



Journal of Public Interest Communications

Journal homepage: <http://journals.fcla.edu/jpic/>

Public Diplomacy in the Public Interest

Kathy R. Fitzpatrick

American University

Article Information

Received: February 10, 2017

Accepted: April 3, 2017

Published online: April 28, 2017

Keywords

Public diplomacy
Public interest
Communication
Social responsibility
Collaboration

Abstract

As public diplomacy becomes a more collaborative, socially conscious enterprise with increased focus on global issues, problem-solving and shared goals, public interest communications--or strategic communication efforts to influence outcomes on issues that transcend the particular interests of any single organization (Fessmann, 2016)--will become an increasingly important aspect of public diplomacy practice. This article explores public diplomacy's expanding role and impact in global society, identifying key ways in which public diplomacy serves the public interest. It then recommends a research agenda to help explain how public interest communications works (or might work) in achieving public diplomacy goals that extend beyond national borders. The emphasis is on communication models, publics, ethics, and measurement.

Introduction

In writing about public diplomacy, most scholars and practitioners approach the topic from an organizational perspective, looking at how public diplomacy is viewed and practiced in various regions of the world. In contrast to diplomacy involving relations between state leaders (i.e., government to government), public diplomacy involves direct relations between nations and the people of other countries (i.e., government to people). Tuch's (1990) definition of traditional public diplomacy illustrates: "a government's process of communicating with foreign publics in

**Please send correspondences about this article to Kathy Fitzpatrick, Professor, School of Communication, American University. E-mail: kfitzpat@american.edu. Copyright Fitzpatrick 2017. This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 3.0 United States License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/3.0/us/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, PO Box 1866, Mountain View, CA 94042, USA.*

an effort to bring about understanding for its nation's ideas and ideals, its institutions and cultures, as well as its national goals and current policies" (p. 3).

There is growing recognition that non-state actors also conduct and benefit from public diplomacy. This expanded view is reflected in Sharp's (2005) definition of contemporary public diplomacy as "the process by which direct relations with people in a country are pursued to advance the interests and extend the values of those being represented" (p. 106). Gregory (2011) offered a similar perspective in describing public diplomacy as "instruments used by states, associations of states, and some sub-state and non-state actors to understand cultures, attitudes, and behavior; build and manage relationships; and influence thoughts and mobilize actions to advance their interests and values" (p. 276).

These definitions reflect broad agreement within the diplomatic community that public diplomacy serves the interests of those doing it. In fact, the function and value of public diplomacy in serving societal interests often is overlooked in discussions emphasizing the strategic soft power benefits of public diplomacy to state and non-state diplomatic actors (Nye, 2004). However, there is heightened awareness that public diplomacy has an expanded role to play--and interests to serve--in global society. Melissen (2011) observed that in the post-9/11 period, the public diplomacy literature has "conveyed a growing consensus that governments' legitimacy and credibility in an increasingly transnational environment required a greater role for social actors, and that public diplomacy was not just in the national interest but also in the common interest" (p. 10).

As the concept, purpose, and practice of public diplomacy continue to evolve, the ways in which public diplomacy serves societal interests warrant attention. As observed elsewhere, "The issue of interests gets at the heart of what public diplomacy is (or should be) all about and reveals the conceptual underpinnings that guide public diplomacy policies and practices" (Fitzpatrick, 2010a, p. 97). This article explores public diplomacy's expanding role and impact in global society, identifying key ways in which public diplomacy serves the public interest. The aim here is to generate greater awareness of and appreciation for the function and value of public diplomacy in advancing common goals and shared interests. The essential contribution of public diplomacy to international relations historically has been undervalued. As a result, public diplomacy's purpose and value within both organizations and society need to be better articulated and understood.

This work recommends future research to help define the conceptual and practical boundaries of the field and inform contemporary practices. As public diplomacy becomes more socially-conscious with increased focus on global issues, problem-solving, and shared goals, public interest communications--or strategic efforts to influence outcomes on issues of public interest that transcend the particular interests of any single organization (Fessmann, 2016)--will become increasingly important. Public diplomacy in the public interest requires both a collaborative mindset and innovative communication strategies designed to achieve sustained social change.

A more social public diplomacy

As both a discipline and a profession, public diplomacy continues to evolve. Its purpose remains in flux and the subject of considerable debate. It is also an under-theorized field (Gilboa, 2008) and, as Leguey-Feilleux (2009) pointed out, “The significant changes taking place in contemporary diplomatic practice are probably making the development of a general theory more difficult” (p. 11). Indeed, the impacts of globalization, new technology, and the empowerment of non-state actors in global affairs all have contributed to an environment in which the fate of public diplomacy is uncertain (Fitzpatrick, 2010a). As Wang (2006) observed, “The field of public diplomacy is inevitably driven by changing events, if not exclusively so” (p. 94).

