et al.*, 2011). For one year (2017-2018), the posts generated by heads of state and foreign affairs ministers or secretaries of the same branch were followed up in relation to issues of international interest of four states, two European and two American, with attention being paid to social networks, and even though consideration had been given to revising the websites of secretariats or ministries of foreign affairs, the extensive work involved in revising their social networks led to the renouncement of this action, and it was left out of this work. No distinction was made regarding nationalities since the concept of a global citizen was considered, although it could be clearly inferred that the reactions were generally from national citizens. The monitoring was carried out using Excel, and once the posts with the most reactions were identified, two were chosen from each country. An attempt was made to choose the ones that registered the most reactions, and then a content analysis was carried out. The proposal of Lasswell (1985) was followed because it is a well-known approach, and namely reads as follows: Who says what? Through which channel? To whom? With what effect? Given that this author was interested in the study of mass media and political propaganda, this formula can be applied to the analysis of posts on social networks, since these are offered to the masses and seek to validate political-diplomatic objectives. Using this as a base, the five basic elements of communication were systemized in a table: the sender, the message, the channel, the receiver, and the effect of the communication. By following the criterion of an expert, in addition to the number of reactions in the cases presented in this document, messages considered significant in relation to international politics were differentiated, and an attempt was made to understand why the available texts were created, what they meant, to whom they were addressed, antecedents, and results (Krippendorff, 2004). This paper reviews the number of reactions to posts by following the model of going from letters to numbers in order to know the noise, or impact, they generated. When the posts to be revised were chosen, they were delved into more deeply, and simple random sampling was used, with a 95% confidence rate and 10% error rate. It is important to be clear about the exploratory characteristic of this study and to understand that it does not pretend to be conclusive regarding the object of study, but instead it seeks to pose questions that must be addressed in future research, as it is considered that the topic of digital public diplomacy, and even more so the analysis of content posts of social networks on topics of international interest, are still in development. All reactions have been taken into account, but for better understanding and analysis in this document, reactions with comments were chosen.

The States selected for this work were the following: for the Americas, the United States and Colombia, and for Europe, Spain and the United Kingdom. The selection was made due to the fact that in these four countries particular contextual situations were identified that could make audiences more attentive to the posts of their governments on international policy issues, and therefore, to the content of social networks. In the case of the United States, the fact of its being a world

power always places it in the sight of its public. In Colombia, what stood out was the issue of the Peace Agreement with FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia - People's Army or *FARC-EP*, an insurgent guerrilla and terrorist organization of the extreme left wing inspired by Marxist-Leninist political ideology. In Spain, the selection was based on the President's vote of 'no confidence' and the crisis in Catalonia (the proclamation on 10 October 2017 of the establishment of a Catalonian Republic as an independent and sovereign state, based on the rule of law, both in a democratic and social sense). In the United Kingdom, the Brexit initiative (abbreviation of two words in English, Britain and exit, which means the exit of the United Kingdom from the European Union), was voted favorably in a referendum on June 23, 2016. A follow-up was carried out by monitoring Heads of State, and even though the posts by Ministers or Secretaries of State was reviewed, these were not included in this work because at the end of the investigation it was no longer considered pertinent. Consideration should be given to the change of President in Spain, as well as the difficulty encountered when not every politician has a social network, in which case the social network of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or the Presidential Offices was always revised.

3. Case studies

3.1. *The United States*

In the first case, it is important to note that the United States is a global actor, and that some issues will consequently be the focus of greater worldwide attention. In addition, in this work attention was paid to the social network acknowledged as the one used by the American president to communicate his actions and decisions directly. Although in the United States Facebook has greater penetration than Twitter, 72% versus 35% (Statista, 2018b), the latter is the network that Trump uses for his communications.

