Routledge Advances in International Relations and Global Politics

THE FRONTIERS OF PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

HEGEMONY, MORALITY AND POWER IN THE INTERNATIONAL SPHERE

Edited by Colin R. Alexander

"A provocative collection of essays that will challenge and redefine critical scholarship on public diplomacy."

James Pamment, *Senior Lecturer, Lund University*

"In an era in which public diplomacy is essential to any international actor's success and even survival on the world stage, Colin R. Alexander has drawn together a terrific collection of essays on its theory and practice. Alexander's own excellent work is front and center. With an engaging mix of established and emerging scholars and a resolutely global perspective this book pushes back against the field's habitual focus on the US and UK. It reveals a set of practices which remain, to a frustrating extent, untapped. Actors considered include India, Russia and North Korea; issues include educational exchange, new technology and the out-sourcing to private contractors. Great questions and challenging answers abound. This is a book for scholars, and practitioners to read and consider with care."

Nicholas J. Cull, *Professor of Communication, USC*

"Every reading in this rich and very diverse collection of studies brings an original and critical perspective to what the scholars suggest has become a very normative, positive picture of state-centric public diplomacy. The contributors challenge comfortable notions of what public diplomacy can do to promote appealing narratives or images, and raise uncomfortable but necessary questions about power, hegemony, and counter-hegemony, ethics and morality buried within public diplomacy scholarship and practice."

R.S. Zaharna, *American University*

Taylor & Francis
Taylor & Francis Group
http://taylorandfrancis.com

The Frontiers of Public Diplomacy

This edited volume provides one of the most formidable critical inquiries into public diplomacy's relationship with hegemony, morality and power. Wherein, the examination of public diplomacy's 'frontiers' will aid scholars and students alike in their acquiring of greater critical understanding around the values and intentions that are at the crux of this area of statecraft.

For the contributing authors to this edited volume, public diplomacy is not just a political communications term, it is also a moral term within which actors attempt to convey a sense of their own virtuosity and 'goodness' to international audiences. The book thereby provides fascinating insight into public diplomacy from the under-researched angle of moral philosophy and ethics, arguing that public diplomacy is one of the primary vehicles through which international actors engage in moral rhetoric to meet their power goals.

The Frontiers of Public Diplomacy is a landmark book for scholars, students and practitioners of the subject. At a practical level, it provides a series of interesting case studies of public diplomacy in peripheral settings. However, at a conceptual level, it challenges the reader to consider more fully the assumptions that they may make about public diplomacy and its role within the international system.

Colin R. Alexander is a Senior Lecturer in Political Communications at Nottingham Trent University, UK. His expertise surrounds propaganda and public diplomacy and the role of strategic communications in the interplay of world politics. He has particular interests in the politics of East Asia, colonialism, moral philosophy and in philanthropy studies. He is the author of *China and Taiwan in Central America: Engaging Foreign Publics in Diplomacy* (2014) and *Administering Colonialism and War* (2019).

Routledge Advances in International Relations and Global Politics

Foreign Policy and Discourse Analysis
France, Britain and Europe
Henrik Larsen

Exploring Base Politics
How Host Countries Shape the Network of U.S. Overseas Bases
Edited by Shinji Kawana and Minori Takahashi

United Nations Financial Sanctions
Edited by Sachiko Yoshimura

Operational Code Analysis and Foreign Policy Roles
Crossing Simon's Bridge
Edited by Mark Schafer and Stephen G. Walker

Social Media Impacts on Conflict and Democracy
The Techtonic Shift
Edited by Lisa Schirch

Changing Arms Control Norms in International Society
Kenki Adachi

The Frontiers of Public Diplomacy
Hegemony, Morality and Power in the International Sphere
Edited by Colin R. Alexander

For information about the series: https://www.routledge.com/Routledge-Advances-in-International-Relations-and-Global-Politics/book-series/IRGP

The Frontiers of Public Diplomacy

Hegemony, Morality and Power in the International Sphere

Edited by Colin R. Alexander

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group
NEW YORK AND LONDON

First published 2021
by Routledge
52 Vanderbilt Avenue, New York, NY 10017

and by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon, OX14 4RN

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
A catalog record for this title has been requested

ISBN: 978-0-367-34346-0 (hbk)
ISBN: 978-0-367-77162-1 (pbk)
ISBN: 978-0-429-32512-0 (ebk)

Typeset in Times NR MT Pro
by KnowledgeWorks Global Ltd.

For my sons Finlay and Cameron

Taylor & Francis
Taylor & Francis Group
http://taylorandfrancis.com

Contents

Contributors

Colin R. Alexander is a Senior Lecturer in Political Communications at Nottingham Trent University, UK. His expertise surrounds the historical and contemporary international communications of Asian governments, with a particular interest in imperialism and north-south issues. He is the author of two monograph books: 'China and Taiwan in Central America: Engaging Foreign Publics in Diplomacy' (2014) and 'Administering Colonialism and War' (2019).

Sohaela Amiri is a Research Associate at the University of Southern California's Center on Public Diplomacy (CPD). She is a PhD candidate at Pardee RAND Graduate School (PRGS) and a PRGS Fellow at the RAND Corporation. Her research focuses on US city diplomacy as a contributor to US statecraft. She is the co-editor (with Efe Sevin) of the book 'City Diplomacy: Current Trends and Future Prospects' (2020).

Molly Bettie is a Lecturer in Media and Communication at University of Leeds, UK. Her research focuses on exchange diplomacy and cultural relations, particularly the cases of the Fulbright Program and ERASMUS. She has published two journal articles on the Fulbright Programme's contribution to US public diplomacy. Her current work explores the validity of the prescribed cultural mediator role by examining how exchange students discuss politics while abroad.

Alexander E. Davis is a Lecturer in International Relations within University of Western Australia's School of Social Sciences. His research focuses on racism in international relations and Indian foreign policy surrounding identity and race. He is the author of 'India and the Anglosphere: Race, Identity and Hierarchy in International Relations' (2019) and the co-author of 'The Imperial Discipline: Race and the Founding of International Relations' (2020).

Sarah E. Graham is a Lecturer and Research Associate at the US Studies Centre at University of Sydney, Australia. She has published in many academic journals including Diplomatic History,

Diplomacy & Statecraft, International Studies Review, Place Branding and Public Diplomacy, The Australasian Journal of American Studies and Orbis. She has also written for the Lowy Interpreter, The Diplomat and several Australian newspapers. Graham is the author of a monograph on the history of US public diplomacy, titled 'Culture and Propaganda: The Progressive Origins of American Public Diplomacy, 1936-1953' (2015).

Benjamin Tze Ern Ho is an Assistant Professor at the China Programme, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), Singapore. He obtained his PhD from the Department of International Relations at the London School of Economics and Political Science, UK. His research focus includes the study of China's international relations, with an emphasis on Chinese political worldview and exceptionalism thinking. Other research interests include security multilateralism in the Asia Pacific region with a focus on regional institutions and fora, national security (intelligence), the sociology of religion and public theology (Christianity). His research articles have been published in the America Journal of Chinese Studies, China Quarterly, Journal of Contemporary China, East Asia: An International Quarterly, Alternatives: Global, Local, Political, Asia Policy, Australian Journal of International Affairs and the Yale Journal of International Affairs.

Jacob Udo-Udo Jacob is a Visiting Professor in International Studies at Dickinson College, Carlisle, Pennsylvania. He is also a Visiting International Scholar at New York University's Center on International Cooperation. His research interest is located at the intersections between communications, peace, conflict and development in violently divided societies. He is the author of 'Convincing Rebel Fighters to Disarm: UN Public Information Operations in the Democratic Republic of Congo' (2017).

Lorenzo Kihlgren Grandi is an Adjunct Professor in City Diplomacy at Sciences Po – Paris School of International Affairs and Chairperson of Urban Flag. His main expertise and research interests are in the contribution of municipalities and their networks to global challenges, such as sustainable development, intercultural dialogue and migration. He is Chair of the Globalization, Territories and Integration working group at the International Association of Schools and Institutes of Administration (IASIA).

Gary D. Rawnsley is Dean of the School of Humanities and Professor of Public Diplomacy at University of Nottingham Ningbo, China. Much of his research focuses on East Asia, especially China and Taiwan, though he has also published on the United Kingdom, United States, Vietnam, Hong Kong and South Korea. He is the co-editor of the 'Routledge Handbook of Chinese Media' (2015) and the 'Routledge

Handbook of Soft Power' (2016) and is now working on studies of British soft power and (with Ming-Yeh Rawnsley and Jonathan Sullivan) political communication in Taiwan.

Alexander Sergunin is a Professor of International Relations at St. Petersburg State University, Russia. His fields of research and teaching include Russian foreign policy thinking and making, public diplomacy and paradiplomacy of substate and subnational actors, city-twinning and regionalization in Europe and Russia. His most recent books include: Russia in the Arctic. Hard or Soft Power? (2016) (with Valery Konyshev); Explaining Russian Foreign Policy Behavior: Theory and Practice (2016); Russian Strategies in the Arctic: Avoiding a New Cold War (2014) (with Lassi Heininen and Gleb Yarovoy); Contemporary International Relations Theories (2013) (with Valery Konyshev et al.) and Laboratories of European Integration: City-Twinning in Northern Europe (2012) (with Pertti Joenniemi).

Vineet Thakur is an Assistant Professor of History and International Relations at Leiden University in the Netherlands. His research focuses on disciplinary history of IR and diplomatic histories of India and South Africa. He is the author of 'Jan Smuts and the Indian Question' (2017) and 'The Postscript of Independence: Foreign Policy Discourses in India and South Africa' (2018).

Introduction

Colin R. Alexander

This edited volume delivers powerful and challenging accounts of public diplomacy in both historical and contemporary settings. The fundamental purpose of the book is to define, understand and push the frontiers of the subject forward, but also to provide scholars, students and practitioners with a coherent understanding of public diplomacy's foremost intent. This is to offer a rationale to foreign publics for the policies and values of an international actor. Some may challenge this position or think that it does not go far enough, claiming instead that it understates public diplomacy's potential to unite those who have no connection, who suffer from mutual misunderstandings or who might otherwise be in conflict. However, time and time again public diplomacy falls short of offer such a noble outcome, failing to deliver despite many a seeming open goal. This book goes some way to explaining why this is the case and comes to the unfortunate conclusion that open goals are only attractive if there is an intent to score into them.

Within the interviews and more relaxed 'off the record' conversations that I have had with public diplomats over the years – nationals of many countries, working on many different types of projects, often in challenging locations – the common theme of frustration with their diplomat bosses has been quick to emerge. In a recorded interview that is likely to be published in some format, most public diplomats understand that they ought to tow a careful line. Most are careerists like the rest of us and want to preserve their jobs and not draw what they would deem unnecessary attention to themselves. Nevertheless, frustrated people often want to talk about their concerns to someone who understands. It appears to lighten the burden if only briefly. Upon buying these people a beer or two the evening after I met them for the formal interview the frustrations of their profession soon become a topic of discussion.

Most public diplomats dislike the use of the word 'diplomat' to describe themselves. They are of course aware that they are cogs in a diplomatic wheel. However, most, in my estimations at least, genuinely believe in the power of their communications to do something good in/for the world (whatever their interpretation of 'good' may be). Many of those working

on the ground are idealists. The vast majority have a passion for their jobs. Indeed, with their qualifications and skillsets there are much easier jobs in much nicer parts of the world that pay much better money than working public diplomacy. Few are interested in the dark arts of deception but almost all are frustrated because diplomats and public diplomats appear to be working at cross-purposes. Perhaps public diplomacy's fundamental 'problem' then, so to speak, is that it is mainly performed by states and governments (or by sub-contractors working for them) and it is done with the source's determined self-interests in mind. This results in public diplomacy's claims to greater good or moral purpose often being veneers masking more ambitious power consolidating ends. Perhaps then we ought to stop thinking about public diplomacy's potential to do good in the world (I will leave the concept of 'good' open to interpretation here), and acknowledge that any such goodness is extremely limited simply because it *is* public diplomacy.

As readers make their way through the book it may be tempting to consider the information presented as a catalogue of missed opportunities. Whether it is public diplomacy routinely failing to understand the potential of new communications technologies to foster a greater sense of human togetherness (Rawnsley, Chapter 2), Anthony McCall being sacked by the British government for actually trying to do public diplomacy 'properly' (myself, Chapter 4), India's BJP political party falling short when it 'postured' its public diplomacy around yoga (Davis, Chapter 8), or the United Nations outsourcing its public diplomacy as part of peacekeeping missions to a public relations firm with the murkiest of reputations (Jacob, Chapter 11), the conclusions of each of the chapters in this book highlight the extent to which that 'opportunity' to do good was either severely curtailed by other interests or never really existed at all. Indeed, the competitive, nasty and sometimes brutish reality of world politics – past and present – leaves little room for genuine niceties and public diplomacy, as I will argue in Chapter 1, forms part of a modern 'spectacle' wherein an aesthetic moral layer camouflages more contestable actions and intentions.

Public diplomacy is a contested concept within the study of political communications with hundreds of definitions within its growing body of published works. These definitions agree and disagree with each other in equal measure but retain core trends. I define public diplomacy simply as the political act of attempting to communicate with foreign publics to assist the strategic ambitions of the source of these communications. The key aspects here are that the communications form part of a wider political project or intent and that it involves engagement with foreign audiences, although domestic audiences and other proxy audiences may be involved as well.

The other contributors to this volume were encouraged to discuss their own definitions of public diplomacy and some have done so. What all are

agree on when it comes to public diplomacy though is first that a foreign public ought to be involved (although they might not be the real target of the communications); and second, that the source of the communications should be a recognised political actor, although this need not be a state or state government. Indeed, this book on public diplomacy's frontiers emphasises in abundance the extent of this latter point in through Vineet Thakur (Chapter 5, Sarah Graham (Chapter 6), Sohaela Amiri and Lorenzo Kihlgren Grandi (Chapter 9), Alexander Sergunin (Chapter 10) and Jacob Udo-Udo Jacob (Chapter 11), all of whose contributions make clear the extent to which the landscape of public diplomacy actors is complex and multi-layered.

The frontiers of public diplomacy are rather blurred. However, there are aspects of mass international political communication that this book does not consider to be within the realm of public diplomacy. Can, for instance, a powerful individual engage in public diplomacy? I think not, but others may disagree. Where does foreign aid, development assistance and other implicit communications fit into the public diplomacy equation? For me, foreign aid ought to be considered an act of public diplomacy and I have written about this topic elsewhere. However, many other scholars focus almost exclusively on the mainstays of public diplomacy – international broadcasting, educational exchange and cultural diplomacy – and tend to exclude foreign aid. Where does public diplomacy stop and public relations, propaganda, psychological warfare and the many other political communications terms begin? I think that psychological operations conducted by militaries abroad overlaps considerably with public diplomacy and Gary Rawnsley (Chapter 2) agrees. And finally, is public diplomacy the concern of the state (usually a more permanent bureaucratic fixture) or can it also be a governmental activity (even in authoritarian regimes governments tend to come and go)? I think it is both, mainly because it is rare that foreign audiences will differentiate between the two, and why should they? Donald Trump's tweets were as much US public diplomacy as the Voice of America or a Fulbright scholarship programme during the latter half of the previous decade. Indeed, perhaps Trump's tweets and other utterances were the most vocal part of US public diplomacy at that time given the global news uptake of them. This is despite them often conflicting with the more traditional US public diplomacy narratives epitomised by the poem *The New Colossus* by Emma Lazarus in 1883 and which now adorns the Statue of Liberty in the harbour of New York City. As Gary Rawnsley says towards the end of Chapter 2, US public diplomacy was essentially 'covfefe-d' although some scholars may disagree that this was public diplomacy at all.

This book is called the 'The Frontiers of Public Diplomacy' and represents an attempt to get to the bottom of some of these questions. A frontier in this respect may represent a geographical boundary or an extreme, an area of contest, something notional or something tangible. The frontiers

covered by this book are philosophical (myself, Chapter 1), technological (Rawnsley, Chapter 2), educational (Bettie, Chapter 3), archetypal (myself, Chapter 4), racial (Thakur, Chapter 5), self-determinist (Graham, Chapter 6), aspirational (Ho, Chapter 7), conscious raising (Davis, Chapter 8), metropolitan (Amiri and Kihlgren Grandi, Chapter 9), geographical (Sergunin, Chapter 10), warfare/violence and peacekeeping (Jacob, Chapter 11) and counter-hegemonic (myself, Chapter 12). Some chapters cover more than one frontier and some overlap.

There are plenty of other frontiers that the book could have examined but which have not been included. For example, gender, LGBTQ+ issues or indigeneity. Their exclusion and that of others is not to demean them but to recognise that this book must also have a frontier. According Natalja, my editor at Routledge, that frontier is about 90,000 words. However, if this volume sells well then maybe I will be asked to write another volume on other frontiers of public diplomacy. Not to be dissuaded though, this critical edition aims to assist the conversation about public diplomacy by filling some gaps and by providing new spaces for discussion through philosophical musings and case studies geared towards the provision of broader insights. Central to the arguments found within all the chapters though are the notions of hegemony, morality, power and counter-hegemony. For the most part, to engage in public diplomacy – or what is routinely recognised as public diplomacy by practitioners and scholars – is to engage in hegemonically coalescent activities. Beyond the focus on foreign publics and debates over which communications 'impact' and which do not, public diplomacy is also concerned with the wider art of virtue signalling to likeminded actors or those who are ideologically compatible. Alternatively, public diplomacy is concerned with advocating for certain positions and convincing those who differ to adopt that preferred way of thinking and being.

So much of what public diplomacy actors do and say today is a version of the same thing. There appears to be only so many ways of doing public diplomacy and only so many narratives to attach to one's activities. Explicit or implicit, most of the activities have the same simple message: 'We are good people. We do good things. Take more interest in us and our good work'. Thus, as Chapter 1 of the book discusses, this aspect of promoting 'goodness' brings public diplomacy very much into the field of morality, ethics and moral façade. Indeed, as the title of the first chapter suggests, the most conspicuous part of the study of ethics and moral philosophy within public diplomacy literature is its inconspicuousness or even non-existence. It would therefore be rather futile to engage in a literature review that went to the ends of the public diplomacy earth. There is little doubt (hope, perhaps) that somewhere out there a PhD thesis or a journal article does cover some of the theoretical ground covered by this book. The point, however, remains that within mainstream published public diplomacy thought there are significant theoretical gaps and that

in a decade and a half of studying public diplomacy I have not found anything published of comparable substance to the discussions found within my Chapter 1 of this volume or many of the discussions provided in the subsequent chapter contributions. It should also be declared here that this book is the culmination of my growing awareness and journey into deeper critical though surrounding political communications and that my first book publication on public diplomacy in 2014 is as guilty of the oversights and ignorance discussed here as other texts on the subject.

I hope that you enjoy the book but more importantly I hope that you find it interesting and useful. To say that I am proud of the final product is an understatement. It is an immensely important book for the field of public diplomacy, which all too often exists in an echo chamber of itself when it creates articles, chapters and books that offer little in the way of perspective or overarching philosophy. I would like to thank Natalja Mortensen and Charlie Baker at Routledge and their wider team who believed in me and my ability to produce this book when other people were not convinced or thought that it 'sounded like too much work'. Hopefully Natalja thinks that the end product is to the standard that I convinced her it would be. Thank you also to my mother-in-law Janet Hillyer who proof-read many of the chapters and gave feedback in her brutalist but very helpful manner. Finally, to my wife Rachael who 'graciously' permitted me time to work at the weekends and on weekday evenings towards the end of the project despite us having two young children. I never imagined I would meet someone as amazing as you. All my love.

Colin Alexander
Sheffield, England
September 2020

Taylor & Francis
Taylor & Francis Group
http://taylorandfrancis.com

Part I

The First Frontier: Understanding Public Diplomacy

Taylor & Francis
Taylor & Francis Group
http://taylorandfrancis.com

1 Hegemony, Morality and Power

A Gramscian Theoretical Framework for Public Diplomacy

Colin R. Alexander

Introduction

The widespread absence of philosophy within public diplomacy literature presents one of the most interesting challenges to those trying to understand the subject. Too often, articles are published in political communications journals that have an air of simplistic positivity about the potential of public diplomacy to create a more peaceful world. This is a noble desire but one that is largely unrealistic. These positive utterances are therefore the result of assumptions rather than rigorous research, applied theory or philosophical pondering. As such, despite advocating for the sanctity of democracy, liberty and the rights of the individual, many works of public diplomacy demonstrate little awareness of social theory, critical thought or even Enlightenment philosophy. Instead, public diplomacy publications – monograph books, chapters in edited books and journal articles – have tended to be case studies from around the world that provide readers with detailed insight into the scenarios in which this fascinating subject operates. However, aside from rather brief discussions of definitions, most overlook the hardest part of academic inquiry; that of presenting a philosophised and professed position that attaches wider meaning to the information provided.

The most oft-quoted work on public diplomacy theory is Eytan Gilboa's (2008) promisingly titled journal article 'Searching for a Theory of Public Diplomacy'. However, while Gilboa accurately states that the theoretical development of public diplomacy has been 'limited' (p. 56), he himself then demonstrates his own considerable theoretical and philosophical limitations by providing an article that applies only the theories of soft power, public relations and branding to the concept of public diplomacy. He then appears to consider the application of *models* of communication to be a contribution to theory rather than a separate (albeit interesting and worthwhile) area of investigation. Gilboa states that '[while] scholars have applied communications models and theories to issues of foreign policy and international relations, only a few researchers have applied them to public diplomacy'. However, the article makes few inroads into

the rectification of this deficit and by the end of the text the most outstanding aspect of the article is the complete lack of reference to philosophical works or any kind of positioning of public diplomacy within discussions of hegemony, morality or power. Rather amusingly, 4 years ago at a political communications conference, the public diplomacy scholar James Pamment (2017) presented a paper called 'Still Searching for a Theory of Public Diplomacy' in which he argued that the subject had not progressed since Gilboa's original article in 2008. This chapter, and indeed many of the other chapters in this book, are therefore offerings as part of efforts to address this deficiency.

The public diplomacy of an international actor at a given time can be analysed through the triangulation of three interrelated factors: (1) the predominant structures of hegemony and counter-hegemony; (2) the prevailing notions of virtuosity and 'goodness' within the international system and (3) the power status and ambition of the actor. Taken together, these factors provide a theoretical framework upon which all public diplomacy activity can be understood. The factors make up the core of the critical analysis provided by the chapters of this edited volume and each will be discussed in turn within this chapter. Wider theoretical discussion is required before this though.

The eighteenth-century French philosopher Jean Jacques Rousseau wrote that

> Since no man has a natural authority over his fellow, and force creates no right, we must conclude that conventions form the basis of all legitimate authority among men.
>
> (Rousseau, 1993: 185)

The 'conventions' that Rousseau alludes to, which other translations of his work into English have termed 'covenants' or 'agreements', often take the form of normative behaviours that are communicated as part of efforts to validate the power ambitions of some and to disqualify those of others. This is perhaps best seen in the strategic communications over the right to develop nuclear weapons that is covered by Chapter 12 of this book. These communications assist in the manufacture of a sense of what is notionally acceptable conduct around the world – where and by whom – and perhaps more importantly what is deemed unacceptable – where and by whom. Such conditions exist away from moral concerns as the deciding factor, for it is self-interest that almost always motivates international actors even if they present their selflessness convincingly. These utterances are, therefore, a means to an end, with the propagation of virtuosity within public diplomacy campaigns around the world a central part of the quest for greater status, or retention of it, and positive recognition among peers and by publics. Rousseau's 'conventions' thus become a guised moral authority within

the global swirl of public diplomacy narratives that accompany the great game of international politics.

To this end, Rousseau's notion of the 'convention' helps to confirm that public diplomacy exists within a dialectic, in as much as there is nothing 'natural' about an actor's claim to its 'natural authority'. Indeed, by engaging in public diplomacy of any kind, the actor is also offering tactic admission that they have no natural authority or special or 'divine' right to their power. For if an actor had natural authority then they would not require strategic communications to justify themselves. The power dynamics within the world system at a given time exists by virtue of circumstance and decision-making. Public diplomacy is thus part of an attempt to manufacture the tacit agreement of publics that a natural authority favourable to those in power does exist. Public diplomacy is therefore a moral deception – or an attempt to deceive at least. Whereas any genuine belief by an actor in their own natural authority represents a narcissistic self-deception.

Public Diplomacy and Hegemony

The writings of the Italian philosopher and political prisoner Antonio Gramsci (1891–1937) have been used in many contexts relating to the wider discipline of Communications Studies. Gramsci's philosophy has provided the platform for much of the work of the Birmingham School of Culture Studies and to Stuart Hall's workin particular during the latter half of the twentieth century. In addition, the likes of Robert Cox and other theorists of world order have used Gramsci as part of their explanations for the global power dynamics that they research, while Homi K. Bhabha, Gayatri Spivak and other leaders of postcolonial and subaltern studies have also been profoundly influenced by Gramsci. Thus, despite Gramscian frameworks being used extensively in the related literature on cultural imperialism and cultural hegemony, there has been minimal transfer to specific works of public diplomacy. One of the few to do so has been Foad Izadi's (2016) journal article that discusses Gramsci in the context of hegemony and the ethical legitimacy (or lack thereof) of US public diplomacy during and after the Cold War. However, this article does not provide the philosophical depth that this chapter will provide and was published in a rather obscure academic journal rarely frequented by political communications scholars. As such, rather than providing further literature review on the matters related to this chapter, readers should move forward noting that while there are some texts that complement what will be said here, the publications are decidedly limited both in their scope and in their critical depth.

Gramsci's notions of hegemony and counter-hegemony are central to understanding public diplomacy. Defining hegemony, the renowned

cultural theorist and advocate of Gramscian studies, Raymond Williams, wrote that

> [h]egemony supposes the existence of something which is truly total, which is not merely secondary or superstructural, like the weak sense of ideology, but which is lived at such depth, which saturates the society to such an extent, and which, as Gramsci put it, even constitutes the substance and limits of common sense for most people under its sway, that it corresponds to the reality of the social experience very much more clearly than any notions derived from the formula of base and superstructure.
>
> (Williams, 1979: 37)

The notion of 'common sense' is important here. Rather than focussing on ideology, which many people have at least a passive awareness of and can acknowledge that other ideological options exist, hegemony appears so ingrained to the cultural fabric that the vast majority cannot conceive of a counter discourse through which alternatives can be fully considered. The French philosopher Michel Foucault (1989) put forward a similar premise during the late 1960s when he argued that systems of knowledge and thought within a given period are governed by hegemonic impositions that determine the boundaries of conceptual possibilities. Moreover, by virtue of their incumbency, these hegemonic structures hold much of the ability to shape the discourse through which counter movements are interpreted and often dismissed in the minds of the mainstream regardless of their virtue. There are of course moments in history when contests over narrational supremacy emerge; the first half of the twentieth century being one period in particular, to which this book devotes several chapters.

Assuming that clear hegemonic supremacy exists then, the human mind thus views the incumbent superstructure as a 'natural' order of sorts rather than something manufactured, in flux and purposely conserved and reinforced by the powerful forces invested in its upkeep. To give full credence to alternatives thus requires critical thought, a rare degree of independent agency, a set of terminologies that are not merely counterpoints to dominant concepts and a willingness to act against perceived norms that may also result in the ostracism of the individual from certain social circles. In environmental consciousness, for example, this distinction can be seen in the tendency of the majority of people towards what the Norwegian philosopher Arne Næss (1973) called 'shallow' rather than 'deep' ecology.

The hegemony of the current era is pivoted towards neoliberal interests. For Western countries, this has been the case since at least the early 1980s, although many of the origins of neoliberal thought were developed through the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s and merely came to fruition after

decades of squeezing within the Western world. For other parts of the world, particularly the former Soviet bloc, neoliberal pivoting, restructuring even, emerged only after the collapse of Communism in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Communism, for its part, provided much of its own superstructure and thought processes in countries under its gaze until the late 1980s and an intercontinental system of public diplomacy narratives formed around it.

Neoliberalism can thus be defined as the intensification of market-oriented principles into the individual and collective consciousness. It is an ideology based on consumption wherein the solution to emotional distress or uncomfortable feelings is prophesised as the purchase of material goods rather than introspection and the development of mindfulness within the self. Despite it being primarily a theory of socio-economic organisation, set among other theories pertaining to the same goal, advocates of neoliberalism, perhaps most famously Milton Friedman (1962), have sought to present it as an inclusive ideology, simple 'common sense' and even the 'natural' state of man. As part of its hegemonic consolidation, neoliberalism has sought to marginalise alternatives by making them appear unworkable, unrealistic, unnatural or inhumane, while propagating itself as pious, virtuous, altruistic and compassionate. It does this despite it favouring the deregulation of commercial industries, reductions to international trade tariffs and the privatisation of public services to profit-making hands. Such preferences have resulted in the intensification of human destitution around the world, tribal, indigenous and smallholding communities being expelled from traditional lands, exponential human population growth, cultural imperialism, unrivalled global pollution, deforestation, soil deterioration, desertification, global warming, climate change, species decline and even the emergence of new deadly viruses. Nevertheless, neoliberalism's hegemonic status remains largely unchallenged and some of the explanation for this must be down not only to its ability to detach itself from collective responsibility for the acceleration of these global issues but also its claims to conscience and virtuosity.

This is of interest to public diplomacy because it helps to explain the place of publics within the public diplomacy equation. Publics form part of the power equation only when it is believed that they are useful to the interests of the powerful to engage them. The motivation to engage publics around the world is summarised well by the American political scientist Gerald Sussman, who writes that

> The maintenance of the corporate state requires an intensification of public persuasion […] in order to divert citizens from the cognitive dissonance that follows the unwillingness of the neoliberal state to protect public interests.
>
> (Sussman, 2012: 42)

Thus, as market forces seep further into public life under neoliberalism, the corporate state must invest more resources in communications to convince much of the global population that this ideology remains committed to the protection of public welfare, when in reality it is alleviating itself of its basic governmental duties by shifting the burden of providing vital public services onto the likes of the voluntary and charity sector. Herein, the public diplomacy communications by members of the hegemonic coalition are motivated by the normalisation of neoliberal ideology around the world and the creation of a sense of enfranchisement within select groups of people.

Here then, hegemony is developed and sustained through forces of cultural production that emanate from the interests of the powerful. For Gramsci, the key to the maintenance of hegemonic supremacy was through what he called the 'guardians' of any society. Most likely improvised from concepts found within Plato's *The Republic*, Gramsci's guardians essentially amount to opinion-leaders who are admired by a given society and who gain credibility and authority through the perception that they act as intermediaries between the powerful and the masses. Gramsci concludes that this is a fabrication and that the concept of guardianship is a propaganda, for these opinion-leaders emerge through their allegiance to at least a semblance of the power status quo rather than their advocation for any more counter-hegemonic positions. Indeed, they would not be bestowed with so-called guardianship if they did seek such revolutionary change and are sharply dismissed if they do.

Gramsci wrote little about the importance of media communications as a vehicle for the transfer of hegemonic power. Forgacs (1988) argues that this was partly the result of his political incarceration during the time of Mussolini's fascist government of Italy, which would have prevented his regular access to publications. However, it is also likely that Gramsci was more interested in a consideration of the entirety of cultural space within society as part of his hegemonic analysis. Nevertheless, today public diplomacy can only operate as it does as a result of advances in media communications technology. Media offers the powerful and their guardians a platform from which they can propagate their self-interested views and from where they can belittle those viewed as a threat or deny them access to explain their position. Those given the most space on popular media platforms include mainstream politicians, journalists, social commentators, entrepreneurs and prominent business owners, leaders of charities, religious leaders, musicians, actors, sports stars, celebrities, bloggers and vloggers and 'experts' on whatever topic is deemed worthy of attention by the hegemonic coalition. In contrast, those marginalised include environmental protestors, animal rights activists, vegetarians and vegans, refugees, those engaged in the pursuit of mindfulness, those

living in extreme parts of the world, those who do not concede to the rules of capitalism and private property, prisoners (political or otherwise), those preferring traditional ways of subsistence living, the poor and the destitute, those engaged in alternative lifestyles where involvement in the capitalist system is deliberately limited and academics and other critical thinkers who advocate for what the hegemonic coalition frequently refer to as 'radical thought', even though much of it is not particularly radical at all.

In reality though neoliberalism is a deeply insecure ideology that relies upon disassociated violence to facilitate its continuation. This is coupled with the increasing levels of propaganda that it requires to support public indoctrination. Like a seemingly loud and confident guest at a party, neoliberalism's constant chatter is indicative of the anxiety of a knowing usurper who must divert attention away from its misanthropic intent. Thus, in a ratio inverse to the virtuosity and welfare actually provided by neoliberalism, the major players – international corporations, the modern corporate state, wealthy individuals and charities – spend increasing amounts of money trying to convince publics around the world of the values, virtues and opportunities presented by a deregulated market system and how this system offers the most extensive opportunity for the protection of human securities.

Aside from the communications of counter-hegemonic actors, neoliberal narratives are found within most public diplomacy around the world today. This is despite the subtleties of the messaging diverting the recipient's attention from the neoliberal positions through a focus on egocentrism and individual entitlement. Indeed, a majority of governments around the world are primarily aligned to the interests of industry and capital security rather than their own or anyone else's publics. Thought of this way, public diplomacy is an attempt to preserve the legitimacy of powerful actors and to prevent publics (domestic or foreign) from realising the extent to which governmental care is conditional upon the usefulness of the individual to the neoliberal project. More interesting for public diplomacy research though is a consideration of the publics around the world who are excluded from the attention of these strategic communications on the clear basis that they do not have enough social, economic or political capital to warrant any interest under current hegemonic conditions. Indeed, public diplomacy is far more elitist than its advocates tend to acknowledge. It should thus be thought of as a tool of statecraft first and foremost rather than a means to a virtuous end.

Public Diplomacy and Morality

Gramsci wrote the following on the use of moral narratives by the powerful in their quest to retain power:

> In my opinion, the most reasonable and concrete thing that can be said about the ethical and cultural state is this: every state is ethical in as much as one of its most important functions is to raise the great mass of the population to a particular cultural and moral level, a level (or type) which corresponds to the needs of the productive forces of development, and hence to the interests of the ruling classes. The school as a positive educative function, and the courts as a repressive and negative educative function, are the most important state activities in this sense: but, in reality, a multitude of other so-called private initiatives and activities tend to the same end – initiatives and activities which form the apparatus of the political and cultural hegemony of the ruling classes.
>
> (cited in Forgacs, 1988: 234)

Thus, for Gramsci, that 'particular cultural and moral level' is decided by whatever the forces of production require it to be. The prevailing narratives of mainstream public diplomacy are thus linked to the requirements of the global means of production through the communication of an ideological, cultural and moral landscape that befits those priorities.

Ethical codes emerge within societies through various processes and experiences. For Gramsci, it was what he termed the 'historical bloc' – a combination of collective myth-making, experiences and beliefs that bind members of a society together – that made a substantial contribution to the formulation of prevailing modes of being. More broadly, in Western societies, particularly those with Jewish and Christian traditional belief systems, it has been Enlightenment philosophy and the teachings of the Bible, particularly God's Ten Commandments delivered to Moses on Mount Sinai, that form a crucial part of prevailing ethical thinking. This is despite agnosticism and atheism increasing in many of those countries. On this point, the twentieth century philosopher Iris Murdoch delivers a compelling argument:

> To speak of Good in this portentous manner is simply to speak of the old concept of God in a thin disguise. But at least 'God' could play a real consoling and encouraging role. It makes sense to speak of loving God, a person, but very little sense to speak of loving Good, a concept. 'Good' even as a fiction is not likely to inspire, or even be comprehensible to, more than a small number of mystically minded people who, being reluctant to surrender 'God', fake up 'Good' in his image, so as to preserve some kind of hope.
>
> (Murdoch, 1970: 70)

For Murdoch, to think of Good is to think of God in a post-Christian way, with notions of Good and God thus transferring into the conceptualisation of modern ethical codes, dispositions and adherences

that make up the moral self both individually and collectively. Such an argument follows the treatise of the eighteenth-century German philosopher Immanuel Kant (2008), who declared that a single moral standard or 'supreme canon' does not exist, although this has not prevented some individuals and groups from attempting to declare themselves to be the epitome of one. As such, for the twentieth century ethicist Patrick Nowell-Smith (1954: 133), ethics are almost always reflections of conscious or unconscious self-interests in as much as they include a significant performative function within one's adherence to them. The arguments of each of these influential theorists helps to draw the conclusion that the development of ethical codes, indeed their very perception of value and the extent to which they are adhered to, is as much about the internal self as it is the external world in which the individual inhabits.