At the same time, these changes have created opportunities for *public* diplomacy to play a central role in helping nations accommodate the increasing prominence and power of non-state actors in global affairs. As Leonard (2002) suggested, the way in which foreign publics interpret a country’s values, motivations, and qualities “can create an enabling or disabling environment” (p. 49). Key to public diplomacy’s effectiveness is a shift toward more collaborative approaches that recognize publics as active participants in policy-making processes rather than passive recipients of diplomatic messages.

In introducing a new public diplomacy, Melissen (2005) established the foundation for a relational model of public diplomacy that called for a move away from historical one-way messaging practices to more dialogic forms of communication. “Modern public diplomacy,” he said, “is a two-way street” (p. 18). Other scholars have built on the idea and importance of relational perspectives, emphasizing the need for engagement with rather than communication to organizational publics (Fitzpatrick & Vanc, 2016). In tracing the emergence of the relational orientation in modern public diplomacy, Zaharna, Arsenault, and Fisher (2013) cited a “chorus of scholars, politicians, diplomats, and laypeople arguing for a greater focus on relationship-building strategies, including dialogue, networks, and collaboration [that have] helped to bolster shifts in public diplomacy practice” (p. 5).

An increased focus on relationships also is evident in how foreign ministries are transforming public diplomacy operations. For example, the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office (2008) chose the term engagement to describe the nation’s new approach to public diplomacy:

We need a public diplomacy which fits our time. The policy issues which confront us are increasingly global. Systematic engagement with publics both at home and abroad will be required if we are to identify and implement solutions. Policy-makers and diplomats must work with a wider range of constituencies beyond government, moving towards a more open, inclusive style of policy-making and implementation. Understanding of complexity, difference, networks and cultural heritage will be needed, alongside more imaginative use of technology. Engagement, conducted with energy, ambition and creativity, must be the hallmark of contemporary public diplomacy. (p. 7)

Of course, a more relational public diplomacy doesn’t necessarily mean that public diplomacy activities are motivated by a desire to serve interests beyond the state or private actor. Nor do more

open, collaborative approaches necessarily reflect a new worldview that includes a public mission for public diplomacy. In fact, there is considerable evidence that relational trends are more a response to changing *strategic* demands than a newfound belief in social responsibility. Those who recognize the importance of relational approaches note that public diplomacy is “not an altruistic affair” (Melissen, 2005, p. 14).

As an example, in reviewing the Obama administration’s approach to public diplomacy--as defined in its policy and strategy documents--Fitzpatrick (2011) identified a shift away from one-way messaging strategies used during the prior administration to more relational strategies based on principles of dialogue and mutuality. The guiding philosophy was “enlightened self-interest,” described by the administration as “the belief that our own interests are bound to the interests of those beyond our borders” (p. 23). However, the author (2011, p. 36) also identified inconsistencies in how public diplomacy was talked about and practiced. She concluded that the administration had adopted a two-way model of *asymmetrical* global engagement “that seeks to serve and preserve self-interest” rather than a two-way *symmetrical* model (see J. Grunig & Hunt, 1984) in which genuine dialogue is used to achieve mutual understanding and benefits for both the nation and its foreign publics. Comor and Bean (2012) reached a similar conclusion, contending that U.S. public diplomacy efforts aimed “to leverage social media and related technologies to persuade skeptical audiences to empathize with American policies” (p. 203).

As global demand for collaborative solutions to shared problems that cross national boundaries has become more acute, however, scholars and practitioners increasingly recognize that public diplomacy has relevance and impact beyond its organizational function. It may serve societal interests while also serving the interests of those driving public diplomacy initiatives. In writing about the future of public diplomacy, Melissen (2011) cited shifts in public diplomacy practices that point to the emergence of a more social public diplomacy. “Traditionalist authors do not accept that the increasing linkages between diplomatic institutions and domestic and foreign societies contribute to diplomacy’s transmutation into a more ‘societized’ form of diplomacy,” he said. “Ironically, however, such a change is a palpable development in the day-to-day experience of people working inside foreign ministries” (p. 13). According to Melissen, “National governments always have their own interests in mind but, in practicing public diplomacy, they increasingly emphasize common interests as well as global public goods” (2011, p. 21).

To some extent, this new societal orientation requires changes in both the attitudes and talents of public diplomats on the front lines. For example, citing the need for a *connective mindshift* in public diplomacy, Zaharna, Arsenault, and Fisher (2013) argued that public diplomacy’s success in an interconnected world of complex cross-border challenges will be determined by “the ability of practitioners to successfully forge positive and productive connections to individuals and groups embedded within a network of communication networks...organized around religious, social, political or other common interests” (p. 1). The new public diplomats, they said, “will need to be well skilled in collaboration to tackle and address problems for the collective, public good” (p. 7). Also, reflecting on transformative changes in the diplomatic landscape, Kelley (2014) observed that “diplomats are increasingly recognized for what they can do beyond simply who they are, and

the diplomacy of problem solving matters more in comparison to the diplomacy of serving self-interests” (p. 1).

