

REVIEW ARTICLE

Training and human capital challenges for diplomatic foreign services in the 21st century

ABSTRACT

The paper analyzes the training and challenges of human capital in Foreign Services, given the new challenges posed by globalization, new actors on the international scene, citizen diplomacy, technological and digital transformation, and cybersecurity. Diplomacy must adapt to the emergence of citizen diplomacy and new technologies in a global context. From a qualitative documentary review of academic and government sources from the last 15 years, it is observed that academic training institutes of Latin American foreign services share common criteria for the selection of human capital. It is recommended that foreign services training centers offer updated teaching, in line with the development of new technologies and digital transformation. The continuous professionalization of Foreign Services, through these training centers, would allow the countries of the region to develop and implement effective strategies to face the new sectors of the international and global environment.

Keywords: human capital; diplomacy; citizen diplomacy; foreign service.

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INTRODUCTION

Human capital in the foreign services is facing the irruption of the so-called “citizen diplomacy” and issues of digital transformation, which makes the diplomatic foreign service, especially its human capital, face these challenges posed by civil society and globalization.

In this sense, diplomatic academies or institutes have gaps between traditional training and the concepts of digital transformation, for example, networking, knowledge management, social networks, cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, which implies strengthening the training of human capital.

The purpose of this study was to highlight the importance of diplomatic human capital development and the challenges posed by new actors in international relations.

The authors highlight these challenges and the importance of diplomatic human capital in diplomatic management. Therefore, it is important that their continuity and that they are part of a professional career (Lequesne, 2020; Cabrera, 2019; Jaramillo, 2019; Erazo & Narváez, 2023).

In this regard, the existence of an institutionalized Foreign Service, born from the training provided by the Diplomatic Academies or Foreign Service Institutes and continuing with a career plan for diplomats, makes the human capital of the Foreign Service a critical point for an academic update that responds to the challenges outlined above. In order to better understand the objective, the concept of diplomacy is defined (Nicolson, 1953; Der Derian, 1987; Drinkwater, 2005) and the emergence of new actors is pointed out, especially citizen diplomacy as a new challenge (Bishop, 2023; Pría, 2008; Cruickshank, 2013; Díaz, 2013; Fulda, 2019; Trejos, 2016).

It is evident that there are common criteria for admission to the Foreign Service in the countries of the region that have training institutes or ad hoc diplomatic academies. The importance of human capital in the Foreign Service and the characteristics of citizen diplomacy as opposed to diplomacy are defined, understanding that public diplomacy is also practiced by states. In this sense, the challenge

of citizen diplomacy for the foreign services is to extract from it what is most appropriate for the achievement of the objectives of the state and the welfare of its population. Finally, the relevance of diplomacy in new strategic issues such as cybersecurity is highlighted (Aggestam & Duncombe, 2023; Barrinha, 2024).

It is recommended to continue academic research to learn about the best management practices of diplomats and how they can affect their human capital; to make them transparent for a better understanding of their role in contributing to the country to which they belong, and also for a better understanding of their function by public opinion.

METHOD

For the preparation of this qualitative documentary review paper, a broad and exhaustive search for open access papers related to diplomacy and foreign services was conducted. In particular, academic journals that are consistent with the variables of foreign services recruitment, academic training, diplomacy, and citizen diplomacy during the last 15 years.

The selected papers were evaluated based on reliability, most of them coming from reliable indexed sources and from rigorous and scientific academic centers, which allow us to trust the research and give us a perspective for future research in the field of international diplomatic relations.

An exploratory bibliographic search was carried out in the main databases such as Scopus, Jstor and Proquest. Bibliographic portals such as Dialnet, the SciELO repository, and Google Scholar were also reviewed. In Jstor, 419 results on human capital and diplomacy were found, and in Scopus 55 results. For citizen diplomacy, 661 results were found in Scopus, 140 in Jstor, and 159 in Proquest. For Foreign Service, 7234 results were found in Jstor and 10 in Scopus. To perform an exhaustive bibliographic search, we defined the descriptors that support this paper, taking into account the year of publication, reliability, location and languages of publication (Spanish, English and French). We excluded papers that were not related to the subject and object of the research and included only those that focused their study on

diplomats as human capital. While compiling the information, we noticed that the topic under development was not very representative in the databases consulted. Therefore, we included information sources from diplomatic academies, reviews of relevant books, and bibliographic sources from prominent authors or members of the Foreign Service.