To think of 'good' though, or a 'good' act, is widely accepted as involving the conception of the self beyond egocentrism. Murdoch states that

> Goodness is connected with the attempt to see the unself, to see and to respond to the real world in the light of a virtuous consciousness. […]. 'Good is a transcendent reality' means that virtue is the attempt to pierce the veil of selfish consciousness and join the world as it really is. It is an empirical fact about human nature that this attempt cannot be entirely successful.
>
> (Murdoch, 1970: 91)

The pursuit of virtuous consciousness cannot be successful in part because of human ego and the incapacity and unwillingness of all but the most mindful of individuals to achieve higher states of consciousness. Even then, those who obtain super consciousness would not be aware that they had done so, nor would they care, for it involves the relinquishing of egotistical considerations around a sense of achievement and self-gratification. To this end, Murdoch (1970: 89) argues that individuals invent 'false doubles' and 'jumped-up intermediaries' as substitutes for the perseverance, dedication, self-control, self-sacrifice and probably failure involved in the pursuit of super consciousness. These are essential coping strategies invented by the ego to preserve itself and the feelings of righteousness that are at the centre of human confidence and decision-making. At the collective level, 'good' can never be achieved though because 'crowds', as Gustave Le Bon (2009) calls them, always act egotistically.

In most instances, the primary motive of public diplomacy is to make the international actor in question appear morally virtuous under prevailing conceptualisations of 'good' within the international system. In this era, public diplomacy has attached itself both to Biblical and Enlightenment thought that conceives of virtuosity through the prism of the human individual and the rights thereof. The majority of public

diplomacy actors are thus at pains to express their adherence to democratic frameworks, the Geneva Convention, the uplift of the poor and social justice for all, even if the reality of those observances is more questionable. Indeed, for the American ethicist Reinhold Niebuhr who was writing during the hegemonically turbulent interwar period, most powerful actors have a vested interest in ensuring the continuation of injustice. This is despite their words to the contrary. Niebuhr makes an important intervention here and his argument is worth noting at length:

> No society has ever achieved peace without incorporating injustice into its harmony. Those who would eliminate the injustice are therefore always placed at the moral disadvantage of imperilling its peace. The privileged groups will place them under that moral disadvantage even if the efforts toward justice are made in the most pacific terms. They will claim that it is dangerous to disturb a precarious equilibrium and will feign to fear anarchy as the consequence of the effort. This passion for peace need not always be consciously dishonest. Since those who hold special privileges in society are naturally inclined to regard their privileges as their rights and to be unmindful of the effects of inequality upon the underprivileged, they will have a natural complacence toward injustice. Every effort to disturb the peace, which incorporates the injustice, will therefore seem to them to spring from unjustified malcontent. They will furthermore be only partly conscious of the violence and coercion by which their privileges are preserved and will therefore be particularly censorious of the use of force or the threat of violence by those who oppose them. The force they use is either the covert force of economic power or it is the police power of the state, seemingly sanctified by the supposedly impartial objectives of the government which wields it, but which is nevertheless amenable to their interests.
>
> (Niebuhr, 1932: 78)

Niebuhr's compelling argument leads to the broader question of access to, and control of, global cultural spaces both within public diplomacy and for the wider communications landscape. In short, whose voices are heard, whose are listened to and whose are marginalised, discredited or absent. This is important for public diplomacy research as it provides a theoretical platform from which one can understand why some public diplomacy actors sit at the industry's core and why others exist at its frontiers. The notion of cultural space, and its control, was discussed at length by the French philosopher Henri Lefebvre during the twentieth century. Lefebvre's (1991) explained how the narratives of cultural space embody future notions of utopia of the prevailing hegemonic coalition at a given time. These narratives are the result of 'knowledge' (think: Foucault's earlier argument) that is propagated as objective, but which is

framed by the means of production and the socio-economic trajectories of those who control those means. Lefebvre (1991: 9) wrote that '[t]his ideology carries no flag, and for those who accept the practice of which […] it is indistinguishable from knowledge'. To this end, public diplomacy's lack of critique of the concept of 'knowledge' within most of its literature may go some way towards explaining the positivity that is normally found towards its activities.

Public Diplomacy and Power

Most definitions of public diplomacy emphasise that it consists of communications between governments and foreign publics in the pursuit of that government's ambitions vis-à-vis economic prosperity, strategic concerns and other power ambitions. As such, public diplomacy essentially involves attempts to gain strategic and/or financial advantage by influencing the hearts and minds of publics and decision-makers around the world in the hope that they act, think or behave in ways benefitting the source of the communications. This remains the simple, basic and uncontroversial task of public diplomacy. However, definitions cannot convey the conceptual, historical, contemporary and anecdotal debates, contests and approaches that have occurred within the subject.

Excluding the political communications of counter-hegemonic actors, which are discussed in several chapters of this book, public diplomacy tends to present the credentials of an international actor in terms of its loyalty to the prevailing world order and the values that the order holds. However, it is power rather than moral worth that is the primary consideration. Here then lies the power dynamic between egoism and altruism that is played out in the international arena and where Murdoch's 'false doubles' and 'jumped up intermediaries' reside. Writing during World War II, the political geographer Nicholas Spykman concluded that

> The statesman who conducts foreign policy can concern himself with values of justice, fairness, and tolerance only to the extent that they contribute to or do not interfere with the power objective. They can be used instrumentally as moral justification for the power quest, but they must be discarded the moment their application brings weakness. The search for power is not made for the achievement of moral values; moral values are used to facilitate the attainment of power.
>
> (Spykman, 1942: 18)

Thus, public diplomacy's task is to, as Spykman says, 'facilitate the attainment of power' and to justify the position of those who enjoy it. This is achieved through the propagation of a cultural morality that is congruent to the interests of the powerful and which disassociates elite status from the process of exploitation that has occurred for that status

to be achieved. This is delivered explicitly and implicitly by public diplomacy activities through the narratives of international broadcasting, cultural diplomacy, education and 'knowledge' exchange, endorsement or chastisement of other governments, state visits, gestures of goodwill, foreign aid and development assistance and all the other communications activities that have been categorised by public diplomacy scholars over the years. However, public diplomacy is vulnerable to becoming redundant when it is deemed unimportant or even detrimental to the power quest.

Buoyed somewhat by sanctions against regimes committing abuses and humanitarian interventions in Somalia, the Balkans and Rwanda during the 1990s and early 2000s, a body of work emerged that questioned whether greater room now existed for moral considerations within the conceptualisation of power in the post-Cold War era. To this end, many public diplomacy scholars were engrossed by the emergence of Joseph Nye's (1990) work on 'soft power' – power as attraction rather than power as coercion or persuasion – and the possibility of a world order that attached greater importance to virtuosity.

However, in a separate publication, this author argued that it is a moral 'spectacle' that is being witnessed rather than an actual moral pivot within modern considerations of power (see Alexander, 2021). International actors remain no more moral or immoral than they were before. What has altered over the previous decades is the attention that they give to the imitation of virtue within their propaganda. The contemporary political scientist Neta Crawford frames this debate in terms of the distance between behavioural norms and normative beliefs. She continues by arguing the following:

> [N]orms emerge and are promoted because they reflect not only the economic and security interests of dominant members of international society but also their moral interests and emotional dispositions. This suggests that for new behavioural norms to become dominant, the most powerful actors must find that their economic and security interests coincide with the proposed new norm, or at least not be counter to it, and that they may also believe the prescription is good on substantive normative grounds.
>
> (Crawford, 2002: 95)

To engage in public diplomacy has thus become a behavioural norm for international actors, many of whom say very similar things within their communications. However, it is more questionable whether the discourses found within these strategic communications reflect the actor's normative beliefs or whether they merely constitute a rhetorical performance (see Dufournet and Adab, 2015). While still somewhat marginalised from modern debates on international affairs, beyond Crawford,

there is a growing body of contemporary scholarship on the role of ethics and morality within the world system (for example, Acharya, 2004; Busby, 2007, 2010; Dufournet and Adab, 2015; Haugevik and Neumann, 2019). These works tend to build on the arguments of twentieth-century theorists like historian E. H. Carr, who wrote that 'morality is the product of power' (Carr, 1964: 81) in as much as interests are rooted in desires for power and, crucially, that this a rational action. Under such conditions, ethics essentially become an oxymoron, a means to a self-interested end, but also a justification of self and a route towards Crawford's positive 'emotional disposition' for the international actor in question.

Crawford's concept of the positive emotional disposition thus sits behind much of the public diplomacy that is seen around the world today. However, these communications exist within what the French philosopher Guy Debord called 'the spectacle'.

> In societies dominated by modern conditions of production, life is presented as an immense accumulation of spectacles. Everything that was directly lived has receded into a representation. The images detached from every aspect of life merge into a common stream in which the unity of that life can no longer be recovered. Fragmented views of reality regroup themselves into a new unity as a separate pseudo-world that can only be looked at. The specialization of images of the world evolves into a world of autonomised images where even the deceivers are deceived. The spectacle is a concrete inversion of life, an autonomous movement of the non-living. The spectacle presents itself simultaneously as society itself, as a part of society, and as a means of unification. As a part of society, it is the focal point of all vision and all consciousness. But due to the very fact that this sector is separate, it is, in reality, the domain of delusion and false consciousness; the unification it achieves is nothing but an official language of universal separation.
>
> (Debord, 2012: 32)

Public diplomacy thereby forms part of this 'pseudo-world' of spectacular modern power politics wherein moral cause is proclaimed as part of Debord's 'fragmented reality'. Sat within the domain of façade and 'false consciousness', public diplomacy encourages its audience to engage in behaviours that the prevailing hegemonic order conceives of as virtuous, when in reality these behaviours feed the narcissistic process of neoliberal public image building both at the individual and collective level. Debord continues:

> The task of the various branches of knowledge that are in the process of developing spectacular thought is to justify an unjustifiable

> society and to establish a general science of false consciousness. This thought is totally conditioned by the fact that it cannot recognize, and does not want to recognize, its own material dependence on the spectacular system.
>
> (Debord, 2012: 193)

Indeed, if it is to be upheld as the prevailing hegemonic doctrine, neoliberalism is reliant upon the circulation of virtuosity narratives among its advocates. These encourage the availability of the feel-good factors that consolidate the primacy of the superstructure. Feelings of virtuosity under these circumstances are means to an individual end though, rather than Murdoch's (1970: 91) 'attempt to see the unself'.

Conclusion

If public diplomacy were to be motivated by human progress, then its primary concern would be the unification of humanity with the natural world to tackle the causes and effects of climate change, desertification, deforestation, pollution and habitat and species loss. Public diplomacy does this in some small degree as a marginal pursuit undertaken mainly by peripheral actors. On the whole, public diplomacy does not engage in more profound ecological arguments because its loyalty is to the market economics despite. This is despite these human capitalist operations being the primary cause of our current environmental crisis.

Counter-hegemony is often thought of in terms of the groups and causes that sit on the outskirts of the hegemonic core protesting and critiquing its exploitative, suppressive and destructive intent through different prisms. However, the extent to which these actors should be considered counter-hegemonic is dependent on the extent to which they are able to articulate a critical appraisal of hegemonic actors rather than issuing grievances at the single-issue level or a mere request for redistributions of wealth or power within the framework of the current system. To this end, the management of media production by interested humans is one of the key methods through which neoliberal hegemony is sustained. This involves a process of promoting pro-hegemonic narratives and stifling, filtering and discrediting counter-hegemonic voices. It is therefore what is at the frontier of a subject that is of more interest than what comfortably resides within its mainstream thought.

Within this hegemonic framework, contestable moral standards become a struggle in which different actors either attempt to alter the debate to fit themselves or propagate their observance of the prevailing codes. However, in both cases, these actions are undertaken primarily in the hope that others perceive the actor as worthy of reward or status rather than a fundamental concern with their own moral integrity or

'good' character. This opens a debate as to whether such activities can be referred to as 'ethics' at all given the limited upholding of principle.

Ultimately therefore, public diplomacy scholars and professionals are often advocates of global change, wealth redistribution and a more egalitarian world but erroneously believe that public diplomacy can be a vehicle towards these goals. There is of course evidence at an anecdotal level that public diplomacy may help lessen misunderstandings, xenophobia and ultimately the potential for conflict. However, the selectivity of these occurrences draws the conclusion that alignment with the interests of the powerful increases the likelihood of such instances. Therefore, an emphasis on the dynamics of international power reveals the extent to which the same powerful corporate states are guilty of violence, suppression, vilification and 'othering' of different groups around the world as befits their interests. In short, public diplomacy is not inherently peaceful or egalitarian, and while it can contribute to peace or peacebuilding in some scenarios, one must ask whose peace it really is, why one scenario has been selected for peace and another for antagonism, and come to the conclusion that most public diplomacy today forms part of the consolidation of a system that results in a few people living in great wealth but many others enduring wretched and destitute lives.

Bibliography

Acharya, A., (2004), "How Ideas Spread: Whose Norms Matter? Norm Localisation and Institutional Change in Asian Regionalism", *International Organization*, 58(2), pp. 239–275.

Alexander, C., (2021), "The Compassion 'Spectacle': The Propaganda of Piety, Virtuosity and Altruism within Neoliberal Politics", In: G. Rawnsley, Y. Ma and K. Pothong (eds.), *The Edward Elgar Handbook of Political Propaganda*, London: Edward Elgar.

Busby, J. W., (2007), "Bono Made Jesse Helms Cry: Jubilee 2000, Debt Relief, and Moral Action in International Politics", *International Studies Quarterly*, 51, pp. 247–275.

Busby, J. W., (2010), *Moral Movements and Foreign Policy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Carr, E. H., (1964), *The Twenty-Year Crisis*, London: Harper Row.

Crawford, N., (2002), *Argument and Change in World Politics: Ethics, Decolonialization and Humanitarian Intervention*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Debord, G., (2012), *Society of the Spectacle*, Eastbourne: Soul Bay Press.

Dufournet, H. and B. Adab, (2015), "The Rhetorical Trap: A Moral Coercion: Reflections on the Influence of 'Moral Arguments' on the Process of Public Action", *Revue Francaise de Science Politique*, 65(2), pp. 261–278.

Forgacs, D. (ed.), (1988), *A Gramsci Reader*, London: Lawrence and Wishart.

Foucault, M., (1989), *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, London: Routledge.

Friedman, M., (1962), *Capitalism and Freedom*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Gilboa, E., (2008), "Searching for a Theory of Public Diplomacy", *Annals of the American Academy of Social Sciences*, 616, pp. 54–77.

Haugevik, K. and I. Neumann (eds.), (2019), *Kinship in International Relations*, Abingdon: Routledge.

Izadi, F., (2016), "US Public Diplomacy: A Theoretical Treatise", *Journal of Arts Management, Law and Society*, 46(1), pp. 13–21.

Kant, I., (2008), *The Metaphysics of Morals*, San Antonio: MSAC Philosophy Group.

Le Bon, G., (2009), *Psychology of Crowds*, London: Sparkling Books.

Lefebvre, H., (1991), *The Production of Space*, Oxford: Blackwells.

Murdoch, I., (1970), *The Sovereignty of Good*, London: Routledge.

Næss, A., (1973), "The Shallow and the Deep. Long-Range Ecology Movements: A Summary", *Inquiry*, 16(1), pp. 95–100.

Niebuhr, R., (1932), *Moral Man and Immoral Society: A Study in Ethics and Politics*, New York: Charles Scriber's Sons.

Nowell-Smith, P. H., (1954), *Ethics*, London: Penguin.

Nye, J. S., (1990), *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power*, New York: Basic Books.

Pamment, J., (2017), Still Searching for a Theory of Public Diplomacy, Paper presented at the *Annual Conference of the International Communication Association*, San Diego, USA, 25–29 June 2017.

Rousseau, J. J., (1993), *The Social Contract and The Discourses*, London: David Campbell Publishers.

Spykman, N., (1942), *America's Strategy in World Politics: The United States and the Balance of Power*, New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company.

Sussman, G., (2012), "Systemic Propaganda and State Branding in Post-Soviet Eastern Europe", In: N. Kaneva (ed.), *Branding Post-Communist Nations: Marketizing National Identities in the "New" Europe*, London: Routledge.

Williams, R., (1979), *Politics and Letters: Interviews with New Left Review*, London: New Left Books.

2 Communications Technologies and Public Diplomacy

A History of the Tools of Statecraft

Gary D. Rawnsley

Introduction

The delivery of public diplomacy messages and the conversations that occur around them are inextricably linked to the communications technologies that are readily available at a given time. Rather than drivers of policy though, these technologies are predominantly tools of statecraft to be utilised (or not) as decision-makers determine the optimum approach under a given circumstance. This assertion against technological determinism within the realm of public diplomacy has been supported by the diplomats of many countries over the years but perhaps most notably by Penn Kemble, the Deputy Director of the United States Information Agency (USIA) under US President Bill Clinton, who stated in 1993 that 'technology can only be a means for this Agency. Our end goal is not the new electronic network, but a human community of values and interests, linked through these new technologies […]' (cited in Cull, 2012: 72). As such, communications technologies are instruments within the world of politics that work alongside the other instruments through which power and influence are claimed and dispersed. The instruments feed into the strategic ambitions of the source or whatever master the source serves, and, while a human community of values and interests may develop, that community is always encouraged in the mould of the prevailing hegemonic coalition's priorities rather than a blossom from more authentic grassroots. To borrow a phrase from the literature on public relations then, public diplomacy is 'astroturf' – manufactured grass made to look like the real thing but easily rolled up and taken away when the owner's interests lie elsewhere.

This chapter provides an overview of the history of public diplomacy's relationship with communications technologies. It is clear that our world is metaphorically shrinking and that technologies of all descriptions have played a key role when it comes to the changing ways in which space, distance and community are perceived and organised. However, it is step too far to declare that a revolution has occurred in which 'everything' is now different to how things were but a few centuries ago. Certainly, some things are different, but a lot remains the same or at least very similar. Consistencies can be found in matters such as the human relationship with power, the

conceptualisation of ethics within those power equations, the psychology of the self in terms of its tendencies towards ego, compassion, malice and love and the tendency of humans to perform versions of themselves as invariably virtuous for public consumption. For public diplomacy then, versions of those core motives provide justification for its very existence both in the present and in the past. Or as L. Hudson (2009: 52) says, 'What was true for diplomacy under the reign of Louis XIV of France is as true today'.

Much has already been written about the entwinement of technology and society and for social theorists the primary question has been whether it is society or the technology itself that has been the controlling determinant of human history. Further questions concern the extent to which society encourages the development of technology for the alleviation of its hardships as part of a project towards notions of human progress or whether the technology itself has a considerable role to play in shaping, reshaping and perhaps even dominating the human condition. Such an argument has a distinct overlap with wider philosophical questions surrounding what Horkheimer and Adorno (1997) called 'The Dialectic of Enlightenment' wherein human detachment from the natural world has resulted in it 'sinking into a new kind of barbarism' (p. xi). Or as the psychoanalyst Erich Fromm argued

> Man's evolution is based on the fact that he has lost his original home, nature […] and that he can never return to it, can never become an animal again. There is only one way he can take: to emerge fully from his natural home, to find a new home […] one which he creates, by making the world a human one and by becoming truly human himself.
>
> (Fromm, 1963: 25)

However, a dialectic exists because, as Fromm states,

> [O]n the other hand this growing individuation means growing isolation, insecurity, and thereby growing doubt concerning one's role in the universe, the meaning of one's life, and with all that a growing feeling of one's own powerlessness and insignificance as an individual.
>
> (Fromm, 1941: 29)

On the specifics of technology then, the historian Melvin Kranzberg (1986: 544) has argued that while, '[t]echnology is neither good nor bad; nor is it neutral'. Perhaps more importantly though, the communications academic Brian Winston (1998) has argued that creativity and innovation (technological or otherwise) is mediated and controlled by the powerful with the purpose of suppressing any radical potential that it may have for the overhaul of the hegemonic status quo and the genuine cognitive advance of civilisation or its relationship with the natural world. This is important to this book's wider discussion of the maintenance of hegemonic power structures through public diplomacy. In complement

to Winston and others, Shoshana Zuboff's (2018) recent book on capitalism and surveillance argues that the digital age has seen the emergence of a whole industry that seeks to track and influence social behaviour through algorithmic software with the purpose of reliably predicting what she calls 'human futures' that are favourable to the powerful.

To this end, technological advance has been a key influencer within the development of diplomacy and public diplomacy. Moreover, the central motives behind these acts of statecraft – notably the building of human-to-human relations – have been largely consistent with wider trends in the application of technology within the human experience. Public diplomacy thus does little to shape technological advance itself (it is very much a 'taker' rather than a 'maker' of technological platforms). However, an investigation into its history reveals an enthusiasm to utilise technology within the pursuit of power that is its purpose and motivation.

The research within the chapter takes an instrumentalist approach to the study of communications technology. Indeed, technology itself has no inherent moral value. The telegraph, radio, cinema, television, the World Wide Web, social media and downloadable applications (all of which will be mentioned in the proceeding discussion), none of these technologies ought to be considered 'good' or 'bad' but to simply exist. What should be stated from the outset then is that human intent and utilisation of technology is what ought to be evaluated when it comes to critical analysis of public diplomacy. The emergence of technologies is still an important area of discussion though and represents a 'frontier' of public diplomacy in much the same way as nascent use by innovators and then adoption by the mainstream reflects instrumental transformation within all industries.

The chapter discusses public diplomacy from the introduction of the telegraph and the telegram during the nineteenth century – which some feared would herald the 'death' of the resident Ambassador – through to the era of social media and public diplomacy 2.0. At each stage media and communications technologies have intersected with global structural forces to shape and re-shape the way public diplomacy has been conducted. Space and time have been compressed by technology meaning that communications that at one time took longer, or were not possible at all, can now happen in real time or very close to real time. This has put pressure on the makers and shapers of foreign policy and has allowed new actors, both hegemonic and counter-hegemonic, to emerge and challenge the status quo. The chapter will thus survey and assess some of these technological developments, while suggesting that the impact of new communications technologies through the ages has provoked similar anxieties in statesmen, diplomats, public servants and indeed the publics themselves.

Additionally, when focussing on international broadcasting (via radio and television) as well as so-called 'digital diplomacy', this chapter will address claims that the distinction between propaganda and public diplomacy has been, and is being, blurred. Many scholars have

attempted to distinguish public diplomacy from propaganda since the US government introduced the term as a euphemism for propaganda during the 1950s. However, new technologies now serve as a contemporary challenge to that argument. To this end, we have been encouraged to reconsider the propaganda/public diplomacy dynamic over concerns about the ubiquity of 'fake news' and the insidious role of 'bot armies', professional internet trolls and manipulated social media content, all of which looks a lot like psychological warfare. While the international alarm at narratives being produced by Russia Today's (RT) global news programming or China's more ambitious strategy of using, and indeed buying, media organisations around the world (including the creation of a 'digital silk road') only serves to add to this confusion over whether public diplomacy can claim distinction from propaganda.

Frontier 1: From the Telegraph to International Broadcasting

Time and distance – their relevance has been routinely tested by the development of new communications technologies, and each advance has been discussed by scholars in terms of the reduced significance of both these factors to the practice of diplomacy. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, President Thomas Jefferson wrote to his Secretary of State, James Madison that '[w]e have not heard from our Ambassador in Spain for two years. If we do not hear from him this year, let us write him a letter' (cited in Gyngell and Wesley, 2007: 111). While this anecdote may imply that the Ambassador had taken to Spanish beach culture a little too well, it is also a clear reminder of the extent to which the pace of communications and indeed diplomacy has changed. In the age of Facebook, WhatsApp, Skype and Zoom one could be forgiven for simply concluding that the period represented by Jefferson's advice to Madison has long since disappeared and that diplomacy has reached the final frontier wherewith the demise of the resident Ambassador is imminent. Indeed, at the dawn of the digital era veteran US diplomat George Kennan became the latest in a long line of scholars and practitioners to advocate for the advance of a world of 'diplomacy without diplomats' (Kennan, 1997). However, Kennan, like many of those before him, appears to have underestimated the staying power of the embassy and ambassadorial system.

Communication technologies have thus long been considered the harbinger of diplomacy's death. Tom Standage (1998) labelled the invention of the telegraph during the mid-nineteenth century as the 'Victorian internet', and, like the internet, the telegraph and especially the undersea cable system of the late nineteenth century, allowed short messages to be communicated almost instantly across vast distances. This changed how foreign policy was thought of and conducted. Revolutions were

started. Foreign news was gathered and disseminated. Wars were won and lost (Müller, 2016; Nickles, 2003; Standage, 1998). As an example, the editor of this book, Colin Alexander (2019), in a previous publication has discussed the role played by telegraphic communications in fanning the flames of rebellion against British rule during the Indian Mutiny of 1857. While the telegraph also prompted George Loring, a former US congressman and chairman of the Massachusetts Republican Party, to remark in 1871 that '[t]he chilling influences of time and distance are all gone' (cited in Neuman, 1996: 16).

Some statesmen did recognise the potential of communications technology to advance possibility of promoting greater understanding among people though. Napoleon III told an American diplomat that in the age of the telegraph 'any misunderstanding … might be easily rectified' (quoted in Nickles, 2003: 6), and Guglielmo Marconi said much the same thing about radio: 'Communication between peoples widely separated in space and thought is undoubtedly the greatest weapon against the evils of misunderstanding and jealousy', he said, 'and if my fundamental invention goes some way toward averting the evils of war, I shall not feel that I have lived in vain' (cited in Briggs, 1961: 309).

After the telegraph came the telephone, perhaps the most underresearched tool of modern diplomacy, and this invention also aroused fear and suspicion among political commentators of the day. David Nickles (2003) explains how during the financial crisis of 1931 US President Herbert Hoover used the telephone to speak to other leaders around the world, which led one Belgian politician to be quoted in *The New York Times* on 29th June that year as saying that 'Diplomats feel they have outlived their usefulness when the heads of States can discuss matters *almost* face to face'. G. R. Berridge (2002) makes the case for the telephone allowing for direct communication between statesmen, adding a sense of flattery to diplomacy – a call from a Prime Minister or a President can have more symbolic value and therefore strategic utility than a statement drafted by a civil servant. The creation in 1962 of the so-called 'hotline' between Washington and Moscow in the aftermath of the Cuban Missile was a significant confidence building measure at the height of the Cold War; while President George H. Bush relied on telephone conversations with his counterparts around the world to build support against Iraq's annexation of Kuwait in 1990 (Sterns, 1996: 11).

Radio broadcasting would emerge during the early 1920s as the first electronic mass media and this would serve as a catalyst behind the public diplomacy industries of twentieth century. Global Communications expert Monroe Price (2003: 53) defines international broadcasting as, 'an elegant term for […] the use of electronic media by one society to shape the opinion of the people and leaders of another'. While W. J. West (1987) more explicitly described the contribution of radio to international politics and diplomacy:

> Unlike previous great changes in the political state of Europe in the days before World War I, what has happened was there on the surface to be heard by everyone in the voices of the leaders themselves over countless radios all over the world. There was no time needed for understanding, analysis or debate. The actual administrative changes could take place within hours of a radio announcement.
>
> (West, 1987: 79)

In his quotation above, West hints that technological developments have a habit of reducing the factor of time and distance within the formulation of foreign policy. However, he states that there was 'no time *needed*' when in fact a great deal more time than what was available *was* needed to understand, analyse and debate in order for rash or ill-conceived plans to be avoided. Perhaps this is what George Loring meant in the earlier quote when he spoke of the 'chilling' effects of time and distance. The debate about the need for time was to surface again during the 1990s when the so-called 'CNN effect' appeared to be leading some administrations towards ill-fated foreign policy decision-making. The most notable case within the literature being the US invasion of Somalia in 1992.

Nevertheless, war and revolution, rather than peace and mutual understanding were the main drivers of new communications technologies and how they were used. The amateur radio engineers who helped create the BBC in the 1920s had their first professional experience of the technology during World War I (Briggs, 1961), and would shortly after play a crucial role in trying to prop up British interests in its colonies (Alexander, 2019). Also in the 1920s and early 1930s, the Soviet Union used radio to agitate for global revolution in English and other languages (West, 1987: 22). However, it was in the run up to World War II that the value of radio to public diplomacy and propaganda became most apparent. The British, understanding the importance of India to its war effort in terms of manpower, natural resources and manufacturing, began to broadcast to its Indian colonial subjects in their own languages from the mid-1930s onwards (Alexander, 2019). This was an idea considered abhorrent only a decade before, such was the aloofness of the British and the systemic prejudice against Indian culture within British thinking. But the onset of impending crises drove the imperative. Meanwhile, in 1935 the Italian state began to broadcast vitriolic propaganda in Arabic against Britain's policies in and towards the Middle East, compelling the BBC to establish its first foreign language service – Arabic – in 1938 (Rawnsley, 1996).

As World War II came to an end, radio broadcasting was rolled back and the BBC Overseas Services cut its transmissions in European languages almost immediately (Rawnsley, 1996). The Hill Committee, established in the aftermath of the catastrophe (for the British at least) of the Suez crisis in 1956, decided that fighting the Cold War was more

important than broadcasting to the UK's Western allies. In that year, the BBC abolished its Swedish, Norwegian, Austrian, Portuguese and Afrikaans services, while broadcasts in French and Italian, and programmes directed towards the US were all reduced drastically (Ibid.). Thus by the end of the 1950s, the philosophy guiding the BBC's international broadcasts neglected the UK's allies in Europe and North America. However, in public diplomacy, managing friendly relationships is just as important as confronting hostility.

In the United States, the Truman administration abolished the Office of War Information (OWI) in September 1945 after recognising its 'outstanding contribution to victory' (cited in Winkler, 1978: 149). This made way for the creation of the USIA, which would exist until 1999. Focussing more on the weaponisation of information as a Cold War imperative, rather than the need for public diplomacy with allies, in a similar policy to the BBC the Voice of America (VoA) closed its broadcasts in Italian (in 1957), French to France (1961), German (1960) and Japanese (1970), while the United Kingdom has never featured in VoA's list of target areas (Nicholls, 1984: 5). On this last aspect, in 1962, Henry Loomis, Director of VoA, explained to the British Foreign Office that it was his station's established policy not to broadcast to any 'fully developed countries' (Briggs, 1979: 522), implying that broadcasting to Western allies was not considered important.

At the end of the Cold War, the deliberate reduction of the US's public diplomacy network once again did little to assist positive international sentiment about the United States and proved especially problematic for them when new defined threats emerged towards the end of the 1990s. Moreover, the closure in 2011 of radio broadcasting services in Mandarin by both the BBC and VoA – the fastest growing language in the world – was remarkable given the growing strength of China in geopolitics generally, and in the public diplomacy space in particular. Both stations explained that radio audiences are declining in China and that most listeners – when they can climb over the so-called Firewall that blocks broadcasts – turn to the internet. Mandarin programming thus became available on the internet only.

The rapid development of round-the-clock international television news broadcasting around the same time, made possible by the expansion of satellite and cable technologies, opened a new frontier in public diplomacy though. CNN's 'A Global Forum with President Clinton' in May 1994, arguably a direct descendent of USIA's WORLDNET programme of the 1980s, gave the US President an opportunity to address the major foreign policy issues of the day on live television, while fielding questions from journalists and audience members from across the world (and included him speaking directly to the North Korean leadership he believed was watching the programme). Nevertheless, cable and satellite programming also extended the possibility of blurring even further the distinction between propaganda and public diplomacy.

While many governments continue to criticise Western news channels, such as CNN and the BBC, for disseminating one-sided news (the Chinese government, for example, believes that Western news organisations present an inaccurate picture of China (see Rawnsley, 2016)) the communication landscape was opening up to a range of new voices, including Al Jazeera (broadcasting from Qatar), RT, China's CGTN (China Global Television News), Singapore's Channel News Asia and Venezuela's Telesur (the regional channel developed by the Chavez regime as a counterbalance to the US-led narratives that circulate that hemisphere). These stations adopt many of the formats and styles of their major Western competitors, seeking to make them more attractive to, and comfortable for audiences more familiar with CNN and the BBC. For example, early in its history RT 'began to look and sound like any 24/7 news channel: the thumping music before the news flash, the earnest pretty newscasters, the jock-like sportscasters' (O'Sullivan, 2014).

The Chinese have long aspired to create their own version of CNN or Al Jazeera, and the development of its international language television demonstrates how the formats have evolved for international tastes. Using Western news anchors and formats, CGTN has developed over several decades to today resemble its major Western competitors (Rawnsley, 2016; Zhao, 2012). Even the United States has used familiar and successful arrangements to grow their propaganda. Shawn Powers and Ahmed El Gody reveal that Norma Pattiz, a member of the US Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG), wanted Al Hurra, an American government-funded television station hastily launched in February 2004 for audiences in the Middle East, to look 'like a CNN or MSNBC or Fox News, or an Al Jazeera …' (Powers and El Gody, 2009: 50).

Creating stations to mimic their more successful competitors speaks to a wider debate about the blurring of strategic communications, public diplomacy, propaganda and news. While news has long been regarded as an essential ingredient of propaganda – famously John Reith, the founding Director-General of the BBC, called news 'the shocktroops of propaganda' (cited in Taylor, 2003: 213) – international broadcasting expanded the possibility of using news to grow the credibility of both the message and the source (Price, 2003: 51). Serving two masters – the government's political agenda and the need to maintain a reliable, objective and at least notionally independent news service – is particularly challenging for those international broadcasters who are firmly embedded within the state structure, such as China's CGTN. Others appear to be independent, and indeed make grand claims about their editorial independence, but are in fact influenced, if not controlled by government. Margarita Simonyan, Director of RT, told researcher Jill Dougherty that she talks 'daily' with the Kremlin (Dougherty 2013: 55). Whereas Al Hurra's primary funders are the US Agency for Global Media (USAGM) which reside in the leafy suburb of Newington, Virginia, on the outskirts of

Washington DC. Thus, broadcasters in democratic societies also routinely serve national interests and agendas while also trying to preserve a reputation for serious, objective and accurate news journalism. Indeed, the BBC World Service, long considered the jewel in the crown of Britain's public diplomacy, was funded in part by a grant-in-aid from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office until 2014 and, during the Cold War, was regularly used (sometimes unwittingly) by the covert Information Research Department (IRD) to broadcast propaganda. While, since its inception, the VoA has struggled to maintain its credibility as a news organisation while remaining the Voice *of* the American state (Rawnsley, 1996).

To see the public diplomacy-propaganda dichotomy that partly frames this chapter most clearly though we must turn to Russia. As part of a bid to resolve distorted opinions about Russia, RT was created in 2005 to become part of a public diplomacy machinery that would compete with the Western media which (correctly or incorrectly) circulated such narratives. In 2001, Sergei Yastrzhembsky, aide to President Putin, noted that 'Russia's outward image is […] gloomier and uniformly darker compared to reality' (cited in Avgerinos, 2009: 121), and in 2012, President Putin embraced the concept of soft power as 'all about promoting one's interests and policies through persuasion and creating a positive perception of one's country, based not just on its material achievements but also its spiritual and intellectual heritage' (cited in Simons, 2014: 4). With this in mind, Russia has attempted to stake some claim within the global sports market. It hosted the 2018 football World Cup and the 2014 Winter Olympics and is now a regular host of a Formula One Grand Prix each year. However, any Russian success in hosting major sporting events has been undermined by continual allegations of gross and systematic doping violations that have resulted in the country's suspension from several international sporting bodies.

Within this international environment then and despite its claims to more nobler public diplomacy intentions, many observers – and even some of RT's own staff – have expressed concern that the station is nothing more than a propaganda mouthpiece for the Russian government. In March 2014, Liz Wahl, a former Washington-based correspondent for RT-America, resigned on air saying: 'I cannot be part of a network that whitewashes the actions of Putin … [I] believe in disseminating the truth and that is why, after this newscast, I'm resigning' (cited in Caroll, 2014). Wahl was followed in July by RT's London correspondent, Sara Firth, who announced her own resignation on Twitter, revealing what she called a 'disrespect for facts' concerning Russia's involvement in the shooting down of a Malaysian Airways passenger plane over Ukraine in July 2014, killing all 238 passengers and 15 crew.

RT has also employed some unlikely 'rogues' to front its flagship shows. The Kaiser Report, hosted by former trading executive Max Kaiser, focusses on London and New York to investigate underhand dealings within the global banking industry (little is said of the dealings

of Russian oligarchs et al.). While, George Galloway, the former Labour Party MP (sacked by his party for refusing to back UK involvement in the 2003 invasion of Iraq) hosts its Sputnik politics programme. Agree with them or not, neither makes any claim to impartiality, and RT is regularly admonished by the Office of Communications (Ofcom), the government-approved regulatory authority for the broadcasting industries in the UK, for its content and accompanying narrative. Ofcom has found that RT's reporting of, for example, the crisis in Ukraine and the attack with nerve agent on the former British spy, Sergei Skripal, and his daughter, broke impartiality rules.

As such, if RT was originally created as an instrument of public diplomacy to change the global conversation about Russia, it has failed. Not only must we question its credibility as a news station, but also its programmes choose to focus mainly on global stories that are openly critical of other governments' behaviour at home and abroad but say little of Russia's own conduct. RT's broadcasts thus serve as the most obvious and compelling modern example that the public diplomacy-propaganda divide is not as clear as some would like to think and that it is interests rather than integrity that reigns supreme.