Others have focused on the growing importance of diplomatic networks--and networking--in the global environment. For example, Copeland (2009) stressed the importance of network connectivity in citing global challenges that public diplomats could play key roles in addressing, such as climate change, pandemic disease, and alternative energy. In describing *transformational public diplomacy* as a means for tackling such issues, he suggested that public diplomats contribute to global development and security “through a relentless dedication to meaningful dialogue, cross-cultural understanding and network connectivity” (p. 97). In grappling with the complexity of such challenges, he said, “the real issue for diplomats and policy-makers is to find ways to extract maximum benefit in service of the public interest” (p. 98).

Still others have emphasized an increased role for public diplomacy in providing global public goods. Zhang and Swartz (2009) proposed a conceptual expansion of public diplomacy to include the promotion of “the common goods of humankind” (p. 383). In an era in which global warming and the globalization of health, for example, have become realities that require collective action, they said, creating and preserving global public goods should be one of the functions of public diplomacy. “It is not the ‘national interest’ or ‘national image,’ but the importance of ‘global commons,’ or the common heritage of mankind that is invoked” in such efforts, they contended (Zhang & Swartz, 2009, p. 383). Public diplomacy “plays an important role by facilitating global cooperation, creating and building agendas, promoting mutual understanding, and involving non-governmental actors and international organizations” (Zhang & Swartz, p. 384).

Castells (2008) went further in arguing that “public diplomacy is the diplomacy of the public,” which is “the domain of...shared interests and values” (p. 91). Public diplomacy, he said, “seeks to build a public sphere in which diverse voices can be heard in spite of their various origins, distinct values, and often contradictory interests” (p. 91). If public diplomacy is understood as “networked communication and shared meaning,” he said, then it “becomes a decisive tool for the attainment of a sustainable world order” (p. 91).

How public diplomacy serves the public interest

Public diplomacy contributes to global society in many ways, often indirectly, influencing matters related to peace and security, human rights, trade, economic development, health, energy, organized crime, the environment, pandemic disease, migration, and more. In some instances, public diplomats with special expertise concentrate on specific issues, often partnering with NGOs or other non-state actors, to address matters that require cross border support and cooperation. In other instances, the role and impact of public diplomacy is less visible, but still important.

This section describes key ways in which public diplomacy serves the public interest. To those well acquainted with public diplomacy, they will sound familiar. Each represents a function of

public diplomacy that has long been or is increasingly viewed as essential in advancing national foreign policy and security interests. The point here is to show that these functions also serve broader interests in global society.

Creating mutual understanding

The U.S. Congress passed legislation in 1948 that led to the creation of the United States Information Agency (USIA), which until 1999 served as the public diplomacy arm of the U.S. government. At the time, the thinking was that increased mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries would lead to more peaceful and prosperous relations. Although the idea of *mutual* understanding was marginalized over time as resources were directed to helping foreign publics better understand America, U.S. President Jimmy Carter revived the original intent in 1977. In a directive to the USIA, he identified dual objectives: “to tell the world about our society and policies” and “to tell ourselves about the world.” The goal, he said, should be “to reduce the degree to which misrepresentations and misunderstandings complicate relations between the United States and other nations” (The White House, 1978).

Although this charge was again neglected in succeeding administrations, mutual understanding re-emerged as a cornerstone of the new public diplomacy in the post-9/11 environment. Indeed, in writing about the history of the USIA, Cull (2008) concluded that the Carter administration had “produced a model of public diplomacy for the era of global interdependence” (p. 398). Whether achieved through field work, exchange programs, social media or other activities, mutual understanding provides the foundation for public diplomacy’s long-term success in helping to build and sustain relationships that advance both national and societal interests.

Building relationships

The importance of relationship building as a core function of public diplomacy is not a new idea. Indeed, those serving on the front lines of U.S. public diplomacy, for example, have long believed the interpersonal dimensions of public diplomacy are key to its success (Fitzpatrick, 2010a). What is new, however, is the complex webs and networks of relationships that public diplomats must manage both at home and abroad. As the world and its citizens become more connected and interdependent, challenges spill across borders and what once were national interests or concerns become global interests and concerns. At the same time, the boundaries between government and civil society have become more porous (Gregory, 2015).

In such an environment, the ability of nations and people to work together in identifying and solving problems is critical. Public diplomats play essential roles in building and sustaining relationships of trust and goodwill with other governments, NGOs, corporations, and other individuals and groups that contribute to the advancement of shared goals. As relationship managers who span the boundaries of institutions, they help states and other diplomatic actors reconcile their interests with the interests of their publics. In the new global environment, they play

a more expansive role in building networks of relationships that include and serve broader segments of civil society.