Based on the research conducted and the stated objective, 24 papers were selected that refer to the human capital variable in diplomacy with dimensions such as academic training, foreign services, and citizen diplomacy.

Of the 24 selected papers, 10 were excluded for not providing relevant information. The 14 papers selected were: Bjola (2017), Frey (2024), Fulda (2019), Hernández Solano (2023), Leijten (2017), Rexhaj & Krasniqi (2023), Valle de Frutos (2024), Embassy of Brazil in Colombia and Sacchitelli Riascos (2023), Luja and Flores (2015), Dalbosco (2017), Jaramillo (2019), Lequesne (2020), Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC, 1994) and Oosthuizen (2024). Laws and norms of foreign ministries and diplomatic academies of the Latin American region were also used. The selected papers correspond to qualitative research with a descriptive, non-experimental methodology. They were analyzed, evaluated and consolidated according to their quality and relevance to the research objectives. The data were analyzed for their relevance, and tables of contents were prepared to facilitate analysis and synthesis, which was useful for interpreting and comparing the results, as well as for identifying trends.

RESULTS

Digital transformation and diplomacy

Bjola (2017) and Frey (2024) point out that diplomacy and foreign ministries need to adapt their organizational culture in the face of the demands of the digital age. They believe that in the 21st century, many foreign ministries had already started their online communication activities, which has implied a change in diplomatic culture, especially in diplomatic language due to social networks “to tweet or not to tweet”. However, he says there is still no consensus on this adaptation, as many of

these diplomatic administrations still see it as a tool that is not strong enough to change the organizational culture of the foreign services. Bjola adds that it is an open and still unresolved debate whether digital tools are changing only the way of communication or the DNA of diplomacy.

Frey (2024) has a much stronger view, arguing that technologies are changing the field of diplomacy as a central element of international relations and modern statecraft. However, he sees in their proper use by states opportunities to influence foreign policy and international relations. Leijten (2017) and Frey (2024) point out that the integration of digital technologies in diplomacy comes with challenges as well as opportunities. They are numerous, such as cyber threats, privacy, information overload, misinformation, and the important issue of the digital divide, social networks, and artificial intelligence, but nevertheless, Frey adds, digital technologies provide states with the ability to influence international affairs in a more direct and dynamic way.

The proliferation of digital technologies has had a profoundly transformative impact on diplomacy. The conundrum for many scholars and practitioners of diplomatic studies is how these new digital technologies are driving change, from the interpersonal to the international (Aggestam and Duncombe, 2023).

Traditional diplomacy versus citizen diplomacy

Oosthuizen (2024), Rexhaj and Krasniqi (2023), Leijten (2017) and Steiner (2004) agree that in diplomacy, states are still the fundamental protagonists, although other actors, international organizations, transnational corporations, non-governmental organizations, which have acquired an important role in the evolution of international relations, are also active in the international arena. All of them can follow globalist currents as opposed to more regional or national ones. Diplomacy is the way to obtain a satisfactory management of international relations, to resolve conflicts, to achieve peace agreements and economic, commercial, cultural and cooperation agreements to improve the development and growth of countries. Therefore, the importance of diplomatic human capital

to adapt to all these changes with flexibility, critical and analytical thinking, knowledge, judgment and intelligence (Hernandez, 2019; Leijten, 2017).

Fulda (2019) highlights the emergence and role of citizen diplomacy because of technological change and social networks. He argues that it can be harnessed to achieve state goals and that diplomats must become relevant or disappear in the face of the information and communication technology revolution. A definition of citizen diplomacy brings us closer to the influence it can have on various issues, from the economic to the social and even the technological (Magu, 2013), since technological development is the one that has given it greater visibility. It should be noted that citizen diplomacy can emerge in any country and can be exercised uniformly in several countries with similar objectives. Therefore, in some cases it will not respond to national or territorial interests, but to global trends that seek to impose themselves, as Valle de Frutos (2024) points out, based on international public opinion.

“Citizen diplomacy is diplomacy exercised by organized citizens vis-à-vis governments and international organizations” (Cruickshank, 2013, p. 20).