At this point in the discussion of broadcasting it is important to draw attention to an important frontier that has been largely neglected by scholars of public diplomacy. As the global media space expanded during the 1930s and the number of voices clamouring for attention proliferated, governments quickly recognised the value of listening to what was being said. First the British Post Office (in 1930) and then the BBC Monitoring Service were tasked with listening to and making transcripts of radio transmissions from different parts of the world. Working closely with the US Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS), the BBC has played an essential role in triangulating foreign policy, intelligence and public diplomacy. This was especially the case during the Cold War when the BBC Monitoring Service helped to defuse the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962 (Rawnsley, 1996) by relaying official foreign policy statements from both Moscow and Washington. As a provider of open source intelligence, these monitoring services represent the institutionalisation of *listening*, one of the core functions of public diplomacy listed by Cull (2008) in his much-quoted taxonomy. As Cord Meyer, a former head of the CIA, emphasised, '90 per cent of what the policy-maker needs to know to make intelligent policy decisions is in the public domain' (Meyer, 1980: 360). A careful analysis of this 90 per cent, much of which is provided by organisations like the BBC Monitoring Service and its equivalents in other countries, is crucial to identifying and understanding the remaining 10 per cent. Indeed, a report published by the UK House of Commons Select Committee on Defence (2016) concluded that the planned cut in funding by £4 million could have far reaching consequences for British public diplomacy and foreign policy. In other words, routine systematic

listening to the global media marks the extent to which listening, actively hearing and acknowledging the points of view of others ought to be integrated into the foreign policy process. All too often it is not though.

Frontier 2: The Internet and Social Media

As we arrive at the latest frontier of public diplomacy there is no reason to suppose it will be the final frontier as we can hear many echoes from previous eras. Discussions about the declining importance of time and space as constraints on communication; the imminent death of the resident diplomat; arguments about where public diplomacy ends and propaganda begins – all of these debates have been heard long before the digital age. The new communications landscape intersects with multiple structural forces at the international level, including deterritorialisation and globalisation, questions about the sovereignty of states, the rise of new problems requiring greater levels of global co-operation across the public and private sectors, and the introduction to international politics of new actors – all impact the way diplomacy and public diplomacy are structured and transformed (Hocking et.al., 2012; Neumann, 2008). This collision of global politics and technological advances has encouraged claims about the existence of 'new' public diplomacy or 'public diplomacy 2.0' that accounts for the expanding range and depth of global interactions between and beyond states, These interactions function within a less hierarchical, less structured and more diffuse network environment. Indeed, as Hudson (2009: 52) states, diplomacy has 'expanded because of the multiplicity of stakeholders, the growth of the media and rapid communication of information, privately and publicly'. Social media platforms have very much enlarged the diplomatic room (though some would prefer to call it an echo chamber) in which communication takes place, urging public diplomacy to be both relevant and attractive to compete with all the other global voices competing for our attention on a second-by-second timescale.

However, at the top level, more sceptical questions remain over the extent to which power, interests and ambitions have changed. Indeed, perhaps some commentators on public diplomacy have fallen into the trap of confusing technological advance with human advance. Human psychological evolution is a much slower process than the technological advance which we have experienced since the emergence of the telegraph. Two and a half thousand years, let alone two hundred years, is but the blink of an eye for humankind (hence the scholarly and mythological teachings of the ancient Greeks remain of utmost relevance today). We as humans remain partly rational and partly irrational creatures, partly mindful and partly mindless, capable of both compassion and cruelty, and we operate with much the same urges as our ancestors regardless of the technologies available to us. As such, while changes within the 'theatre of diplomacy' require diplomats to 'acquire new skills of public diplomacy and strategic

communication' (Hudson, 2009: 52), it is more questionable whether any fundamental revolution has occurred within this domain.

Nevertheless, to function well public diplomacy depends on and encourages at least the appearance of transparency and openness. This sits at odds with foreign ministries where the prevailing belief (rightly or wrongly) is that the optimisation of power occurs when transparency is limited to that which is deemed to be positive or to the appearance of transparency as part of a manufactured public persona. As such, understanding that international politics can be an unfair, violent and downright messy business, most foreign policy strategists remain primarily concerned that an overly enthusiastic commitment to transparency enhances vulnerability, particularly when the same burden is not requested of competitors. The history of international affairs is littered with risers and fallers and transparency seems to be a sure-fire way to encourage one's own disadvantage within the confines of world politics.

Diplomats and public diplomats thus often have different views of the world and this can lead conflicting working practices, priorities and frustrations over resource allocation (Kiehl, 2009; Rawnsley, 2017). Digital platforms are casualties of this clash of cultures. Focussing on the nuts and bolts of the job at hand, the temptation of the diplomat is to use social media as another tool to gain leverage within the great game of world politics. This approach to communication usually involves conveying – transmitting – information in a traditional hierarchical top-down manner: we speak, you listen; or, in the age of social media, the talk is off 'pushing' messages much in the same way as advertisers sell a product to a consumer. For many diplomats and statesmen it is more convenient to think of publics as passive receivers of information, rather than shapers of policy, meaning that the opportunity to use social media to engage in a more genuine political discussion with audiences is lost.

On the other hand, public diplomats, perhaps motivated by greater ideals of human connectivity and the potential of integral communications within the task of breaking down barriers of ignorance and xenophobia, often see the world as a more harmonious place. Seen this way, digital media provides an extended platform from which to advocate for universal values. Yet despite Nicholas Cull (2013) acknowledging the particular power of Public Diplomacy 2.0, his careful research on the history of American public diplomacy leads him to the conclusion that, in the digital age, the 'level of risk aversion has been mind-boggling', with strategies prioritising advocacy and broadcasting (Cull, 2013: 24). Cull calls the growing attention to digital platforms after 9/11 'a sideshow of a sideshow. The budget went elsewhere', he says. 'The Bush White House resolved to compete directly with Al Jazeera and directed public diplomacy resources' into a new television station, Al Hurra. 'The advocacy approach', Cull concludes, 'reigned supreme' (Cull, 2013: 13). To this end, perhaps the

most apparent (and rather ironic) problem for public diplomacy is that it is predominately done by states in pursuit of their self-interests.

More recently, any remaining potential for social media to offer positive assistance to policymaking has dissipated further as a result of concerns over how personal data is being used. Now backed-up with newly published research by Peter Pomerantsev (2019) and Emma Briant (2020), award-winning reporting of Cambridge Analytica for *The Guardian* and *The Observer* newspapers, along with follow-up investigations by Britain's Channel 4 News, revealed how the personal data of Facebook users could be 'mined' by private and political organisations for greater levels of political influence. Many of the reports and comments on the story used variants of the term 'psychological warfare' to describe the activities of Cambridge Analytica as the extent to which information is now weaponised became apparent. Indeed, what Cadwalladr's investigation revealed is that unfortunately this might not be just a 'dark side' of digital diplomacy but the actual grotesque face of the modern diplomatic world partially revealed.

In turn, news organisations are now challenging 'clearly identifiable' misleading statements and falsehoods uttered or published by political leaders around the world. By the autumn of 2018, a year and half after he entered the White House, *The Washington Post* had detected over 5000 such statements from US President Donald Trump. In response to this a committed public diplomat may say that it is for his or her profession to cut through the fog and rebuild any lost credibility; to confront the growing confusion and uncertainty; and to explain foreign policy in as clear a way as possible. However, public diplomacy cannot be separated from these developments. Indeed, however divisive, rude, arrogant, incoherent or just plain false one perceives Trump's tweets to have been during his time in office, they *were* a part of US public diplomacy during the latter half of the last decade (and perhaps the loudest part at that). This is the same for, as an example, the Duterte administration's approach to social media, which must be recognised as being a major part of the Philippines' contemporary public diplomacy output. In different parts of the world then, public diplomacy has been and is still being *covfefe*-d.

Therefore, my argument is very simple: despite the communications technology that is now available offering improved capacity for people around the world to engage with each other, the principal problem for public diplomacy endures. Namely, the divergence between the (Trump et al. excluded) encouraging, unifying and progressive front-of-house narrative displayed by public diplomacy and the often more suppressive, oppressive or exploitative policy that sits underneath. There is a failure by governments around the world and across the political spectrum to remember that actions always speak louder than words. Thus, while the US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations concluded in 1953 that 'The US is judged by its actions more than words. Words may help a people to

understand action, but they are no substitute for policy'(cited in Whitton, 1963: 7), the same sentiments were still being heard in 2012 when Admiral Mike Mullen of the US Navy summarised the relationship between presentation and policy:

> To put it simply, we need to worry a lot less about how to communicate our acts and much more about what our actions communicate. Each time we fail to live up to our values or don't follow up on a promise, we look more and more like the arrogant Americans the enemy claims we are.
>
> (Mullen, 2012: 55)

Conclusion

Public diplomacy is not under any circumstances a panacea for problems in the hard power domain, and no amount of presentation or spin will change opinion about misjudged, unethical, or poorly designed policies crafted and executed by governments in the national or international arena. In other words, public diplomacy is not and cannot be a function of technology. Rather, it is shaped by the political culture in which it operates and by the policies and decisions it is tasked with communicating.

Digital platforms offer opportunity and a degree of simplicity for public diplomacy but they also complicate matters in at least three ways: through the reach and speed of communication, by the absence of information 'gatekeepers' who influence content in the print and broadcast media and by the overwhelming amount of information now at our fingertips. Added to this mix is the merger of source, content and consumer so that everyone with a cell phone is able (and often encouraged by the convergence of platforms) to upload and download their experience as witnesses (but not experts) of events and stories as they happen. This means that digital media can reveal often instantly inconsistencies and contradictions in messages across platforms, between message and policy and between geographical targets. Such confusion and incoherence leads to an authenticity deficit wherein even genuinely authentic and integral voices are met with overwhelming scepticism by audiences who feel simultaneous empowered and disoriented. Much in the same way as humans feel within the dialectic of enlightenment.

Social media have not only expanded the 'theatre of diplomacy' but also led diplomacy into becoming more a theatre or spectacle itself. The loudest and often most emotional voices are normally those that gain the most attention, but this says nothing for their authenticity or accuracy. If anything, whistleblowing by the likes of Chelsea Manning, Edward Snowden and Craig Murray only confirms, if ever it was needed, that we remain a long way from the 'democratisation' of diplomacy. However,

the level of public scrutiny of foreign policy decisions, nurtured by the ubiquity of social media, amplifies a modern version of the 'CNN Effect' (the Facebook Effect perhaps) wherein it is clear that foreign policy strategists include an appreciation for the modern dynamics of information consumption within their plans.

However, one of the most serious challenges today is that the differences between news, public diplomacy and propaganda are as opaque as they were in the 1950s. Following the spread through social media of conflicting realities about the Crimea crisis in 2014, the news was dominated in 2017 and 2018 by accusations that digital platforms were complicit in attempts to influence elections and referenda by spreading disinformation, 'fake news', and by gathering data on users that could be used to manipulate news feeds. We now understand much more about the power of algorithms and codes and how it is possible for political actors to use Facebook et al. in a strategic way.

Understanding how social media work and embracing their potential delineates the next public diplomacy frontier. Communications technology and software will likely advance even further and forthcoming challenges will revolve around freedom of speech and information versus the right to privacy and the need to maintain national security; accommodating the opinions of multiple voices and stakeholders, including Presidents and citizens alike; expressing clearly a meaningful message in 140 characters; dealing with the promise and problems of instant communication; and developing the tools to aid media literacy among users to contextualise information and to separate fact from fiction. Whatever happens in the next frontier though, we should not lose sight of how the long evolution of information and communications technologies has impacted the history of international politics and the wider human condition that it is a part of. From President Woodrow Wilson disseminating his Fourteen Points by Morse Code in 1918 to President Donald Trump's incessant tweeting from the White House, politicians and diplomats have – with virtuous or deceptive purpose – embraced technology – to meet their political ends. Few, if any, have given any indication of an overarching care for the advancement of the human condition though.

Bibliography

Alexander, C., (2019), *Administering Colonialism and War*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Avgerinos, K. P., (2009), 'Russia's Public Diplomacy Effort: What the Kremlin is doing and why it's not working', Journal of Public and International Affairs, 20, pp. 115–132.

Berridge, G. R., (2002), *Diplomacy: Theory and Practice*, New York: Palgrave.

Bjola, C., and J. Pamment, (2019), "Introduction: The 'Dark Side' of Digital Diplomacy", In: C. Bjola and J. Pamment (eds.), *Countering Online Propaganda and Extremism: The Dark Side of Digital Diplomacy*, London: Routledge.

Briant, E., (2020), Cambridge Analytica Interative Map, Available from World Wide Web: http://emma-briant.co.uk/16th-may-2020-cambridge-analytica-interactive-map-launch.

Briggs, A., (1961), *The History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom: The Birth of Broadcasting*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Briggs, A., (1979), *Governing the BBC*, London: BBC.

Carroll, R., (2014), Russia Today News Anchor Liz Wahl Resigns Live on Air over Ukraine Crisis, Available from World Wide Web: http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/mar/06/russia-today-anchor-liz-wahl-resigns-on-air-ukraine [accessed 27th July 2019].

Cull, N. J., (2008), "Public Diplomacy: Taxonomies and Histories", *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 616, pp. 31–54.

Cull, N. J., (2012), *The Decline and Fall of the United States Information Agency: American Public Diplomacy, 1998–2001*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Cull, N. J., (2013), "The Long Road to Public Diplomacy 2.0: The Internet in US Public Diplomacy", *International Studies Review*, 15(1), pp. 123–139.

Elliott, K. A., Dougherty, J., (2013), 'Russia's Soft Power Srategy', Unpublished MA Thesis, Georgetown University.

Elliott, K. A., (2002), "Is There Any Audience for Public Diplomacy?", *The New York Times*, 16 November.

Fromm, E., (1941), *The Fear of Freedom*, London: Routledge.

Fromm, E., (1963), *The Sane Society*, London: Routledge.

Gregory, B., (2008), "Public Diplomacy and National Security: Lessons from the US Experience", *Small Wars Journal*, Available from World Wide Web: http://smallwarsjournal.com/blog/journal/docs-temp/82-gregory.pdf [Accessed 31 October, 2018].

Gyngell, A., and M. Wesley, (2007), (2nd ed.), *Making Australian Foreign Policy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hocking, B., J. Melissen, S. Riordan and P. Sharp, (2012), 'Futures of Diplomacy: Integrative Diplomacy in the 21st Century', Report #1, Clingendael: Netherlands Institute of Diplomacy (October).

Holbrooke, R., (2001), "Get the Message Out", *The Washington Post*, 28 October.

Horkheimer, M., and T. Adorno, (1997), *The Dialectic of Enlightenment*, London: Verso.

House of Commons Select Committee on Defence, (2016), *Open Source Stupidity: The Threat to the BBC Monitoring Service*, Available from World Wide Web: www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmdefence/748/74802.htm [Accessed 30 June, 2018].

Hudson, L., (2009), *The Enabling State: Collaborating for Success*, London: Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Kennan, G., (1997), "Diplomacy Without Diplomats?", *Foreign Affairs*, 76(5), pp. 198–212.

Kiehl, W. P., (2009), "Addressing the Public Diplomacy Challenge", *Foreign Service Journal*, Special issue on the state of public diplomacy: A decade after USIA's demise, what next? October, Washington DC, pp. 47–51.

Kranzberg, M., (1986). "Technology and History: 'Kranzberg's Laws'". *Journal of Technology and Culture*, 27(3), pp. 544–560.

Melissen, J. (ed.), (2005), *The New Public Diplomacy: Soft Power in International Relations*, Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Meyer, C., (1980), *Facing Reality: From World Federalism to the CIA*, New York: Harper & Row.

Mulgan, G., (2007), *Good and Bad Power: The Ideals and Betrayals of Government*, London: Penguin.
Mullen, M., (2012), "Getting Back to Basics", *Joint Forces Quarterly*, issue 55.
Müller, S. M., (2016), *Wiring the World: The Social and Cultural Creation of Global Telegraph Networks*, New York: Columbia University Press.
Neuman, J., (1996), *Lights, Camera, War: Is Media Technology Driving International Politics?* New York: St Martin's Press.
Nicholls, J. S., (1984), "Wasting the Propaganda Dollar", *Foreign Policy*, 56 (Autumn).
Nickles, D. P., (2003), *Under the Wire: How the Telegraph Changed Diplomacy*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
O'Sullivan, J., (2014), "The Difference between Real Journalism and Russia Today", *The Spectator*, 6 December. Available at: http://www.spectator.co.uk/features/9390782/the-truth-about-russia-today-is-that-it-is-putins-mouthpiece/.
Pomerantsev, P., (2019), This is Not Propaganda, London: Faber and Faber.
Powers S., and A. E. Gody, (2009), "The Lessons of Al Hurra Television". In: P. Seib (ed.), *Toward a New Public Diplomacy*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
Price, (2003), "Public Diplomacy and the Transformation of International Broadcasting", *Cardoza Arts and Entertainment Law Journal*, 2(1), pp. 51–85.
Rawnsley, G. D., (1996), *Radio Diplomacy and Propaganda: The BBC and VoA in International Politics, 1956–64*, Basingstoke: Macmillan.
Rawnsley, G. D., (2016), "To Know Us Is to Love Us: Public Diplomacy and International Broadcasting in Contemporary Russia and China", *Politics*, 35(3–4), pp. 273–286.
Rawnsley, G. D. (2017), 'Soft Power Rich, Public Diplomacy Poor: An Assessment of Taiwan's External Communications', *The China Quarterly*, 232 pp. 982–1001.
Sorenson, T., (1968), *The Word War: The Story of American Propaganda*, New York: Harper & Row.
Simons, G., (2014), 'Russian Public Diplomacy in the 21st Century: Structure, Means and Message', Public Relations Review, 40(3), pp 440–449.
Standage, T., (1998), *The Victorian Internet: The Remarkable Story of the Telegraph and the Nineteenth Century's On-Line Pioneers*, London: Bloomsbury.
Sterns, M., (1996), *Talking to Strangers: Improving American Diplomacy at Home and Abroad*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
Taylor, P. M., (2003), *Munitions of the Mind: A History of Propaganda*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.
West, W. J. (1987), *Truth Betrayed*, London: Duckworth.
Whitton, J. B., (1963), *Propaganda and the Cold War: A Princeton Symposium*, Connecticut: Public Affairs Press.
Winkler, A., (1978), *The Politics of Propaganda: The Office of War Information, 1942-1945*, New Haven: Yale University Press.
Winston, B., (1998), *Media Technology and Society: A History from the Telegraph to the Internet*, London: Routledge.
Zhao, Q., (2012), *How China Communicates: Public Diplomacy in a Global Age*, Beijing: Foreign Language Press.
Zuboff, S., (2018), *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: The Fight for a Human Future at the New Frontier of Power*, London: Profile Books.

3 Education Beyond Borders

Explaining the Frontiers of Public Diplomacy's Core

Molly Bettie

Introduction

Ludovic Tournès and Giles Scott-Smith (2017), in their study of modern educational exchanges, assess the existing literature on the subject as being "hagiographic" or excessive in its praise. Without the necessary application of critical analysis, the stated aims of government-sponsored exchange programmes are often described by academics using encouraging but vague rhetoric about the value of education and their ability to promote mutual understanding and international goodwill or a shared sense of humanity. Exchange programmes tend to be viewed as benign, two-way, mutually beneficial activities in which the participants gain an appreciation of other cultures, impart positive stories of their encounters with others upon their return, and, crucially, take these formative experiences forward with them into a future career. More broadly, when performed between countries of asymmetric international power means, exchanges feed into the broader narrative of foreign aid and development in global studies wherein the "rich north" assists the "poor south." The wealthy and powerful impart their knowledge of industry, science and thought onto those less fortunate in a self-styled persona of normative philanthropy within the world system.

However, beneath this altruistic, humanist, liberal internationalist surface, there are other mechanisms at work in exchange diplomacy. Unequal flows of people and resources consolidate social, economic, political and cultural hegemony and tend to reproduce those of elite status rather than leading to any greater sense of international egalitarianism or global change. Exchange programme alumni become what Pierre Bourdieu (1998: 113) referred to as "an academic nobility," who share in symbolic capital granted by their membership in the prestigious institutions of exchange. This symbolic capital enables them to fulfil programme aims by embracing connections with other international elites ensuring that elitism is built into the very design of exchange diplomacy practices. Moreover, the dominance of Western education models has led to the prevalence of a Western "cast

of mind," according to Bourdieu. Wherein Western exchange scholars influence their host institutions and inevitably contribute to the recycling of this state of affairs.

In order to better understand the motivations, values and processes at work here, this chapter provides a more critical and theory-supported approach to the subject. The chapter argues that, while education is undoubtedly important, perhaps even *the* most important part of human development, questions surrounding what is taught, how it is taught, when it is taught, why it is taught and by whom, remain equally valid and important. Otherwise, we may, according to the World War I poet Wilfred Owen (1988: 65), "miss the march of this retreating world into vain citadels that are not walled." In short, "education" cannot simply be provided under the assumption of its positivity and without further enquiry, assessment or critique. Moreover, it cannot be assumed that educational advancement will lead humanity to progress. As such, it is to overcome the tendency of public diplomacy literature to see "education" as a catch-all positive term that is this chapter's primary motivation.

This chapter also considers the larger context in which exchange diplomacy takes place. Exchanges do not take place in a vacuum; rather, they reflect the larger geopolitical concerns and interests of the participating nations. The decision of whether to enter into an exchange agreement, and on what terms, is a matter of statecraft that is influenced by power relations between the participating countries. Exchanges are a symbolic act of signalling peaceful intentions between nations, and it is this elite-level interaction that imbues exchange diplomacy with meaning.

Few public diplomacy scholars have critically engaged with this aspect, but it is arguably a key consideration, and one which many exchange programme administrators would readily acknowledge. This chapter addresses this gap in the existing literature by including the aspect of context in its analysis. It asks the simple question, what is the purpose of exchange diplomacy within the context of global power structures?

As discussed elsewhere in this volume, the field of public diplomacy is under-theorised, despite the applicability of many theories in political science, sociology and psychology. This has been particularly true for the discussion of global power structures, which are at the heart of political science, economics and international relations. In an attempt to remedy this gap in the literature, the works of Antonio Gramsci and Pierre Bourdieu will be applied to a discussion of power relations. Exchange diplomacy, it will be argued, plays a key role in reinforcing existing global power structures. Indeed, this is its primary purpose rather than to educate as such. This chapter examines the limited examples of existing theoretical work in the field and expands upon it, arguing that in order to fully understand the dynamics of exchange diplomacy, the theoretical basis underpinning the practice must be further developed.

Education and the State

On the role of education and the state within political and cultural hegemony, Antonio Gramsci wrote that,

> [E]very state is ethical in as much as one of its most important functions is to raise the great mass of the population to a particular cultural and moral level, a level (or type) which corresponds to the needs of the productive forces of development, and hence to the interests of the ruling classes. The school as a positive educative function, and the courts as a repressive and negative educative function, are the most important state activities in this sense: but, in reality, a multitude of other so-called private initiatives and activities tend to the same end – initiatives and activities which form the apparatus of the political and cultural hegemony of the ruling classes.
>
> (cited in Forgacs, 1988: 236)

At a most basic level then, governments ought to be viewed not as autonomously virtuous (despite them often trying to convince us so) but as consequentialist actors whose motivation for the provision of education, and other social services, extends only as far as a social contract demands and as the priorities of the means of production encourage. To this end, at the heart of a government's position in a debate over, for example, whether students ought to pay tuition fees to attend university, or whether these institutions ought to be funded by the state, are visions over the current and future needs of the economy and the levels of literacy, numeracy, analytics and vocational specialisms that can help to create optimal productivity. Moreover, educational advancement, which forms the backbone of all exchange programmes, exists within a *dialectic of enlightenment*, whereby, through the development of factual knowledge, analytical ability, cognitive processes, reasoning and linguistic expertise, education furthers the potential for mindfulness, compassion, rationality and restraint. Meanwhile, those with access to education commonly neglect such pursuits in favour of personal financial success and the exploitation of those without such opportunities. The prospect of educational attainment thus encourages both government and citizens to see value in engagement with the process. However, any notion of a state providing education to either its own citizens or to foreign nationals in exchange programmes out of goodwill, a sense of humanity or moral virtuosity, is unrealistic.

The Hagiography of Exchanges

For the purposes of the present discussion, this chapter adheres to the definition of public diplomacy as stated in the introduction: a government-driven practice of communicating with foreign publics in support

of state interests. In recent years, there has been a growing recognition of non-state actors engaging with foreign publics, and state actors practicing alternative forms of engagement. This phenomenon has been described as "the new public diplomacy," and has utilised a broad definition of public diplomacy activities that is inclusive of individuals, corporations, non-governmental organisations and other actors (see Melissen, 2007). This broader definition has important implications for our understanding of exchange diplomacy, because exchange-of-persons is conducted by a wide range of state and non-state actors, funded by public and private sources, and motivated by many different interests, on the parts of the organisers, sponsors, hosts and participants themselves. If one were to use this new broader definition of public diplomacy, the field of exchange diplomacy could potentially swell to encompass millions of people travelling outside of their home countries and engaging with foreign publics to some degree, most of whom do not have diplomatic aims in their itineraries. Therefore, this chapter accepts the more traditional government-led definition of public diplomacy that was discussed in the introduction to this volume, as it offers the clearest delineation of the frontiers of exchanges.

With this in mind, some practitioners and academics have deemed educational exchange programmes as being some of the most effective ways to engage in public diplomacy. The central premise of exchange diplomacy for those who support it is that it facilitates interpersonal communication between people across borders. Quite simply, it brings people into contact with foreigners who share mutual interests and, presumably, facilitates the recognition of a shared humanity usually through the act of directly communicating with each other. Such claims are found throughout the literature, and still persist on exchange diplomacy websites. The US Fulbright Program (2019), "… fosters mutual understanding between the United States and partner nations, shares knowledge across communities, and improves lives around the world." Similarly, the aims of China's Confucius Institutes (see Hanban, 2019) surround, "contributing to the development of multiculturalism and the building of a harmonious world." The German Goethe-Institut's (2019) programs are said to, "encourage intercultural dialogue and enable cultural involvement."

Several academics, including R. S. Zaharna et al. (2013), Ali Fisher (2013) and Leysan Khakimova Storie (2017), have argued that relational strategies including exchanges are better suited to this networked global communications environment and increasingly multipolar world order than more traditional, one-way information-driven forms of public diplomacy. As Zaharna (2010: 147) put it, interpersonal communication "may not be the most efficient medium, but it is the most effective and preferred one for building and sustaining relationships. It is highly credible and resonates positively with the participatory nature of the

relational perspective." To this end, in the era of the social web, individuals are connected in networked relationships that corporations and politicians seek to tap into and influence, and social media networks represent a rich source of data for campaigners, public relations professionals and advertisers. For their part, users appear to value their online networks as a means of social connection and self-expression to such an extent that they are willing to consent to their data being used in ways that they mostly do not understand. As such, Ali Fisher has emphasised the importance of networked relationships and collaboration in his discussions of public diplomacy. He argues that "[s]uccess in public diplomacy is inextricably linked to the way individuals collaborate through relationships [...].The complex connections through which public diplomacy takes place are better understood as numerous few-to-few interactions." (Fisher, 2013: 2) In Fisher's view therefore, educational exchange programmes accumulate upon each other and the tentacles of these positive and intense interpersonal interactions then respond to and capitalise upon wider social, economic and political developments in the globalised world system.

Limited Critiques of Exchange Diplomacy

There has been limited and somewhat trivial critique of exchange diplomacy rather than a more rigorous critique of its meta-purpose. Exchange diplomacy participants have traditionally made up a small proportion of the overall transnational flow of people, from tourists and business travel to migrants and refugees. Indeed, exchange diplomacy students are only a small proportion of those travelling overseas in pursuit of education, as many international students are independent and self-financed. Furthermore, there is some evidence that exchange encounters can produce unfortunate results. In exchange diplomacy circles, there has been the occasional pejorative use of the "tourist" label. In Jeanne and John Gullahorn's study of Fulbright scholars from the 1960s, for example, American tourists were cited as a factor which had strongly contributed to a negative image of the United States around the world. Despite being over 50 years old the following quotation from a French interviewee still emphasises some of the dilemma within which educational exchange occurs

> The exchanges between French and American students are of great importance because they show that the United States is interested not only in force but that it has need of culture and of other values which it lacks. Besides, this helps suppress in France a part of the false image which is given to us by the American tourists who are quite detestable.
>
> (cited in Gullahorn and Gullahorn, 1966: 57)

In this case, the negative image projected by American tourists was something that the grantees could correct, although it cannot be certain whether they did so or not. However, in other cases it was the exchange diplomacy participants themselves who were criticised with the term "tourist." From the same period, former executive secretary of the US-German Fulbright Commission John F. Mead reported his concerns about American grantees becoming tourists during their grant periods. Some students, he wrote that "yield to the temptation to travel and loaf during scheduled sessions of their universities … This 'tourist' attitude is also a source of embarrassment to conscientious American study grantees in Germany." (Mead, 1958: 1) He cited examples of grantees travelling to other parts of Europe without the Commission's knowledge or approval. In his report, Mead included an unsolicited letter that he had received from University of Munich's Professor Rolf Huisgen who had observed this tourist behaviour amongst grantees in his laboratory:

> The danger of "bumming around" is much greater with the post-doctoral fellows than with (pre-doctoral) exchange students. Perhaps in the future one ought to point out the obligation to maintain normal work schedules with more emphasis. I always deplore if the limited number of workplaces are not fully used. After all, we want to take care that a distinguished organization like the Fulbright Commission is not being abused and degraded to an "American Vacation Organization"; this term circulated among our German doctoral candidates two years ago.
>
> (cited in Mead, 1958: 2)

Aside from the boundary between travelling for leisure and travelling to gain cultural awareness, education and mutual understanding being a matter of debate, and beyond the more ideological concerns about the purpose of exchange diplomacy, there is considerable evidence that the results of programmes against some of their intentions and claims are most certainly mixed and that there is no guarantee that those who participate will be conscientious, focussed, hardworking, make the relationships the benefactors hope they will or be deemed a worthwhile character by those they meet along that journey. Ultimately then, exchange diplomacy participants experience some of the same culture, learning and adaptation experiences that other travellers do, with it being the traveller's personality, motivations, background and previous experiences that determine exchange outcomes alongside the geopolitical circumstances under which the exchange occurs. These factors become apparent regardless of whether the programme is a formal exchange diplomacy effort or not.

As such, the literature tells us that participating in an official exchange diplomacy programme comes with both limitations and privileges, and it

should be considered whether the participants would have the same freedoms and access as a compatriot tourist or business traveller would have in that country. In terms of limitations, being a visitor under exchange diplomacy auspices can limit the types of activities one could engage in. Political demonstrations, for example, may be prohibited. That said, grantees may have greater access to other aspects of the host society due to their official status. There may be more opportunity to interact with elites, including political leaders, business executives and senior academics as a structured part of the exchange experience. In comparison, study abroad participants or international students under private auspices would have no such established access routes to elite groups.

That said, if much of the outcome of an exchange are dependent upon the individual participant, it begs the question of whether it matters if a participant is "official" or not. Research on study abroad participants has found that students in private exchange programmes share many of the same concerns and experiences as their exchange diplomacy counterparts. Nadine Dolby's (2004) research found that American undergraduates studying abroad in Australia sensed an obligation to defend the US when hearing criticism. In contrast, Benjamin Hadis's (2005) study found that the vast majority of study abroad participants reported an increased sense of open-mindedness and a deeper interest in world affairs from a perspective beyond their home country's interests. Given such findings, it may be that all intercultural contact experiences facilitate ambassadorial opportunities that "unofficial" citizen diplomats can engage in no matter the status of the student. In sum, the literature on this topic tell us that, while the official status of an exchange diplomacy programme can influence a participant's experience, questions of building relationships and winning over hearts and minds remain the responsibility, acknowledged or not, of an individual exchange participant. However, these studies make very little impact upon more critical debates about the overall purpose of public diplomacy and its claims to making the world a better place.

Exchange Diplomacy in Context

Exchange diplomacy activities are part of the larger contemporary phenomenon of international human movement that has been facilitated by globalisation and the advances in communications and transport technology that have supported it. However, globalisation, as an overwhelmingly economic practice connected with neoliberal policies, has been responsible for cultural imperialism, human destitution, the erosion of social welfare, climate change and a host of environmental catastrophes including devastating levels of pollution, deforestation, soil erosion and species decline. Public diplomacy, and exchange diplomacy within this field, is thus integrated and entwined with globalisation and many of the

problems resulting from it. Indeed, public diplomacy is part of globalisation, and most occurrences of exchange diplomacy can be directly linked to the globalisation objectives of the benefactor. To this end, while the educational benefits that can occur from exchange diplomacy have merit and it may be that some exchanges produce more humanitarian, mindful and conscientious individuals, questions remain over how such exchanges operate and the extent to which it is education, or more likely power within a globalised world system, that is the main objective. Thus, as was aptly described by Tournès and Scott-Smith (2017) in the introduction to this chapter, much of the existing literature on exchanges is hagiographic, and a more critical and philosophical discussion is required. To provide that debate this section will use the works of Antonio Gramsci and Pierre Bourdieu as a guide but first there will be a discussion of some of the more critical works on exchange diplomacy.

The internationalisation of higher education is tied closely to globalisation. As Kemal Gürüz (2011: 3) has noted, "Academic mobility … is and has been an important aspect of the process of globalisation throughout history." However, countries that are better equipped to participate in the global knowledge economy have a distinct advantage, whether it is in technology, infrastructure, or higher education institutions. Gürüz also observed that a "country's capacity to take advantage of the global knowledge economy … clearly depends on its capacity to participate … in the processes of generating, accessing, and sharing knowledge. If no such capacities exist, then that country is technologically disconnected and excluded from the global knowledge economy." (Gürüz, 2011: 18) This is something that most countries want to avoid. Such a conclusion overcomes the presumption that exchange programmes ought to be viewed as an altruistic output of governance, for it is a commitment to one's own interests that motivates the selectivity of their occurrence rather than any wider pro-social commitment to the betterment of humanity and/or the global ecosystem.

Nevertheless, the major Anglophone receivers of international students, such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, are facing new forms of competition, and not just from non-English speaking countries that are now offering degrees taught wholly in English. Chinese higher education institutions, for example, are developing a strong international reputation and the country has become a net-receiver of foreign students after many years of sending its own students abroad to gain education unavailable in their homeland. China also welcomes students from the likes of North Korea, Iran, Zimbabwe and Cuba; all countries sitting towards the periphery of the international community in modern times and which have had only limited inclusion in the global exchange diplomacy network. Distance learning offerings have also improved, while open access literature and open source software have contributed to a shift away from traditional models of higher

education provision and dissemination of knowledge. While these cannot be considered "exchange" as such, Craig Hayden (2017: 66) makes the important point that new education programmes such as massive open online courses (MOOCs) add to the global democratisation of the sector and should therefore be seen as an integral part of the bid to overcome logistical and physical barriers to access, participation and ultimately the reproduction of elites.

Therefore, exchange diplomacy reinforces existing global power structures in two ways: by generating unequal flows of people and resources and by contributing to the reproduction of elites and thus an exploitative neoliberal international status quo. These have received insufficient attention in academic public diplomacy literature, but they are significant concepts with far reaching consequences, and their application also enables us to draw upon a large body of theoretical literature. As discussed elsewhere in this volume, the work of Antonio Gramsci has a special relevance for public diplomacy. According to James Martin (1998: 2) Gramsci's concept of hegemony can help us to "address the issue of power and domination in society through the lens of culture and ideology." This can be applied to the field of exchange diplomacy, a practice built upon the international transfer of culture and ideology and, for the most part, the consolidation of existing power structures. Educational exchanges, specifically, represent a significant tool for the Gramscian approach, because education, in Gramsci's conception, amounts to nothing less than the fundamental operations of hegemony (see Borg et al., 2002: 8).

One of the earliest articulations of exchange diplomacy's intent to preserve hegemonic structures was put forward by Cecil Rhodes, the British imperialist and founder of De Beers and of the Rhodes Scholarships (Pietsch and Chou, 2017: 36). Likely due to his chronic poor health and bachelorhood, Rhodes prepared and revised his wills throughout his adult life, which would direct how his fortune should be used after his death. He made seven wills between the ages of 24 and 46. The first will instructed his fortune to be used to establish a "secret society" that promoted British colonialism and unity across the Empire, drawing its members from the colonies and the United States (the "lost colony" that Rhodes hoped would return to the British Empire one day). The aim of the society, he wrote, should be "to form so great a power as to render wars impossible and promote the best interests of humanity" (cited in Aydelotte, 1946: 7). The "secret society" was envisioned as a network of Caucasian elites drawn together from different countries with the stated aim of creating peace through mutual understanding, but more likely the consolidation of an economic and political power structure and elite network that would make war – which is always underpinned by economic motives – a thing of the past. The scenario presented here appeared to ignore the suffering and destitution of the hundreds of millions of mainly

non-white colonial subjects under British rule at this time. The concept of a secret society was subsequently dropped in favour of a scholarship programme in his sixth will most likely as his thought developed on the matter. Ultimately, however, the concept of an international network of elites was carried over from the "secret society" proposal to The Rhodes Trust (2019), and the language of rendering war impossible through economic and social entwinement – assisted by education exchange – remained in the Trust's founding documentation. Moreover, the premises behind the Rhodes scholarship (less Rhodes's explicitly racist views) would become the mainstay of exchange diplomacy rhetoric the world over in the postcolonial era.