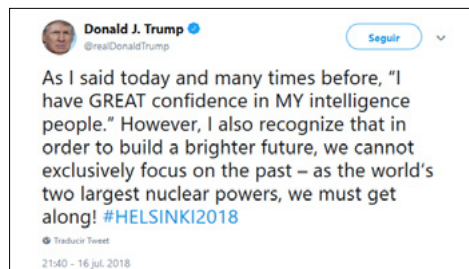
As a first post, Donald Trump's meeting with President Vladimir Putin of Russia is particularly noteworthy. This issue generated many comments, and the reactions that were counted at the time of the cutoff was 36,000. Many of the comments referred to Russia's alleged interference in the U.S. election campaign and the non-convenience of the meeting, given the findings of U.S. intelligence. Among the comments were opinions about whether or not it was wise to meet, given the U.S. Department of Justice's accusations against 12 members of Russian intelligence for launching a cyber war against the USA during the 2016 elections. Trump did everything possible to validate his actions, as can be seen in Figures 2 and 3, practically at the same time as the meeting, with a direct communication and almost in real time.

Figure 2. Helsinki Summit 1



Source: <https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1018956970143858688>

Figure 3. Helsinki Summit 2



Source: <https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1018943446583668736>

The second post analysed is the one made by President Trump after a conversation with King Salman of Saudi Arabia in relation to the production of crude oil and the effects on its price. Figure 4 shows the post, and again this was done almost simultaneously at the moment when the event occurred.

Figure 4. Conversation with the King of Saudi Arabia



Source <https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1013023608040513537>

In relation to content analysis, the first thing to consider is to whom the release is addressed and what effect it causes. According to the user profile of this network, his message is aimed at people with a certain level of education, and according to the coverage of the network, Americans are regular users of Twitter, although it is clear that by using Internet his reach is worldwide. However, the American people are those who react more strongly to posts made by the president of the United States of America, but due to the fact that there is global interest involved, it should not be ruled out that the posts also aim to validate actions for other audiences. It is clear that the reactions are highly diverse; in general, if the objective of the communication through Twitter was to validate the actions of the president in diplomatic affairs, it can be said that for the first case, the reactions were mostly negative; therefore, of a sample of 96 posts (simple random sampling, margin of error 10% and reliability 95%), the result was 30% positive reactions and 70% negative; moreover, although the data were not accounted for, it was observed that in general the posts of those who called themselves Republicans validated the action. One could also think that if the purpose was to attract the public's attention to that action, the end was achieved, since the Twitter users reacted with comments and memes.

The role of the global citizen who is empowered in matters of global interest, informed and willing to give an opinion is a reality that was unthinkable some two decades ago; without access to these technological resources, the validation or explanation of the actions of a government almost immediately or simultaneously at the moment it was taking place was not possible in the past.

The second post, shown here for analysis, indicates that the President's action is more favourable, with 52% positive, which may be due to the fact that this is an issue that concerns the economic condition of the country and that an improvement in oil prices would be favourable for the whole country and the world in general. It is evident that Trump uses Twitter in a very distinctive way and that he has brought political issues previously considered private into the public domain, among them issues related to U.S. diplomacy; it is even pointed out that he governs by means of the tweet; even before he took office, the media referred to Trump's tweets in order to identify the government's position on strategic issues such as relations with China and Russia, the nuclear doctrine, free trade, anti-terrorist policy, and relations with close partners such as Western Europe and Mexico. George Lakoff, a former professor at the University of Berkeley, categorizes Trump's use of Twitter as a strategy, and classifies the posts into four categories: 1) introduce an idea 2) create a distraction 3) divert or evade attention 4) similar to probe balloons: experiment with issues to perceive public opinion. It is clear that the Trump administration understands there is a public that accesses social networks and seeks to communicate directly without interference from a third party such as a media outlet or reporter, and this administration does not underestimate the importance of public opinion. It is noteworthy that the Knight First Amendment Institute, an academic organization of Columbia University, filed a lawsuit on behalf of seven Twitter users who had been blocked by Trump for criticizing or scoffing at him online, and in June 2018 Federal District Judge Naomi Reice Buchwald ruled that Trump should not block users who write to her on Twitter, as this is a violation of the First Amendment (U.S. Constitution), which refers precisely to freedom of expression. The argument was that Twitter is the equivalent of a public forum that the president did not have the right to restrict its use. The previous paragraph indicates how social networks are seen as a new space for communication, interaction, and the exercise of citizenship.