This diplomacy tries to justify itself as an effort to democratize international relations. Even Fulda (2019) sees it as an alternative problem-solving strategy by non-state actors to alleviate difficult interstate relations.

Citizen diplomacy seeks to occupy spaces previously reserved for states to form opinions, generate currents, and raise awareness on issues that they consider to be priorities and on which they want decisions to be made at the international level.

An example of citizen diplomacy is that used by Colombian non-state (opposition) actors, which would fall under what Risse and Sikkink (1999) call the “boomerang effect”. This occurs when local groups or organizations that oppose the state direct part of their political action to establishing relations with international actors, with the aim of finding international allies to join the opposition activity, that is, their

diplomacy is alternative and confrontational because it challenges the legitimacy of the Colombian state (Trejos 2016; Ramírez *et al.* 2020).

This behavior of citizen diplomacy is based on the concept of the network organizational structure, which serves as a basis for the simultaneous, coordinated, balanced and integrated functioning between the organic units of one or more organizations, as it represents the various intra- and/or inter-organizational relationships that exist between the different elements that make it up (Louffatt, 2009).

Oosthuizen (2024) questions the relevance of diplomacy if it does not adapt to the challenges of new and increasingly important non-state actors and civil society. He proposes a new form of selection, training, and development of specialized diplomats based on 4 challenges of diplomacy: new technologies and digital diplomacy; changes in the global economy; issues of secrecy, security, and conflict; and a new diplomacy of influence based on culture, as indicated by Fiallo (2024). Based on these challenges, he proposes a new form of hierarchy based on specialization in one of the 4 challenges, although he believes that “generalist” diplomats can continue in parallel.

Foreign service training

Regarding the recruitment and training of diplomats, it is important to note that there is a certain uniformity in the criteria for entry into the Foreign Service in the Latin American region. It is observed that countries have an ad hoc training center and that the first common filter is that applicants must be professionals, regardless of their specialty, and fluent in English. This conclusion results from the review of the regulations of the Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores de Colombia (Decreto Ley 274, 2000), Chile (Decreto N° 463, 2001), Brasil (Ley N° 11.440, 2006), Argentina (Ley N° 20.957, 1975), México (Ley del Servicio Exterior Mexicano, 1994), Ecuador (Ley Orgánica del Servicio Exterior, 2006), Uruguay (Resolución Ministerial N° 30/2024, 2024), as well as the paper by the Brazilian Embassy in Colombia & Sacchitelli (2023), and the ECLAC study (1994).

To facilitate the presentation of this result, Table 1 has been prepared and is presented below:

As Jaramillo (2019) points out, only two Latin American countries can publicly announce that the only way to join the foreign services is through their diplomatic academies: Brazil and Peru. It is no coincidence that their diplomatic services are recognized as the most professional and institutionalized in the region on a global scale. The rest of the Latin American countries-although many of them have active diplomatic academies-have suffered the same processes of deinstitutionalization, crisis, and consequent politicization that have affected other state entities since the 1980s (Jaramillo, 2019).

Professionalized foreign service

In his paper, Lequesne points out the importance of having human capital shaped by a professionalized and institutionalized foreign service, while recognizing that there are a significant number of countries in which the diplomat obeys a transient political consideration. "We should not forget that in many states, diplomats are still recruited according to purely political criteria, consisting of proximity to government authorities" (Lequesne, 2020, p. 3).

For his part, Hernández Solano (2023) stresses the need for diplomats to have a

professional career and emphasizes the need for them to be prepared to face the difficulties and opportunities of a globalized and constantly changing world.

With regard to Peruvian diplomacy, the regulations state that it is institutionalized, composed of career diplomats (Ley N° 28091, 2021), belonging to the Foreign Service of the Republic, who perform their duties in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Peru, alternating with the embassies, consulates and representations of the country abroad. All Peruvian diplomats are trained at the Diplomatic Academy of Peru "Javier Pérez de Cuellar", which began its functions in 1955. Admission to the Diplomatic Academy is made after rigorous examinations, and to remain in the Academy, students must meet academic and behavioral requirements. It is important to note that the students come from different disciplines: economics, law, social sciences, administrative sciences, international relations, engineering, etc.