This concept of a global elite network is the central underpinning of exchange diplomacy as investment in exchange programmes is often motivated by a perceived ability to bring potential future leaders together, to further their education and experience, to exchange ideas and to gain first-hand knowledge of selected other cultures. This occurs in the hope, or anticipation, that the benefactor will reap future rewards from powerful foreign individuals prioritising the economic, political and security interests of the country that bequeathed them a scholarship in their formative years. Thus, the core concepts underpinning exchange diplomacy are rooted in an imperialist vision of global power structures (Pietsch and Chou, 2017: 37). Indeed, when public diplomacy practitioners and scholars point to world leaders who are alumni of exchange diplomacy programmes, they tend to do so as demonstrations of the "effectiveness" of those exchanges, and all the while overlook or are dismissive of the fact that those alumni "success" stories also reveal a system of neoliberal power consolidation that undermines any claim to exchange diplomacy's more philanthropic, egalitarian or humanist intentions.

Exchange diplomacy's focus on elites is certainly unsurprising to scholars who are familiar with Gramsci's work. Gramsci cited traditional, professional intellectuals as the key advocates of wider ideological communication efforts. "One of the most important characteristics of any group that is developing towards dominance is its struggle to assimilate and to conquer 'ideologically' the traditional intellectuals …" (Gramsci, cited in Hoare and Nowell-Smith, 1971: 2) Such a premise was first devised by Plato in The Republic and his concept of the "guardians" of his utopian society. Gramsci's conceptualisation of intellectuals can hereby be used as a theoretical framework for understanding this aspect of exchange diplomacy in terms of global power relations.

Scott-Smith's (2008) work on Gramsci and public diplomacy acknowledges the relevance of hegemonic power consolidation within exchanges. However, he argues that there are limitations to the application of Gramscian theory to exchange diplomacy. This is primarily on

the basis that the emphasis on economic relations ignores the social and cultural aspects that create ties between countries within a globally networked hegemonic system. These aspects, Scott-Smith argues, are some of the key elements of exchange diplomacy and to ignore them, and the extent to which intercultural experiences help to overcome issues of intolerance, privilege and provocative nationalism, would be to disregard some of the potential of exchanges. Indeed, many education and sociology scholars have referred to psychologist Gordon W. Allport's (1954) work on "contact theory" as a means of intergroup prejudice reduction, but it is often absent from public diplomacy research. The contact hypothesis has dealt primarily with efforts to improve race relations wherein Allport specified four conditions that must be met for intergroup contact to effectively reduce prejudice. The contact must be between participants of equal status, in the pursuit of common goals, sanctioned by institutional supports, and it must encourage the perception of common interests and common humanity. Contact alone, without these conditions, does not necessarily improve intergroup relations and can often have the opposite effect. Social psychologist Stephen Bochner (1982: 16) warns that "intergroup contact may increase tension, hostility and suspicion." The truth behind the adage "familiarity breeds contempt" has been observed in several exchange diplomacy anecdotes. For example, Scott-Smith (2009: 52) highlights the case of Seyyed Qutb, an Egyptian civil servant whose visit to the US turned him towards Islamic radicalism and anti-Western fundamentalism. Upon his return, Qutb wrote "The America I Have Seen" for Egyptian magazine Al-Risala, in which he decries American culture as primitive, sex-obsessed and lacking in humanity. He is deeply critical of a church party where he witnessed couples dancing to "Baby, it's Cold Outside," a song choice, and behaviour, which he found inappropriate for a church setting (Qutb, 1951: 13). From this experience, he generalised that American churches, and society in general, lacked morality. Despite this being an extreme example of what has been an admittedly efficient method of building international relationships, Qutb's story of a "warts and all" representation of his host culture's values and intricacies serves as a warning to the normative assumptions that underpin this aspect of public diplomacy.

Richard Brislin's work on intercultural communication describes the difficulties and limitations of the contact hypothesis. "Some people are so rigid in their prejudices that any out-group behaviour can be interpreted as supporting their initial attitudes … Administrators must realise these possibilities as well as some background factors which participants bring to the contact situation" (Brislin, 1981: 197). Background factors might be as simple as previous brief experiences with the foreign culture, such as tourism, or as complex as family heritage, religious beliefs and a sense of national or cultural superiority. Exchange diplomacy's very

focus on elites thus limits the possibility of the optimal contact specified by Allport. Indeed, the recipients of scholarships are usually people from privileged backgrounds who, through family ties, schooling and other such experiences, already speak key world languages, have access to networks beyond their local and domestic communities, and thus likely possess a worldview that promotes the integrity of the status quo rather than an ambition towards a more harmonious global future. Scott-Smith's (2008) argument is therefore limited in its scope and creates a romantic (and hagiographic) conceptualisation of the power of exchange diplomacy to break down social barriers rather than reinforce them at the hegemonic level.

To this end, the work of Pierre Bourdieu may provide further clarity to the reality of exchange diplomacy. His concept of a "field of symbolic exchange" has been applied effectively in previous research on this subject. Oliver Schmidt's (1999) study of US-German exchanges used Bourdieu's concept, arguing that such programmes constituted a site of negotiation for post-war interests and identities, both domestically and internationally. Bourdieu's work on "cultural capital" takes on special significance here for the cross-cultural contact between elites. Exchange diplomacy programmes under this theoretical scrutiny ought to be viewed as methods by which participants increase their cultural capital. It gives them postgraduate degrees or certificates, cultural knowledge gains, prestige within clear cultural hegemonic frames and other markers of accomplishment that are widely recognised by other hegemonic elites. In order to be eligible to participate, one must already have many of these elite markers, or be viewed as having the willingness and potential to attain them, with the act of participation itself an acknowledgement of that cultural capital and the potential for future accumulation. Those without such markers or such potentials are absent from the exchange diplomacy equation.

This discussion of selection and exclusion in education, beyond its relevance to the opportunities presented by exchange diplomacy programmes, also contributes to a wider understanding of the duality of education and the questions raised in the introduction to this chapter surrounding what is taught, how it is taught, when it is taught, why it is taught, and by whom. If knowledge is power, then education transmits power and directs the flow of power in society. For Bourdieu and his co-author Jean-Claude Passeron the problem is a question of prerequisites as a tool of exclusion, something that exchange diplomacy administrators have grappled with in the past. They note that the educational system has the power to turn "social advantages into academic advantages, themselves convertible into social advantages, because they [society] allow it to present academic, hence implicitly social, requirements as technical prerequisites for the exercise of an occupation"(Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977: 166). As such, the gatekeepers of exchange diplomacy

essentially look for those with, what might be called, good hegemonic character.

Although some effort has been made to democratise programmes and open-up participation, it remains very limited. In US exchange diplomacy, for example, a 1966 report by the US Board of Foreign Scholarships cited intensive English language courses as an attempt to address the issue. "Since fluency in English tends in many countries abroad to be found chiefly among the socially and economically favoured groups, some efforts have been made to draw student grantees from outside these groups by providing opportunities for intensive training in English for the grantees before they take up studies in the U.S." (Board of Foreign Scholarships, 1966: 36) Underprivileged students would thus be brought up to the same level of fluency as their socio-economically privileged peers, and able to participate on a more equal basis. However, one's ability to speak English, or another major world language, is only a small part of the equation within an exploitative world system. More broadly though, with taxpayers' money at stake, the idea that an exchange programme would deliberately underachieve itself seems unlikely, lest the government be accused of incompetent use of state funds. Such a scenario therefore returns the argument to the core purpose of public diplomacy, and exchange diplomacy within that portfolio, as being to support a government's power consolidation strategy rather than the encouragement of international goodwill or philanthropy. In conclusion, Bourdieu and Passeron would describe exchange diplomacy as part of the meritocratic nature of education, in which a discourse of effort and achievement disguises the reality that some opportunities are more readily (or exclusively) accessible for the privileged. "In ever more completely delegating the power of selection to the academic institution, the privileged classes are able to appear to be surrendering to a perfectly neutral authority the power of transmitting power from one generation to another, and thus to be renouncing the arbitrary privilege of the hereditary transmission of privileges." (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977: 167)

Finally, one caveat against applying Bourdieu's ideas to an analysis of exchange diplomacy practices would be the question of context. Bourdieu's *Reproduction* is notoriously empirical and based on studies of the French education system in the 1960s. This raises the question of whether ideas derived from a narrowly specific time and place, culture and society can be more universally applied. Are they relevant in other contexts? This critique is particularly valid for the multifaceted context in which exchange diplomacy programmes operate, involving multiple variations of time, place and culture that need to be taken into consideration. Nevertheless, this author would argue that Bourdieu's theories remain relevant and broadly applicable. The core concepts of cultural capital and selection he outlines represent an important theoretical contribution that translates well into other countries' educational systems

and social structures, while the argument also holds its explanatory value over time. In a discussion of the international circulation of ideas, Bourdieu argued that we should better understand different national fields and categories of thought. "The aim must be to produce a scientific knowledge of national fields of production and the national categories of thought that originate there, and to diffuse this knowledge as widely as possible, notably by ensuring that it forms a component of studies of foreign languages, civilisations, and philosophies" (Bourdieu, 1999: 226). In summary then, exchange diplomacy, particularly the international movement of scholars and increased understanding of foreign cultures, has the potential to bring benefit to the world and this is what many academics look to celebrate in their discussions. However, under current strategies and priorities, there is little evidence of it actually occurring.

Conclusion

Exchange diplomacy presents several theoretical challenges. At a basic level, the idea that a state might benefit politically from supporting educational and cultural activities is problematic for those who believe in the inherent value of education and culture, but who fear that these other motives surrounding power might undermine the academic integrity of the experience. However, beyond this there has been a reluctance to critically engage with the elite nature of exchange diplomacy programmes. This chapter has tried to explore those ideas, critique the existing literature and push the theoretical boundaries of exchange diplomacy.

Education is important. Indeed, it is *the* most important factor in determining the individual's ability to control the intricacies of their life. Education is a route towards personal agency. It leads to improved cognitive ability and thus one's ability to astutely process complex and multi-faceted information. It is the platform on which mindfulness, compassion, self-improvement and introspection occur and from which contradiction is realised and corrected. However, education should not be seen as the blanket positive concept that is depicted in much of the public diplomacy literature. Indeed, some of history's most brutal and repressive characters have also been some of the most learned and, on the whole, many of those who have obtained their elite status as a result of privilege have attempted to justify and consolidate the circumstances under which that status was achieved rather than facilitate greater social justice. Indeed, many appear unaware, genuinely or not, of the extent of their privilege.

The international movement of people, be it in the form of exchange diplomacy, study abroad, business, migration or tourism, is ultimately a political act. Regardless of whether it is conducted as a formal part of statecraft, it has political, economic and socio-cultural implications that contribute to understandings of global hegemony. Recognising the

inherently hegemonic nature of exchange-of-persons is a good first step towards ensuring that current levels of hagiography are reduced within the literature on public diplomacy. Such an occurrence can then lead to wider questions over what can be done to define and promote practice within the industry that encourages greater equality and social justice around the world, and to understand how exchange diplomacy *can* contribute to a sense of shared humanity among host and home country participants, as it has the potential to do. It is for governments on all sides to establish policies that reflect a more egalitarian mind-set and to support a broad range of exchange diplomacy activities. It is for the practitioners, the exchange diplomacy programme officials and administrators, to seek out these more positive elements in their selection criteria, to promote genuine collaboration and mutual understanding and to act not in state-centric self-interest but for the common interest of humanity and the natural world. Moreover, it is for scholars, journalists and other observers to remind them of this responsibility and to hold them accountable if or when they fall below that standard.

Bibliography

Allport, G. W., (1954), *The Nature of Prejudice*, Cambridge, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Aydelotte, F., (1946), *The Vision of Cecil Rhodes: A Review of the First Forty Years of the American Scholarships*, London: Oxford University Press.

Board of Foreign Scholarships, (1966), *International Educational Exchange: The Opening Decades, 1946-1966: A Report of the Board of Foreign Scholarships*, Washington, DC: Government Printing Office.

Bochner, S. (ed.), (1982), *Cultures in Contact: Studies in Cross-Cultural Interaction*, Oxford: Pergamon Press.

Borg, C., J. Buttigieg, and P. Mayo (eds.), (2002), *Gramsci and Education*, Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield.

Bourdieu, P., (1998), *The State Nobility*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Bourdieu, P., (1999), "The Social Conditions of the International Circulation of Ideas," In: R. Shusterman (ed.), *Bourdieu: A Critical Reader*, Oxford: Blackwell.

Bourdieu, P., and J.-C. Passeron, (1977), *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture*, London: Sage.

Brislin, R., (1981), *Cross-Cultural Encounters*, Oxford: Pergamon Press.

Dolby, N., (2004), "Encountering an American Self: Study Abroad and National Identity," *Comparative Education Review*, 48(2), pp. 150–173.

Fisher, A., (2013), *Collaborative Public Diplomacy: How Transnational Networks Influenced American Studies in Europe*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Forgacs, D. (ed.), (1988), *A Gramsci Reader*, London: Lawrence and Wishart.

Goethe-Institut, (2019), Organisation, Available from World Wide Web: www.goethe.de/en/uun/org.html [Accessed 30 July, 2019].

Gullahorn, J. E., and J. T. Gullahorn, (1966), "American Students Abroad: Professional versus Personal Development," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 368(1), pp. 43–59.

Gürüz, K., (2011), (2nd ed.), *Higher Education and International Student Mobility in the Global Knowledge Economy*, New York: SUNY Press.

Hadis, B., (2005), "Why Are They Better Students When They Come Back? Determinants of Academic Focusing Gains in the Study Abroad Experience," *Frontiers: the Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, 11, pp. 57–70.

Hanban, (2019), *About Us*, Available from World Wide Web: english.hanban.org/node_7719.htm [Accessed 30 July 2019].

Hayden, C., (2017) "Technology Platforms for Public Diplomacy: Affordances for Education," In: J. Mathews-Aydinli (ed.), *International Education Exchanges and Intercultural Understanding*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 59–78.

Hoare, Q., and G. Nowell-Smith (eds.), (1971), *Selections from the Prison Notebooks by Antonio Gramsci*, London: Lawrence & Wishart.

Khakimova Storie, L., (2017), "Relationship Cultivation in Public Diplomacy: A Qualitative Study of Relational Antecedents and Cultivation Strategies," *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 29(6), pp. 295–310.

Martin, J., (1998), *Gramsci's Political Analysis: A Critical Introduction*, Basingstoke: Palgrave.

Mead, J., (1958), "Report on German Fulbright Program: 1 August 1958," *University of Arkansas Library Special Collections*. Manuscript Collection 468, Group 3, Series 2, Box 107, folder 19.

Melissen, J., (2007), *The New Public Diplomacy: Soft Power in International Relations*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Owen, W., (1988), "Strange Meeting," In: J. Breen (ed.), *Wilfred Owen Selected Poetry and Prose*, New York: Routledge.

Pietsch, T., and M.-H. Chou, (2017), "The Politics of Scholarly Exchange – Taking the Long View on the Rhodes Scholarships," In: L. Tournés and G. Scott-Smith (eds.), *Global Exchanges: Scholarships and Transnational Circulations in the Modern World*, New York: Berghahn.

Qutb, S., (1951), 'The America I Have Seen: In the Scale of Human Values. Kashf ul Shubuhat Publications. Available from World Wide Web: https://www.cia.gov/library/abbottabad-compound/

Schmidt, O., (1999), *Civil Empire by Co-optation: German-American Exchange Programs as Cultural Diplomacy, 1945–1961*. PhD Thesis, Harvard University, Cambridge.

Scott-Smith, G., (2008), "Mapping the Undefinable: Some Thoughts on the Relevance of Exchange Programs within International Relations Theory," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 616, pp. 173–195.

Scott-Smith, G., (2009), "Exchange Programs and Public Diplomacy," In: N. Snow and P. Taylor (eds.), *Routledge Handbook of Public Diplomacy*, London: Routledge, pp. 50–56.

The Fulbright Program, (2019), *About Fulbright*, Available from World Wide Web: eca.state.gov/fulbright/about-fulbright [Accessed 30 July 2019].

The Rhodes Trust, (2019), *Will and Codicils of the Rt. Hon. Cecil John Rhodes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), Available from World Wide Web: https://www.rhodeshouse.ox.ac.uk/media/1141/willandcodicils.pdf [Accessed March 2019].

Tournès, L., and G. Scott-Smith (eds.), (2017), *Global Exchanges: Scholarships and Transnational Circulations in the Modern World*, New York: Berghahn.

Wilson, I., (2017), "Exchanges and Peace making: Counterfactuals and Unexplored Possibilities," In: J. Mathews-Aydinli (ed.), *International Education Exchanges and Intercultural Understanding*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 21–39.

Zaharna, R. S., (2010), *Battles to Bridges: U.S. Strategic Communication and Public Diplomacy after 9/11*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Zaharna, R. S., A. Arsenault, and A. Fisher (eds.), (2013), *Relational, Networked and Collaborative Approaches to Public Diplomacy: The Connective Mindshift*, London: Routledge.

Part II

The Second Frontier: Early Public Diplomats and Their Innovations during the Collapse of Colonialism

Taylor & Francis
Taylor & Francis Group
http://taylorandfrancis.com

4 Hegemonic Communications with Colonial Subjects

British Public Diplomacy in Colonial India

Colin R. Alexander

Introduction

Public diplomacy emerged as a term during the early Cold War as part of attempts by US diplomats to distance themselves from the negative connotations associated with the word 'propaganda'. However, many would privately admit that propaganda *was* a suitable term for their activities (see Manheim, 1994; Schindler, 2018; Taylor, 2003). During this period public diplomacy would become most commonly associated with the West's battle for supremacy against the Eastern Communist Bloc and the intent of the *BBC World Service, Voice of America, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty* and other international broadcasting services to affect change or to solidify allegiances overseas (see Gillespie et al., 2008; Puddington, 2000; Rawnsley, 1996). Academic research on public diplomacy has traditionally focussed on the Cold War and these publications have often included broader discussions about what these communications technologies and their messages have meant for the notion of state sovereignty and the concept of nationhood. Other forms of global governance – particularly colonialism – were more often than not absent from these discussions. However, the Cold War epoch was also the epoch of decolonialisation and many hegemonic actors with colonial territories used what we would now call public diplomacy as part of attempts to control their – albeit deteriorating – imperial fiefdoms. The history of public diplomacy ought therefore to include much more consideration of colonial empires engaging in mass communications with their colonial subjects as foreign 'others'. Furthermore, Western hegemonic actors conceived of many of the international communications strategies that they would take forward into the postcolonial era and the fight against Communism during the first half of the twentieth century as counter-hegemonic personalities emerged to argue the moral wrongness of colonialism. As such, there is much of interest to be found in a study of British strategic communications in colonial India during the final years of 'the Raj' when considering this book's focus on public diplomacy, hegemony, morality and power.

During the spring of 1942 it became clear that the British were about to be driven almost entirely out of Burma by the advancing Japanese Imperial Army. Anthony Gilchrist McCall, the Indian Civil Service Superintendent for the Lushai Hills, was just over the border in north-eastern India. On 3rd April McCall brought the 300 community leaders of that tribal region together and asked them to join in a voluntary bond with the British Crown. The minutes of the meeting can be found in the India archives at the British Library in London. McCall's speech at the event can be found in the McCall Papers at the archives of the Centre for South Asian Studies (CSAS) at the University of Cambridge, and McCall (1949) discusses the gathering at length in his memoirs. The triangulated texts confirm that the Chiefs and *Upas* (village elders) of this remote back-water of empire pledged their loyalty to the British despite their colonial overlords being in a weakened position and there being clear opportunity for resignation from the imperial project. It is the circumstances leading up to this pledge and their importance to a nascent understanding of public diplomacy that will be discussed in this chapter.

The following is an extract from the minutes of the meeting held on 3rd April 1942 in the Lushai Hills:

> McCall: If you decide not to fight would it be unfair for the Government to withdraw from the Lushai hills? […] We have no wish or desire to abandon a fine people, but if we are to follow Lal Upa's advice to us then it would amount to the Lushais abandoning the government.
>
> Lal Upa: In the old days *pasalthas* used to be given *zu*, women and praise. Now that our society has changed will it not be essential for our men to be paid by the *Sircar*?
>
> Chief Pu Thanghlianga Sailo: We are in the position of a man who owns a house – the thief is passing near our door – we must stand up close to the door to see that the thief does not come in. Even if our *Sircar* is weak and in difficulties it is not for us to consider leaving the *Sircar* – rather should we put ourselves out to give our *Sircar* every help which is within our power.

Upon agreeing to side with the British against the Japanese the document then states

> Every single Chief and Upa (300) – with two Civil Assistants – the Chief Ministerial Officer – Mrs. McCall and the Superintendent all join hands in one great circle – around the Union Jack – and standing all sing 'God Save the King' in Lushai – as token of unity and of our allegiance to His Majesty.

Let us not downplay the remarkability of this event both for its historical importance vis-à-vis wider hostility to British imperialism in India at

the time and for its importance to the Allied victory over Japan in the Burma frontier of war. It is now known that the Total Defence Scheme (TDS) designed by McCall and enacted by the tribes of the Lushai Hills held for long enough during the war despite McCall's forced transfer out of the region in May 1943 (more about this later). It was partly the failure to gain a foothold in the Lushai Hills that fractured the Japanese Imperial Army's rather haphazard logistics systems and scuppered their progress towards a land invasion of India proper (Raghavaih, 1971: 106). The Lushai Hills form a natural obstacle between the Burmese river deltas to the east and the Ganges delta and the cities of Chittagong, Dhaka and Calcutta to the west. To this end, resistance to the Japanese around the Lushai Hills pushed their Imperial Army further north into more inhospitable mountainous jungle terrain and stretched their logistics to a point where they simply could not be effectively supplied or reinforced.

Ultimately, momentum on the Burma frontier turned against the Japanese during the spring of 1944. The Allied victory at the Battle of Kohima (April–June 1944) resulted in an end to the siege of the strategically important nearby town of Imphal (March–July 1944). Indeed, spring and summer 1944 would mark the height of Japanese territorial gain in Burma and by the end of that calendar year they had been pushed back several hundred miles south towards Rangoon and the coast. The level of renewed self-assuredness within the British ranks was palpable after the siege at Imphal was lifted. The Governor of Assam, Sir Andrew Clow, made it clear to Viceroy Wavell where he thought credit should lie for this, despite McCall having been sacked the year before:

> 10th November 1944 – The greatest credit of all, perhaps, goes to Major McCall, who started the [Total Defence] [S]cheme single-handed and worked it out in detail. His far-seeing and accurate judgment ensured first class foundation for the scheme; and from information received from enemy agents captured in South Lushai, it would appear that the Japs on our E. border had a wholesome respect for the scheme, which is the greatest tribute that can be paid to Maj. McCall's work.

It is the circumstances that led to McCall's manufacture of the allegiance of the leaders of the Lushai Hills in the years before the start of World War II that is of greatest interest here. Improved understanding of these events enhances the main themes of this edited volume: first, through an important contribution to the arguments surrounding public diplomacy and its support for a hegemonic coalition and second, adding to the portfolio of case studies of public diplomacy frontiers. In the case of the latter, a historical study of public diplomacy on the margins of Empire and a mass communications campaign directed towards a human society on the fringes of the forces of globalisation.

McCall's mass communication activities bear more than a little resemblance to what many modern public diplomacy practitioners would consider as best practice. He understood that trust and integrity were built over long periods of time and could be lost very easily if contradictions emerged. However, he also appears to have understood that positive results require a multidimensional and multi-layered approach; that local friendships and allegiances with powerful opinion leaders ought to be cultivated; that he should listen to local concerns and hardships and be useful to their resolution; that he should understand and respect the culture of his audience, learn their language and become as genuinely sympathetic as possible to the prosperity of those people; and all the while he should not lose sight of his primary commitment to British strategic interests. All of these aspects appear to have been understood by McCall at the time and continue to be viewed by contemporary public diplomacy analysts as best practice.

The British had found it difficult to administer these north-eastern frontier territories with some populations only receiving the lightest of colonial touches. Deaths from disease were common, as were deaths at the hands of the tribes themselves, and the harsh, wet climate and deadly wildlife made it one of the worst places in the world for human combat. The historian David Gilmour provides some insight into the difficultly of administering these frontier regions:

> Three successive political agents to the Naga hills (to the north of the Lushai Hills) met violent deaths in the years 1876-8: Captain Butler was killed in a fight with the Lhota Nagas, P.J. Carnegy was shot by his sentry, and Guybon Damant was killed trying to enter a village during the revolt of the Angami Nagas. In spite of malaria, James Johnstone survived his years as Political Agent in Manipur, but his three successors died within the space of five years (1886-91), one from wounds suffered fighting the Burmese, the second from fever and lack of medical attention, and a third in a botched attempt to arrest a local prince.
>
> (Gilmour, 2007: 172) (information in brackets added)

This quotation provides an indication of the problems that the British colonial regime encountered in these remote areas. Indeed, tribal revolt was a near constant anxiety and the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries include various uprisings against the British in this region. Most notably, the Kuki Rebellion (1917–1919) during World War I by the people of the Chin Hills neighbouring Lushai (see Raghavaih, 1971). With this in mind, the positive response of the Lushai Hills tribes to McCall's request for loyalty to the British appears all the more remarkable and certainly worthy of further inquiry.

Using a public diplomacy framework, the chapter presents archive research by the author surrounding McCall's tenure as the ICS Superintendent

to the Lushai Hills. At a practical level it attempts to better understand how he was able to manufacture the almost wholesale consent of a tribal community that had little contact with those beyond its densely forested region. These were people who spent a considerable amount of time warring among themselves and those of neighbouring tribal areas, never mind their British colonial rulers. McCall was by no means an average colonial administrator, many of whom maintained an image of power by their perception of being a class apart. Instead, McCall and his wife Jean were more willing to embrace the culture of the region during their time in the Lushai Hills where they learnt the local language and embraced some local traditions. In his memoirs, McCall (1949) claims that he began preparations for wartime hostilities in 1935 after he had been the Superintendent for two years. Although he could not know the precise profile of the aggression that the Lushai Hills might face, he understood that there were few ways to capture the territory no matter the direction that one invaded from. He intricately planned the TDS and had it signed off by the Government of Assam in Shillong once it became evident how the aggression would likely unfold. However, loyalty is not easily manufactured without prior substance and so it is the social policies that he encouraged before the conflict began that the rest of the chapter will focus on.

This chapter has been produced from a wider research project examining political communications and activities towards the end of British rule on the Indian subcontinent with the main publication being the monograph book published by the author (see Alexander, 2019). This chapter represents a derivative of that research and provides new insights into a little-known area of British colonial rule in the mid-twentieth century. The use of a public diplomacy framework to inform the research provides additional insight into the discussion at hand. The project involved a significant amount of archive research at the British Library and National Archives in London, the CSAS at the University of Cambridge, and other private archives around the United Kingdom, as well as reviews of published literature on the related topics. The McCall files are found mainly at the British Library and in the CSAS at Cambridge with many unopened since they were written.

Colonial Public Diplomacy

Public diplomacy is a useful analytical framework for the discussion of these events because the source of the communications is perceived to be a foreigner or outsider by the target audience. In the case of the British Raj, and McCall as one of the ICS's Superintendents, the audience were colonial subjects and thereby not 'foreign' in the modern sense of the word. However, most successful colonial regimes were built upon clear hierarchical distinctions of race, religious persuasion, cultural practices

and divergences in social, economic and political opportunities afforded to the rulers and those who were ruled. Therefore, the audience's perception of the communications as originating from those different to them, despite the source not being strictly a foreign government, remains constant between colonial and postcolonial epochs and bears more than a little resemblance to modern public diplomacy communications between what is now loosely called the global North and global South.

Furthermore, the public diplomacy framework is also appropriate in this context because Britain's colonial past and the communications that it developed during this period have formed the basis of the country's postcolonial public diplomacy discourse towards former colonial subjects and their often notionally independent governments. This can be seen in the Indian subcontinent as well as in sub-Saharan Africa where the stories of Victorian explorers and Christian missionaries like David Livingstone are often referenced as examples of the tied heritage between the UK and the likes of Zambia and Malawi (see Alexander, 2014). Here it can be noted that McCall continually referred to himself and his wife as members of the Lushai community in his speeches, with this a likely part of his attempt to overcome the obstacle of him being an outsider, which would have been unhelpful for a narrative of unity to a shared goal.

Public diplomacy encompasses communications beyond the mere explicit. Indeed, public diplomacy is often at its most effective when both the word and the deed of a source work in congruence with each other as this avoids the likelihood of cognitive dissonance among the audience. One conclusion of this chapter is that McCall's message to his audience was congruent with his own actions during his incumbency in the Lushai Hills. This he acknowledges in a letter to J. P. Mills, the Private Secretary to the Governor of Assam, Sir Andrew Clow, on 6th June 1943 as he is being dismissed from his role. Indeed, his concern was that the military and wider British Government of India did not embody that same congruence and that this would be detrimental to the British cause.

> (1) The Chiefs agreed to organise their people because the Superintendent had personally identified himself in this risky undertaking outside the ordinary reasonable demands a government has any right to expect of a dependent people. (2) The departure of the Superintendent, will deprive the people, committed as they are, of their accustomed and trusted head, who to them represents the personification of British integrity. (3) Consequent upon (1) and (2) the act of the Superintendent leaving the Lushai Hills at this juncture amounts to what it is difficult not be taken by the Hill man as a breach of faith, which might well have wide repercussions.

Public diplomacy is also about listening to the audience to understand their cultural norms, respect their way of life and assist in the alleviation

of their tribulations where possible. It ought not to be a one-way communication but should involve genuine discourse if it is to be effective (Cull, 2010). It should not merely attempt to promote or 'sell' the policies or activities of the source that have already been decided prior to the discussion (although it frequently does do just that), and it should be built on long-term trust between the different parties. McCall appears to have been a master communicator in this regard and lessons can be learned from him for all those who seek to engage in public diplomacy today.

It is not the purpose of this chapter to critique the wider morality of colonialism. This has been aptly discussed by the likes of Albert Memmi (2003), Jean-Paul Sartre (1964) and several key others. Instead, the chapter discusses the specifics and merits of McCall's communications strategy in the lead up to the Japanese invasion based on its effectiveness against its desired outcomes and, more importantly for this volume, his intent to preserve the hegemonic status quo in favour of his employers. Indeed, whether McCall used deception tactics to manipulate his audience into taking up a collective position that was unwittingly against their better interests (the fundamental criticism of propaganda's potential) appears, at the very least, to be highly contestable. McCall engaged in a mainly positive-natured campaign and, as an alternative, a British retreat from the Lushai Hills would most likely have led to the community's replaced subjugation within the Japanese Empire rather than any achievement of 'freedom'. To this end, it is not the purpose of this chapter to scrutinise the morality of McCall's actions against colonial subjects other than to make conclusions about the power motives of the communications under discussion as per the wider themes of this edited volume.

McCall's Public Communications Strategy

Major Anthony Gilchrist McCall (1895–1978) joined the ICS in 1921 and served as Superintendent in the Lushai Hills from 1933 until 1943 when he was recalled by the Governor of Assam, Sir Andrew Clow.

On 7th July 1942, he wrote to Mills in Shillong about the Lushai Hills.

> Lushai is a heterogeneous area. It has no Maharajah. It has no central unifying force when once the majesty of Government is withdrawn. The value of the Superintendent lies more in his utility to those who need him from time to time than in any vague idea that he is almost a 'mythical figure beloved by every man, woman and child'. The superintendent has considerable utility [to govern] because he will not sanction unwise approaches to the people, can see where unfairness is irritating from the Lushai point of view, and maintains a balance of scrupulous impartiality in all dealings. But these qualities are not adequate to secure him from the flows inseparable from a heterogeneous people with not much stronger binding than that exercised by the Pax Britannica.

The following extracts from the McCall papers at the CSAS Archive suggest the thought process behind his strategic communications with the people of the Lushai Hills during his tenure. However, we should remain somewhat cautious over the use of memoirs as accurate historical documents as experience tells us that they tend to be selectively self-aggrandising, nostalgic and far 'cleaner' than the reality of such happenings. Nevertheless, they remain a solid guide to events and the data presented here has to be triangulated with other archive and historical sources. McCall wrote the following about his experiences as ICS Superintendent for the Lushai Hills:

> It was inescapably clear that the League of Nations was an edifice behind which the 'have' Nations could shelter in their pursuit of material prosperity.
>
> Returning to Lushai, towards the end of 1935 (following leave in the UK), I was convinced that the rise of Mussolini and Hitler could only end in widespread disturbance. I felt certain trouble must come to Lushai, but in what form I had no idea at all. I was obsessed by the sense that it was my duty to administer the people along lines that would help to equip them to meet a threatened future.
>
> Official records will show that I lost no time in introducing four innovations into the local administration. These were 'the ten point code', the Welfare System under the aegis of the Red Cross, the Lushai Hills Cottage Industries, and the inauguration of the Chief's Durbar. All these had one common aim – unity.
>
> The main target for implementing the Village Welfare System was two-fold. The first was to bring all people together on the whole subject of health, which, after all, was the concern of the rich as much as the poor. The second target was to inveigle the chiefs to turn out and face their people once a month on matters of a non-controversial and unifying nature. I made one stipulation, joining the System was voluntary and any village which chose to join MUST follow the rules.
>
> The final measure in 1936 was the establishment of a scheme to enable the traditional weaving skills of the Lushai women to be turned into a profitable account for the first time in their entire history. Jean (McCall's wife) assumed the role of Joint Organiser and Managing Director, as she was the creator of the whole venture. […] the two joint Organisers put up the capital – several hundred pounds. The venture was too risky to ask Government for funds. […] Mrs. Joint Organiser worked daily at the Lushai Hills Cottage Industries for seven years, without any form of remuneration.

McCall's strategy is clearly laid out in this extended quotation. He sought to develop four distinct aspects of socio-political life for the people of the region, some of which he funded himself rather than negotiate for

government sign off. His selection of these activities as appropriate for his Lushai audience indicates that he sought to encourage a greater form of democracy, public accountability and democratic values within the community that may be useful to him in the future. Secondly, he wanted to improve community healthcare provisions and to encourage education around healthcare practices as there is a strong delineation between provisions of healthcare and moral virtue. He also encouraged the furthering of the role of women within the Lushai community as this demographic often plays a vital auxiliary role in conflicts. Finally, McCall wanted to develop market practices around theories of liberalism with a particular emphasis on the improved role of women in this regard, most likely because he believed that financial vibrancy was a simple way to encourage people to follow a leader.

Furthermore, McCall believed – rightly – that the traditional structure of the Chiefs simply dictating their decisions to the people, rather than justifying the reasons, made the Lushai Hills vulnerable to rebellion because it prevented the majority from obtaining a sense of individual agency over their lives. To this end, McCall encouraged the tribal leaders to become more accountable through the Village Welfare System. Beyond the village, McCall also believed that it was necessary to bring a greater sense of collective and even national identity to the people of the Lushai Hills, as many of the tribes and extended villages had little contact with each other and what contact they did have was quite often violent. Presbyterian missionaries (particularly those from Wales) had been reasonably successful in their attempts to Christianise some communities in the Lushai Hills during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This meant that differences in culture and the practice of religious ritual and celebration had developed between communities and had led to a greater sense of polarisation that was unconducive to unity and trust in times of war. As such, McCall's focus on healthcare as a universal concern helped to bring Christians and non-Christians closer. It lessened the gap between the Chiefs and the people and the Chiefs and the Church and overcame some traditional social customs surrounding Shamanism.

McCall introduced a ten-point code which highlighted the personal conduct representing a 'good' Lushai citizen. The code read much like the Ten Commandments received by Moses from God on Mount Sinai surmounting to what was meant to represent the moral conduct of humanity. Furthermore, the Lushai Hills Cottage Industries created the means by which the skills of the Lushai in handcrafts might spread beyond the immediate territory. As war with the Axis powers had become almost inevitable by 1938, in 1939 McCall intensified his communications and began to hold circle conferences with groups of tribal Chiefs and Upas. This culminated in October 1941 with a first full Lushai district durbar of Circle Representative Chiefs from the North and South Lushai Hills.

This meant that the tribal leaders were familiar with the structure of the durbar and with each other when McCall called them together at the beginning of April 1942 to ask for their allegiance to the British in fighting the Japanese. McCall's foresight almost certainly led to a sense of the ordinary rather than extraordinary at the meeting which benefitted the British as it meant that a multidimensional and more trustworthy discussion could occur about what was in the perceived best interests of the Lushai Hills collectively.