Facilitating collaborations

Relationship building and collaboration go hand in hand in contemporary public diplomacy. Zaharna, Fisher, and Arsenault (2013) pointed out that the increased emphasis on relational models in modern times reflects the increasing importance of collaboration in dealing with “the complexity and global scope of contemporary problems such as global warming, terrorism, and human trafficking” (p. 7). As they explained, “Collaboration focuses on common challenges and contributing toward outcomes that are better for the larger community than any one entity alone” (p. 7).

In *Collaborative Public Diplomacy*, Fisher (2013) observed that public diplomacy must find ways “to collaborate within the multi-hub, multidirectional networks that exist between communities around the world” (p. ix). Public diplomacy, he said, “is the art of knowing what will make the collaborative network successful” (p. ix). Through collaboration and the diversity of thought that defines it, “a decision-making process can become more likely to be innovative, relevant to a wider community, and less likely to be the result of a narrow political perspective” (p. 6). In helping to build and facilitate networks of international actors--and in managing the mutual interdependence of these actors--public diplomacy helps to maintain relationships necessary for the advancement of global society.

Promoting responsible behavior and informed decision making by policy makers

Although the policy advisory role of public diplomacy is sometimes undervalued, it is critical in helping to ensure that policy decisions are based on a deep understanding of the public implications of decisions and actions. Through on-the-ground research, media monitoring, and other means, public diplomats evaluate public attitudes and opinions and identify issues and challenges that must be addressed. They also provide human intelligence regarding the beliefs, values, and interests of publics as well as other actors involved in public diplomacy processes. In this way, public diplomats help policy makers address what Gregory (2014) called the “constant diplomatic challenge of making hard choices about whom to hear and whom to ignore in online and offline worlds” (p. 12).

This advisory role is essential to a more socially conscious public diplomacy. Public diplomats help policy makers interpret and respond to the global environment of attitudes and opinions and bring the concerns of people abroad back to policy makers at home. They help to reconcile diplomatic goals with the expectations of foreign publics through careful balancing of the interests involved and giving foreign publics a voice in public diplomacy outcomes. In this role, public diplomats serve as social consciences who help to ensure that policy decisions and actions incorporate the views of affected stakeholders as well as the broader interests of society (Fitzpatrick, 2013).

Advancing truth

The importance of public diplomats as purveyors of truthful information needed for informed decision-making by the world's citizens cannot be over-stated in a *post-truth* era characterized by disinformation, fake news, a glut of information sources, and declining public trust in traditional media. A recent report on U.S. public diplomacy by the Center for Strategic & International Studies (CSIS) cited an increase in state actors directing “disinformation and covert influence campaigns to shape public opinion around the world” (Brown, Green, & Wang, 2017, p. 10). In such a climate, public diplomats play critical roles in advancing the ideals of a global marketplace of ideas based on access, truth, and transparency. As the CSIS report suggested, public diplomacy efforts are central to efforts aimed at “creating and maintaining relationships with influential leaders and opinion-makers in civil society, commerce, media, politics and faith communities worldwide” that help facilitate the free flow of truthful information (Brown, Green, & Wang, 2017, p. 1).

A public interest communications research agenda

This review of the ways in which public diplomacy serves global society raises important questions for scholars interested in studying public diplomacy from a public interest communications perspective. Indeed, the idea of a more socially conscious public diplomacy with a public mission gets at the heart of a question central to public diplomacy debates: What is public diplomacy's purpose? Historically, public diplomacy's impact on global society has been seen mostly as a by-product of public diplomacy efforts to advance national interests. In other words, in serving national interests, public diplomacy also serves the broader public interest.

As service to society becomes more purposeful, with public diplomats taking on more prominent roles in addressing global issues of common concern, the implications for public diplomacy theory and practice may be significant. For example, Wiseman (2015) observed that in viewing public diplomacy's mission too broadly, there is the risk that “public diplomacy loses its commonsense meaning and becomes something else: transnational dialogue; global networking; cross-cultural, humanist interaction; or private, market-driven relations” (p. 298). Gregory (2015) also expressed concern that the lack of conceptual clarity regarding where diplomacy ends and civil society begins risks “taking diplomacy beyond a bounded concept and instrument to a domain where ‘we're all diplomats’ and all global interaction is diplomacy” (p. 3-4). Future research focused on public diplomacy's social role and function will help to define the conceptual and practical boundaries of the field as well as the beliefs and assumptions that drive contemporary public diplomacy efforts and the tools that reflect best practices.