The Diplomatic Service of the Republic exercises the functions of representation, negotiation, promotion and protection of the interests of the State in the international arena, as well as the assistance and protection of Peruvian citizens abroad (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, 2024). The ley del Servicio Diplomático de la República N° 28091 establishes that the Diplomatic Service is a public career and is

Table 1
Diplomatic Academy of Latin America (Minimum Requirements)

Diplomatic Academies / Institutes	Country	Year of Creation	Minimum Entry Requirements
Instituto del Servicio Exterior de la Nación (ISEN)	Argentina	1963	Hold a professional degree and be proficient in English. Be aged 35 or less.
Itamaraty - Instituto Rio Branco	Brazil	1945	Hold a professional degree and be proficient in English. Be aged 32 or less
Academia Diplomática de Chile "Andrés Bello"	Chile	1954	Hold a professional degree and be proficient in English.
Academia Diplomática de Colombia "Augusto Ramírez Ocampo"	Colombia	1961	Hold a professional degree and be proficient in English.
Academia Diplomática del Ecuador "Antonio J. Quevedo"	Ecuador	1987	Hold a professional degree and be proficient in English. Be aged 21 or over.
Servicio Exterior Mexicano (SEM) Instituto Matías Romero (IMR)	Mexico	1974	Hold a professional degree and be proficient in English. Be aged 30 or less (undergraduate), 35 or less (postgraduate).
Academia Diplomática del Perú "Javier Pérez de Cuéllar"	Peru	1955	Hold a professional degree and be proficient in English. Be aged 30 or less.
Academia Diplomática del Uruguay, Instituto Artigas del Servicio Exterior	Uruguay	1955	Hold an undergraduate degree and be proficient in English. Be aged 35 or less.

Note. Prepared by the author based on the official income requirements of the Academies and Institutes of the Foreign Service.

composed of professionals specially trained in the discipline of international relations, trained to exercise diplomatic and consular representation, as well as the promotion and protection of national interests in the international arena. The Peruvian Foreign Service is meritocratic. It is strictly regulated by the Law and Regulations of the Diplomatic Service.

The main characteristics of the human capital of the Peruvian Diplomatic Service are professionalization, since admission is a competitive and meritocratic process. After graduating from the Diplomatic Academy, they enter the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The academic training or education is continuous, seeking to diversify their competencies. Diplomats deal with political, commercial, economic, environmental, international cooperation, cultural promotion, human rights and consular issues. The latter, considering the support and protection that Peruvian communities abroad require, and also to maintain their ties with our country. This also implies continuous training to keep them up to date with the new issues of the international and global agenda and the soft skills necessary for the exercise of diplomacy (Ley 28091, 2021).

On the other hand, a space has been opened for the growing participation of women. According to the Diplomatic Service of the Republic, as of January 1, 2023, women will represent 31% of the total foreign services. In the highest categories of ministers and ambassadors, they will represent 20% and 29% respectively by 2023. It should be recalled that in the 1950s there was only one female ambassador.

DISCUSSION

It is worth recalling the concept of human capital in order to better understand the human capital in the Foreign Service, which is made up of diplomats who exercise diplomatic management, what we call diplomacy. For this purpose, the following definition will be considered: Human capital is understood as the set of knowledge, shared values, work competencies and demographic characteristics of the personnel who work for the company and who create or can create value in the future (Gallego-Giraldo & Naranjo-Herrera, 2020).

This concept can be applied to the human capital of public management and, therefore, to that of diplomacy. Although, as Steiner (2004) and Lequesne (2020) point out, human capital in foreign services has specific characteristics that are specific to diplomatic management and as part of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs.

In the public sector, human capital plays a fundamental role in achieving organizational goals and success. The value of human capital lies in the skills, knowledge and experience of employees to carry out their assigned roles and responsibilities. These human resources are the driving force behind the implementation of public policies, the delivery of essential services, and the making of decisions that affect the community at large. (Erazo & Narvaez, 2023, p.47)

It is also important to consider that human capital has become increasingly important in public management and, therefore, different countries are adopting policies to provide it with the facilities to improve its skills, abilities, knowledge and experience. In this sense, "the management of human talent is a fundamental issue in the public and private sectors, which is realized when human capital is considered as a key element" (Olivos *et al.*, 2023, p. 278).