As the early stages of the war against the Japanese progressed in the region, McCall further incentivised the collective responsibility and decision-making of the Lushai people by encouraging them to consider the impact of their wartime actions upon the likelihood of their status after India and Burma gained independence from Britain. He believed that encouraging Lushai 'nationalist' sentiment among the people of the region would benefit their status in this postcolonial pursuit and this is evidenced in an extract from the report that McCall sent to all the communities of the Lushai Hills on 6th May 1942 shortly after the Chiefs and Upas had agreed to side with the British and had sung God Save the King. Note the use of the word 'we' in the below quotation:

> If Lushai land were handed over to India or to Burma what chance would we, who are Lushais, have of entering into the social and cultural framework of either power, at this late stage, bearing in mind the fact that geographically or culturally we have never been a part of either? (from the McCall papers – CSAS Archive, University of Cambridge)

By the time that the war arrived in the Lushai Hills McCall and his wife were knowns as 'Ka Pi' and 'Ka Pu': terms of affection and respect in the Lushai language. After the war The Statesman (1946) magazine ran a profile piece about the McCalls' and their civilian efforts in the Lushai Hills. The article noted how McCall had disseminated reliable war information by means of a daily news sheet that encouraged high morale and looked to counter Japan's subversive propaganda that usually came in the form of leaflets dropped by aircraft. It pays special tribute to his wife Jean by saying that, '[h]er house became the centre for civilian refugees from Burma, worn out bush fighters and other brave soldiers from Burma, while at all times she was a constant inspiration to high standards and morale'. Indeed, Jean McCall's exploits during the war confirm that she was an atypical wife of a colonial administrator. She was Scottish and had previously been the wife of a tea garden owner in Assam who had died after a short tropical illness, which was a common affliction among rural colonists. It is clear that she had a sense of adventure and was quite content to get her hands dirty and 'rough it', and so it is unsurprising that

the McCalls decided to stay for as long as they could in the Lushai Hills when the families of other colonial administrators and merchants had departed as the war began. Moreover, in his memoirs, McCall admits to buying capsules of potassium cyanide for himself and his wife to be taken in the event of their capture by the Japanese. In recounting the episode, he remarks that he would not have left the people of the Lushai Hills in the event of his recall or orders to abandon post.

McCall's wartime accomplishments were built upon the positive, proactive, knowledgeable and dignified relationship that he had built with the Lushai Hills communities prior to the conflict. He developed a situation where he was valued as their Superintendent, communicated well, and made apt decisions for their well-being and prosperity. Indeed, McCall understood that much of the Lushai loyalty was to himself rather than the British Crown. However, this was also what made the ICS and the Allied military uneasy about the situation. When McCall was summonsed to Shillong in May 1943 he did not know that he was about to be relieved of his duties. Indeed, perhaps the ICS privately knew that this was the only way to relieve him as he would not have come had he known he was about to be sacked.

McCall's Dismissal as ICS Superintendent to the Lushai Hills

In June 1943, McCall was requested to Shillong, the administrative capital of Assam during the late Raj, for a meeting with his superior officer, the Governor of the province Sir Andrew Clow. Without his prior knowledge, and much to his surprise and distain, McCall was relieved of his position as Superintendent to the Lushai Hills and given what one might call a 'desk job' elsewhere in the ICS. For the ICS, McCall had developed into somewhat of a pariah (despite some acknowledgement that his plans had actually worked). McCall appears to have felt highly aggrieved. He felt that Mills had given his opinions to him too readily on matters that he did not have competence or authority around, that Mills had misrepresented him to the Governor, and that he had failed to grasp the importance of the civilian work that McCall was doing in the Lushai Hills. McCall wrote to Mills on 12th June 1943, after being relieved of his post, that

> [T]he enemy is not nearly such a danger as our own side. […]. Unhappily, the files show the gradual and increasing alienation of the Government of Assam from their officer in the Lushai Hills on all matters concerning defence. It is one thing to castigate or discourage an officer but it is a serious matter if such a practice ends in the general deteriorating of a whole district within the responsibility of the British parliament.

McCall's consistent argument throughout the early period of the Burma conflict was that he himself was integral to the enduring loyalty of the people of the Lushai Hills to the British Empire. He had tried to explain this to Mills on 7th July 1942 in the context of the likelihood of the people siding with the Japanese.

> [The people of the Lushai Hills] dare not resist [the Japanese Imperial Army] if later they are to be abandoned by [a British] army withdrawal.

Mills went on to become a lecturer in anthropology at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London after his career in the ICS. However, McCall felt that Mills, who had never actually been to the Lushai Hills, did not understand the socio-political dynamics of the territory. The accuracy of this is contestable but will not be discussed in these pages. What is important to state here, however, is that Mills and Clow, as the key ICS figures in Assam towards the end of colonial rule in India, were required to balance the interests of a number of different groups simultaneously – civilian and military – all of whom were under the acute pressures of war. Beyond the regular governmental and mercantile interests of the British, and those of the local Assamese (albeit of secondary concern under colonialism), the population of Assam and its surrounding territories swelled during the war. There was a significant British, US and Chinese military presence, including large numbers from African American battalions and West African regiments of the British army, each of whom had overlapping but different reasons for being there. In addition, the ICS in Assam were required to deal with two refugee crises: first, in the spring of 1942 when people fled over the border into Assam from Burma as the Japanese advanced; and then, as the Bengal Famine took hold to the south of Assam, large groups of rural Bengalis began to migrate in search of available sustenance (see Alexander, 2019). However, it appears to be the influence of the British military over the ICS, and to a lesser extent the American military, that McCall felt was most problematic and which led to his removal from post. In his view the army was operating with a sense of superiority ahead of all other state offices and functions and were guilty of professional bias when assuming that a solution from within the military framework was appropriate to all socio-political situations. On 12th June 1943 McCall wrote the following to Mills on this subject:

> Surely also it must be clear that the army has no competence to direct anything but the army. […]. […] nowhere in the whole continent of India could the army have found a people (in the Lushai Hills) from whom so much could have been obtained in an area in which then, as now, the army are not competent to fight battles alone against

> any invader. The invader is or has been within a few miles of the boundary of the district on the south and on the east. When given the opportunity to resist the enemy on the only lines admitted as possible [...] the people agreed to resist rather than to follow the alternative role of preserving a friendly attitude to whoever was the more dominant of two powers in their midst. The confusion disclosed and later supported by facts is due to the Army claiming all prerogative to direct without a compensating experience, interest or competence. The position of the Assam government is that it has condoned this attitude by the Army Commander rather than support its own officer after having accorded to him a special assignment that even his enemies would have to admit could be best secured by him who had laboured 10 years in obscurity on the whole problem of Lushai administration. By no other background, by any stretch of imagination could the defence of the Lushai Hills ever have reached its present dimension.

In this quotation McCall makes several points that are relevant to our understanding of public diplomacy. The first surrounds the inconsistency in the interests that different institutions may have for trying to manipulate a foreign public. This is despite those institutions representing the same international actor. This divergence can lead to the exposure of fracture lines in that actor's narrative that increases the likelihood of nullification or aggravation of those audiences when some public diplomacy messages are received. To this end, the extent to which public diplomacy is ultimately self-interested and can be disingenuous – arguments that public diplomats would rather were kept peripheral among the foreign publics that they seek to influence – are more likely to become mainstream points of discussion. In McCall's case, he had a clear intuition and clarity of thought around mass communications and foresaw that the military were operating in a way that he considered to be damaging and his plans within Lushai Hills and also the broader war effort in that part of the world. He thought that the situation represented gross short-sightedness as it would likely have a negative impact on the ability of the British to defend the territory from the Japanese. This, he believed, was primarily because of the hierarchical, authoritarian and sometimes arrogant approach taken by militaries that would ultimately undermine the communitarian strategy he had pursued and which the Lushai people had responded positively to.

The second point that can be taken from the extended quotation above concerns the extent to which institutions can suffer from inertia in their decision-making when they are unable or unwilling to look for solutions beyond the portfolios that govern their operational structures. To this end, they often lack an introspective ability to assess the level of competence that their organisation has for a task. In the instance of the Lushai

Hills during World War II, it was McCall's opinion that the territory was best suited to a civilian approach and the Government of Assam signed off McCall's defence scheme for the area. However, the army's unwillingness to consider strategies from beyond the military portfolio, built on a blanket dismissal of those other approaches and coupled with a sense that civilian institutions ought to offer their service, led to strained relations in north-eastern India. The ICS's plans for the Lushai Hills were superseded by circumstances and by military pressure upon them to adhere to what the military deemed to be imperative to the security of the region. McCall's plans, and indeed his power and influence among the Lushai people, was thereby unsettling to the military command structure as he was operating outside of their control. He thus came to be viewed as a rogue no matter the actual success that his operation was having and his own dedication to the British Crown. To this end, there is evidence here of bureaucratic determinism where administrative control was deemed to be more important than solutions to the situation presenting itself.

These circumstances resemble the issues encountered by contemporary public diplomats who have discussed their frustrations at the incongruence between their communications activities and the strategies of other organs of the state. Militaries in particular, partly as a result of their organisational structures and values, often consider public communications activities to be a secondary or even tertiary concern behind battle tactics. This when public diplomacy scholars have spoken at length about the benefits of communications being incorporated into strategy planning from the beginning and at all levels (for example, Cull, 2010). Instead, foreign policy, whether involving the military or otherwise, is often formed with minimal initial input from public diplomacy experts, with the decisions then dictated to communications departments, leaving them to determine how best to 'sell' or 'dress up' a policy that has had only their modest contribution to its formation. To this end, perhaps an alternative would be to have policies that require less pretence in the first place, but that is a discussion for elsewhere.

An example of such retrospection towards the occurrences in the Lushai Hills occurred in a letter from Mills to Brigadier W. E. H. Talbot at the end of the war in 1945. He had been in charge of the 109th Indian Infantry Brigade assigned to jungle training in India's north-east during 1943.

> It is quite clear that these implications (a preference for civilian rather than military leadership in the Lushai Hills) were grasped by none other than [McCall] dated Mar 7th and sanctioned [by the Government of Assam] on Mar 13th 1942 for the Lushai Hills, and in principle for the Chin Hills as well. But it was not till many weeks had gone by that it began to become clear that (1) there was no one with total powers to organize totally (2) that the Assam government was following a policy of wishing the Superintendent to confine himself

> to the normal duties of a civil officer (despite authorising otherwise) and that matters concerning defence lay outside his jurisdiction and with the military only. (information in brackets added)

Thus, it appears that McCall's wartime civilian defence scheme for the Lushai Hills, approved by the Government of Assam at the outset of the conflict in early 1942, was very quickly superseded by the Shillong administration's emergent subservience to the military when its presence in the province escalated after the retreat from Burma during the spring of 1942. However, that subservience was never formalised. Indeed, Mills and McCall exchanged frank words during 1942 and 1943 wherein McCall made it clear that he was frustrated by what appeared to be the thwarting of his strategy through mixed messages from Shillong. This is understandable because at no point in the correspondences during late 1942 or early 1943 was the authorisation for his civilian defence initiative withdrawn and yet it became clear that the military wanted a greater role and saw McCall as operating beyond their command structure. McCall's dismissal thereby owes as much to the British reactions to the development of the war as it does to institutional inflexibility and the military's likely lobbying of Shillong for his removal. Upon word of McCall's removal, the Chiefs and Upas of the Lushai Hills wrote to Governor Clow to express their displeasure at the decision but did not declare themselves opposed to British rule.

Conclusion

The discussion of public diplomacy in the context of colonialism may sit awkwardly with some who argue that the events under consideration occurred before public diplomacy became a known terminology within political circles and academic inquiry. However, as this and other chapters in this volume make clear, public diplomacy provides a useful, insightful and appropriate framework to the critical consideration of some political communications from the late colonial epoch as these scenarios formed the learned basis of the postcolonial order in which public diplomacy programmes would become a mainstay of the Allied powers. Indeed, the communications activities that are now ably identified as public diplomacy have existed for much longer than the origins of the phrase, just as the concept of human rights has existed for longer than widespread familiarity with the term in public debate.

Beyond any discussion of whether the hegemonic status quo ought to be supported, reformed or overthrown, the case study surrounding A. G. McCall presented in this chapter has provided multidimensional insights into public diplomacy's position vis-à-vis hegemonic power structures. The crux of McCall's motivation was to prevent the Japanese, as imperial competitors, from achieving a foothold in a territory on the frontiers of

the British Empire. This he achieved by endearing himself to the people who saw the land as their ancestral home and becoming the personification of the integrity of his own power's interests. In this regard, McCall demonstrated the moral virtue so important to the quest for power in political affairs that the introduction to this volume highlighted when it discussed Nicholas Spykman's (1942) work. However, McCall and his wife also encouraged greater investment and dependency in those hegemonic power structures that the mainly tribal people of the Lushai Hills had been peripheral to until the mid-1930s. This they achieved primarily through improving their knowledge of public health, facilitating access to overseas markets for their products, and by synchronising their systems of local governance and inclinations towards moral virtues with those of the hegemonic power. Such encouragements have become the philosophical lifeblood of most public diplomacy today. To this end, the pledge of allegiance by the Lushai Hills chiefs and elders in April 1942 – joining hands to sing the British national anthem – was the culmination of a communications campaign developed with the foresight of Anthony Gilchrist McCall that sought to strengthen the hegemonic status of the British with a peripheral group of people that suddenly became important to the preservation of a wider imperial exercise.

Bibliography

Alexander, C., (2014), "The Public Diplomacy of Sub-State Actors: The Case of the Scottish Government with Malawi", *Palgrave Journal of Public Diplomacy and Place Branding*, 10(1), pp 70–86.

Alexander, C., (2019), *Administering Colonialism and War: The Political Life of Sir Andrew Clow of the Indian Civil Service*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Cull, N., (2010), "Public Diplomacy: Seven Lessons for its Future from its past", *Journal of Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*, 6(1), pp 11–17.

Gillespie, M., A. Webb, and G. Baumann, (2008), "Broadcasting Britishness: Strategic Challenges and the Ecology of Overseas Broadcasting by the BBC", *Historical Journal of Film, Television and Radio*, 28(4) pp 453–458.

Gilmour, D., (2007), *The Ruling Caste: Imperial Lives in the Victorian Raj*, London: Pimlico.

Manheim, J., (1994), *Strategic Public Diplomacy and American Foreign Policy: The Evolution of Influence*, New York: Oxford University Press.

McCall, A. G., (1949), *Lushai Chrysalis*, London: Luzac.

Memmi, A., (2003), *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, Abingdon, UK: Earthscan.

Puddington, A., (2000), *Broadcasting Freedom: The Cold War Triumph of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty*, Lexington: University Press of Kentucky.

Raghavaih, V., (1971), *Tribal Revolt*, Madras: Jupiter Press.

Rawnsley, G., (1996), *Radio Diplomacy and Propaganda: The BBC and Voice of America in International Politics, 1956–1964*, Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Sartre, J.-P., (1964), *Colonialism and Neocolonialism*, New York and London: Routledge.

Schindler, C., (2018), *The Origins of Public Diplomacy in US Statecraft: Uncovering a Forgotten Tradition*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Spykman, N., (1942), *America's Strategy in World Politics: The United States and the Balance of Power*, New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company.

Taylor, P., (2003), *Munitions of the Mind: A History of Propaganda from the Ancient World to the Present Era*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.

The Statesman, (1946 (Summer)), *A Civilian's Efforts during War Time*.

5 Colonial Subjects as Hegemonic Actors

V. S. Srinivasa Sastri's 1922 Public Diplomacy Tour of British Dominion Territories

Vineet Thakur

Introduction

Colin Alexander's definition of public diplomacy in this volume emphasizes three aspects. First, it is a political act carried out by, or at the behest of, organized actors, mostly states. Second, it is directed at foreign publics in the form of communication. And third, the intent behind these acts is strategic. My contribution in this book is primarily a case study which builds on the analytical leeway Alexander's definition provides. However, I also attempt to push the definition in a direction in which 'public diplomacy' is seldom considered. Instead of viewing public diplomacy as an organic composition of the act, the form and the intent, the case study here makes a case for seeing public diplomacy as an assemblage where meanings are negotiated in the myriad ways in which the act(or), the form and the intent interact.

In this chapter, I look at a forgotten slice of history from India's diplomatic past – the dominion tour of Valangaiman Sankaranarayana Srinivasa Sastri in 1922. The tour was undertaken with the purpose of convincing Dominion governments and their publics of the need to grant equal rights to their resident Indians. The revealing of this pre-independence instance of British Indian public diplomacy is a useful exercise in and of itself, considering how little we know about Indian diplomacy during colonial rule (see Thakur, 2017). However, allying with Alexander's chapter on British public diplomacy on colonial India and Sarah Graham's on the Indian National Congress in this book, I would also argue that public diplomacy offers us greater conceptual scope to think about colonial forms of diplomacy. Consequently, a discussion of Sastri's role as a public diplomat within a colonial setting provides a useful anecdote to the debates within this book about public diplomacy's relationship with hegemony and counter-hegemony and the various individuals who have committed their careers to the pursuit of either of those ends. Through the figure of Sastri, this chapter explores the fractured personality of the 'native diplomat' who, I argue, is a transversal being; a 'subject' who becomes, momentarily, a 'citizen' of the world.

A prominent Indian liberal leader during the inter-war period, Sastri emerged as a trusted diplomat in the 1920s. He first represented India's colonial regime at the Imperial Conference and at the League of Nations in 1921. Soon after he was designated as India's plenipotentiary to the Washington Naval Conference of 1921–1922. The tour of some of Britain's Dominion territories that is the focus of this chapter followed his time in the United States. He would go on to play an instrumental role in the Cape Town Agreement between India and South Africa in 1926–1927 and would become India's first agent to South Africa between 1927 and 1929.

Sastri's politics were complex. As Ragini Tharoor Srinivasan (2017: 134) notes, it reveals the 'vexed compatibility of reform and revolution, civility and catastrophe' within hegemonic and counter-hegemonic thought. Sastri was not a revolutionary – and history remembers him as a 'camp follower of the British'. For many, that charge is justified, given – as will be seen in this chapter – that he was an enthusiastic supporter of the empire/commonwealth. Perhaps such a position is inexcusable for those with more of a revolutionary spirit. However, as Srinivasan reminds us, this practice of reform and civility in politics 'constituted a calculated, even visionary' response to colonialism that created fertile ground for seeding constitutional politics in India.

The choice of Sastri as a diplomat of a colonial regime thus reveals a lot about the depth of the power dynamics of usurper and usurped within the colonial experience. It was in producing native leaders – who were manifestly original but sufficiently compliant – that colonialism recycled its own validity. Original leaders often cannot remain compliant for long unless they invoke a range of coping mechanisms to blind themselves as to their role within the exploitative system. Shaping the native into an ideal product of the intermixture of colonial-colonized cultural interface – blending their exotic charm with a hospitable cheeriness – is where colonialism finds its *raison d'être*. A native diplomat, like Sastri, was chosen because they were an ode to colonialism, a living tribute to the success of the civilizing mission.[1]

Contrastingly, the civilizing mission is also a self-negating idea. The more 'civilizing' that occurs the less the need for the mission itself. Ergo, colonialism's *raison d'être* can, and must, always remain a promise – the eternal promised land – with only a limited few having found access to it. The exceptional few are the ones who are ready to be paraded globally to provide colonialism with the moral authority and legitimacy that it so craves at least in part because the true extent of its exploitative core is only thinly veiled beneath the surface.

This hegemonic hybridity – where the native agency is imbricated within the very logic of the colonial structure – is revealing of the simultaneous empowering as well as emaciating of the 'native diplomat'. Sastri, as we'll see in the course of this chapter, plays the part: he utilizes,

rather than contests, the logic of imperial rule to justify and push for the equal treatment for Indians in the Empire. While this hybridity allows him to project his own personality as the embodiment of the cultured, right-deserving, Indian and thus appeal for the equality of Indians across the British Commonwealth, but he is also simultaneously trapped in his own exceptionalism. For he is cast as exceptional to his own people and in many ways his actions are defamatory to those people, his culture and himself.

Seen this way, here is thus a rooted ambivalence in colonial public diplomacy. Sastri represents the government of India, but only because his moral authority exceeds his government's. He is sent to educate the foreign publics and to convince them of the merit of the rights of Indians. However, the success of his communications is also a potential justification for the failure of his mission. In this case, colonial public diplomacy has no linear tales to tell. Operating in a sphere of contradictions – hegemony and counter-hegemony, exceptional-normal, public-colonial – colonial public diplomacy can only be understood through unravelling the constellation of its three component parts – the act(or), the form and the intent.

This chapter is based on archival research conducted in India, the United Kingdom and Canada. In regard to the information provided on Australia and New Zealand, the author has relied on the online archives of various local and national newspapers in circulation in 1922.

Background and Preparation for Sastri's Public Diplomacy Tour

London's hegemony within its Empire began to wane during the early years of the twentieth century and, with the extensive costs of World War I then brought to bear, the metropole had little choice but to allow the Dominion governments' greater influence over their own imperial governance. Between 1901 (the establishment of the Commonwealth of Australia) and the end of World War I, the Dominions had progressively asserted more control over their domestic policies. Increasingly then, racial segregation and overt discrimination based on racial lines, became a key area of contest wherein Britain, which had insisted on non-racial ways of exclusion (for example, education tests and property qualifications), was diverging from its Dominion governments who backed explicitly white supremacist legislation.

Indeed, from the 1890s, Asian immigration became one of the most contentious issues between Britain and its white settler frontiers (Atkinson, 2017; Lake and Reynolds, 2012). Opinion leaders in the dominions around this time talked in sub-human terms of a coming 'deluge' of 'swarming' Asian migrants and of the 'pollution' of the 'racial purity' of the white-ruled settler colonies of Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South

Africa. As Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds argue, W. E. B. Du Bois's historic reference to the emerging 'colour line' at the start of the twentieth century primarily pointed towards the relentless efforts in the Anglo-Saxon world to close off their borders to non-white immigration (Lake and Reynolds, 2012: 1).[2] The Commonwealth of Australia was proclaimed in 1901 in order to secure a 'White Australia', while Canada, New Zealand and South Africa also made strenuous efforts to limit and debar the entry of Asians (Japanese, Chinese and Indians) around the same time. These policies, it should be noted, were in addition to the appalling treatment laden upon the native communities of these territories.

Britain as the imperial power, however, saw these exclusionary and outright racist stances through a different political lens. Compelled by a combination of anti-racist consciousness within some echelons of British society; the colonial experience in India during the latter half of the nineteenth and early twentieth century vis-à-vis the rising tide of nationalism, home rule and eventually campaigns for independence; and its interests elsewhere including its treaties with China and Japan, the British government posited against imposing explicitly racial barriers on social opportunity, employment and travel. Instead, it pushed for alternative and seemingly non-racial criteria such as education tests and property requirements that would filter undesirables (Atkinson, 2017). To this end, the likelihood that a smattering of non-whites would fulfil the exclusionary criteria could usefully be evidenced by the establishment in response to any criticism that this was a pretence to more acute racist views.[3]

At the Imperial Conference of 1918, Satyendra Sinha, an Indian representative to the Conference, introduced a resolution that called for reciprocity between India and the Dominions in regards the question of equal treatment of each other's immigrants. The India Office in London, wary of a strong response from the Dominions, immediately added an acknowledgement of the right of the Dominions to determine the composition of their population through restriction on immigration. This dilution of the original resolution meant that the Dominions were able to retain sovereignty over the question of new arrivals to their territories, while also being encouraged to offer better protections to those already resident within their domain (Gorman, 2012: 115).

However, by the time of the next Imperial Conference three years later, the Dominions had either done nothing or had actually imposed more restrictive conditions. In early 1919, the South African government passed the Asiatic (Land and Trading Amendments) (Transvaal) Act, imposing further restrictions on Indians from owning companies. The same year New Zealand passed its Immigration Restrictions Amendment Act, which also contravened the 1918 resolution, and in the Canadian province of British Columbia, which hosted around 90 per cent of the Indian population resident in Canada, a measure introduced in the legislative assembly to confer votes on those Asians who

had served with the Canadian forces during World War I was defeated. Indeed, with increased urgency, white supremacist governments from across the Anglophone world were imposing harsher restrictions on non-whites. Lothrop Stoddard, the widely popular American white supremacist author of the time, wrote in his most notably work, *The Rising Tide of Colour*, that: 'nothing was more striking than the instinctive and instantaneous solidarity which binds together Australians and Afrikanders, Californians and Canadians, into a "sacred Union" at the mere whisper of Asiatic immigration' (Stoddard, 1923: 281).

With British interests elsewhere, Sastri, as India's representative to the 1921 Imperial Conference, brought a resolution that urged the Dominions to live up to the promise of the 1918 resolution. Sastri was able to convince the premiers of some Dominion territories (notably South Africa dissented) to pass a non-binding resolution that called for steps towards the improvement of the rights of resident Indians.[4] Moreover, each of the Dominion premiers made Sastri aware of the strong domestic opposition that they would face to the resolution, particularly if they were to take any more formal measures. Sastri's thus proposed that the Dominion premiers invite an Indian delegation that would encourage progress within the debate on the rights of Indians. This suggestion was readily accepted by all Dominion premiers, except South Africa's Jan Smuts.

The Silver-Tongued Orator of the Empire

Sastri's (1922) tour of the Dominions was funded by the British Indian government and Sastri travelled as India's representative following formal invite by each territory. There had been some debate as to whether he should be invited in a personal capacity (Australia initially insisted on this) or in official capacity as an Indian representative, but it was made clear to each Dominion that it would be the latter. His mandate from the Indian government was to, 'assist respective Governments to give practical effect to the resolution of the Imperial Conference of 1921' (India Office Records, 1922a). Beyond being tasked with canvasing lawmakers or finding out about the condition of Indians, Sastri's tour included the public diplomacy mandate to educate Dominion publics about India and to create a broader sympathy for the Indian cause (India Office Records, 1922a). After several rounds of discussions between Sastri, the India Office in London and the Indian government, it was decided that Sastri would go on a single-member mission, with a young civil servant, G. S. Bajpai, as his secretary.

Acclaimed as the 'silver-tongued orator of the Empire', Sastri's eloquence was more subtle than powerful but his delivery – measured, moderate and meticulous – held an unbending charm over his audience who became 'willing captives to measured strains of his verbal music' (Anjaneyulu, no date). Previous speeches that he had made in London,

Cambridge, Geneva, New York and Washington had all been well-received and he manufactured a great deal of respect from international peers and the news media. However, it was not just his delivery that made him an able 'native'. He was a self-confessed imperialist and, thus, the content and argument contained within those speeches was also attractive to many of those who came to listen, for it offered the confirmation of self-righteousness that usurpers, conscious or sub-conscious and colonial or otherwise, so often crave.

Sastri in Australia and New Zealand

The Australian journalist, A. D. Ellis (1922: 6), introduced Sastri to his readers in the Antipodes a few days before his arrival on 1 June 1922 as 'our first great racial ambassador' who 'moves in an orbit that transcends the conventional limits of international diplomacy'. Sastri's visit to the Dominions, Ellis continued, might have an immediate purpose, of 'interpret(ing) the aspirations of his fellow-countrymen, to seek our understanding and cooperation' but this was tenaciously pursued in order to 'forge some tangible and material links in the bonds which … will ultimately unite in amity the Eastern and Western civilisations' (Ellis, 1922: 6). Tasked with 'increasing the understanding and co-operation existing between diverse racial elements of the Empire', Sastri's mission was of the greatest significance to the British peoples (Ellis, 1922: 6). Adelaide's local newspaper, The Chronicle (1922: 42), called Sastri 'one of the most remarkable personalities in India and in the wider sphere of world politics'. Whereas the Australian and New Zealand Press were particularly impressed by Sastri's work for the Servants of India Society (of which he was the President), which required him to live in poverty; his 'self-abnegation' and a sense of 'patriotic self-sacrifice' was held as a high virtue, especially, they emphasized, coming from a 'coloured man' (West Gippsland Gazette, 1922: 2).

Between 2 June and 6 July 1922, Sastri visited all of Australia's provinces, except Tasmania. In his month-long packed schedule that took him to Perth, Adelaide, Brisbane, Melbourne and Sydney, he made several speeches to the provincial and Federal parliamentarians, elitist clubs and the general public, gave interviews to the press, and met politicians from different political parties as well as Indian residents. This pattern was repeated in New Zealand, where he spent two weeks on the north island (Sastri, 1923: 7).

His speeches broadly iterated two points to which the speech at Perth in Western Australia provides a first class examples (see Sastri, 1924a). First, he emphasized the existence of the new doctrine of the British Commonwealth of Nations. This new Commonwealth which emerged after World War I, he argued, was 'no longer based on domination, on conquest or on exploitation, but … on ideas of brotherhood, of equality

and of absolute and even-handed justice all around' (Sastri, 1924a: 257). Second, in this new Commonwealth, India had 'acquired a place of undisputed equality … which has not been won by force of arms exerted by brother against brother, but which has been won by honourable participation in the risks, perils and sacrifices of the Great War' (Sastri, 1924a: 258). Both required that the indignities and disabilities that Indians faced in various parts of the Empire, 'sometimes by law, sometimes by rules and regulations having the force of law; but very often by prejudices', be removed (Sastri, 1924a: 259). In the 'kinship of spirit', he appealed for the Dominions to grant equal rights to Indians (Sastri, 1924a: 267).

However, Sastri also pointed out that it was in his audiences' self-interests to adapt to the Indian cause. Appeals to morality and justice aside, he also argued that the physical existence of the Empire was at stake. The Indian nationalists led by Gandhi et al., Sastri argued, had emphasized the ill-treatment of Indians as 'outcastes, bearers of burdens; never, never sharers of privilege' across the Empire and used that as a reason for seeking India's separation (Sastri, 1924a: 254–265). Sastri urged his audience to see the rights of Indians within their domain as a chance to undermine the nationalist movement. In so doing, Sastri placed himself in direct opposition to the counter-hegemonic movement of some of his countrymen. It is one of Sastri's most unashamedly pro-hegemonic utterances in all his speeches on the tour wherein he provided his audience with advice on defeating the Indian nationalist movement.

Sastri's reception in the Antipodes was a mix of patronizing amazement and stupefying awe. Hailed for his 'memorable eloquence', one West Australian (1922: 10) reader called him the 'Lloyd George of India', while another listener wrote to The Advertiser (1922: 12) in Adelaide noting that '[h]e asks very little, simply for his countrymen to be allowed a vote. Why should we not grant it? No just objection can exist'. His performances were applauded even by the Australian Prime Minister of the time, William Hughes, noting that India's case had 'gained in weight by the eloquence and reasonableness with which it had been urged' (cited in The Queenslander, 1922: 9). In the New Zealand parliament Sastri's speech was hailed as 'the most perfect example of public speaking heard for many years in the parliament building' with William Massey, the New Zealand prime minister, in a fit of exuberance while calling for three cheers for the guest, exclaiming, 'Three hearty cheers for our fellow citizen – don't forget, our fellow citizen' (cited in the Evening Star, 1922a: 3). Being a 'citizen' was deemed an honour for Sastri but perhaps it was also a subtle reminder that he was not actually a citizen.

In contrast, those more critical of Sastri's speeches questioned how much of these praises were because of the colour of his skin. An Australian correspondent in the New Zealand Herald (1922: 5) attributed Sastri's appeal to his 'oriental impassiveness'. Another writer, A. G. Stephens (1922: 2), writing in the *Northern Champion* in New South Wales, argued

that Sastri's was impressive only because his speech comes as 'a surprise to plain citizens not accustomed (mildly to phrase it) to pay high respect to a brown skin and a turban'. Stephens (1922) would continue by saying that they see 'suddenly a power of mind, a command of language, and a fluency of utterance, rarely met among English public speakers, and exhibit the traditional perplexity regarding the pearl in the oyster – they wonder how the dickens it got there'.

Sastri had arrived in Australia amidst a public debate in the country about the feasibility of maintaining the 'White Australia' policy, especially in the tropical parts of Northern Australia, and his audiences anxiously awaited how he would approach this topic (see Daily Mail, 1922: 6). Henry Barwell, South Australia's Premier, had publicly advocated bringing coloured labour into tropical Australia. Supporters of Barwell pointed to the failure of 'White Australia' to develop the north, while the opponents, especially the Australian Labour Party, warned about the dangers of turning Australia into South Africa's Natal province – where the Indian population had swelled to about 140,000 people after over 5 decades of indenture.[5] One Barwell supporter, Matthew Cranston (1922: 4), argued that India could provide Australia not only labour but also, evidenced by Sastri's own bearing, 'men of the highest culture'.

Sastri, mindful that 'an overwhelming majority' of Australians considered White Australia 'sacrosanct', was careful not step on too many toes over the issue and so daintily avoided raising the matter in his speeches (Sastri, 1923: 5). However, in Melbourne, when an interviewer probed him further, he was no longer able to evade the matter. He was forthright that in principle Indians did not regard White Australia as consistent with the integrity and ethos of the British Empire. A subject of the Empire should be able to travel freely within it and be able to develop themselves to the best of their capability. The White Australia policy went against that imperial code. However, he added, his mission was not meant to question it. In response to the anxieties over Indian emigration to the Dominions, India had passed the Indian Emigration Act in March 1922 which now forbid indenture emigration to other countries. India had thus lived up to its commitments made under the 1918 and 1921 Imperial Conference resolutions. It was now incumbent upon the Dominions, including Australia, to provide equal rights to the Indians already resident in their countries (Sastri, cited in The Ballarat Star, 1922: 3). His tone was sterner on 13 June at the Victorian branch of the Royal Colonial Institute in Melbourne where he concluded: 'We … ask you for nothing but equality. You dare not, you cannot, and I know, you will not, deny it' (cited in The Brisbane Courier, 1922a: 10).

Critics in India, including H. S. L. Polak (1922: 194), accused him of sacrificing Indians at the altar of White Australia. While in Australia, the Labour Party suspected him of attempting to 'white ant' (subvert from within) the principle of White Australia (Daily Telegraph, 1922b: 8;

Sastri, 1923: 4). The Labour Party feared, as Sastri's Secretary Bajpai wrote to the India Office in London, 'somewhere, in the dim distance, the spectre of an Indian invasion of Australia' (India Office Records, 1922b). To assuage their fears, Sastri addressed a Labour meeting in Melbourne's Trade Hall Council and also met Labour leaders there informally. In public, Labour leaders, while showing solidarity with the Indian workers in their struggle for home rule, questioned Sastri's concerns over citizenship rights for a few Indians in Australia, especially when he could devote energies to doing the much more important work of raising the abject levels of poverty in India (see The Argus, 1922: 11; Daily Telegraph, 1922a: 6). In an article provocatively entitled 'What is the Sastri Move?' (Daily Standard, 1922: 4) a Labour sympathizer berated the 'lengthy capitalist press notices' for loudly and perhaps disingenuously heralding Sastri's visit. These critics saw Sastri's mission as an assault against transnational white solidarity. Australia and New Zealand were only a warm-up though according to the article. The real targets were Canada and South Africa where Indians were in larger numbers.

An Evening Star (1922b: 4) writer cautioned against Sastri's 'stirring appeals to abstract justice', arguing that New Zealand could afford to take a lenient stance on Indians but in places like Natal in South Africa where Indians outnumbered the whites by almost 36 per cent it was unreasonable to ask whites to grant equal rights to Indians. Urging New Zealanders not to fall 'under the spell of the charmer', the writer implied that, while Sastri may be a man of high culture and impeccable standards, the vast majority of Indians (and particular to those who emigrated to other parts of the Empire) were not. An anonymous writer in Adelaide's The Advertiser (1922: 12) claimed that Sastri's assertions of the equality of Indians in the Empire under the term 'British Commonwealth of Nations' were 'manifestly ridiculous'. India was not a nation, but a territory of divided people on the basis of religion, culture, foods, class and caste; and thus did not deserve equal consideration within the Empire. He warned that Sastri, whose 'religious faith has biased and warped his character', had a concealed motive of inducing Australia to abandon its 'White Australia' policy. A. G. Stephens (1922: 2), in perhaps some of the most explicitly racist language seen on the issue urged that 'High policy counsels us to keep European blood pure. Rightly we may dread the extension of Eurasian life in Australia. After electoral rights come human right; and it is good to block the smallest leaks in our racial dyke against the tide of overwhelming Asia'.

Curiously, the frantic nature of these calls for transnational white solidarity also indicated how effective Sastri's 'rhetoric' had been. Sastri generally received an enthusiastic response; his meetings were well attended and eagerly reported. Bajpai cabled the India Office that 'by his eloquence, sanity and moderation' Sastri had created a great impression (India Office Records, 1922b). In private, even Labour leaders seemed more sympathetic.

But this was also largely because, as Sastri (1923: 12) acknowledged in his report, he was seen as an exception to Indians in general.

Although almost every leader in Australia, including from the publicly stubborn Labour Party, gave him positive assurances during personal counsel, the results were not entirely immediate in the domain of public rhetoric let alone legislation. Notably, the Labour Government in Queensland had removed restrictions on Indians working on banana plantations in Queensland, which was a significant concession – but that was all. Prime Minister Hughes, who had somewhat of a reputation for being opposed to Asian immigration, was also very sympathetic to Sastri's appeals. He told Sastri: '[y]ou have achieved wonders, and in my opinion have removed for all time those prejudices which formerly prevented the administration of our countrymen resident in Australia to the enjoyment of full rights of citizenship' (cited in The Brisbane Courier, 1922c: 7). Sastri was aware that Hughes faced several domestic challenges; he had low approval ratings but he believed that there was now wider support across the Australian political spectrum for further enfranchisement of Indians towards citizenship and wider rights. Hughes wrote to Sastri that: 'you have brought within the range of practical politics a reform but for your visit would have been most improbable, if not impossible, of achievement' (cited in Sastri, 1923: 4). It took two more years for Indians to be granted franchise at the Dominion level in Australia, although by then Hughes was already out of power. Queensland granted the franchise to Indians in 1930 and Western Australia in 1934 (Allen, 2018).