Among those tools will be strategic communication campaigns and programs designed to positively influence outcomes on issues of public interest that transcend national borders. Future research also can help to build a body of knowledge that explains *how* public interest communications works (or might work) in achieving public diplomacy goals. A key objective

should be the development of meaningful frameworks that could guide public diplomats in engaging global publics on matters of common interest and bringing state and non-state actors together around common goals. This section outlines a research agenda for scholars interested in studying public diplomacy from a public interest communications perspective, with a focus on topics in four key areas: models, publics, ethics, and measurement.

Models

A popular phrase in the public diplomacy community is *the last three feet* which was uttered by the USIA's most famous director, Edward R. Murrow, who said that the *real art* in public diplomacy "is not so much moving information or guidance or policy five or 10,000 miles. That is an electronic problem. The real art is to move it the last three feet in face-to-face conversation" (cited in Tomlin, 2016, p. xv). This philosophy, which guided U.S. public diplomacy during the Cold War, is still relevant today. The idea, of course, is that *effective* communication happens through personal interactions. But what types of interactions work best in a high-tech world? How do public diplomats cover that last three feet in a digitally-connected society? How does mutual understanding happen on a global scale?

Cowan and Arsenault (2008) observed that the internet and other new communication technologies offer unprecedented opportunities for promoting cross-national collaborations, as well as dialogue and monologic communication. In *The Digital Diplomacy Handbook*, Deruda (2014) further noted that "the most valuable aspect of social media is not just the opportunity to reach new audiences and disseminate targeted messages more effectively, but the ability to increase mutual understanding between governments and citizens worldwide" (p. 2). But new media will not replace traditional media or face-to-face communication. Thus, research studies focused on how best to *integrate* new technology and new channels of communication into traditional public diplomacy strategies will help define best communication and engagement practices going forward. New models depicting network communication processes will help to explain how information and ideas travel through diplomatic networks and the influences and impacts along the way. Such models also would deepen understanding of the communicative relationships within global networks of state and non-state actors and how public interest communication works within such structures.

Another area in which new models of communication are needed involves listening. In his definitive history of U.S. public diplomacy during the Cold War, Cull (2008) identified the USIA's network of listening posts in the field as key to its success. Others also have cited the importance of listening in public diplomacy relational frameworks based on dialogic models of communication and engagement. For example, in reviewing commonalities from recent research in the field, Trent (2016) reported that "a clear requirement for successful innovation in public diplomacy is fostering better listening to global publics. The more we hear and synthesize in context, the better we understand and generate shared interest" (p. 22). Yet there has been little scholarly attention to the principles and requirements for effective listening in public diplomacy. Future research, especially studies focused on listening in digital spaces, could help to fill this gap.

Here, a recent study that identified criteria for “effective ethical listening” in public relations could be instructive in developing a model for global diplomatic contexts (McNamara, 2016, p. 162).

Development communication also offers potentially useful perspectives for constructing models of public interest communications that promote social change in the context of public diplomacy. Pamment (2015) observed, for example, that development communication and public diplomacy rely on a common conception of process: “namely, that information propagated through media channels can alter how foreign citizens know and experience the world around them, and that this transformation can lead to positive social change” (p. 188). Additionally, he said, these related fields have been pursuing similar “communicative grounds for stimulating positive social change across national borders” even though they have done so in “different scholarly and political boxes” (p. 189). Future research could help to identify conceptual and practical connections that would inform thinking and practices in both fields.

Publics

The importance of dialogue in relational models of public diplomacy reflects the commonly-held view that “effective communication in public diplomacy depends on a solid understanding of the point of view of the people with whom you are communicating” (Dayton & Kinsey, p. 267). The challenges related to knowing your publics and understanding their views and values--as well as their potential to influence others--takes on greater complexity in a networked global communication environment. Yet as Wang (2006) pointed out, “If public diplomacy is about building relationships and negotiating understanding between nations and peoples, it is important that we develop a better understanding of the audiences, not only at the rational but also at the emotional level” (p. 94).

Recent scholarly work on the impacts of emotion and identity in the public sphere in which diplomats operate” provides a starting point for future research (Zaharna, 2017). Studies focused on understanding the changing nature of communication and relationship-building within digital and social spaces--and the implications for global communication practitioners--would be most welcome. As Zaharna (2017) suggested, contemporary “diplomacy may be actively using digital technology but it might be still relying on mass media era thinking that views the social media as a tool to communicate with an audience instead of an environment or domain [in which] shared emotion and identity are the defining features” (p. 6).