All the papers reviewed agree that digital transformation has an impact on diplomacy, the difference in approach of each author lies in how diplomacy could change and adapt to be more efficient or integrate these elements into its daily work to achieve foreign policy objectives and thus effectiveness. In this spectrum, Oosthuizen (2024) is more radical, questioning the relevance of diplomacy if it does not adapt to the challenges of new and increasingly important non-state actors and civil society.

Diplomatic human capital faces the challenges of citizen diplomacy. Given the evolution of international relations, and with it the content of the global agenda involving actors other than states, we observe that diplomats must operate in multiple scenarios, interacting with their counterparts in other states, international organizations, transnational corporations, organized civil society, and even citizens themselves. This assertion can be found in several papers

analyzing the role of diplomacy (Cochrane & Gordon, 1989; Ochoa, 2011; Banks, 2015). There is a trend that aims to give a greater role to social actors, which is called “citizen diplomacy”, as opposed to what they call “traditional diplomacy”. In this trend, we have authors such as Pría (2008), who points out that international society has evolved in such a way that the relationship between nations has become broader; therefore, the action of various social actors is recognized, promoting the formation of regional and multilateral movements, with the aim of making the foreign policy of their countries more effective within the multiple issues of the international agenda. In many cases, this may be due to interests outside the State itself, to ideologies and objectives of groups that seek to press for the achievement of their own interests, which may not coincide with the common good and welfare of the nation, and may also be due to the interests of third, invisible States.

In light of the above, Oosthuizen’s (2024) proposal for a new form of selection, training, and development of specialized diplomats is noteworthy, although it would need to be adapted in light of Jaramillo’s comments and the regulations of foreign ministries and diplomatic academies that currently govern these processes, especially since it is an achievement to have the Foreign Service as a state career. Although Oosthuizen’s proposal was originally designed for the U.S. Foreign Service, he notes that it can be applied to other states as well. In this sense, the perspectives of Lequesne, Luja and Flores, Frey, Fiallo, and Rexhaj and Krasniqi emphasize the preparation of diplomats based on new technologies and their development. Bishop, Steiner, Banks, and Frey agree that states are losing relevance as horizontal power grows, generating new types of conflict. In this context, Oosthuizen suggests that a “cultural diplomacy” based not on soft power but on “smart power” is appropriate, combining foreign policy with new communication technologies and integrating hard and soft power tools.

The human capital of the Foreign Service is fundamental, as it not only possesses the knowledge and skills acquired through education and training, but also accumulates

experience throughout a diplomatic career and builds international networks of contacts that are useful for diplomatic work. However, this knowledge and skills may be outdated given the speed of digital transformation and a certain reluctance of the Foreign Services to adapt it in their training centers and foreign ministries. Similarly, the organizational culture of foreign services seeks to share values and practices that contribute to a diplomat’s commitment to his or her country. The challenge would be whether digital transformation will change their organizational culture, as this could be a risk if governments of the day with short-term political interests use it to weaken the institutionalized diplomatic foreign services. This diplomatic human capital is more useful the longer it remains in the organization, as it has acquired relevant and specific skills and experience. It is important that diplomacy be practiced as a career, as it provides continuity and enriches diplomatic management, and also contributes to the training of future generations of diplomats.

Nicolson (1953), in his various papers, pointed out that the main purpose of diplomacy is to assist the process of securing “international stability” by obtaining the most valuable commodity in international relations - the *salve of time* - which creates opportunities for the relaxation of tensions. The essence of good diplomacy lies not in the elimination of points of contention, but in the identification of areas of agreement. The definition of diplomacy emphasizes negotiations between states, bilateral relations, and groups of states, regional or multilateral relations. Nicolson’s philosophy of diplomacy focused on its relationship to the main elements of foreign policy, such as the balance of power; he also emphasized the effects of national character and prestige on diplomacy (Drinkwater, 2005). Diplomacy, as defined by Der Derian (1987), is about reducing the distance between diplomatic actors (mostly states) in the international arena. These concepts are still relevant in today’s world conflicts, but we must not lose sight of the fact that these conflicts are becoming increasingly complex due to the new actors that are emerging as a result of digital transformation.