In New Zealand, Sastri gathered that the total number of Indians was small (around 550–600) and the problems faced by them were minimal. Indians had only two specific complaints: they were excluded from receiving old-age pensions, and they had difficulty in securing employment. In the case of former, no Indian resident in New Zealand was old enough to be considered eligible for the Old Age Pensions Act (and this was to remain so for many years). Since it was not considered a pressing matter the New Zealand Government informed Sastri that no amendments were proposed. With regards to employment of Indians, Sastri (1923: 8) observed that while there was societal prejudice against Indians (although much less prevalent than Australia), the government took a stronger stance against discrimination faced by Indians in employment schemes. The New Zealand government also agreed to relax two specific provisions on the New Zealand Immigrations Restrictions Act of 1920, which were restrictive towards Indians. Sastri and Bajpai left New Zealand quite satisfied and in general pleased with their efforts.

Sastri in Canada

Arriving in Victoria, British Columbia, in early August, Sastri and Bajpai sensed a completely different mood from the Antipodes. The Pacific

Coast of the United States and Canada had been the hotbed of anti-Asian immigration sentiment since late nineteenth century. In Australia and New Zealand the public mood against Asians was mostly against the Japanese and the Chinese. However, in Canada the anti-immigrant sentiment was equally strong against Indians and particularly in British Columbia where the majority of Indians lived. There were only about 1200 Indians but this population had reduced substantially from its pre-war strength of about 6000 mostly because of the severe restrictions on bringing wives and children after the conflict (Sastri, 1924c: 443). The Asian Exclusion League, a white supremacist organization which originated in California but which had also opened a branch in British Columbia and which had stoked some of the civil unrest behind riots in Vancouver in 1907, had recently brought together several church leaders, trade unionists, business people and veterans of the War to issue a call for prevention of all Asian immigration. To make matters more hostile, of the Indian diasporic communities in the White Dominions, the Indians in Canada were also the most radical (Lal, 1979).

Canada's Prime Minister, W. L. MacKenzie King, had only been in the incumbent for a little over 6 months when Sastri landed in British Colombia. King was considerably less sympathetic to the Indian cause than his predecessor, Arthur Meighen, who Sastri knew well and would surely have helped to optimize the tour. King's PhD thesis, completed at Harvard in 1909, had been on 'Oriental Immigration to Canada' and he had authored a report in 1908 which strongly opposed Asian immigration and emphatically proposed to keep Canada white (see Hutchinson, 1953). Even if he could be convinced to change his views, his government was running on a slender majority (118 out of 235) and was adverse to risk. It seemed therefore improbable that he would antagonize The Asian Exclusion League and the strongly anti-immigration parliamentarians of British Columbia (*The Australian*, 1922: 3).

On arrival Sastri (1923: 6) was given a 'mere suggestion', but in reality 'a grave hint', on behalf of the Prime Minister, that he should not make any public speeches. Sastri was displeased at such a 'gag', believing that upholding it would constitute a dereliction of his mission and an affront to the Indian government that was his sponsor. His mission was primarily about generating public sympathy for the rights of Indians, which he could not do without speaking in public (Sastri, 1923: 6). As a way out, Sastri proposed to consult the premier of British Columbia, John Oliver, on the matter, since it was British Columbia where any trouble was expected.

Sastri met Oliver and his Cabinet, who heard him 'with astonishment and pleasure' and eventually consented to Sastri speaking in public (Sastri, 1923: 6). However, unlike Australia and New Zealand where he attempted to influence provincial governments first, in Canada Sastri had to primarily aim at the Dominion government to enfranchise Indians. His chances of seeking relief from a strongly anti-Asian legislative assembly

in British Columbia were practically nil, and accordingly he declared that he had abandoned the hope for a legislative action enfranchising Indians in the province (cited in The Press, 1922: 7).

Furthermore, unlike Australia and Canada, the Indian community in British Columbia also 'proved to be difficult of access and reluctant to help' in furthering Sastri's mission. The influence of radical organizations and publications from the American West Coast was a factor in shaping the Sikh opinion there. Sikh leaders passed a resolution in Vancouver that Sastri should not be approached by any member in Canada. Eventually, however, Sastri was able to secure information from them on an undertaking that he would not make any representation to the Canadian government in their name, but only in the name of the Government of India (Sastri, 1923: 7).

Sastri (1923: 6) by his own account had a difficult meeting with the Sikh Community in a Gurudwara in Victoria, the only occasion where he addressed Indians. For over two and a half hours, Sastri was heckled, 'lectured on the error of [his] ways', and asked to return to India. He returned 'a sadder and wiser man' and blamed this on the 'protracted and bitter struggle of Sikhs in Canada' with emigration. Especially the memories of the Komagata Maru incident of 1914 when Indians aboard a Japanese steamship had been refused entry to Canada upon arrival at Vancouver and had been forced to return to Calcutta (Sastri, 1923: 7). Despite not stating it in his report and short of a crisis of self, the meeting with the Sikhs appears to have caused Sastri to undertake a degree of introspection around the narrative of his mission and the wider affiliations that he held dear.

Sastri addressed several public gatherings and discussed the franchise question with representatives of labour organizations. The Vancouver Sun (1922a: 1) noted his 'world fame as an able statesman'. But his speeches were distinctively shriller from those in the Antipodes. Following his experiences in British Columbia, at the Reform Club in Montreal, Sastri started his remarks in an unusually combative manner and, to some extent, demonstrated a shift in his ideology:

> Neither Britain nor any Dominion can afford to play bully with India any longer, and we in India, let me tell you once for all, are determined to be bullied no longer. If we are going to be equal partners with the rest of the Empire in the maintenance of peace, we will contribute what we can to its might, strength and majesty.... Otherwise, much as we should regret it, we must seek our political salvation outside of this great political organization.
>
> (cited in The Brisbane Courier, 1922b: 7)

The narrative displayed here was, in fact, not that dissimilar to the position of the Indian nationalists that he had castigated earlier in his tour.

Indian nationalists only made full independence their goal at the end of the 1920s (see Sarah Graham's chapter in this book). The *Montreal Gazette* noted that Sastri was 'nothing if not frank and blunt in telling of the terms under which India is willing to remain within the Empire' (cited in Sastri, 1924b). The more sympathetic press praised him. The Vancouver Sun (1922b: 4) called his speech 'captivating in its boldness, disarming in its consummate tact' which evoked 'a storm of approval'. His appeal to the duty of 'higher imperialism' was 'one of the loftist that has been made' and 'humanity demand[ed] that the East Indians in British Columbia be given the franchise'. Leon Ladner (1922), the Conservative Party representative from Vancouver, wrote that the speech had an important effect on public opinion in British Columbia. The success of the speech could be gauged from the fact, he wrote, that none of the anti-Asian organizations and complainants had criticized Sastri, even though his speech was published verbatim in most of the newspapers.

In his farewell speech in Canada, he argued that franchise of Indians may not be that important from the perspective of material changes, but as a matter of principle of equality on which the British Empire must now craft its new form. He added 'in the first place it will teach the people of Canada, who require that little education, that they have no right to take away the rights of citizenship from fellow-citizens within the Empire' (Sastri, 1924c: 317).

The distinct shift in Sastri's tone and position during his time in Canada was unmistakable. Towards the end of his tour Sastri (1923: 7) had a rather combative meeting with MacKenzie King where he refuted the points the Canadian Premier made about the difficulties of granting franchise to Indians. King had argued that the government only had a majority in one house of the parliament and thus could not ensure the success of a measure to enfranchise Indians. Sastri pointed out that from the opposition, the United Farmer's Party had voted with the Government on all progressive measures, so they were quite unlikely to oppose the move especially since the party did not have a big presence in British Columbia. King then took refuge under the policy and tradition of the Liberal Party to not go against the provincial government in matters of franchise. Again, Sastri pointed to precedents which went against King's argument. Finally, King attempted to disassociate Canada from the 1921 resolution by saying that Meighen's support of the 1921 Resolution was made in his personal capacity and he did not bind the Canadian Government or parliament to it. Sastri left the meeting quite clear that King had been evasive and quite simply did not want to give Indians more rights.

Nevertheless, Sastri got assurances from other members of the Liberal Party and with J. S. Walton of the franchise committee 'even going so far as say that he would bring in a bill next session and force King's hand' (see India Office Records, 1922b). These signs, Sastri wrote in his

confidential report, pointed to 'a softening of prejudice and a broadening of prejudice'. Seeing his primary task to be of 'political education', he stated: '[i]n British Columbia, I am not hopeful of immediate results; but of the ultimate success of continued endeavors I have no doubt'. Bajpai was also of the view that they had been 'successful beyond expectation'.

However, Sastri overestimated his efforts in Canada. Indians in British Columbia were only able to gain franchise in Canada in 1947. At the Imperial Conference of 1923, Mackenzie King, who had otherwise assured Sastri that the Indian franchise was desirable, argued that Sastri's speeches had a counter effect of organizing 'the forces that were opposed to granting the franchise to Indians' (Rao, 1963: 126). However, the Canadian Prime Minister was not the only one to complain. At the end of the year 1922, Lord Reading underhandedly recommended removing Sastri's name from the list of honourees for the year (see India Office Records, 1922c). Sastri's criticisms of the British government in Canada, Reading argued, were only the beginning of what could be expected. 'I'm rather expecting much more of this from him', he wrote to Peel. Although sly, he was quite prophetic. In the summer of 1923, incensed at the British settlement in Kenya and the great injustice done to Indians in the country, Sastri was 'roused to incandescent indignation' which 'drove him for once in his life to advocate retaliation and Non-cooperation, irrespective of consequences' (Rao, 1963: 143). In less than a year, the critic of Gandhi's non-cooperation had ironically come to advocate non-cooperation with the British on Kenya (see Hughes, 2006; Sastri, 1924d: 197).

Conclusion

Sastri left Canada on 22 September 1922, his 53rd birthday. Although Canada had proven to be much more difficult than Australia and New Zealand in terms of hostility to his public diplomacy mandate, he was satisfied overall at his own performance. The Australian and New Zealand governments had granted some legislative concessions and been most amiable to him and even Canada had promised to consider his requests positively. However, as he emphasized himself, the more significant aspect of his tour was that this was the first instance when India had directly negotiated with Dominions on matters of mutual interest through accredited representatives. Although far from anti-imperial India could now claim a quasi-independent international diplomatic identity separate from London. This would have constitutional significance in later years and would also develop and familiarize others with what would become a foreign policy pillar of Nehruvian morality in independent India.

More important for the context of this book though, Sastri's tour is noteworthy for its colonial and hegemonic hybridity. On the one hand it represents one of the few instances of a colonial subject advocating for

the rights of his fellow compatriots. However, on the other there is little doubt that the tour is also affirming of the colonial relationship and the power dynamics within it. Sastri enacts his public diplomacy not just as a representative of British India but indeed champions the idea of the British Commonwealth. Nevertheless, the tour also represented a voyage of self-reflection for Sastri in which he was taken to the brink of his own pro-imperial volitions. Indeed, his timely return to India ultimately preserved any more fundamental crisis of self, ideology or identity. Therefore, perhaps it can be said that Sastri's tour represents a movement from the public diplomacy's centre to its frontiers and back again, both ideologically and geographically. Furthermore, for Sastri himself the tour was a voyage into the moral and egocentric self. It tested him and his political positions and at times he wavered towards the advocation of a more revolutionary path despite his self-interests lying elsewhere. Ultimately, his commitment to reform, civility and dialogue was retained though.

Finally, it is interesting that in arguing for granting equal treatment to Indians, Sastri did not include other non-whites living under such regimes. Conspicuous by its absence is a discussion of Aboriginal rights in Australia, Maori rights in New Zealand or First Nation rights in Canada. The right he is pushing for is actually sovereign equality for Indians not racial equality for humankind. Indeed, he treads a careful line of self-censorship in each of the Dominions that he travels to. This is especially evident surrounding the White Australia policy though. To this end, Sastri's tour ultimately only occurred by virtue of his support for the hegemonic status quo and even then he was kept under close supervision, albeit from a far. These anxious discussions in London and Delhi about Sastri as he began to waver in Canada thus confirm the extent to which public diplomacy is used by hegemonic actors for the protection or advancement of their interests; a vehicle towards power rather than any tendency towards virtuosity or the upholding of moral principle no matter how virtuous the narrative may seem.

Notes

1. Another example is Apartheid South Africa parading diplomats from the so-called TBVC states – Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei.
2. See also Sarah Graham's chapter in this volume concerning Du Bois and the 'colour line'.
3. The extent to which racist views remained institutionalized within the British government in London and in the British government of India should not be underestimated. Throughout this period and into the postcolonial era of mass migration from the former colonies to Britain, explicitly racist views about non-whites were prevalent among the British political classes. Indeed, racial prejudices remain in some parts of the British political establishment – certain hostilities towards migration within the current Home Office, for example.

4. The resolution made no mention of improved rights for natives and thus ought not to be thought of as a piece of anti-racist legislation at any fundamental level.
5. Natal was one of the four provinces in South Africa. The others being: Transvaal, Orange Free State and the Cape.

Bibliography

The Advertiser (Adelaide), (1922), 'Mr. Sastri', 8 June 1922.

Allen, M., (2018), "'I Am a British subject': Indians in Australia Claiming Their Rights, 1880–1940", *History Australia*, 15(3), pp. 499–518.

Anjaneyulu, D., (no date), "The Sastri Style", Available from Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi: Writings by Others, S. No. 25, VSS Papers (II Instalment), NMML.

The Argus (Melbourne), (1922), "India's Aims. Mr. Sastri at Trades Hall. Officials ask questions", 14 June 1922.

Atkinson, D. C., (2017), *The Burden of White Supremacy: Containing Asian Immigration in the British Empire and the United States*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

The Australian (Perth), (1922), "White Australia. Mr. Sastri's Visit to Canada", 17 November 1922.

The Ballarat Star (Victoria), (1922), "Srinivasa Sastri welcomed to Melbourne; Interesting Interview, Patience and Resignation India's National Character", 12 June 1922.

The Brisbane Courier, (1922a), "Indians' status. Appeal for Equality. Mr. Sastri in Melbourne", 13 June 1922.

The Brisbane Courier, (1922b), "Status of Indians. Sastri in Canada", 12 September 1922.

The Brisbane Courier, (1922c), "Sastri's Mission. Australia's Position. Letter from Mr. Hughes", 16 September 1922.

The Chronicle (Adelaide), (1922), "The Right Hon. V. S. Sastri: A Distinguished Indian. Visit to Adelaide", 10 June 1922.

Cranston, M., (1922), "White Australia and Coloured labour", *Register* (Adelaide), 16 June 1922, p. 4.

Daily Mail (Brisbane), (1922), "Notes of the Day. Mr. Srinivasa Sastri's visit", 5 June 1922.

Daily Standard (Brisbane), (1922), "What is the Sastri move?", 21 June 1922.

Daily Telegraph (Sydney), (1922a), "Srinivasa Sastri. In Sydney Today. Claims of Indians", 14 June 1922.

Daily Telegraph (Sydney), (1922b) "Labour and Mr. Sastri", 22 June 1922.

Ellis, A. D., (1922), "Srinivasa Sastri: A Racial Ambassador; visit to Australia", *The Argus* (Melbourne), 27 May 1922, p. 6.

Evening Star (New Zealand), (1922a), "Mr. Sastri's Mission", 11 July 1922.

Evening Star (New Zealand), (1922b), "Full Status", 12 July 1922.

Gorman, D., (2012), *The Emergence of International Society in the 1920s*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hughes, D. L., (2006), "Kenya, India and the British Empire Exhibition of 1924", *Race and Class*, 47(4), pp. 66–85.

Hutchinson, B., (1953), *The Incredible Canadian: A Candid Portrait of Mackenzie King; His Works, His Times, and His Nation*, New York: Longmans, Green and Co.

India Office Records, (1922a), "Brief of Instructions for the Right Honourable Srinivasa Sastri", Available from British Library, London: IOR/L/E/7/1242, F.No. 2547, India Office Records and Private Papers (IORPP).

India Office Records, (1922b), "Bajpai to J. C. Walton, 16 June 1922", *Sir John Walton Papers*, Available from British Library, London: MSS EUR D. 545/1, IORPP, BL.

India Office Records, (1922c), "Peel to Reading, 28 December 1922", Available from British Library, London: Departmental Files, MSS EUR 238/5, IORPP, BL.

Jagadisan, T. N., (1969), *V. S. Srinivasa Sastri*, New Delhi: Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India.

Ladner, L., (1922), "Ladner to Meighen, 19 September 1922", Available from Library and Archives of Canada, Ottawa: MG26-I. Volume/box number: 98. Copied container number: C-3455, f. 056205-056206, LAC.

Lake, M., and H. Reynolds, (2012), *Drawing the Colour Line: White Men's Countries and the International Challenge of Racial Equality*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lal, B., (1979), *East Indians in British Columbia, 1904–1914: An Historical Study in Growth and Integration*, Master's Thesis, The University of British Columbia. Available from World Wide Web: https://open.library.ubc.ca/media/download/pdf/831/1.0093725/1 [Accessed 28th July 2020].

New Zealand Herald, (1922), "Servant of India", 16 May 1922.

Polak, H. S. L., (1922), "Notes and News", *Indian Opinion*, 34(20), pp. 194–197.

The Press (Vancouver), (1922), "Status of Indians. Mr. Sastri in British Columbia", 23 August 1922.

The Queenslander, (1922), "Mr. Sastri's Visit", 1 July 1922.

Rao, P. K., (1963), *The Right Honourable V. S. Srinivasa Sastri: A Political Biography*, Bombay: Asia Publishing House.

Sastri, V. S. S., (1922), "Sastri to Ramaswami, 15 August 1922", Available from Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi: Subject File 5, VSS Papers, 1st Instalment, NMML.

Sastri, V. S. S., (1923), Report by the Right Hon'ble V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, P.C., Regarding His Deputation to the Dominions of Australia, New Zealand and Canada, Simla: Government Central Press.

Sastri, V. S. S., (1924a), "Speech at Perth (1922)", In: V. S. S. Sastri (ed.), *Speeches and Writings of the Right Honourable V. S. Srinivasa Sastri*, Vol. 1, Madras: G. Natesan and Co.

Sastri, V. S. S., (1924b), "Speech at the Reform Club, Montreal (1922)", In: V. S. S. Sastri (ed.), *Speeches and Writings of the Right Honourable V. S. Srinivasa Sastri*, Vol. 1, Madras: G. Natesan and Co.

Sastri, V. S. S., (1924c), "Speech at the Canadian Club (1922)", In: V. S. S. Sastri (ed.), *Speeches and Writings of the Right Honourable V. S. Srinivasa Sastri*, Vol. 1, Madras: G. Natesan and Co.

Sastri, V. S. S., (1924d), "Kenya Lost, Everything Lost (1923)", In: V. S. S. Sastri (ed.), *Speeches and Writings of the Right Honourable V. S. Srinivasa Sastri*, Vol. 1, Madras: G. Natesan and Co.

Srinivasan, R. T., (2017), "Moderating Revolution: V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, Toussaint Louverture, and the Civility of Reform", *The Comparatist*, 41, pp. 132–151.

Stephens, A. G., (1922), "Indians in Australia. The Rt. Hon. Srinivasa Sastri", *Northern Champion* (Taree, NSW), 29 July 1922.

Stoddard, L., (1923), *The Rising Tide of Colour: Against White World Supremacy*, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

Thakur, V., (2017), "Liberal, Liminal and Lost: India's First Diplomats and the Narrative of Foreign Policy", *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 45(2), pp. 232–258.

The Vancouver Sun, (1922a), "Race and Creed no barrier, says Sastri", 17 August 1922.

The Vancouver Sun, (1922b) "The Higher Imperialism", 25 August 1922.

Walker, D. E., (1976), *Srinivasa Sastri and His Dominion Tour of 1922*, MA Thesis, University of London, Available from British Library, London: MSS EUR Photo EUR 299, IORPP, BL.

West Australian (Perth), (1922), "Mr. Sastri's visit. To the Editor", 13 June 1922.

West Gippsland Gazette (Warrangui), (1922), "A Great Indian", 4 July 1922.

6 Non-governmental Public Diplomacy Networks

The Indian National Congress and US Public Opinion, 1914–1947

Sarah E. Graham

Introduction

International political communications by non-governmental organizations must meet certain criteria if those activities are to be deemed public diplomacy. This is because public diplomacy is situated as a form of *diplomacy* and diplomacy is dominated by political actors with mandates or by actors with governmental ambitions. Non-governmental public diplomacy should therefore include efforts by the actor, or its affiliates, to articulate a social, cultural, economic, political and/or environmental worldview. This should be done as part of proto-diplomatic efforts wherein the actor seeks a greater role within future governance. The communications should also be at least in part a critique of, or response to, the narratives of relevant political allies, incumbents or adversaries, who may also be public diplomacy actors and who may be promoting competing narratives within the international domain.

In the decades before Indian independence from British rule in 1947, the Indian National Congress (INC) and other anti-colonial organizations in India sought to convince international audiences of India's fitness for self-rule. The chapters in this edited volume written by Colin Alexander and Vineet Thakur cover this period from the perspective of the British and those aligned to them. Indian nationalist groups countered such imperialist narratives with an innovative public diplomacy campaign of their own. Public opinion in the United States, especially the rising African American civil rights movement, was a key constituency for these efforts. Alongside the actions of the African National Congress during the latter years of Apartheid in South Africa (which Amiri and Kihlgren Grandi touch on in Chapter 9 of this book), the INC's efforts to create trans-continental sympathy for the plight of oppressed people represents a significant early example of non-governmental public diplomacy. A deeper understanding of these efforts thus makes a valuable contribution to the wider themes of hegemony, counter-hegemony and the contestation of global moral authority that are found within this book.

Between the start of World War I in 1914 and Indian independence in 1947, several political organizations within India's anti-colonial movement performed international political communications in ways that would now be considered non-governmental public diplomacy. The most prominent of those was the INC, which conducted a sophisticated, multi-faceted and influential international communications campaign. The INC's international communications initially consisted of calls for more Indian representation and autonomy within the Empire, before shifting to the promotion of a vision of an independent sovereign state. The INC thus increasingly presented itself to foreign publics as a government-in-waiting for greater India, with a domestic agenda that centered on eliminating poverty and fostering religious pluralism, as well as promoting economic self-sufficiency and racial equality (Nehru, 1961). Similar principles informed the INC's vision of a reformed international system, in which formerly colonized societies such as India's could pursue economic development, cultural empowerment and peaceful strategic co-existence on its own terms (Singh, 2010). Through these discourses, the INC forged linkages with other anti-colonial nationalist movements, as well as Western left-wing movements and civil rights organizations. Although the INC's public diplomacy was thus informed by the "governmental" imperative of strategic power accumulation—to weaken British rule and present itself as the presumptive government of independent India—it was simultaneously revolutionary, counter-hegemonic, and founded on broad principles of morality and justice.

The INC's efforts to engage the US public as potential allies of Indian nationalism presents an especially important case study of non-governmental, counter-hegemonic public diplomacy in the early twentieth century. It is an especially significant case insofar as public diplomacy scholarship addresses in different kinds of communication and the different power relations in which communication can operate. The INC and its American supporters garnered sympathetic public opinion in the US using a range of communicative tools that encompassed, among others, sharp rhetorical challenges to the status quo, moral suasion, aesthetic performances, dispelling stereotypes and the promotion cultural understanding. Tracing the causal impacts of *any* form of public diplomacy is difficult, given that public diplomacy operates at the intangible levels of discourse, attitudes, culture and relationships (Hocking, 2005; Sevin, 2015; van Ham, 2010). The analytical task is also difficult because the impacts of public diplomacy are often only apparent after long intervals and tend to affect publics in conjunction with other historical dynamics.

However, it seems clear that the public sympathy that the INC was able to garner in the United States *was* a significant factor in Washington's position on British rule in India during World War II, encouraging US President Franklin D. Roosevelt to quietly urge Churchill towards accommodation of Indian demands for greater self-government (see

Dallek, 1979: 323–328; Hess, 1971). FDR's unsuccessful efforts to shape British policy during the war were also motivated the success of the Indian nationalist movement in its public diplomacy addressing publics elsewhere in the world. The INC had worked for decades to craft a compelling vocabulary and global movement against colonialism, which bore fruit during the War especially in the Pacific Theatre. American war information and diplomatic officers clearly understood that Washington's close alliance with Britain presented an image problem for the United States among the publics of Asia, and they understood that this image problem could prove deeply debilitating for the war effort if not countered in careful and meaningful ways (see Graham, 2009; Pullin, 2010).

As a case study of public diplomacy, the Indian nationalist movement's efforts also highlight the stakes at play in conceptual choices around whether to adopt public diplomacy versus some other term as a frame of reference, as well as what *kinds of* public diplomacy concepts are most helpful in clarifying the enquiry (see Ayhan, 2019: 67). In this period the INC was simultaneously: a non-governmental movement seeking to represent the Indian public globally in a proto-governmental/diplomatic way (see Sharp, 1999); an entrepreneur of disruptive new ideas and practices in the context of a global contestation of colonialism (see Kelly, 2014); a vehicle for strategic, inter-cultural communication and relationship-building (see Storie, 2017; Zaharna, 2010); a global actor whose presence and diplomatic opportunities were constructed partly through media portrayals (see Pamment, 2014; Sheafer and Gabay, 2009); a proponent of moral claims against global power structures (see Kaldor, 2003); an actor using rhetorical tool strategically (see Krebs and Jackson, 2007); and a political party operating within India, with domestic-facing constraints and domestic constituencies. The history told below demonstrates that all of these processes and modalities of public diplomacy are present in the INC case, and that there is room to explore how counter-hegemonic movements of all stripes have engaged the tools identified in more theoretically informed public diplomacy taxonomies and analyses. Thus far, research addressing the history of decolonization movements while drawing on public diplomacy concepts has been limited, and this volume begins to address the gap. However, there has been excellent scholarship on the diplomatic history of the United States, especially, tracing public responses to US public diplomacy in the Global South during colonial and post-independence periods (see, e.g. Cull, 2008; Parker, 2016).

It is also worth noting at the outset that Indian nationalist public diplomacy left a profound mark on the United States, by shaping the African American civil rights movement. The Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.'s own pilgrimage to India in 1959 is but one reflection of the deep tactical, political and personal linkages that were established between both movements in the period before Indian independence (see Horne, 2008: 210–212). The way Indian nationalists articulated their goals, and the example they set

in their peaceful campaign for independence, also helped to establish the discourses of moral authority that have suffused India's foreign policy since independence (Biswas, 2001; Chacko 2012; Vajpeyi, 2012: xiv).

This chapter begins by providing an overview of emergence and development of the INC's global public diplomacy efforts. The chapter then looks specifically at how the INC cultivated public opinion in the United States, highlighting the relationships that Indian spokespeople developed with African American civil rights leaders and other progressive Americans.

Indian Nationalism and the Development of Its Public Diplomacy

During the 1910s, the objective of the INC's fledgling public diplomacy initiatives was not to secure of full sovereignty for India from British colonial rule. Although several leaders called for complete separation from Britain after 1919, the party only adopted this goal as its official policy with the *Purna Swaraj* declaration of 1930. Even at this stage, though, independence was still only an ultimate objective after a period of greater autonomy under British rule. It was not until 1942, as India was under direct threat from the Japanese Imperial Army, and Gandhi and other INC leaders had been incarcerated by the British, that the INC shifted its policy to one of securing full independence with immediate effect (Alexander, 2019; Owen, 2007). In this context, the INC's decision to develop a public diplomacy strategy during the first half of the twentieth century was linked to four inter-related factors. Each factor will now be discussed in turn.

Barriers to Reform within the British Empire

Indian reformers lacked the ability to influence British rule through the colonial bureaucratic structures of the day, many of which excluded Indian participation at the highest levels. This became even more difficult during the great depression and collapse of India's foreign trade during the late 1920s and early 1930s. During this period, the Indian Civil Service enacted "retrenchment" policies that were designed to save the government money while also shoring up the British position on the subcontinent, which limited the degree to which Indian concerns were heard in London (Alexander, 2019). Moreover, as Alexander (2019: Chapter 5) observes, after the outbreak of World War II British decision-making began to bypass those levels of government in India which did permit Indian representation.

To a significant extent, Indian nationalism also struggled to garner favourable public opinion among the British public. Throughout the pre-independence period, there were entrenched views among many on

the British Left that the Indian nationalism was suffused with bourgeoise interests, that the INC did not represent all Indians and would provoke communal strife if it was allowed to dominate an increasingly independent Dominion, and that the cause of anti-imperialism was a threat to the economic interests of the British working class (Gupta, 1975; Owen, 2007: 236–237). Throughout the 1920s and 1930s the Labour Party struggled to reach consensus on what sort of transitional and governmental arrangements for India it could endorse (Brasted and Bridge, 1988). As such, despite numerous expressions of sympathy from both liberal and leftist political quarters in Britain, the INC's spokespeople struggled to get the British Labour Party to endorse an anti-imperial stance before the War (Brasted and Bridge, 1988: 92–94). Both the lack of direct opportunity to influence imperial governance in India and difficulties shaping British political opinion thus pushed Indian nationalists to seek out more receptive audiences beyond the British Empire.

The Rowlatt Act

In 1919 the British authorities in India passed a public order law known as the Rowlatt Act, which permitted the internment or deportation of suspects without trial and allowed certain political cases to be tried without a jury (Pandit, 1979: 63). The law was passed on the auspices of curtailing nationalist agitation and concerns over what the precedent of the Russian revolution of 1917 might mean within India. Under the pretext of the Rowlatt Act, British troops under the command of Colonel Reginald Dyer gunned down 379 unarmed protesters at Amritsar in the Punjab in 1919. This atrocity became a turning point in the movement for Indian independence, and prompted Gandhi's *hartal*, a suspension of national economic activity that was his first mass civil disobedience action against British rule in India (Fisher, 1950: 176). The Rowlatt Act was perceived as all the more duplicitous by Indians in light of the fact that the *Raj* had made promises during World War I that improved rights for colonial subjects would be forthcoming after the conflict in return for India's commitment of approximately one million troops and the crucial supply of natural resources and food stuffs from India to the war effort (Manela, 2007: 81–82).

Wilson Announced His Fourteen Points

On 8 January 1918, US President Woodrow Wilson delivered a now-famous speech in Washington that outlined a comprehensive plan for post-war peace in Europe and for the establishment of a League of Nations to guarantee the sovereignty of all nations moving forward. Known as the "Fourteen Points," Wilson's plan offered a rhetorical framework for anti-imperialists within many colonized territories to place their struggle

in context of a global fight against oppression, although Wilson himself had not intended that non-European nations be included in his principle of sovereignty according to the wishes of the populations concerned (Manela, 2007: 21). Indian nationalists nevertheless initially regarded Wilson as a potential ally in their struggle. Sir S. Subramanya Aiyar, an ally of the Congress leader and Theosophist Annie Besant who was jailed for distributing copies of the Fourteen Points, even managed to evade British censors and have a letter directly delivered to Wilson. In it Aiyar expressed Indians' desire to live up to the principles of the Fourteen Points (Manela, 2007: 78). It was, moreover, no coincidence that the leader of India's Muslim League, M. A. Jinnah, issued a 1929 declaration of rights for India's Muslims entitled "Fourteen Points."

Technological Advances in the Global Media

In more practical terms, the INC was able to enhance its global public diplomacy efforts due to advances in communications technology and the increasing ease of international travel during the interwar period. The emerging media formats of radio, film, magazines and especially photojournalism were particularly useful for the nationalist cause. Gandhi became the focal point for much of this global media interest (Scalmer, 2011). He was adept at cultivating supportive coverage of his spiritual leadership and at staging arresting visual images for the world's press. His 1930 Salt March, for example, was extensively chronicled and photographed in the foreign press by a cadre of invited journalists and Western writers. This coverage cultivated sympathy for Indian nationalism by framing the Mahatma in familiar and stirring terms, presenting him as a Christ-like or saintly figure, a brave man and one of great wisdom (see, for example, Jones, 1925; Rolland, 1924). Indeed, the framing of Gandhi as a man of unwavering moral courage put was a substantial, even fatal, challenge to Britain's global public diplomacy efforts in defence of colonialism. In the American context, media portrayals of Gandhi's as a modest, courageous figure standing up to the might of the British Empire had something of a built-in appeal to a nation that celebrated its own struggle against British imperialism (Chatfield, 1976: 28).

Taken together then, these four factors explain both the "push" and "pull" forces that encouraged the INC into the international sphere and sustained its belief in the value of public diplomacy efforts. As a result of years, India's status would become a source of tension within the trans-Atlantic alliance during World War II (Hess, 1971). Although both sides understood that disagreements over India should not interfere with the imperative of defeating the Axis powers, in historian Stanley Wolpert's view India was nevertheless the most significant point of diplomatic disagreement between the United States and Great Britain during the war (Wolpert, 2009: 14). US President Franklin D. Roosevelt's

sympathies inclined towards the anti-colonial movement, and he came to believe that concessions to Indian nationalism could also shore up India's contribution to the war effort and solidify public support for the Allies elsewhere in Asia (Graham, 2009; Rhea Dulles and Ridinger, 1955). To this end, Roosevelt several times urged British Prime Minister Winston Churchill to seek a path forward that would demonstrate a compromise with Indian demands. Partly in order to placate Roosevelt, in 1942 Churchill sent a much publicized but ill-fated diplomatic mission headed by Sir Stafford Cripps to conduct independence talks with the INC and the Muslim League (Hess, 1971: 47–49; Wolpert, 2009: 9). I have argued elsewhere that without the background of public sympathy for India that had been cultivated by the INC's public diplomacy and by sympathetic media coverage of Gandhi in the United States, it is unlikely that Roosevelt would have interceded for Indian independence to the extent that he did (see Graham, 2009).

Cultivating American Public Opinion

Indian nationalists had built strong connections within important echelons of US society and with some policymakers by the start of World War II (see Graham, 2014). These person-to-person ties, and the cultivation of favourable media coverage, helped counteract the derogatory images that had defined "India" for Americans for many years (Isaacs, 1980; Rotter, 2000). In addition to dispelling stereotypes, nationalist public diplomacy assisted Indian leaders in bringing concrete constitutional and political matters to the attention of Americans and other foreign audiences. This was often achieved by positioning India's struggle as part of a global network of local counter-hegemonic movements.

The American Anti-Imperialist League (AAIL), originally established in 1899 to oppose the US' annexation of the Philippines, was one of the first American organizations to take up the cause of Indian independence. AAIL publications favourably commented on the cause of Indian home rule (see, for example, Gookin, 1899). Outlets such as *The Nation* helped to generate a degree of American public awareness of Indian conditions and the personalities at the helm of India's struggle. The Unitarian minister and AAIL member Jabez T. Sunderland, who had the distinction of being the first American to attend an INC meeting during his travels within India during the 1890s, established the Society for the Advancement of India in 1907. Sunderland made use of the extensive contacts between Unitarian missionaries and Indian nationalists during his time to the sub-continent and was one of the first Americans to correspond regularly with Gandhi (Sunderland, 1908; Teed, 2009). In his writings on India, Sunderland was also one of the first to draw parallels between India's situation and the America's struggle to abolish slavery. Sunderland would remain the "most persistent

American propagandist for India" well into the 1920s (Gordon, 2002; Raucher, 1974: 85; Teed, 2003).

Perhaps the most notable phase of the INC's public diplomacy efforts in the United States was the American sojourn of the prominent Indian nationalist and future INC President Lala Lajpat Rai. Rai arrived in the United States in 1914 and would spend 5 years there as the hostilities of World War I blocked his return home. Rai took up residence in New York City and connected with figures like Sunderland, John Haynes Holmes (founder of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)) and Eamon De Valera (future President and Taoiseach of Ireland). Rai also founded and led the Indian Home Rule League of America (IHRLA) and its two sub-organizations, the Hindustan Students Association and the Hindu Workers Union of America. He was an adept organizer and the IHRLA soon had branches in Ann Arbor, MI, Berkeley, CA, Cleveland, OH, Louisville, KY and Minneapolis, MN. Its membership consisted mostly of intellectuals and journalists—opinion-leading groups that high-ranking INC members had agreed should be the focal point of their international persuasion efforts—as well as members of the South Asian expat community, especially Indian students (Clymer, 1990: 149). Rai delivered speeches to Church congregations, student groups and trade unions, where he emphasized the connection between Indian nationalism and wider concerns such as pacifism, racial equality, class politics and the teachings of the Bible. As he saw it, one of the most important functions of Indian nationalist public diplomacy in the United States should be to provide accurate information on Indian conditions and to counter the distorted views circulated by British sources (Rathore, 1965: 203).