The highly connected world in which public diplomats work also makes identifying strategic publics more complicated. For example, although public diplomacy historically has focused on *foreign* publics, the impact of *domestic* publics in global communication campaigns also must be considered in a world in which cross-border communication is the daily norm. Huijgh (2013) observed that “investing in networks and collaborations with domestic civil society actors is not only relevant from a government’s perspective. It can also respond to the increasing desire among key segments of the population for engagement opportunities with foreign publics on international issues of shared concern” (p. 64). In examining the domestic dimensions of public diplomacy, future research might focus on diaspora communities, looking at how communication that occurs

within these groups influences public diplomacy outcomes. For example, in exploring the increasing relevance of diaspora communities to host countries, Bravo (2015) noted that “reverse diaspora diplomacy” can help to facilitate better relations between the diaspora home country and people in countries of origin (p. 287).

Other studies might focus on adversarial and/or activist publics. Here, a question for public diplomats is often whether to engage at all. For example, in reviewing the impact of isolation as a diplomatic policy toward adversarial states, Wiseman (2015) concluded that “cutting ties with an adversary leads to a lack of communication and information, which can produce and enhance stereotypes and biases that distort a relationship, as well as lead to lost opportunities for closer relations...or to counterproductive outcomes” (p. 288). Future research might address issues and challenges related to communicating and engaging with adversarial and/or activist publics with an eye toward developing predictive models of behavior. As an example, in researching activist publics, Hon (2015) proposed a model of digital social advocacy that could be tested in public diplomacy contexts.

There is also a need to better understand the ways in which culture influences both relationship-building and collaborative diplomatic processes. Noting a surprising gap in the literature on this topic, Zaharna (2012) noted that “culture infuses every aspect of public diplomacy, from policy, to practice, to scholarship” (p. 26). She said that “at the heart of collaboration is the ability to bring people of diverse backgrounds together and get them to combine their efforts to achieve a unified goal. Research reveals that cultural and ethnic diversity are the biggest sources of friction--and synergy--in collaborative teams” (p. 26). How then, might cultural differences be negotiated to positive effect in public diplomacy generally and in public interest communications campaigns specifically?

Ethics

Although public diplomacy (like other forms of strategic communication) can be used to achieve negative as well as positive outcomes, this essay presents a view of public diplomacy as a positive influence in global society. In future analyses of public diplomacy’s role and function in both organizations and society, it will be important to examine public diplomacy from functional and instrumental, as well as critical (Melissen, 2011), perspectives with emphasis on how public diplomacy is actually practiced in various parts of the world.

Issues related to power should be considered here. For example, how should power imbalances among publics, actors, and partners be addressed in developing and implementing public interest communications campaigns in diplomatic contexts? The focus on positive behavioral change in public interest communications assumes an outcome that serves the common good (Fessmann, 2016). Future research might challenge this assumption. Key questions are: Who decides whose or what interests are served in public interest communications campaigns and programs? How is public interest defined? Who determines what positive behavioral change looks like?

In fact, the concept of power has been the focus of considerable debate in public diplomacy. The rise of public diplomacy in the period following 9/11 was in large part due to the widespread adoption of the view that soft power--or the ability of a nation “to shape the preferences of others” in ways that advance national interests (Nye, 2004, p. 5)--is critical to national security and that “public diplomacy is one of soft power’s key instruments” (Melissen, 2005, p. 4). As public diplomacy takes on a more social role, links between public diplomacy and power warrant greater scrutiny. As Riordan (2005) suggested, in situations requiring “the collaboration of other governments and their broader civil societies, a successful public diplomacy must be based not on assertions of values, but on engaging in a genuine dialogue” (p. 189). Future research can help to map the interplay and influences of multiple actors in public diplomacy processes.

Measurement

Demonstrating significant and sustained positive behavioral change (Fessmann, 2016) resulting from strategic communication efforts is not easy. But it is important. Although there is a growing emphasis on research and evaluation to document the outcomes of public diplomacy (United States Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy, 2014), much more needs to be done. Future research could help to refine traditional methods for program evaluations and develop new relational measures for evaluating the long-term impact of public diplomacy in various cultures and contexts. As Paine (2011) suggested, if you can measure your relationships, you can improve them. Field research and comparative studies involving targeted publics would be particularly useful in better understanding relationship dynamics and the requirements of effective relationship-building.

As public diplomacy becomes an increasingly collaborative enterprise, there is also a need for research that defines the motivations and criteria for successful collaborations and provides templates for assessing collaborative outcomes. Additionally, the development of new media impact measures could be helpful in evaluating the influence of public diplomacy in advancing social goals. As Seib (2016) suggested, “Any nation that fails to take seriously the transformative power of new media will be limiting its diplomatic effectiveness” (p. 9). Future research geared toward unraveling the complexities of social media in diplomatic contexts will be essential in defining best practices for engaging and influencing publics--and partners--in ways that serve national and public interests.