3.2. Colombia

The second case study is the government of Colombia. This country makes significant use of social networks; according to the Ministry of Information and Communication Technologies, in recent years Colombia has registered exponential growth in the number of users registered on social networks, Facebook and Twitter, with more than 15 million users. Bogota is the ninth city in the world with a figure close to 6.5 million, and Colombia is one of the countries among those with the highest percentage of users of social networks. Its Internet penetration is close to 60%, and social networks stands at 50% (Statista, 2018). In the period under study, its president also used social networks to communicate issues of diplomacy and international politics.

In this case, two posts have been presented for analysis, and both were chosen with expert criteria and for the number of reactions they triggered. Both on Twitter and Facebook, President Santos exposed his country's diplomatic actions to the Colombian public, but if we count the comments, there were more responses on Facebook than on Twitter.

This first case is about his visit to the United Arab Emirates; President Santos tries to validate two actions: first he tries to link his visit to the signing of his country's Peace Agreement, and secondly, he tries to prove to his citizens that the world recognizes Colombia is changing.

Figure 5. Visit to the United Arab Emirates



Source: <https://www.facebook.com/330825443903/posts/10155807311843904/>

Figure 6. Visit to the United Arab Emirates



Source: <https://twitter.com/juanmansantos/status/929704519482691584?lang=es>

The second post is on both networks, Facebook and Twitter, referring to the Pacific Alliance summit and his meetings with Presidents Vizcarra of Peru and Piñera of Chile to address Alliance issues. It is important to note that there are more reactions on Facebook than on Twitter and this is related to the number of users on each network and their profile.

Figure 7. Pacific Summit Meeting



Source: <https://twitter.com/JuanManSantos/status/1021848030075604993>

Figure 8. Pacific Summit Meeting



Source: <https://www.facebook.com/330825443903/posts/10156468272748904/>

With regard to the first post, the reactions were quite positive. There were 6,000 reactions, and based on the sampling (95), the result obtained was 16% (76 posts) positive and 24% (19) negative. It is important not to overlook the background of the text (Krippendorff 2004) since as mentioned earlier, the president in his message sought to remind his audiences that Colombia was changing, thereby recalling his greatest achievement as president.

The second post totaled about 2,000 reactions with Facebook and Twitter together; the public was more active on Facebook and in general showed very strong support for the action of the president on this issue; the president made three posts, two on Facebook and one on Twitter.

Following the defined sample, 88 reactions were reviewed. The result was 8% (7 posts) that showed opposition to the president; however, in this case it should be clarified that there appeared to be greater opposition to the president and not to the action the post was about. On the other hand, the positive responses were largely related to the president's achievement in the peace process. Of the 20 posts reviewed above, 11 mentioned the word 'peace'. Moreover, Colombian social network users who made comments usually associated him with the entire tenure since this was the last summit Santos would attend as president. In short, according to the content analysis, if we analyse to whom the message is aimed, we can say that it seeks to reach the entire population that uses social networks, regardless of education level or social class,

since it uses both Facebook and Twitter, and it seems that the effect sought by the message is to provide recognition for the work of the president so that it will be remembered that he is at the end of his term and “it was his final achievement as President”. Another important element to understand about the historical moment in which the posts were made is that the polls were measuring the popularity of the outgoing president, and it was a good moment to offer a reminder on social networks of the achievements of the president in the context of the historical conflict in Colombia. The result seems to have been attained since the comments on social networks were positive, with a strong association with the peace process; this is related to the study by Rodríguez et al. (2015) in which he points out the use of Twitter by President Santos during the peace process as he sought to generate optimism.

3.3. Spain

The case of Spain was analyzed with attention paid to the fact that according to the media, social networks played a very important role both in the election of Rajoy as president and in the motion of censure that removed Rajoy from power; if so, it seems reasonable to believe that social networks play an important role in public diplomacy in Spain. Furthermore, according to Manfredi, Herranz and Calvo (2017), the digital dimension is now part of Spain’s foreign action strategy, not merely a shortlisted instrument, and in this sense “the Spanish model of digital diplomacy seeks greater prominence in communication, more closeness and interlocution, convinced that the administration must be where its citizens are” (Manfredi and Femenía, 2016: 20). As the analysis in this paper refers to the second Rajoy administration, it is important to note that: “...the array of digital and audiovisual changes have led to the need for organizing a communication strategy to respond to international public opinion and to the very demand of Spanish groups living abroad, which is around four million people” (Manfredi, 2017: 106). It is therefore necessary to analyse how citizens respond to Spain’s digital public diplomacy. The first post relates to the meeting with Rajoy and Trump in the Oval office of the White House, Figures 8 and 9. According to the author, the Spanish experience is very positive, and social networks are used for the dissemination of information, for attending to emergency situations, and for diffusion of the agenda.