In 1917, President Wilson's spoke to the US Congress and issued declaration of US war aims, which included the phrase that "every people must be free to determine their own form of government" (Manela, 2007: 84–90). Rai saw the speech as a rhetorical avenue for cultivating American support and telegraphed Wilson to praise the announcement. Associating Indian nationalism with the United States' stated war aims helped Rai to connect India to American foreign policy concerns (Rathore, 1965: 200–201). Although Wilson ultimately proved to be no ally to non-European anti-imperialists, as discussed above, some sympathy for Indian aspirations developed within the US Congress. During debates on the League of Nations Charter several senators criticized plans for the fledgling organization for seeming to endorse European imperialism. Two subsequent House of Representative resolutions were introduced, though never passed, which expressed condemnation of British rule in India (Moser, 1999: 21–23).

Educational institutions were another focal point for INC public diplomacy in the United States. This was in part because it afforded the INC access to South Asian students residing in the United States,

but also because African American educational institutions seemed to offer a model of educational empowerment for India itself. Gandhi was a longtime admirer of Booker T. Washington, the founder of Tuskegee University in Alabama, and Gandhi endorsed the Tuskegee principles of self-uplift for African Americans and the dignity of agricultural labour (Gandhi, 1995: 220). Rai visited Tuskegee in 1915 to draw parallels between Indian nationalism and African American civil rights (Manela, 2007: 88). In addition, leading figures in American education such as the President of Washington DC's Howard University School of Religion, Benjamin Mays, and the Young Men's Christian Association's Channing Tobias travelled to India and met Gandhi. Mays later wrote an article on his journey stressing the connections between anti-racist struggles across the globe, and he remained an anti-colonialist and advocate for the Global South while serving as a civil rights leader during the 1950s and 1960s (Azaransky, 2017; Slate, 2012: 116–117). The well-known African American theologian Howard Thurman also travelled to India in a much-publicized "Pilgrimage of Friendship," and he became a nuanced commentator on the nature of the racial problems that were present in both the United States and India (Slate, 2012: 112–116). Indeed, Howard University became a center of American engagement with India and with Gandhian ideas in the 1930s under the leadership of its President, Mordecai Johnson, who recruited Mays, Thurman and others to the university's faculty (Azaransky, 2017: 5).

During his time in the United States, Rai lectured alongside the leading African American intellectual of the early twentieth century, W. E. B. Du Bois. Du Bois was one of the most important figures in the public diplomacy relationship between the INC and African American advocacy groups during the period. His prominence as a spokesperson for the NAACP and editor of its widely circulated journal *The Crisis* enabled him to introduce the INC's concerns to more liberally inclined American audiences. *The Crisis* frequently published writings by Gandhi, Rai and other Indian nationalists. Moreover, Du Bois' promotion of the concept of a "world color line" linked the struggles of African Americans to those of other oppressed peoples, although both India and African American intellectuals also struggled to reconcile American notions of race and Indian notions of caste within their discourses of racial empowerment (Du Bois, 2005: 35–36; Immerwhar, 2007).

The future Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru, was particularly interested in Du Bois's ideas and drew often on his critiques of American racism and the global colour line during the final stages of the independence struggle during World War II, when Nehru called upon the Allies to commit to racial justice by dismantling colonial rule in Asia (Graham, 2009). As India's first post-independence Prime Minster and the architect of the country's non-aligned Cold War foreign policy,

Nehru would make the pursuit of global racial equality a bedrock of Indian postcolonial diplomacy.

Rai had advised his colleagues within the INC's leadership that the organization's approach to advocacy in the United States should be informative and intellectual rather than propagandist. Yet Rai veered towards propaganda in his publication *Unhappy India*, a rebuttal of *Mother India* in which he drew on his conversations with African Americans to point out the similarities between "racial and caste-based oppression" (Ahmad, 2009: 173; see also Slate, 2012: 61). Some of Rai's most effective media connections were to the famous *New Republic* columnist Walter Lippmann and the magazine's associate editor Robert Morss Lovett, as well as to Oswald Garrison Villard, an anti-imperialist journalist and editorialist at the *Nation* and the *New York Evening Post*. Rai also established his own magazine *Young India*, and its inaugural edition in 1918 contained an open letter to Woodrow Wilson highlighting India's contribution to World War I and condemning the "misrule and oppression" of the Raj (Subramaniem, 1918: 7). Between 1918 and 1921, *Young India* delved into cultural diplomacy themes, featuring articles on Rabindranath Tagore's poetry as well as Indian painting and music. Here, the utilization of Indian culture as a public diplomacy tool reflected the debates and initiatives of the period which regarded the exchange and appreciation of different cultures as a vehicle for global peace (Laqua, 2011).

In addition to Rai, the US-based Indian academic Taraknath Das shaped the US media's view of India by producing the English-language newsletter of the Ghadar Party, an organization that had been formed in 1913 to represent the Sikh diaspora in the Western United States. Das advised Nehru, who by then taking on an increasingly prominent role in the INC's leadership, that international publicity should be of the highest priority of the nationalist movement (Clymer, 1990: 149). Nehru agreed with this, but he remained skeptical that the American public at large would be receptive to India's message given the ongoing tolerance of racial segregation and oppression in so many parts of the country, and he continued to focus his energy on shaping public opinion in the UK and Europe. Nehru nonetheless had some productive exchanges with American activists, especially during his 1927 visit to Europe for the 10-year anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution. On that visit Nehru met the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) founder Roger Baldwin in Brussels, and during their subsequent correspondence Baldwin guided Nehru's understanding of the African American situation. Baldwin also curated a reading list for Nehru to improve his understanding American society, which included works by Henry George, Upton Sinclair and Scott Nearing. In return, Baldwin became an advocate for Indian independence within the United States and the ACLU officially supported the INC's cause (Clymer, 1990: 147).

After Nehru assumed the INC presidency in 1929, he granted numerous interviews to American journalists, contributed his own articles to several American magazines, and took a strong interest in US reviews of his writing (Clymer, 1990: 153). During a visit to London in 1938, Nehru met the notable African American couple Paul and Essie Robeson, finding common ground with them through their shared interest in socialism as a vehicle for racial empowerment. However, the meeting with the Robesons also confirmed Nehru's sense of "ambivalence" about the United States. Nehru clearly believed that favorable US public opinion was useful to the nationalist struggle as a source of moral authority on the world stage. But he often also expressed misgivings about whether the political establishment in Washington would ever press for the dismantling of British imperialism (Clymer, 1990: 143). As such, while Nehru was certainly appreciative of his meetings with American activists like Baldwin and the Robesons—"unconventional Americans," as Kenton Clymer (1990: 145) calls them—on the basis that they deepened his thinking around the global implications of racial and class disparities, the very "unconventionality" of these people laid bare that there was a greater challenge for the INC in building a consensus in support Indian freedom in Washington.

Rai completed a lot of the groundwork in the United States that would stand the Indian nationalism in good stead for the coming decades. In the years after Rai's departure in 1919 the INC sent an array of representatives to the United States including the female singer, poet and INC leader Sarojini Naidu, who completed on an 8-month lecture tour during 1928. Naidu called on her audiences to support Indian nationalism, based on a shared revolutionary spirit present within both nations, and also sought to correct the debased image of Hindu women that Katherine Mayo had presented in her popular travelogue *Mother India*, (Sinha, 1994: 15–18). Naidu played an important role in framing Indian nationalism as a feminist concern both globally and in India itself, and while in India she helped to establish the All India Women's Conference in 1926 as an offshoot of the INC. This paved the way for a transnational women's conference that was held in Lahore in 1931, featuring representatives from the likes of Burma, Japan, the Soviet Union, Syria and Afghanistan (Nijhawan, 2017; Sandell, 2011: 611). Thus, in the content of her speeches, and in her symbolic role as a female representative of the INC, Naidu challenged American views of Eastern women as "immobile and fixed in suffocating domestic spaces" (Arora, 2009: 91).

C. F. Andrews, the British missionary, pacifist and friend of both Gandhi and the poet Rabindranath Tagore, frequently published in the American media and in Rai's *Young India* in support of Indian freedom. Andrews also edited a prominent series of volumes on Gandhi's life and work during 1930s, which he hoped would counter the disparaging images of India in the United States that were promoted by Mayo and

others (Chaturvedi and Sykes, 1973). In his own contributions to these volumes, Andrews located Gandhi within a Christian framework as a pillar of moral righteousness and divine inspiration (Andrews, 1931: 8). Andrews had also planned a visit to the United States following his trip to England for the Round Table Indian constitutional talks in 1931, and alluded to discussions of a possible visit to America by Gandhi, which never ultimately transpired.

The famous Theosophist and former INC President Annie Besant also visited the United States several times during the 1920s to speak in support of Indian self-determination, and occasionally spoke alongside the spiritual philosopher Krishnamurti (Blanchard Press, 1926). Madeline "Mirabehn" Slade, a prominent follower of Gandhi and daughter of a British admiral, also spoke in the United States at Howard University (Slate, 2012: 113). These British spokespeople for Indian independence helped convey the point that anti-imperialism also commanded support among many British people who were familiar with Indian conditions and helped to move India's struggle further into the realm of moral principle rather than competing self-interest. American supporters and associates of Gandhi also continued to publish works in support of Indian freedom in the lead-up to 1947. For example, Samuel Evans "Satyanand" Stokes, an American Quaker who lived for years in India as a spiritual follower of Gandhi, published his *Essays, Memoranda and Letters* in the United States in 1946 with the hope of garnering American support for India's cause.

Finally, beyond the actions of INC representatives, several prominent members of the Indian diaspora in the United States made calls for independence into the late 1930s and during World War II. Dr. Dalip Singh Saund was a prominent critic of Katherine Mayo and merged his nationalist concerns with opposition to the US government's racial immigration quotas that discriminated against Indians. J. J. Singh, a successful textile importer, used his position as head of the Indian Chamber of Commerce in the United States to lobby against American immigration policy. Singh spent much of World War II in Washington DC calling on American Congressmen to endorse Indian independence (Muzumdur, 1962: 43). In New York City, Anup Singh and Syud Hossain—the latter a former Bombay newspaper editor and protégée of Gandhi's, who had been lecturing and writing abroad on behalf of the INC since 1920—published a monthly cultural publication called *India Today*, which sharpened its calls for independence after the United States entered World War II in 1941. American supporters of Indian nationalism also continued their advocacy efforts into the 1930s. The previously mentioned John Haynes Holmes, Jabez T. Sunderland, Roger Baldwin, Oswald Garrison Villard, as well as the prominent intellectual John Dewey, were members of the India League of America and lent their notoriety to public statements on issues related to the plight of Indians under British rule. And, as

discussed above, when the status of India arose as a strategic as well as a propaganda issue for the US war effort in the Pacific, Franklin D. Roosevelt (unsuccessfully) pushed Churchill to offer British concessions to the nationalist movement.

Conclusion

Indian nationalist public diplomacy offers insight into historical forms of public diplomacy and the use of public diplomacy by non-governmental organizations to advance their political causes. It also provides a historical example of the cultivation of dialogue between counter-hegemonic groups as a public diplomacy tool and outcome; one that deserves more attention within theoretically informed taxonomies and frameworks for the study public diplomacy. The INC operated within global civil society between 1914 and 1947. Indeed, its activities helped to deepen the global civil society networks of the time around the counter-hegemonic purposes of anti-colonialism, anti-racism, international socialism and feminism. The INC's status as a non-state and non-governmental actor enabled its representatives to engage with supporters of the civil rights movement in the United States in a spirit of openness and, for the most part, mutuality and equality. The leading organizations of both movements learned from each other, exchanged ideas, and advanced their overlapping agendas.

Advances in media communications technology also served the public diplomacy of the Indian nationalist movement well. This was especially the case in the United States, where media coverage and publishing on the Indian campaign for independence became "cacophonous" from the late 1920s (Scalmer, 2011: 31). Gandhi's understanding of propaganda, especially the strategic way in which he used advances in visual communications and his cultivation of journalists, editors and writers, enabled the INC to garner sympathetic global attention. This is a textbook example of a political cause developing media relations around a narrative of moral authority in pursuit of its goals, key themes in contemporary conceptualizations of public diplomacy.

The INC forged important connections between Indian leaders and influential Americans within the civil rights, progressive Christian, academic and journalistic communities before India's independence. These continued after the war, though not with the same level of intensity. Despite these people-to-people ties, at the diplomatic level India and the United States struggled to maintain positive relations once India gained independence. There were important officials on both sides, notably Chester Bowles and Sir Girja Bajpai, who worked to strengthen Indo-American diplomatic ties. However, the relationship had drifted into an atmosphere of "cold peace" by the late 1940s (see Brands, 1990; Graham and Davis, 2020), and India and the United States struggled to find common ground for decades after (see McMahon, 1996; Rakove, 2014).

Many influential Indians, including those at the helm of Indian foreign policy such as Prime Minister Nehru and his Foreign Minister Krishna Menon, turned their discourse against British imperialism into criticism of American "neo-imperialism" and India became a fierce critic of what it deemed to be exploitation by the United States of the Global South. As such, the INC could not escape its legacy as a counter-hegemonic actor and its pursuit of friendships with protest groups in the United States between 1914 and 1947, but nor did it want to.

Postscript

India's Muslim League and the Communist Party of India also engaged in public diplomacy during the early twentieth century and they, too, developed their thinking in accordance with the political situation that unravelled during the interwar years. Like the INC's calls for immediate independence, the notion of a separate Muslim state only really gained momentum through the 1930s and 1940s. Even then, many thought that the goal of a separate, sovereign state was unlikely to be achieved (Kux, 2001). Indeed, as Alexander (2019: 230) notes, even as late as 1942, many within the Muslim League were not entirely sure that "partition" was a good idea. As the Indian Civil Servant and associate of Jinnah, Sir Andrew Clow, who wrote on 9 May 1942: "There are, as yet, few Muslim politicians who believe in Pakistan without reservations, but there are signs of an increasing tendency for those who viewed it originally as a useful gambit to convince themselves by iteration" (quoted in Alexander, 2019: 230).

Nevertheless, the Muslim League had established channels with British government officials via its London branch from its earliest days in 1906. This initially had the primary aim of securing improved Muslim representation in the British-dominated government of India (Nanda, 2010: 18–19). The Muslim League's leader Muhammed Ali Jinnah was well-connected within the British elite, particularly to Winston Churchill, who sat favourably towards him. After publicly declaring its ambition to be the creation of an independent Muslim state in 1940, the Muslim League focused almost exclusively on the manufacturing sympathy from British audiences. Jinnah was also the subject of several sympathetic profiles in the American press during this time (Malik, 1991: 25).

In contrast, the leader of the Communist Party of India, M. N. Roy, had been a protégé of Vladimir Ilyich Lenin. This organization argued powerfully for Indian independence in Marxist terms and helped to cement India's status as a cause celebre for the Soviet Union and its sympathizers around the world (Alonso, 2017). As Clark (2017: 66) chronicles, Indian leftist writers in London that were affiliated with the Soviet Comintern published influential works of literature by Indians, which celebrated Indian cultural achievements and calling for India to regain

its "rightful place in the concert of nations." These writers, particularly Mulk Raj Anand, became part of a lively public discussion that also included British and European progressives such as W. H. Auden and Stephen Spender. These cultural ties helped to crystallize anti-imperialist sentiments on the British far Left and led to the growth of international communications in support of the Communist cause.

Bibliography

Ahmad, D., (2009), *Landscapes of Hope: Anti-Colonial Utopianism in America*, New York: Oxford University Press.

Alexander, C., (2019), *Administering Colonialism and War: The Political Life of Sir Andrew Clow of the Indian Civil Service*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Alonso, I. H., (2017), "M. N. Roy and the Mexican Revolution: How a Militant Indian Nationalist Became an International Communist," *South Asia*, 40(3), pp. 517–30.

Andrews, C. F., (1931), *Mahatma Gandhi at Work: His Own Story Continued*, London: George Allen & Unwin.

Arora, A., (2009), "The Nightingale's Wanderings: Sarojini Naidu in North America," *Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, 44(3), pp. 87–105.

Ayhan, K. J., (2019), "The Boundaries of Public Diplomacy and Nonstate Actors: A Taxonomy of Perspectives," *International Studies Quarterly*, 20(1), pp. 63–83.

Azaransky, S., (2017), *This Worldwide Struggle: Religion and the International Roots of the Civil Rights Movement*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Biswas, S., (2001), "'Nuclear Apartheid' as Political Position: Race as a Postcolonial Resource?," *Alternatives*, 26(4), pp. 485–522.

Blanchard Press, (1926), "Dr. Annie Besant." Pamphlet advertising lectures by Dr. Annie Besant and Krishnamurti in San Francisco. South Asian American Digital Archive. Accessed 28 July, 2020.

Brands, H. W., (1990), *India and the United States: The Cold Peace*, New York: Twayne.

Brasted, H., and C. Bridge, (1988), "The British Labour Party and Indian Nationalism, 1907–1947," *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*, 11(2), pp. 69–99.

Chacko, P., (2012), *Indian Foreign Policy: The Politics of Postcolonial Identity from 1947 to 2004*, Abingdon: Routledge.

Chatfield, C., (1976), "Introduction," In: C. Chatfield (ed.), *The Americanization of Gandhi: Images of the Mahatma*. New York: Garland Publishing.

Chaturvedi, B., and M. Sykes, (1973), Charles Freer Andrews: Builders of Modern India, New Delhi: Government of India Publications Division.

Clark, K., (2017), "Indian Leftist Writers of the 1930s Maneuver among India, London and Moscow: The Case of Mulk Raj Anand and His Patrol Ralph Fox," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, 18(1), pp. 63–87.

Clymer, K., (1990), "Jawaharlal Nehru and the United States: The Pre-Independence Years," *Diplomatic History*, 14(2), pp. 143–61.

Cull, N. J., (2008), *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency*, New York: Oxford University Press.

Dallek, R., (1979), *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy, 1932–1945*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Du Bois, W. E. B., (2005), "The World Problem of the Color Line (1914)," In: B. Mullens and C. Watson (eds.), *W. E. B. Du Bois on Asia: Crossing the World Color Line*, Jackson: University of Mississippi Press.

Fisher, L., (1950), *The Life of Mahatma Gandhi*, New York: Harper & Row.

Gandhi, R., (1995), *The Good Boatman: A Portrait of Gandhi*, New Delhi: Penguin.

Graham, S., (2009), "American Propaganda, the Anglo-American Alliance, and the 'Delicate question' of Indian Self-Determination," *Diplomatic History*, 33(2), pp. 223–59.

Graham, S., (2014), *Culture and Propaganda: The Progressive Origins of American Public Diplomacy*, Abingdon: Routledge.

Graham, S., and A. Davis, (2020), "A 'Hindu Mystic' or a 'Harrovian Realist?' U.S., Australian and Canadian Representations of Jawaharlal Nehru, 1947–1964," *Pacific Historical Review*, 89(2), pp. 198–231.

Gookin, F., (1899), *A Liberty Catechism*, Chicago: American Anti-Imperialist League.

Gordon, L., (2002), "Mahatma Gandhi's Dialogues with Americans," *Economic and Political Weekly*, January 26, 337–52.

Gupta, P. S., (1975), *Imperialism and the British Labour Movement, 1914–1964*, London: Macmillan.

Hess, G., (1971), *America Encounters India, 1941–1947*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Hocking, B., (2005), "Rethinking the 'New' Public Diplomacy," In J. Melissen (ed.), *The New Public Diplomacy: Soft Power in International Relations*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Horne, G., (2008), *The End of Empires: African Americans and India*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Immerwhar, D., (2007), "Caste or Colony? Indianizing Race in the United States," *Modern Intellectual History*, 4(2), pp. 275–301.

Isaacs, H., (1980), *Scratches on Our Minds: American Images of China and India*, Abingdon: Routledge.

Jones, E. S., (1925), *The Christ of the Indian Road*, Nashville: Abingdon Press.

Kaldor, M., (2003), "The Idea of Global Civil Society," *International Affairs*, 79(3), pp. 583–93.

Kelly, J. R., (2014), *Agency Change*, Lanham: Rowmann & Littlefield.

Krebs, R., and P. T. Jackson, (2007), "Twisting Tongues and Twisting Arms: The Power of Political Rhetoric," *European Journal of International Relations*, 13(1), pp. 35–66.

Kux, D., (2001), *The United States and Pakistan 1947–2000: Disenchanted Allies*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Laqua, D., (2011), "Transnational Intellectual Cooperation, the League of Nations, and the Problem of Order," *Journal of Global History*, 6(2), pp. 223–47.

Lincove, D., (2011), "The British Library of Information in New York: A Tool of British Foreign Policy," *Libraries & the Cultural Record*, 46(2), pp. 156–84.

Malik, I., (1991), *US-South Asian Relations 1940–1947: American Attitudes Toward the Pakistan Movement*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Manela, E., (2007), *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism*, New York: Oxford University Press.

Mayo, K., (1927), *Mother India*, New York: Harbourt Brace.
McMahon, R., (1996), *The Cold War on the Periphery: The United States, India, and Pakistan*, New York: Columbia University Press.
Moser, J., (1999), *Twisting the Lion's Tail: Anglophobia in the United States, 1921–48*, London: Palgrave Macmillan.
Muzumdur, H. T., (1962), *America's Contribution to India's Freedom*, New York: Universal Publishing Co.
Nanda, B. K., (2010), *Road to Pakistan: The Life and Times of Mohammad Ali Jinnah*, Abington: Routledge.
Nehru, J., (1961), "Future Taking Shape (1946)," In: J. Nehru (ed.), *India's Foreign Policy*, Bombay/Mumbai: Indian Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.
Nijhawan, S., (2017), "International Feminism from an Asian Center: The All-Asian Women's Conference (Lahore, 1931) as a Transnational Feminist Movement," *Journal of Women's History*, 29(3), pp. 12–36.
Owen, N., (2007), *The British Left and India: Metropolitan Anti-Imperialism, 1885–1947*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Pamment, J., (2014), "The Mediatization of Diplomacy," *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy*, 9(3), pp. 253–80.
Pandey, B. N. (ed.) (1979), *The Indian Nationalist Movement, 1885–1947: Select Documents*, London: MacMillan.
Pandit, V. L., (1979), *The Scope of Happiness: A Personal Memoir*, London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, Ltd.
Parker, J. C., (2016), *Hearts, Minds, Voices: U.S. Public Diplomacy and the Formation of the Third World*, New York: Oxford University Press.
Pullin, E., (2010), "Noise and Flutter: American Propaganda Strategy and Operation in India During World War II," *Diplomatic History*, 34(2), pp. 275–98.
Rakove, R., (2014), *Kennedy, Johnson, and the Non-Aligned World*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Rathore, N., (1965), *Indian Nationalist Agitation in the United States: A Study of Lala Lajpat Rai and the India Home Rule League of America*. PhD dissertation, Columbia University, New York City, NY.
Raucher, A., (1974), "American Anti-Imperialists and the Pro-India Movement, 1900–1932," *Pacific Historical Review*, 43(1), pp. 83–110.
Rhea Dulles, F., and G. Ridinger, (1955), "The Anti-Colonial Policies of Franklin D. Roosevelt," *Political Science Quarterly*, 70(1), pp. 1–18.
Rolland, R., (1924), *Mahatma Gandhi; The Man Who Became One with the Universal Being*, New York: Century Co.
Rotter, A., (2000), *Comrades at Odds: The United States and India, 1947–1964*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
Sandell, M., (2011), "Regional Versus Internationalism: Women's Activism and Organizational Spaces in the Inter-War Period," *The International History Review*, 33(4), pp. 607–25.
Scalmer, S., (2011), *Gandhi in the West: The Mahatma and the Rise of Radical Protest*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Scalmer, S., (2018), "Empire and Activism: Gandhi, Imperialism and the Global Career of Satyagraha," In S. Berger and S. Scalmer (eds.), *The Transnational Activist: Transformations and Comparisons from the Anglo-World since the Nineteenth Century*, London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Sevin, E., (2015), "Pathways of Connection: An Analytical Approach to the Impacts of Public Diplomacy," *Public Relations Review*, 41(4), pp. 562–8.

Sharp, P., (1999), "For Diplomacy: Representation and the Study of International Relations," *International Studies Review*, 1(1), pp. 33–57.

Sheafer, T., and I. Gabay, (2009), "Mediated Public Diplomacy: A Strategic Contest over International Agenda Building and Frame Building," *Political Communication*, 26(4), pp. 447–67.

Singh, K. R., (2010), "Nehru and India's Foreign Policy," In: G. G. Kumar (ed.), *Nehru and Modern India*, New Delhi: New Century Publications, pp. 88–97.

Sinha, M., (1994), "Reading Mother India: Empire, Nation, and the Female Voice," *Journal of Women's History*, 6(2), pp. 6–44.

Sinha, M., (2006), *Specters of Mother India: The Global Restructuring of an Empire*, Durham: Duke University Press.

Slate, N., (2012), *Colored Cosmopolitans: The Shared Struggle for Freedom in the United States and India*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Storie, L. K., (2017), "Relationship Cultivation and Public Diplomacy: A Qualitative Study of Relational Antecedents and Cultivation Strategies," *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 29(6), pp. 295–310.

Subramaniem, S., (1918), "Message to President Wilson," *Young India*, 1(1).

Sunderland, J. T., (1908), "The New Nationalist Movement in India," Atlantic Monthly, October, 526–35.

Teed, P., (2003), "Race against Memory: Katherine Mayo, Jabez Sunderland, and Indian Independence," *American Studies*, 44(1–2), pp. 35–57.

Teed, P., (2009), "Interfaith Encounter and Religious Pluralism: J. T. Sunderland's Mission to *Brahmo Samajes* of India, 1895–96," *American Studies*, 50(1–2), pp. 51–69.

Tinker, H., (1968), "India in the First World War and After," *Journal of Contemporary History*, 3(4), pp. 89–107.

Vajpeyi, A., (2012), *Righteous Republic: The Political Foundations of Modern India*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

van Ham, P., (2010), *Social Power in International Politics*, Abingdon: Routledge.

Wolpert, S., (2009), *Shameful Flight: The Last Years of the British Empire in India*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Zaharna, R. S., (2010), *Battles to Bridges: U.S. Strategic Communication and Public Diplomacy after 9/11*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Taylor & Francis
Taylor & Francis Group
http://taylorandfrancis.com

Part III

The Third Frontier: Emergent Forces in Contemporary Public Diplomacy

Taylor & Francis
Taylor & Francis Group
http://taylorandfrancis.com

7 China's "Exceptional" Public Diplomacy

Dressing up the Dragon

Benjamin Tze Ern Ho

Introduction

The rise of the People's Republic of China (hereafter PRC or "China") over the last 40 years has coincided with growing awareness by the country's political elite that a positive national image abroad is essential, if not crucial, if Beijing is to achieve its superpower ambitions. Henceforth, public diplomacy communications work alongside China's foreign policy priorities in the hope that perceptions are improved within foreign countries and that this will provide greater leverage for China to achieve its ambitions. Nevertheless, many countries around the world continue to perceive China predominantly as a threat. This is based on and the implications that China's rise may have on their own interests and global ambitions but also a genuine belief that Beijing's narrative is a falsehood (Linley, et al., 2012; Welsh and Chang, 2015; Yee, 2011).

In his previous book on public diplomacy, the editor of this volume, Colin Alexander (2014), defined what he deemed to be the four pillars of Chinese foreign policy. (1) To secure the energy and commodity resources from overseas that are essential to the country's continued domestic growth. (2) To develop new markets and an international trading bloc centred around China and its worldview. (3) To project an image of China as a responsible, peaceful and civilisational power. (4) To marginalise Taiwan politically and economically and to apply international pressure that will encourage conformity to Beijing's view on the Taiwan dilemma. China's international communications thereby have four corresponding goals. (1) To emphasise a country that strives to build a harmonious society. One that works hard to give its people a better future. (2) To be viewed as a stable, reliable and responsible economic partner and an emerging power that should not be feared. (3) To be seen by the international community as trustworthy and responsible, capable of, and willing to contribute to, world peace. (4) To be acknowledged and respected as both an ancient and vibrant culture and as a modern example of sustainable development. Beyond this though, the Chinese state is also motivated by China's experience and interpretation of the past, particularly

its exploitation by colonial powers during the nineteenth century and the international shame and economic sanctions that it had to endure after the Tiananmen Square massacre in 1989.

The extent to which China can credibly claim to have benign ambitions, or that its ambitions also represent an opportunity for those who are affected by its global expansion, has been a central point of discussion for China observers and the wider international community since this narrative first emerged [cautiously] during the 1990s. Indeed, if it is to be believed then China must successfully communicate a sense of its own exceptionalism, for the world is laden with the violent, suppressive and exploitative experiences of other expansionist powers over the course of recorded history. Alternatively, China, knowing that this is a distortion, need only distract its audience with a debate over its exceptionalism for as long as it takes to secure its undisputed position as the world's leading power.

In recent years then several scholars, including this chapter's author, have argued that China's sense of its own "exceptionalism" and the propaganda that surrounds it ought to become a more prominent part of the analysis of China's actions both domestically and internationally (Alden and Large, 2011; Callahan, 2012; Ho, 2014; Zhang, 2013). This is not to say that the discourse of exceptionalism is believed within academic circles. Far from it. Instead, its emergence as an accompaniment to China's superpower status rather paradoxically confirms the country's conventionality and predictability in its pursuit of supremacy. As such, while it may be that Chinese elites and citizens alike have in-part been seduced by their own virtuous narrative (they would not be the first powerful country to do that either) this should not detract from the reality that the development of exceptional narratives are motivated by and devolved from power interests.

China's international communications are thus attempting to distinguish it from the activities of other countries and the legacy of past epochs vis-à-vis the exploitation, enslavement, cultural imperialism and social, religious and racial prejudice that have accompanied the empires of history. Instead, China's accompanying narrative emphasises that it is a force for *good* that will provide mutual benefit for its partners, and respect for sovereignty and cultural autonomy. China's is thus framing itself as somewhat counter-hegemonic but appears to be pursuing much the same self-interested path as other rising empires from history who have also sought to identify their expansion as virtuous and rightful in one form or another. That said, rather than this narrative of exceptionalism being dismissed out of hand as nonsense, China benefits from the reality that its hegemony *could* be different from the world's experience of other powers, however unlikely that is.

This chapter discusses the development of China's public diplomacy strategy with regards to the promotion of a discourse of exceptionalism.

Through critical analysis of public speeches made by PRC President Xi Jinping the chapter highlights several themes that have emerged and which fit the exceptionalism framework. As an emerging superpower engaging in a discourse of exceptionalism, this represents a frontier of public diplomacy in and of itself. However, of more interest is the extent to which the Chinese have created a dialectic rooted in collective ego surrounding their own exceptionalism while pursuing their version of a very common propaganda strategy regarding moral standing and virtuosity. These communications form part of China's bid to legitimise its claim to greater international influence and ultimately its goal of global leadership. As such, the communications strategy that has emerged in China provides one of the most interesting contemporary examples of the moral accompaniment to power that the introductory chapter of this book discussed in reference to the work of Jean-Jacques Rousseau and his notion of power and "natural authority".

Xi Jinping: The Governance of China[1]

Xi Jinping is not the first Chinese leader to have a book of orations published. Mao Zedong's "Little Red Book" (formally called "Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-tung") achieved global iconic status during the late 1960s and inspired many on the political left during the Cold War. Despite scathing evaluations of the Maoist period in China (1949–1976), and the decline of most radical socialist movements around the world the book has retained a certain vogue to it. Indeed, the UK's then Shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer, John McDonnell, read from the book at the dispatch box (perhaps slightly in jest) during an exchange in the House of Commons in November 2015 (see Mason, 2015).

An analysis of President Xi's published speeches can be used as a springboard to analysis of China's wider public diplomacy and national image. Xi's book of speeches, like Mao's Little Red Book before it, is an example of state propaganda. However, in an age of clickbait and political claptrap where manifestos rarely convert to policy, where detail is evaded, and the political elite about-face on previous statements, the publication of a book can represent a somewhat rare boldness and an invitation to be judged against self-imposed criteria. The book comprises 80 speeches made by President Xi Jinping in his first 18 months of office. It thus represents an important attempt by his administration to narrate how they perceive and conceive of China's future. Furthermore, its translation into English by the Foreign Languages Press of Beijing in 2014 reflects an attempt to appeal to international audiences through public diplomacy.

Critical analysis of these speeches uncovers some indication of the national image that Xi and senior leaders within the Chinese Communist Party (CPC) would like to project to the outside world. Interestingly, the

book, despite being almost 500 pages long, makes little reference to the powers of North America or Europe but instead articulates a Chinese view on various issues of global governance. Perhaps indicative of where China's focus lies, it does make reference to China's relations with Asia and its near abroad though. The book suggests a desire among Chinese leaders to differentiate the country from Western viewpoints rather than give credence to them as foundations for debate. This feeds into China's desire to create a sense of Chinese cultural and political superiority. Furthermore, William Callahan (2015a) points out that the book is helpful administratively because it "gathers together otherwise scattered speeches and comments to show Xi's hopes, dreams, goals, and plans for China and the world". Whereas the publisher of the book writes that it was brought together in order "to respond to rising international interest and to enhance the rest of the world's understanding of the Chinese government's philosophy and its domestic and foreign policies" (Xi, 2014, publisher's note).

The following critical analysis will focus on three important themes surrounding exceptionalism and the wider promotion of China's national image abroad. As will be seen, the framing of China's national image by Chinese leaders, and in this case Xi himself, is done with the purpose of distinguishing China from other major powers and thus portraying China as exceptional. This is done explicitly and implicitly within the public diplomacy. The themes that feed into these power dynamics are as follows: (1) the Chinese Dream and the image of China as a flourishing civilisation. (2) China as a progressive power willing to undertake reforms. (3) China as a moral example worthy of global emulation.

Public diplomacy – in the Chinese worldview – is thus a vehicle towards the goal of entrenching Chinese centrality within international affairs. It thereby goes beyond a more simplistic telling of China's story *to* the world and ought to be considered a proactive intent to proclaim China's story as being "good" *for* the world. This approach is thus an attempt to claim global leadership by eschewing the current hegemonic order and by creating more China-centric power dynamics while also attempting to counter the uncertainty that remains around China's rise. However, despite these efforts it should be noted that China remains a suspicious entity in the eyes of many overseas observers and one that cannot lay any claim to moral integrity above and beyond that of another power.

Theme 1: China as a Flourishing Civilisation

On 29 November 2012, shortly after the unveiling of China's fifth generation leaders at the 18th CPC National Congress, President Xi gave a speech entitled "Achieving Rejuvenation is the Dream of the Chinese People" during a visit to the National Museum of China in Beijing. In the

speech, Xi (2014: 38) exhorted Chinese citizens to pursue the *Chinese Dream* (zhongguo meng 中国梦):

> In my opinion, achieving the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation has been the greatest dream of the Chinese people since the advent of modern times. This dream embodies the long-cherished hope of several generations of the Chinese people, gives expression to the overall interests of the Chinese nation and Chinese people, and represents the shared aspiration of all the sons and daughters of the Chinese nation.

The Chinese Dream theme was repeated in five other speeches from the book that Xi made over the next 18 months and which were aimed at both domestic and international audiences. In these speeches, Xi (2014: 47–63) spoke of the need for "hard work [to] make dreams come true", "the need for innovation", as well as the Chinese Dream benefitting people from other nations. According to Callahan (2013: 145) these multiple reiterations of the Chinese Dream should not be dismissed simply as empty rhetoric seeking political purpose or as facts to be proven or disproven. Rather the Chinese Dream – much like the American dream – represents a "moral drama that expresses a community's aspirations and fears" but also the nation's growing collective ego over their special place in the world. Moreover, any corresponding acknowledgement of such a utilitarian purpose by the Chinese people represents de-facto endorsement of their contribution to China's wider hegemonic ambitions and their entrustment of the country's leadership as vanguards of that pursuit. The Chinese Dream can therefore be said to be a *cri de coeur* to Chinese citizens to help achieve the rejuvenation of China as a flourishing special civilisation positioned at the centre of the world (Liu, 2015).

Beyond this, the Chinese Dream symbolises an effort to showcase China's unified and progressive credentials to the outside world as part of the pursuit of its four pillars of foreign policy. Hence, it can be argued that China's outward national image is intertwined with the pursuit of the Chinese dream. By achieving its Dream, China can also become the world power it thinks it can be, ought to be, should be. However, to state that it arrives at its power through exceptionality would likely not be received well by most of its international audience. The claim to exceptionality by the United States both domestically and internationally through public diplomacy and other means, while it has undoubtedly attracted a great many to it, has also been seen as laughably arrogant by many others and a great distortion of the reality of its past, present and future. The narrative of exceptionalism thus sits at the heart of the frustration that many scholars have with American public diplomacy.