Conclusion

This work assumes that more relational--and more collaborative--forms of public diplomacy will define the field in the 21st century. Public diplomats increasingly will be called on to use their talents and skills to bring people together in addressing shared challenges and common interests in global society. In this process, ethical and effective communication will be essential in creating

mutual understanding, building relationships, facilitating collaborations, promoting responsible decision making, and advancing truth as a universal value. Public interest communications designed to go beyond increasing awareness of particular issues or concerns and to achieve sustained behavioral changes that serve the public interest will be part of those efforts (Christiano & Neimand, 2017, Spring).

Public diplomacy's future success may well turn on the willingness and ability of those involved in defining public diplomacy policies and practices to balance self-interests with the broader interests of publics and society. Such an approach will not diminish the critical importance of public diplomacy in advancing the foreign policy and security goals of a nation or the diplomatic objectives of non-state actors. Rather, it will expand public diplomacy's reach and influence in ways that help to build and sustain a more peaceful and prosperous world for all citizens. As Barder (2010) pointed out in calling for a more socially responsible diplomacy, the pursuit of self-interest "is not a zero-sum game" (p. 294).

References

- Barder, B (2010). Diplomacy, ethics and the national interest: What are diplomats for? *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy*, 5(3), 289-297. doi: 10.1163/187119110X511653.
- Bravo, V. (2015). The importance of diaspora communities as key publics for national governments around the world. In Golan, G.J., Yang, S-U, & Kinsey, D.F. (Eds.) *International public relations and public diplomacy: Communication and engagement* (pp. 279-296). New York, NY: Peter Lang.
- Brown, K.A., Green, S.N. & Wang, J. (2017). *Public diplomacy and national security in 2017: Building alliances, fighting extremism, and dispelling disinformation*. Washington, DC: Center for Strategic & International Studies.
- Castells, M. (2008). The new public sphere: Global civil society, communication networks and global governance, *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 616 (March), 78-93. doi: 10.1177/0002716207311877.
- Christiano, A., & Neimand, A. (2017, Spring). Stop Raising Awareness Already. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, 15(2), 34-41. Retrieved from https://ssir.org/articles/entry/stop_raising_awareness_already
- Comor, E. & Bean, H. (2012). America's 'engagement' delusion: Critiquing a public diplomacy consensus, *The International Communication Gazette*, 74(3), 203-220. doi: 10.1177/1748048511432603.
- Copeland, D. (2009). Transformational public diplomacy: Rethinking advocacy for the globalisation age, *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*, 5(2), 97-102. doi: 10.1057/pb.2009.4.
- Cowan and Arsenault (2008). Moving from monologue to dialogue to collaboration: The three layers of public diplomacy, *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 616 (March), 10-30. doi: 10.1177/0002716207311863.
- Cull, N. J. (2008). *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency: American propaganda and public diplomacy, 1945-1989*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University.

- Dayton, B.W. & Kinsey, D.F. (2015). Contextual meaning. In Golan, G.J., Yang, S-U, & Kinsey, D.F. (Eds.) *International public relations and public diplomacy: Communication and engagement* (pp. 268-278). New York, NY: Peter Lang.
- Deruda, A. (2014). *The digital diplomacy handbook*. www.digitaldiplomacyhandbook.com.
- Fessmann, J. (2016). The emerging field of public interest communications. In E. Oliveira, A. D. Melo & G. Goncalves (Eds.). *Strategic communication in non-profit organizations: Challenges and alternative approaches* (pp. 13-34). Wilmington: Vernon.
- Fisher, A. (2013). *Collaborative public diplomacy: How transnational networks influenced American studies in Europe*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Fitzpatrick, K.R. (2010a). *The future of U.S. public diplomacy: An uncertain fate*. Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill.
- Fitzpatrick, K.R. (2010b). *U.S. public diplomacy's neglected domestic mandate*, CPD Perspectives on Public Diplomacy. Los Angeles, CA: Figueroa.
- Fitzpatrick, K.R. (2011). *U.S. public diplomacy is a post-9/11 world: From messaging to mutuality*. CPD Perspectives on Public Diplomacy. Los Angeles, CA: Figueroa.
- Fitzpatrick, K.R. (2013). Public diplomacy and ethics: From soft power to social conscience. In Zaharna, R.S., Fisher, A. & Arsenault A. (Eds.) *The Connective Mindshift: Relational, Networking & Collaborative Approaches to Public Diplomacy*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Fitzpatrick, K.R & Vanc, A.M. (2016, March). Proposing a Theory of Engagement in Public Diplomacy. Paper presented at the annual conference of the International Studies Association, Atlanta, GA.
- Foreign and Commonwealth Office (2008). *Engagement: Public diplomacy in a globalized world*. London, U.K.: Foreign and Commonwealth Office.
- Gilboa, E. (2008). Searching for a theory of public diplomacy, *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 616 (March), 55-77. doi: 10.1177/0002716207312142.
- Gregory, B. (2008). Public diplomacy: Sunrise of an academic field, *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 616 (March), 274-290. doi: 10.1177/0002716207311723.
- Gregory, B. (2014). *The paradox of US public diplomacy: Its rise and "demise."* IPDGC Special Report #1. Washington, DC: Institute for Public Diplomacy and Global Communication.
- Gregory, B. (2015). Mapping boundaries in diplomacy's public dimension, *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy*, 11 (1), 1-25. doi: 10.1163/1871191X-12341317.
- Grunig, J.E. (1984). *Managing public relations*. New York, NY: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Hon, L. (2015). Digital social advocacy in the Justice for Trayvon Campaign. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 27(4), 299-321. doi: 10.1080/1062726X.2015.1027771.
- Huijgh, E. (2013). Changing tunes for public diplomacy: Exploring the domestic dimension, *Exchange: The Journal of Public Diplomacy*, 2(1), 62-73.
- Kelley, J.R. (2014). *Agency change: Diplomatic action beyond the state*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Leguey-Feilleux, J-R. (2009). *The dynamics of diplomacy*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner.
- Leonard, M. (2002). Diplomacy by other means, *Foreign Policy*, 132 (Sep/Oct), 48-56.
- McNamara, J. (2016). Organizational listening: Addressing a major gap in public relations theory and practice. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 28(3-4), 146-169. doi: 10.1080/1062726X.2016.1228064.