Figure 9. Meeting with Trump at the White House



Source: <https://twitter.com/marianorajoy/status/912721896654983168>

Figure 10. Meeting with Trump at the White House



Source: <https://www.facebook.com/54212446406/photos/a.10155722065831407/10155722066241407/?type=3>

For this post, 4,500 reactions were counted; a sampling was carried out according to the established methodology and reactions to the actions that Rajoy is reporting are mostly negative; Despite being an attempt to approach a world power, rather than apparently showing a strong rejection of the meeting, network users seem to be demonstrating dissatisfaction with Rajoy instead; it is important to remember that at the time the crisis of Catalonia was very much at hand, and that precisely a month later the situation would explode with a declaration of independence. Even at that time, this was considered the worst crisis of Rajoy's government. Consequently, from the content analysis one might think that for the Spanish president it would be very important to find acceptance for his actions, even more so when it involved a meeting with the president of an extremely powerful nation. Of the total number of reactions of the sample (95), 94% (83) were of dissatisfaction and even mockery. They did not consider that the meeting produced results, and the government was criticized in different ways. For example, it was criticized for its weapons business with the United States and for not addressing the issue of Catalonia. It is clear that the Internet was used to communicate the rejection of President Rajoy directly.

Due to the change of the presidency in Spain, it was considered important for this work that the second set of posts to be reviewed were those of the new president, Pedro Sánchez; thus, the meeting with Macron, president of France, was chosen because the meetings with presidents or heads of government are specifically the ones that had the most reactions in the period in which social networks were monitored, and as an example, the meeting with Theresa May was third in reactions in the revised period. See Figures 10 and 11.

Figure 11. Macron's first visit to Spain



Source: <https://twitter.com/sanchezcastejon/status/1010526521373741057/photo/1>

Figure 12. Macron's first visit to Spain



Source: <https://www.facebook.com/750689868285972/posts/1916336015054679/>

This is one of the first actions that President Sanchez took after assuming power, and it was clear that the national context was troublesome, given the way he took power. Another factor that must be accepted as a precedent, a context, and a framework for this meeting is the situation of migrants in Europe, a crucial issue for the EU. It can be observed in the post and in some of what is mentioned above that the basic topic of the meeting was the cause of a lot of distress among users of social networks, and there are positive and negative reactions to the fact that it is possible to reach a consensus on a position in the face of Europe's migratory crisis. In this case, the analysis of the sample (91) of the 1,600 reactions shows that 40% (38) of the reactions to the issue were positive, and 60% were negative toward the action communicated or toward rejection of the president. There is a distinct element in this case; there is uniformity in the content of social networks. President Sanchez does not distinguish this according to the social network; he maintains the standard and makes a single post for both Facebook and Twitter using the same text and the same photograph. There seems to be interest only in communicating without identifying differences among target audiences. Considering the study by the Interactive Advertising Bureau (IAB) (2018a), penetration figures for social networks in Spain reach 85% (25.5 million) of the population of Internet users, which in turn is 92% (27.6 million) of the total Spanish population between 16 and 65 years of age. Moreover, 51% of users are

women compared to 49% for men, with an average age of 38.4 years. 74% of them work; it can be inferred from these data that the aim is to reach a mature population interested in governmental issues, which can be further validated, given that these same data indicate that Spaniards use social networks to learn about politics. See Figure 12.

Figure 13. Activities carried out on Social Networks



Source: IAB (2018b) en <https://www.iab.com/insights/2017-iab-research-hub/>

3.4. United Kingdom

The choice of the UK for the study was made after considering that Brexit could provide a particular context for analysing government-generated posts. In relation to the UK's social network penetration data from 2017, according to frequency of use, 55% of the people in the UK said they had accessed some form of social network every day, or almost every day, compared to 25% of the people who said they had never done so. In addition, it is estimated that in 2017 there were some 35.7 million social network users in the UK, compared to 31 million in 2013 (Statista, 2018b). One noteworthy feature that resulted from the review was that in this case there was a lot of activity on Twitter by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Boris Johnson, which led to monitoring these posts. However, the analysis of his posts is not included in this document.