When we speak of the Foreign Service and/or diplomats, we are referring to the official who exercises diplomacy on behalf of his or her country, the diplomat with ad hoc training, usually at a diplomatic academy or a state foreign services institute, who will later work in a Ministry of Foreign Affairs, also known as a "Foreign Ministry". Having defined the concept of human capital in the previous paragraphs, this paper aims to highlight the characteristics of human capital in the Foreign Service, its importance in diplomacy and the challenges it faces. This exercise will be carried out based on the application of the concept defined in the previous paragraphs and the author's interpretation, since the term human capital as such is not found to refer to the diplomatic service. Due to these limitations of the study carried out, further research on human capital in the Foreign Service should be promoted and not only theoretical studies on foreign policy, international relations or personal experiences of diplomats.

It is important to highlight the adaptation and validity of the diplomat to the evolution of the global agenda, new actors, their challenges and challenges to continue exercising their function.

The use of malware for strategic purposes has become an international security priority over the past two decades. As is often the case when an issue acquires strategic relevance, diplomacy is called upon to intervene using its tools to promote and negotiate specific priorities and interests. (Barrinha, 2024, p. 440).

Diplomacy is practiced, but there are few academic papers that adequately reflect its actions. Rather, the results are disseminated, but not the analysis that would allow an accessible comparison.

While much new academic research has been done on contemporary diplomatic practices, paradoxically few of these studies focus on the comparative role of foreign ministries. Thus, providing students with academic material on foreign ministries requires the use of chapters published in general textbooks,

monographs based on single country case studies, practitioners' accounts, which can be quite descriptive, and finally research published more than fifteen years ago. (Lequesne, 2020, p.1)

With regard to the training required by the human capital of foreign services in a 21st century diplomacy, it was crucial to analyze the papers that point out the main challenges that diplomacy has to face and what proposals they make to make it more efficient. In the search for information, we also found studies that characterize diplomacy and its viability in the face of new actors.

Based on the elements presented in the results, it is clear that there is a coherence in the training of the regional Foreign Services, all of them undergo academic training in a specialized place called Diplomatic Academy or Foreign Service Institute with a similar curriculum profile; however, only the Peruvian and Brazilian Foreign Services are state careers and passing through these training centers is the only way to enter the Foreign Service. Given the current trends, it is necessary to update them in the new technologies of digital transformation, so that the diplomat is trained to have skills to perform adequately in new issues. Without this academic update, there is a potential risk that the foreign services will not have the appropriate knowledge and tools to face the new challenges.

The papers show that there is always a risk that diplomacy will be politicized to respond to the interests of the government of the day.

Digital diplomacy is used by foreign services, but also, and perhaps more easily, by new actors and citizen diplomacy. It is easy and agile communication to reach the population, but given the careful handling that some issues require, it could threaten security if it is published or known before the appropriate time. On the one hand, there is the cyber risk.

As Lequesne (2020) points out, the literature does not reveal an analysis of human capital related to the foreign services. Thus, the focus is on the development of the diplomatic phenomenon, not at the level of the professional

diplomat. Therefore, it is necessary to fill this research gap by developing topics of analysis within foreign ministries to better understand their internal processes and identify weaknesses and strengths to prepare future diplomats for the diplomacy of the 21st century.

Diplomacy must ensure that citizen diplomacy is an articulator of common aspirations in an increasingly digital society and does not respond to objectives that subjugate the particularities, aspirations and attributes of a nation.

Diplomacy manages international relations mainly through negotiation, dialogue and communication, seeking cooperation and peaceful conflict resolution. "It is constituted by the methods and means to achieve the goals outlined by foreign policy, which are the objectives of a state" (Cantó, 2019, p. 102). Diplomacy covers many areas, and when it comes to its actions at a certain level, we speak of bilateral diplomacy, which is carried out from state to state, and multilateral diplomacy, which is carried out between the states that make up the various international organizations, such as the United Nations Organization or the Organization of American States, among others, where global issues such as climate change, the environment, human rights, oceans, space and currently artificial intelligence are addressed; On the other hand, it is also subdivided into fields in which it is used, called economic diplomacy, cultural diplomacy, public diplomacy, science and technology diplomacy. Currently, cyber diplomacy is even considered as a diplomacy that deals with the emerging international aspects of cyber policy and cyber security, as they are issues related to international politics and geopolitics. This issue is of growing importance for international politics: a fundamental issue, "fundamentally linked to international politics and geopolitics, and to issues related to the balance of power, freedom and authoritarianism" (Barrinha 2024, p. 461).