- Melissen, J. (2005). Introduction. In Melissen, J. (Ed.). *The new public diplomacy: Soft power in international relations* (pp. xix-xxiv). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Melissen, J. (2011). Beyond the new public diplomacy. Clingendael Papers No. 3. The Hague: Netherlands Institute of International Relations (“Clingendael”).
- Nye, J.S. (2004). *Soft power: The means to success in world politics*. (New York: PublicAffairs).
- Paine, K. (2011). *Measure what matters: Online tools for understanding customers, social media, engagement, and key relationships*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.
- Pamment, J. (2015). Media influence, ontological transformation, and social change: Conceptual overlaps between development communication and public diplomacy, *Communication Theory*, 25 (2), 188-207. doi: 10.1111/comt.12064.
- Riordan, S. (2005) Dialogue-based public diplomacy: A new foreign policy paradigm? In Melissen, J. (Ed.). *The new public diplomacy: Soft power in international relations* (pp. 180-195). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Seib, P. (2016). *The future of diplomacy*. Cambridge, UK: Polity.
- Sharp, P. (2005). Revolutionary states, outlaw regimes and the techniques of public diplomacy. In J. Melissen (Ed.), *The new public diplomacy: Soft power in international relations* (pp. 106-123). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- The White House, Memorandum for Director, International Communication Agency, 13 March 1978.
- Tomlin, G.M. (2016). Introduction: Public diplomacy for a new frontier. In Tomlin, G.M. *Murrow’s Cold War: Public diplomacy for the Kennedy administration* (pp. xv-xxxiii). Lincoln, NE: Potomac.
- Trent, D.L. (2016). Introduction. In Trent, D.L. (Ed.) *Nontraditional U.S. public diplomacy: Past, present and future*. Washington, DC: Public Diplomacy Council.
- Tuch, H.N. (1990). *Communicating with the world: U.S. public diplomacy overseas*. New York, NY: St. Martin’s.
- United States Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy (2014). *Data driven public Diplomacy: Progress towards measuring the impact of public diplomacy and international broadcasting activities*. Washington, DC: Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy.
- Wang, J. (2006). Managing national reputation and international relations in the global era: Public diplomacy revisited, *Public Relations Review*, 32 (2), 91-96. doi: 10.1016/j.pubrev.2005.12.001.
- Wiseman, G. (2015). Conclusion. In Wiseman, G. (Ed.) *Isolate or engage: Adversarial states, US foreign policy, and public diplomacy* (pp. 280-301). Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Zaharna, R.S. (2012). *The cultural awakening in public diplomacy*. CPD Perspectives on Public Diplomacy. Los Angeles, CA: Figueroa.
- Zaharna, R.S. (2017). *Emotion, identity, & social media: Developing a new awareness, lens & vocabulary for Diplomacy 21*. Working Paper No. 02. Berlin, Germany: German Institute for International and Security Affairs.
- Zaharna, R.S, Arsenault, A. & Fisher, A. (2013). Introduction: The connective shift. In Zaharna, R.S, Arsenault, A. & Fisher, A. (Eds.). *Relational, networked and collaborative approaches to public diplomacy* (pp. 1-14). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Zhang, J. & Swartz, B.C. (2009). Public diplomacy to promote Global Public Goods (GPG): Conceptual expansion, ethical grounds, and rhetoric. *Public Relations Review*, 35, 382-387. doi: 10.1016/j.pubrev.2009.08.001.