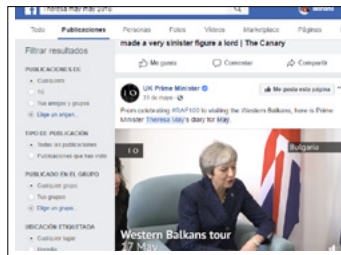
The first analysis refers to the summit in Sofia (Bulgaria) EU-Western Balkans on 17 May 2018. The Tweet of this summit triggered more reactions than other posts of the Prime Minister during the period studied. Facebook posts were also reviewed regarding the UK Prime Minister's profile. See figures 13 and 14.

Figure 14. Meeting with leaders from the EU and Western Balkans



Source: https://twitter.com/theresa_may/status/997152059387514880

Figure 15. Key moments



Source: <https://www.facebook.com/10downingstreet/videos/10156520806743453/>

The second post was part of the preparation for the NATO summit on the 11th and 12th of July, 2018. (NATO stands for North Atlantic Treaty Organization or NATO; this is an intergovernmental military alliance based on the North Atlantic Treaty, or Washington Treaty, signed on 4 April 1949). A week earlier, the Twitter account for the UK Prime Minister posted a piece about a meeting between Angela Merkel and Theresa May and the issues they addressed, such as the Amesbury poisonings and the NATO summit. See Figure 15.

Figure 16. Theresa May and Angela Merkel talk about Brexit and Amesbury



Source: <https://twitter.com/10DowningStreet/status/1014944165417930752>

It is clear that the imprint of Brexit is on the minds of UK social network users; thus, the word Brexit is used in the two posts with the most reactions. For example, of the 20 comments that were documented as part of the sample, 12 use the word Brexit.

In terms of the groups to whom the press release is aimed, if we consider the data for 2017 (Statista; 2018b), among the group of people between 16 and 24 years of age, 95% use social networks. For the group between 25 and 34 years of age, 96% use social networks, and for the group between 34 and 44 years of age, the figure is 86%. For people between 45 and 54 years of age the figure is 75%, and for those who are 55 to 64 years old, 60% use social networks; the information above demonstrates that the target audience is an economically active population at the age when people generally participate in politics. In terms of gender, Facebook has a majority of female users (84%) compared to male users (73%), and Twitter has practically the same percentage of female users (48%) as male users (47%). It can therefore be said that the post is directed at both of these populations without distinction of gender. Regarding the effects it caused, it can be said that in the case of the first post regarding the Summit with the EU and Balkan leaders, of 90 reactions (following the established sample), 85% (77 responses) were negative and 15% (13 responses) were positive: The subject is quite delicate when it comes to the relationship between the United Kingdom and other European leaders within the framework of Brexit, and another subject that was noted as recurrent, although not as much as Brexit, was the problem of migration. It is evident that users who leave comments or react to the topic have the impression that the social network gives them a voice and that their opinion is important. With regard to the second post of her meeting with Theresa May, it is interesting to note how network users compare her to Angela Merkel, and how they demand the same leadership that they claim the German Chancellor has in Europe; somehow it highlights the resentment for the supremacy of the United Kingdom; in this case, there are also some reactions that are mostly negative and that repeat almost the same pattern as the first post. Of a sample of 90 reactions, 90% (81 reactions) were negative and 9% (9 reactions) were positive. It is important to focus on Theresa May's concern about the effect of social networks on politicians, saying that these are becoming spaces for intimidation and abuse of public figures; this shows, in some way, that she does not feel comfortable with them and that she does not seem to have a clear strategy for their use and exploitation. Here it is worth noting that in Britain, "public diplomacy is a way of communicating with people in a very connected and digitized world. And while it is probably one of the most efficient forms of communication between governments and people, it is also one of the most difficult practices to carry out" (Raskovick, 2018: 63).