The papers analyzed agree that diplomacy in the third millennium brings challenges that, together with the immediacy of communication, challenge the traditional actions of diplomacy, which implies time to analyze, weigh and define a course of action in the face of

a foreign policy event. Hence the importance of human capital in the Foreign Service, in diplomacy. An environment of uncertainty requires calm for decision-making, which does not mean slowness. Knowledge of the product, experience, contacts and the conviction to change the status quo are equally valid for the design of any strategy. In this way, the competence of diplomacy to engage in the solution of the problems generated around the issues of the global agenda is evident, since the product is the planet that adds experience and networks to the baggage of each professional product of their international travels, all of which puts it in a better position to accompany a strategic turn and face the implicit challenges with tools more in line with the times (Cabrera, 2019).

The authors agree that while in the past the individual was not considered a fundamental actor in international relations, it only states, today it is "international public opinion" that is channeled through citizen diplomacy. It is precisely at this stage that the risk of the geopolitics of technology, disinformation and globalization emerges. It is in this cybernetic space that virtual power is established, making the Internet a new strategic territory (Valle de Frutos, 2024). Social networks manipulate international public opinion by creating disinformation, as the traditional geopolitics of disinformation carried out by states. Can we really speak of citizen diplomacy in this context?

In this context, we see the need for diplomats to be familiar with the new technologies and for their selection, training and development to take into account their potential and willingness to learn them, in order to manage the international scenario with the new actors in the best possible way. It is important to emphasize that it is the diplomat who will work to achieve the permanent interests of his country, as expressed in its foreign policy. For this purpose, he/she must know the positions of the aforementioned actors, their objectives, motivations, goals, whether they respond to the interests of invisible third parties, evaluate and weigh whether they can be harmonized with national interests and, if so, negotiate for them or seek alliances with other states.

CONCLUSIONS

The human capital of diplomatic foreign services is important for countries due to its characteristics of supporting state policies in their bilateral and multilateral relations and is becoming critical for timely decision making in the face of constant international change. Therefore, there is a need for an updated training of these services according to the development of new technologies and digital transformation. Likewise, for the diplomacy deployed by foreign services, the challenge of new actors on the international scene is an opportunity, in particular citizen diplomacy, which can be seen as a “win-win”. It is desirable that lines of research deepen these issues.

It is important that the ministries of foreign affairs have human capital formed by a professionalized, institutionalized and permanent foreign service to achieve the objectives of the state. There is a certain uniformity in the criteria for admission to the diplomatic academies and foreign services institutes of the countries of the region, whose minimum requirements are a professional career and a command of the English language. This would be the basis for an update on the emerging and challenging issues addressed in this paper.

It follows that citizen diplomacy treats diplomacy as traditional and considers it obsolete. However, what we are witnessing today is disruptive geopolitics that, among other elements, uses the influence of citizen diplomacy to achieve its objectives, without the states being able to “protest” against this presence, since it is justified as globalization. Although it undoubtedly follows various trends. In this context, diplomacy must be able to adapt to this presence, which is the result of information technologies and their immediacy, and to manage it to achieve the interests of the State and the welfare of the nation. Considering that the objective of citizen diplomacy states that “it is to root the concept of citizen diplomacy within the states, in the sense that it can introduce improvements not only in local processes, but even in those that transcend borders” (Pría, 2008p. 171). Having an active diplomacy close to the productive fabric as well as to civil society is a way to connect the foreign services with these actors of society.

Finally, it is concluded that the human capital of the Peruvian Foreign Service is organized, ordered and focused on maintaining its professionalization, training and continuous education through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Peruvian Diplomatic Academy. Both institutions seek to ensure that their human capital, the diplomats, possess the knowledge, skills and abilities necessary to defend the country’s interests in the international arena and in the face of the challenges of uncertainty that this entails. One risk to maintaining these professionalized capabilities is that governments in power may not see it as a strategic priority.

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Conflict of Interests

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

Author Contribution

Noela María Eufemia Pantoja Crespo (lead author): conceptualization, investigation, writing (original draft, review, and editing).