4. Conclusions

This study provides findings that allow us to define suitable approaches to address citizen participation in international policy issues within the framework of digital public diplomacy, and specifically of social networks. It has been clearly demonstrated that the global citizen accesses, utilizes and makes use of the interaction, communication and content creation resources offered by the Internet in order to interact with those responsible for state diplomacy; on the other hand, the latter in turn consider it important to communicate with their audiences and engage them on these issues.

In the case of the United States, the way in which its president has been using social networks, especially Twitter, in matters of international politics demonstrates the great value that the president places on this tool as a means of direct communication

with the public, and the citizens respond in the same way. Thus, more dynamic and bilateral political communication and participation can be deduced from this situation, as expressed by Cardoso (2008). This issue must be monitored with special attention, as the status of this country as a world power might result in other governments emulating the practice, and the same thing might occur with citizens of other countries. Judging by the content analysis (Krippendorff, 2004), we see a clear use of social networks by the U.S. government in informing its audiences almost immediately when an action takes place, and not waiting for other media, or in other words a third party, to make the information available; it is clear that content is created to inform and generate interaction with the public without any intervention.

In the case of Colombia and the United Kingdom, what has been stated by Cull (2009) in relation to the attention and care of public opinion and the interaction with citizens through the explanation of the factors that make up the ideology of the actor, in this case the government, is confirmed. In nearly every post, direct or indirect reference was made to the peace processes in Colombia and to the Brexit situation in the United Kingdom. The posts were not received from the public in an isolated manner, but rather the reactions to it were related to the setting or context of the country or region; it is therefore considered necessary to review other research studies to see the connection that citizens make between internal and external policy actions in a broader framework, because it seems indicated that thanks to the information provided by social networks, citizens have a greater understanding of the interconnection of conflicts, as pointed out by Araya (2001).

In the Spanish case, it should be noted that despite the change of government from Rajoy to Sanchez, which is the reason why posts of both administrations have been reviewed, there is a strategy of explaining and advocating diplomatic objectives using digital public diplomacy, and in particular, doing so through social networks. Furthermore, this conclusion is strengthened by the revised documentation that demonstrates that the digital dimension is now an integral part of Spain's foreign action strategy, and that the Spanish model of digital diplomacy seeks greater closeness and interlocution (Manfredi, Herranz and Calvo, 2017). Thus, we can speak of a state strategy rather than the practice of a particular government.

In relation to the concept of the global citizen, it has been concluded that what was stated by Colombo (2005) is still valid, when he pointed out that communication and information technologies are facilitating and advancing new forms of policy-making with more extensive and direct information and greater communication between representatives and those represented. Furthermore, Internet promotes the dissemination of information and upholds causes and seeks to exercise counter-power for the achievement of collective objectives (Castells, 1997), although it is necessary to go further, as suggested by Baack's work (2015), in order to know whether the feature that social networks favour is greater information, greater political participation, or a greater number of means to carry out self-expression.

In relation to future studies, the dynamics of technological advances in communications that the Internet will undoubtedly continue to promote cannot be ignored. It seems very likely that advances in Artificial Intelligence and Big data will enable politicians and citizens to create their own algorithms for analyzing these issues and suggesting actions and decisions in the field of international politics that will clearly affect decisions taken in diplomatic matters; therefore, the study of these issues will continue to be relevant. However, while this is happening, and taking into account what Lidén (2016) contends regarding the small amount of attention that has been paid to the supply side, or in other words, the online presence of political actors and the structures created by them, there is still much to study; social networks, while rich in providing us

with reactions or actions from politicians and citizens, must place attention on other forms of communication that the Internet has created and will continue to create.

It is also essential to continue analysing what was stated by Baack (2015) in relation to the fact that information is a condition for political participation. Therefore, since social networks offer information in a more open and accessible way on issues as complex as international politics, it is necessary to delve deeper into the study of whether these social networks truly favour greater citizen participation in the decision-making of states on international political issues.

Another issue to study is the role of social networks as a source of information for the actions of governments that might lead other media, such as CNN, to use them as its primary source, as well as the interest of governments in not using traditional media to reach their audiences, since there is a willingness on the part of decision-makers to interact with their citizens without the participation of a third party, and moreover, much of the information that reaches national and foreign audiences is generated from official social networks.

Thus, it can be said that the subject under study has not been exhausted. Instead, it opens up new research possibilities that must continue to be addressed.

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