China has clearly learned from this. Nevertheless, what becomes clear is that the pursuit of the Chinese Dream is largely incompatible with

the envisaging of a world where the current hegemony is replaced by more egalitarian power structures. Instead, the appearance of a Chinese Dream narrative adds weight to the argument that China desires the creation of its own sphere of influence where it determines the rules of the game and is able to prescribe flows of cultural information as other powers have tried to do to it in recent centuries. Indeed, all powers that have pursued a form of empire, whether religious or economic (can the two be separate?), have found it necessary to cultivate public opinion both within and out with their jurisdictions. For without such undertakings there can be little sense of combined purpose, justification of overrule and motivation to endure hardship.

Theme 2: Progressive China

A frequent aspect of Xi Jinping's rhetoric within his speeches is the need for "all round and deeper-level reforms" which are described as "ongoing tasks [that] will never end" (Xi, 2014: 75–77). Indeed, reforms were the central topic for discussion during the Third Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Committee in 2013, such was their proclaimed importance to China's future. The issue of reform has become more prominent within Chinese politics in recent years partly as a result of several high-profile corruption scandals. The most prominent of which involved Bo Xilai, the former party chief of Chongqing who is now serving a life sentence, who was implicated in the death of British businessman Neil Heywood in the city in 2011. Furthermore, several serving members of China's politburo or their close family members, including those of President Xi himself, have been implicated in the leaked Panama Papers in relation to unscrupulous international financial dealings (Obermayer and Obermaier, 2016). Very little of this has found its way into the content of China's heavily censored domestic media though.

The prominence of the subject of reforms and the underpinning narrative of progress away from entrenchment then amounts to a tacit acknowledgement by the Chinese elite of their shortcomings but willingness to learn. Reforms, according to Xi, have to be comprehensive (from the economy to the environment), but most importantly, these reforms ought to be progressively "connected to, and integrated, in the reform of *Party building*" (Xi, 2014: 99, italics my own). Nevertheless, it can be argued that whether specific reforms can be achieved or not, or whether there is an actual desire to do so or not, is not the point. Instead, that reforms have been emphasised so often suggests that they are of paramount importance to China's image of itself and what it hopes to create internationally. A case of being seen to have greater introspection and progressive willingness than other powers rather than being in authentic pursuit of it.

The concept of "reform" (gaige 改革) is not unique to Xi's administration as it has been frequently echoed among Chinese leaders since Deng Xiaoping who have recognised the notion of progress as important to the ongoing governance of China. To be engaged in reform, as David Lampton (2014: 222) points out, appears to confer legitimacy upon Chinese leaders, and is premised on "bringing China's social, economic, and governing systems into greater harmony with one another in the very different [China] that has evolved since mid-1977". More importantly, and echoing Deng Xiaoping's vision, the premise is that the CPC will emerge stronger from the process of reforms, more progressive, and better prepared to meet the ambitions of the country (Deng, 2013: 191–215).

However, Xi's recent recentralisation of political power around himself suggests that reforms in China are loaded with the political purpose of strengthening Xi's governing authority and solidifying his control of the party rather than any attempt to feed into the pursuit of exceptionalism. Such undertakings have been framed as necessary if institutional power in China is to be strengthened (to clamp down on corruption etc.), and if Chinese leaders are to have the capacity to coordinate the priorities of the Chinese nation both at home and abroad. However, a more critical view of these adjustments would question the extent to which the discourse of reform and progress is merely spin to cover-up the re-emergence of more draconian power structures. As such, the narrative likely represents an attempt by the Chinese leadership to gain the moral traction that they want their power trajectories to be accompanied by.

Theme 3: China as Moral Example

This sub-section provides critical analysis of China's emphasis on morality within its international and domestic affairs, wherein it tows a neat line that ultimately reflects the interests of the state and ought to be considered part of its vehicle towards power consolidation and accumulation. In the period after the Sino-Soviet split of the late 1950s and early 1960s China would reach a point where it had adverse relations with almost all the countries that it shared a border with. This position slowly improved after China's own reforms and changing dynamics within world politics, but that scenario serves the current regime as a lesson from the past not to be repeated. Perhaps more so than other countries then, China appears to attach great importance to peaceful and productive relations with both its near abroad and countries further afield. David Lampton (2014: 136) writes that China's foreign policy is a combination of, "realist thinking, situational ethics, and a deeply embedded sensitivity to being 'bullied'". Moreover, since Deng Xiaoping began China's current power trajectory in the late 1970s, the country's subsequent leaders have all been at pains to describe China's rise as fundamentally peaceful and pertaining to a heightened sense of moral

inclination. Perhaps even a morality beyond that of other world powers. China's morality, it is claimed, has been learned through a combination of collective introspection, a retracing of China's ancient philosophical teachings (which were largely subdued during the Mao era) and close study of the actions and rhetoric of other powers (and their interactions with China) over the last three centuries.

These assurances of an absence of violence, subjugation and overall hegemonic ambition have thus become the rhetorical pillars of China's contemporary international communications and represent a position that tacitly implies that to engage in international warfare or other aggressive actions (shades of heroin addiction during the Opium Wars) or to seek hegemony is an immoral undertaking. Such a narrative should be seen as a not so subtle gibe towards the epoch of European colonialism over the previous centuries and the actions of the United States during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Conveniently though, the accompanying narrative to China's worldview also declares the domestic use of violence by its own security forces (and those of other countries) to be one that the international community has no right to interfere in.

The notion of morality also features widely in Chinese international relations scholarship, especially in recent times where scholars have attempted to endorse China's practice of differentiating its international strategy from Western powers. Among them, Yan Xuetong has been a vocal proponent of China's normative model of international relations. Yan's work deals heavily with the theme of moral standing in international politics, which, he writes, is indispensable from a country's ability to lead (Yan, 2011, 2015). He argues that it is moral standing in the eyes of those who one seeks to influence that is more important than the reality of one's actual moral conduct or motive. To this end, a focus on humane authority offers China an enhanced platform for international leadership regardless of whether this a façade to other interests or not. Yan makes clear that, "[t]he goal of our strategy must be not only to reduce the power gap with the United States but also to provide a better model for society than that given by the United States" (Yan, 2011: 15–16). This argument fits well with that discussed in the introductory chapter to this book where Colin Alexander argued that public diplomacy's purpose is to present an international actor as morally virtuous.

What is more, beyond moralist rhetoric surrounding the absence of hegemony and military aggression, China's leaders have also attempted to project China's moral credentials through a variety of symbolic acts. For example, in his book on China's public diplomacy in Central America, Colin Alexander (2014) has discussed how China built a new soccer stadium in Costa Rica (complete with Chinese infinity knot above the entrance), donated new patrol vehicles to the Costa Rican police force, handed out soccer balls to school children, invested in the country's

flagging national oil corporation RECOPE and brought its naval hospital ship the Peace Ark to the Pacific port city of Punta Arenas.

Rebecca Adler-Nissen (2014) argues that acts like these should not be viewed as passive objects of socialisation but active agents attempting to shape the international discourse regarding modern China. Indeed, much of everyday political interaction can be construed as a performative act, whereby states attempt – through policies enacted and articulated – to communicate how they want to be thought of by others in the hope that this gains traction with those audiences. This links to wider social theory on the importance of co-constitution of social relations, wherein Erving Goffman wrote that, "When an individual plays a part he implicitly requests his observers to take seriously the *impression* that is fostered before them" (Goffman, 1990: 10). Thus, the importance of *symbolic action* becomes crucially important to the impression that is conveyed by a state to the outside world but also how a state understands itself to be. These actions by China in Costa Rica, and which have been replicated elsewhere by Beijing, are thus designed to serve as symbols that epitomise the country's values and integrity of intent. This is unsurprising given that Chinese society is accustomed to ritualistic action wherein the act of governance is not just a social contract between the government and the people but also a responsibility carrying certain obligations with social and some moral standing (Fei, 1992; Pye, 1992, 1998).

Nevertheless, the overwhelming position of the hegemonic coalition and international observers has been one of scepticism towards such symbolic action, believing (correctly) it to be a policy pursued by China because it is in China's self-interest to do so. Most of them come to this conclusion based at least partly on self-assessment of their own public diplomacy policies and the priorities that sit behind them. Moreover, the very public violent suppression of political protesters at Tiananmen Square in Beijing during June 1989 remains as somewhat of a beacon to the violent potential of the Chinese state despite it being over 30 years ago now. Additionally, in Costa Rica, Alexander (2014) noted the extent to which China's "gifts" were laden with the weight of their political baggage, wherein Costa Rica made clear pivots towards acceptance and even advocation of the Chinese worldview in the aftermath of China's bestowment. Thus, while Chinese leaders and affiliated scholars frequently characterise Chinese foreign policy as inherently peaceful, and the moral imperative of it being so, most of China's international audience remains unconvinced but prepared to continue the cultivation of positive relations with Beijing while it is in all parties' interests to keep doing so (Guo, 2006; Qin, 2010; Zheng, 2005).

Seemingly aware of the contestability of China's moral dynamic abroad, President Xi has steered clear of moral discussions in his speeches to Western audiences and instead focussed on areas of common interest. Xi's speeches in Moscow, Sunnylands (California) and Bruges

have all attempted to find common ground with his respective hosts by focussing on positive developments, particularly the role played by China in helping other parts of the world to flourish (Xi, 2014: 297–315). Beyond this approach being typical of diplomacy around the world, in the China case the Xi administration appear aware that, despite their contestability, notions of democracy and human rights have become basic moral standards in the minds of many (Chinese dissidents included) and that question marks over China's conduct on these fronts is a subject best left alone if relations are to prosper.

Exceptionalism within Domestic Political Communications

Beyond the narrative of the Chinese Dream that has been leveraged to encourage a view of exceptionalism among China's citizens, the Xi administration has been keen to frame its tackling of corruption and willingness to reform as further aspects of its (and the country's) exceptionalism. This was demonstrated during the second plenary session of the 18th Communist Party Congress in January 2013 when Xi touched on the need to catch "tigers" and "flies" (in a reference to powerful leaders and lowly bureaucrats respectively) and that party members should not "seek any personal gain or privilege" over and above what they are entitled to in the course of their jobs (Xi, 2014: 425–431). However, the extent to which Xi and his team actually want to eradicate corruption can be contested. It may be that the motive is to purge the CPC of Xi's political rivals or simply to create a public anti-corruption narrative with a few cases of success in order to engineer a perception of the Party's legitimacy and righteousness. On this point, China observer James Char has noted that Xi's fight against corruption has not yielded a single high-ranking official from Fujian and Zhejiang – provinces in which Xi previously served – nor anyone from within his "princelings" faction (Char, 2015).

Corruption, it is argued, erodes the moral standing of the Party in the eyes of the people and is inconsistent to other narratives concerning exceptionalism. According to one study of Chinese politics, corruption is widely viewed as a social "evil" that impedes economic development, creates political instability, undermines the legitimacy of public institutions and lowers the moral standards of the entire society (He, 2000). As such, domestic anticorruption campaigns are dual purposed: as an instrument of the Xi administration's power (for political purges) and as a demonstration of good governance whereby the party is able to, or at least be seen to, claim a moral high ground (Broadhurst and Wang, 2014). Moreover, while other countries are bound by the sanctity of their constitutions, particularly the United States, which sometimes greatly restrict political manoeuvre, China's structure enables it much more flexibility to pursue strategies based on the needs of the day.

These strategies allow the Party to claim credit for its success in ruling and developing China and to dismiss any campaigns towards the democratisation of China. To this end, with a one-party system and the absence of popular elections, besides bringing economic prosperity, moral standing has thus become a metric of appraisal for Chinese leaders. The Chinese saying, "if the leader is not upright, the subordinates will also be crooked" (上梁不正下梁歪) dovetails well with how Chinese politics functions. To legitimise their governance, Chinese leaders have to be perceived as being "morally good", insofar as they represent the public face of the CPC and consequently also reflect the extent to which the Party and the nation sit and unison.

Frank Pieke argues that the CPC is being vested with a certain "sacredness and secret void at the heart of its rule that has to remain separate and untouched by the profane realities of ordinary politics" (Pieke, 2016: 26). In other words, the Party seeks to project an image that it is untainted by the immoral vagaries and vicissitudes of everyday politics elsewhere. An exceptionalism of sorts. Wherein it is kept pure through a process of self-criticism and self-reflection. This is despite there being little leverage for outsiders to substantiate such a narrative. Or, as Pieke writes, without "expos[ing] the inner core of [CPC] politics to the gaze of ordinary people [thus] stripping the Party of the mystery and sacredness that have rendered its rule unquestionable and untouchable for so long". The extent to which the Chinese public are actually convinced of the CPC's moral standing as defined by this approach remains contestable though.

Conclusion

According to Ingrid d'Hooghe's (2008) study, China cannot be said to have been successful in projecting the image of a responsible (let alone exceptional) world power. One reason lies in the lack of political freedom and limited freedom of speech in the country – values widely held as moral benchmarks since the end of World War II and signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. Consequently, China's national image remains problematic in the eyes of many international observers. This is despite efforts made by Chinese leaders to remedy that dynamic through public diplomacy. In the case of the Chinese Dream, it is unclear – with the exception of a small group of Chinese ultra-nationals – how much Chinese citizens themselves identify with this dream. Furthermore, as Callahan has observed, the "optimism of the China Dream relies on the pessimism of the national humiliation nightmare … it is a negative soft power strategy that cultivates an anti-Western and an anti-Japanese form of Chinese identity … rather than being attractive and embracing difference, the China dream is part of a broad practice whereby identity is constituted by excluding difference" (Callahan, 2015b: 223–225). The Sino-centric exceptionalism

of the Chinese Dream also raises questions over the extent to which nations not subscribing to the Chinese worldview are being excluded, or worse, seen as hostile by China.

Likewise, the leitmotifs of reforms, peace and restraint propounded by Chinese leaders are not entirely convincing. For one, the reluctance by the CPC to cede control of power or permit greater transparency over its administration limits the extent to which concepts of progress vis-à-vis reforms and anti-corruption campaigns can be seen as anything other than acts of power conservation. However, it is in the country's foreign relations that greatest scepticism can be found over China's intent. Beyond, the memories of the Tiananmen Square massacre of 1989, modern China has found itself in conflict with its neighbours as a result of territorial disputes (with Vietnam, Philippines and Indonesia over the Spratly Islands and with Japan of the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands). China's image of benevolence is being widely disregarded as duplicitous as a result of these conflicts with those states in its near abroad looking elsewhere for their security partnerships (Chen and Yang, 2013; Kuik et al., 2012; Shekhar, 2012). These geopolitical tussles only add weight to the dominant international narrative that emanates from the hegemonic coalition that China's rise creates greater uncertainty – politically, economically, environmentally – and that its systems of government and methods of social control are incompatible with the direction of travel that has prevailed since the middle of the previous century. Therefore, despite the efforts of Chinese diplomats and scholars to promote a peace-loving and non-threatening image of Beijing, China remains a suspicious entity in the eyes of many and one that cannot lay claim to moral integrity above and beyond that of another power. Herein lies the essential quandary for the Chinese. The hegemonic coalition of Western countries seeks to preserve its somewhat weakened grip on global power by claiming that rising powers with non-Western centric worldviews are incompatible and undesirable. This is of course first and foremost a self-interested and self-preserving strategy rather than founded on more moral concerns. However, Beijing's "problem", so to speak, is that much of what the coalition says about China is actually true. Indeed, despite all its development, China still lacks the communications clout to challenge that narrative in a way that represents anything more than a sideshow to the still dominant pro-Western narratives of international affairs.

Note

1. As of writing, a second volume *The Governance of China* has been published. However, this chapter focuses on the speeches in the first volume as they set out the parameters and priorities of President Xi, and consequently that of the Chinese government for the next 10–15 years. Given that President Xi has removed constitutional limits to his term in office, it can be argued that the ideas contained in this book will be considerably salient for some time to come.

Bibliography

Adler-Nissen, R., (2014), "Stigma Management in International Relations: Transgressive Identities, Norms, and Order in International Society", *International Organization*, 68(1), pp. 143–176.

Alden, C., and D. Large, (2011), "China's Exceptionalism and the Challenges of Delivering Difference in Africa", *Journal of Contemporary China*, 20(68), pp. 21–38.

Alexander, C. R., (2014), *China and Taiwan in Central America: Engaging Foreign Publics in Diplomacy*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Broadhurst, R., and P. Wang, (2014), "After the Bo Xilai Trial: Does Corruption Threaten China's Future?", *Survival*, 56(3), pp. 157–178.

Callahan, W. A., (2012), "Sino-Speak: Chinese Exceptionalism and the Politics of History", *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 71(1), pp. 33–55.

Callahan, W. A., (2013), *China Dreams: 20 Visions of the Future*, New York: Oxford University Press.

Callahan, W. A., (2015a), "The Impact of Xi Jinping's Governance of China – III". *The Asan Forum*, Available from World Wide Web: http://www.theasanforum.org/the-china-dream-3-2/ [Retrieved 4 April, 2018].

Callahan, W. A., (2015b), "Identity and Security in China: The Negative Soft Power of the China Dream", *Politics*, 35(3-4), pp. 216–229.

Char, J. A., (2015), "Turning Point in China's Anti-Graft Campaign", *The Diplomat*, Available from World Wide Web: http://thediplomat.com/2015/01/a-turning-point-in-chinas-anti-graft-campaign/ [Retrieved 29 February, 2016].

Chen, I. T. Y., and A. H. Yang, (2013), "A Harmonized Southeast Asia? Explanatory Typologies of ASEAN Countries' Strategies to the Rise of China", *The Pacific Review*, 26(3), pp. 265–288.

Cui, T., (2014), "Tuidonggoujian zhongmei xinxing daguo guanxi", [Promoting and constructing Sino-American new type of major power relations], *Qiushi*, 10, pp. 58–60.

d'Hooghe, I., (2008), "Into High Gear: China's Public Diplomacy", *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy*, 3(1), pp. 37–61.

Deng, X., (2013), *On Reforms*, New York: CN Times Book.

Fei, X., (1992), *From the Soil, the Foundations of Chinese Society: A Translation of Fei Xiaotong's Xiangtu Zhongguo, With an Introduction and Epilogue*, Berkeley: University of California Press.

Goffman, E., (1990), *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life, Reprint*, London: Penguin Books.

Guo, S., (2006), *China's "Peaceful Rise" in the 21st Century: Domestic and International Conditions*, Burlington: Ashgate.

He, Z., (2000), "Corruption and Anti-Corruption in Reform China", *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 33(2), pp. 243–270.

Ho, B., (2014), "Understanding Chinese Exceptionalism", *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*, 39(3), pp. 164–176.

Jia, Q., (2015), *Xinxing daguo guanxi: jiyu yu tianzhan*, [New type of major power relations: challenges and opportunities]. Beijing: Beijingdaxuechubanshe [Beijing: Peking University Press].

Kuik, C. C., A. I. Nor-Azizan, and M. N. Abd-Rahim, (2012), "The China Factor in the U.S. 'Reengagement' With Southeast Asia: Drivers and Limits of Converged Hedging", *Asian Politics and Policy*, 4(3), pp. 315–344.

Lampton, D. M., (2014), *Following the Leader: Ruling China, from Deng Xiaoping to Xi Jinping*, Berkerley: University of California Press.

Linley, M., J. Reilly, and B. E. Goldsmith, (2012), "Who's Afraid of the Dragon? Asian Mass Publics' Perceptions of China's Influence", *Japanese Journal of Political Science*, 13(4), pp. 501–523.

Liu, M., (2015), *The China Dream: Great Power Thinking & Strategic Posture in the Post-American Era*, New York: CN Times Books.

Mason, R., (2015), *John McDonnell under fire for quoting Mao Zedong in Commons*, Available from World Wide Web: https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2015/nov/25/john-mcdonnell-mao-zedong-little-red-book-george-osborne [Accessed 22 March, 2019].

Obermayer, B., and F. Obermaier, (2016), *The Panama Papers: Breaking the Story of How the Rich & Powerful Hide Their Money*, London: OneWorld.

Paltiel, J. T., (2011), "Constructing Global Order With Chinese Characteristics: Yan Xuetong and the Pre-Qin Response to International Anarchy", *Chinese Journal of International Politics*, 4(4), pp. 375–403.

Pieke, F. N., (2016), *Knowing China: A Twenty-First Century Guide*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Pye, L. W., (1992), *The Spirit of Chinese Politics*, New ed., Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Pye, L. W., (1998), *International Relations in Asia: Culture, Nation and State*. George Washington University, Washington DC: Sigur Centre for Asian Studies.

Qin, Y., (2010), "International Society as a Process: Institutions, Identities, and China's Peaceful Rise", *Chinese Journal of International Politics*, 3(2), pp. 129–153.

Shekhar, V., (2012), "ASEAN's Response to the Rise of China: Deploying a Hedging Strategy", *China Report*, 48(3), pp. 253–268.

Wang, J., (2015), *Daguoguanxi*, [Major power relations]. Beijing: Zhongxinchubanshe [Beijing: Zhongxin Publishing].

Welsh, B., and A. Chang, (2015), "Choosing China: Public Perceptions of 'China as a Model'", *Journal of Contemporary China*, 24(93), pp. 1–15.

Xi, J., (2014), *The Governance of China*, Beijing: Foreign Languages Press.

Yan, X., (2011), *Ancient Chinese Thought, Modern Chinese Power*, The Princeton-China Series. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Yan, X., (2015), *Shijie quanli de zhuanyi: zhengzhilingdao yu zhanluejingzhen*, [The Transition of World Power: Political Leadership and Strategic Competition]. Beijing: Peking University Press.

Yee, H. S., (2011), *China's Rise: Threat or Opportunity?* London: Routledge.

Zeng, J., and S. Breslin, (2016), "China's 'New Type of Great Power Relations': A G2 With Chinese Characteristics?", *International Affairs*, 92(4), pp. 773–794.

Zhang, F., (2013), "The Rise of Chinese Exceptionalism in International Relations", *European Journal of International Relations*, 19(2), pp. 305–328.

Zheng, B., (2005), *China's Peaceful Rise: Speeches of Zheng Bijian, 1997–2005*, Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press.

8 India's Public Diplomacy Re-posturing

The BJP's Use of Yoga within Its Political Communications

Alexander E. Davis

Introduction

In his first speech at the United Nations (UN) in 2014 the newly elected Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, of the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP), discussed the potential of yoga to solve global political issues. Yoga, he argued, encourages self-reflection and unity with one's surroundings and so adherence to its philosophy can lead people to change aspects of their life including their relationship with the environment and the natural world.

> Yoga is an invaluable gift of ancient Indian tradition. It embodies unity of mind and body; thought and action; restraint and fulfilment; harmony between man and nature and a holistic approach to health and well-being. Yoga is not about exercise but to discover the sense of oneness with ourselves, the world and nature. By changing our lifestyle and creating consciousness, it can help us to deal with climate change. Let us work towards adopting an International Yoga Day.
>
> (see Government of India, 2015: v)

Following his speech, the UN declared 21 June 2015 (the summer solstice and the anniversary day recognising when Lord Shiva became the first yogi) to be the first official International Day of Yoga (IDY) (Chacko, 2019). At Rajpath, New Delhi, on that day Modi himself led the world's largest mass physical practice of yoga. Subsequently, on 21 June of each year since, mass gatherings of yoga practitioners have been televised or streamed live on the internet and Indian Embassies and High Commissions around the world have hosted mass yoga practices. As Tripati Nath put it in India's public diplomacy publication *India Perspectives,* 'Amazingly, India's [IDY] resolution was adopted in just 75 days with a record 177 countries co-sponsoring and all 193 member states unanimously supporting' (Nath, 2017: 8).

The level of support for Modi's resolution among the member states of the UN partly reflects the seeming innocuousness of the proposal.

Yoga's positive association with physical and mental well-being offered a tantalising opportunity for the UN and its membership to be seen to be committed to doing 'good' in the world. Additionally, any member state abstaining, or protesting its passing, would have been exposed to their colleagues as an unduly harsh outlier, unsupportive of international trends towards promoting healthy lifestyles. To this end, Modi and his delegation strategically enticed the UN to back a contested socio-political issue within India by framing the resolution on apolitical grounds. Nevertheless, with Modi leading the narrative, and his image being widely used in the subsequent promotion of the IDY by the Indian state, any future non-BJP government of India will likely be hesitant to support or use the materials.

In his focus on yoga, Modi has tried to position himself as a self-styled guru of a global imagining of Hinduism's contribution to international cultural affairs. Indeed, as the Indian government's 'Common Yoga Protocol' points out, the mass practice that Modi led in 2015 received two Guinness World Records: most people and most nationalities in a single yoga demonstration (Government of India, 2015). However, events like the IDY and their accompanying Guinness World Records bastardise the central teachings of yogic philosophy wherein individuals are encouraged to relinquish concerns for their own ego if they are to achieve enlightenment. To this end, this chapter explores the different self-interested motivations behind the BJP's use of yoga as a tool towards the consolidation of its own power within its public diplomacy communications. The chapter begins by providing a brief but necessary overview of some of the key teachings of yoga philosophy before providing critical analysis of the BJP's approach to the subject. This will highlight how the Indian government's materials narrate the emergence of yoga in ways that tether it to the priorities of the broader BJP political project. Moreover, the focus on yoga as a mere form of physical exercise and the seemingly intentional downplaying of its philosophical aspects links to wider neoliberal objects that desire individuals to seek comfort in material possessions rather than to pursue spiritual awakening and emotional understanding.

Yoga Philosophy

To many people around the world who do not engage in the physical practice of yoga, and even for many who do, it is an activity that occurs in bespoke studios or gymnasium classes wherein often lycra-clad practitioners adopt a range of postures in a bid to improve core strength and/or bodily suppleness as part of a regular exercise routine. Many of those who practice yoga are aware, or become aware, of its more spiritual Indian origins through brief references to it or the names of the various postures (although many now have more common anglicised descriptors:

'downward dog', 'cobra', 'warrior' etc.). Few exercisers venture deep into the philosophy of yoga, or its origins within the ancient interlaced teachings of Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism. Instead, yoga is simply a tool for the improvement of the individual's physical prowess.

Physical practice occupies a very small part of traditional yoga philosophy though. Indeed, it could even be said that, without any effort towards its philosophy, the physical practices that are most commonly associated with yoga may not even be yoga at all but simply stretching or working on strength and conditioning. Interpretations of the plentiful literature on yoga philosophy discuss its ancient teachings as a life's work and a pursuit of deeper awareness. Ultimately it is a way of being focussed towards the realisation of 'super consciousness', sometimes also referred to as 'pure consciousness'(see Cope, 2007; Maehle, 2006; Saraswati, 1976). To this end, the ancient teachings found in the *Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, which despite some consternation over their origins are believed to have been compiled around 400 CE, offer a guide as to how the individual might pursue this, giving suggestions on convention, thought, observance and action.

Written in Sanskrit, the *Yoga Sutras* were not meant for intellectual debate or speculation, but were written to suggest the process and practical methods that could be used to raise one's level of awareness, gain deeper wisdom, explore the potential of the mind and eventually go beyond the mind into a higher state of consciousness. Patanjali, the renown sage of Hinduism, believed that these methods had given him insight and understanding of the deeper aspects of his being, why he existed and, ultimately, the meaning of life itself. Patanjali thus, in writing his reflections down, provided a range of techniques that slowly harmonise the mind and gradually induce more nuanced perceptions of the world. He explained eight stages to unity and enlightenment. Yama (social code), Niyama (personal code), Asana (sitting pose), Pranayama (control of breath) and Pratyahara (withdrawal of senses). These first five are to prepare the mind and body for the final stages where expanded consciousness can occur. Dharana (concentration), Dhyana (meditation), Samadhi (super consciousness).

The pursuit of super consciousness can be a life's work that may not ever be attained. Indeed, it may even be infinite and thus unachievable. Rather, it involves the dismissal of egotistical concerns over reward and acclaim is part of the yogic process towards unity, enlightenment and those higher reaches of consciousness. The aspects of physical practice commonly associated with yoga are thereby included within the *Yoga Sutras* as an offering of guidance as to postures that the individual can adopt to clear the mind in preparation for philosophical ponderings and the pursuit of deeper wisdom that is yoga's ultimate goal. This is very much at odds with the BJP's celebration of world records. Focus on posture and the calm flow of breath encourages the mind to release other

thoughts about the self as a social being or the specifics of the social, economic and political world that we inhabit as a prelude to such immersion. To this end, for postures to be considered part of a yoga they should occur as part of a wider preparatory process involving introspection and adjustment of one's personal and social conduct and overall way of being. Attendance at a 'yoga' class without intent towards the wider aspects of yoga philosophy amounts to little more than stretching and breath control. In short, yoga is a pursuit that requires a certain state of mind – one cannot simply 'do' yoga.

Elizebeth de Michelis (2005) has argued that 'modern postural yoga' has emerged over the past 150 years but accelerated with the interest in exercise and gym culture during the 1980s. She dates the key moment in the transformation of yoga to the mid-nineteenth century when the American social commentator Henry David Thoreau took it up while remaining a self-identified 'westerner' and discussed both its physical practice and some aspects of its philosophy in his popular book *Walden*, which describes the author's experiences when he spent two years, two months and two days living alone in a cabin in the forests of rural Massachusetts (de Michelis, 2005: 2). Swami Vivekananda was central to the more mainstream spread of yoga to the US in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century through his book *Raja Yoga*, first published in 1896, which provided his interpretation of the *Yoga Sutras* and offered a spiritual guide that was ideologically compatible with prevailing American values. Nevertheless, the contemporary popularity of yoga practice as group exercise alongside the gym 'workout' can be associated with the response of Western societies to neoliberal ideology, but also urbanisation, post-industrialism and increasing levels of obesity. Under these conditions, fitness, and the 'perfection' of the physical body for that end alone, has become a more popular task, as opposed to the enjoyment more keenly associated with playing sports and general outdoor recreation. This has occurred as individuals have sought to boost their efficiency as workers and present a manufactured persona to the world in the hope that it will lead to reward, prestige and additional social capital. Thus, as the manufacture of many goods has moved out of Western countries, individuals have, almost in an inverse ratio, turned inwards to the manufacture of themselves. This more narcissistic muscular performance for its own sake, often in front of mirrors, is a far cry from, perhaps even the antithesis of, the ancient teachings described in the *Yoga Sutras* wherein deeper consciousness can only be achieved when the individual is able to understand, critique and ultimately rise above their own ego. For it is through the filter of the ego that one commonly interprets oneself and the wider world, and this must be removed before deeper wisdom can be achieved.

For a small minority though, the philosophical path offered by yoga's teachings can still begin with a rather superficial introduction to it on

a gymnasium floor, wherein a curiosity develops from the state of mind that the postures and breathing techniques are designed to facilitate. However, given the relatively few people who make that jump to philosophical pursuit, it seems clear that most individuals use yoga classes as a coping or de-stressing mechanism for other aspects of their lives rather than as part of a willingness to contemplate fundamental changes to that life that will address the reasons why they feel such activities necessary in the first place. It thereby corresponds that engagement with yoga philosophy must be sought out independently from such exercise classes and involves a significant amount of individual proactivity.

Public Diplomacy, India and Spirituality

Spirituality within public diplomacy communications has seldom been considered and so this discussion of modern India offers a novel case study. Costas Constantinou's (2010) work on the overlaps between spiritualism and diplomacy focusses on explorations of way in which negotiators can relate to each other. However, this does not quite capture India's efforts nor the role of yoga as a specific. Elsewhere, Tim Winter has looked at China's use of material objects and histories and of connection between China and Eurasia, using the concept of 'geocultural power' as a diplomatic tool. This is somewhat useful as he notes that China has seemingly acknowledged that dialogues between Buddhism, Islam, Confucianism and Taoism, 'are fertile grounds for nurturing "friendships" built on "trust"' (Winter, 2019: 89). As such, this mobilising of history, culture and spirituality to an authoritarian state-based political project perhaps better captures India's evocation of Yoga within its international communications.

Some useful work on Indian public diplomacy provides a platform to the research presented in this chapter. Jabin Jacob (2016: 167) discusses the history of the public diplomacy wing of India's Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) wherein he examines the various themes, narratives and focusses of India's international communications campaigns. Yudhishthir Raj Isar (2017) and Latha Varadrajan's (2010) have both analysed the role of India's diaspora as targets of Delhi's cultural diplomacy outreach. Additionally, in his analysis of the beginnings of India's contemporary public diplomacy, Ian Hall (2012) has discussed the web portal established by the MEA in 2010 under the previous Indian National Congress (INC) government. This portal included lectures, documentaries and access to the accompanying public diplomacy magazine *India Perspectives* that largely emphasised art, culture, sport, diplomatic history and India's engagements with other parts of the world. The magazine was aimed at least in part at the home market and the Indian diaspora. The MEA also developed at this time its own Twitter and Facebook pages. Interestingly, Hall argued that Delhi's impetus for

greater focus on its public diplomacy strategy was inspired by a growing awareness by India's elite of the potential of social media for political purposes. It was also influenced by the perceived growth of China's soft power after the emergence of Beijing's own public diplomacy 'charm offensive'. In this sense, it may be that India's evocation of yoga ought to be viewed as at least partly a response to China's geocultural diplomacy (Winter, 2019). Finally, Lee Edwards and Anandi Ramamurthy (2017) have looked at the 'Incredible India' tourism campaign as a form of 'nation branding' from a postcolonial perspective. Their findings compliment the argument presented here that frames India as 'a hybrid nation, open to global capital but distinctively Hindu in nature' (Edwards and Ramamurthy, 2017: 325). Set up in 2002 by the first BJP led government of Atal Bihari Vajpayee, *Incredible India* presented an orientalist discourse of India as a spiritual civilisation but all the while implying a Hindu underpinning.

A key debate in the study of Indian foreign policy has been the extent to which the BJP, Hindu nationalism and indeed Modi himself, has reshaped Indian foreign policy (Hall, 2015). According to Chacko (2019), previous BJP governments and foreign policy elites have adhered to a different vision of Indian society to the one described by successive governments during the latter twentieth century, but still responds to, and is shaped by, the original Nehruvian moorings of Indian foreign policy. The foreign policy of any single administration is formulated through global circumstances, power relationships and other geostrategies and the legacies of the administrations that have gone before it (Ogden, 2010). However, the BJP have sought to assert India's rationality, masculinity and martial valour in what can be seen as a significant departure from the positions of previous administrations. Closer ties with the United States have also been fostered as part of this process (Chacko, 2019). Furthermore, India, now framing itself as a Hindu-centred civilisation with a claim to being a civilisational power rather than a state power, has moved the strategy by which its government seeks to engage with Indian diaspora around the world in as much as it seeks to 'activate' those communities as public diplomacy assets rather than them mainly conceptualised as passive receivers of communications (Chaturvedi, 2005). To this end, the BJP conceptualise 'India' and 'Indianness' as not just existing within its own borders, but as a transcendent, ancient and modern active global network.

These conceptualisations by the BJP result in different public diplomacy narratives from those of previous non-BJP administrations. After Partition in 1947, Nehru's promotion of India as a secular state, despite its large Hindu majority, sought to signify to the country's ethnic and religious minorities that they were welcome in the newly independent country and that they would be protected and valued under its new constitution. However, state secularism was based on the rejection of the two

nation theory that had gained traction towards the end of the colonial period, the prevalence of which had led to the creation of Pakistan as a Muslim state, and thereby to encourage support for Delhi's desire to represent all of the Indian sub-continent. To this end, the idea of 'secularism' in India refers to Nehruvian secularism, in which the state treats all religions equally, rather than the 'Western' notion in which the state is seen as having no religion (Kumar, 2008).

The BJP's international emphasis on yoga takes place among these wider debates on Indian national identity, Hinduism and secularism. Indeed, while the BJP are inclined to explicitly state that yoga, despite its foundations within the ancient teachings of Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism, holds universal applicability, its inclinations towards Hindu-centrism are never far away and lead to suspicion over a more power-hungry intent behind the narrative. Such a position on yoga philosophy is broadly congruent with the many interpretations of yoga philosophy that are available today. However, consternation remains that the BJP's promotion of the IDY and other yogic narratives are more likely a humble pretence masking more self-interested politically exclusionary intentions surrounding their vision of India as a predominantly Hindu country. Such an argument fits with the theories of public diplomacy explained in the introduction to this edited volume wherein these communications, despite claims to the encouragement of compassion for a common humanity, is a competitive egocentric practice in which self-interest is the imperative. Moreover, the promotion of yoga within India's public diplomacy as a predominantly physical practice, with little encouragement towards the study of the philosophical framework that surrounds it, results in questions over the authenticity of any intent towards unity, emancipation or higher consciousness. Notions that would arguably be of some help in a world still riddled by divisions.

Yoga within India's Public Diplomacy

The BJP's discourse on yoga dates it to the pre-Vedic period (prior to the writing of the Vedas, 1500 and 1000 BCE). This presents yoga as a deeply ancient practice, which existed prior to Aryan migration to South Asia. However, this is one of the key areas of contest and consternation within contemporary debates on the BJP's approach. In so doing, the BJP draws upon Indigenous Indo-Aryan theory, which suggests that Aryan languages, culture and traditions emerged out of India rather than through migration to the sub-continent. This argument is the subject of an ongoing deliberation within India that the BJP are all too well aware of partly because this narrative has accompanied the growth of the Hindutva movement, of which the BJP is the political wing. It sees the migration theory as a colonial imposition that denies the indigeneity of Hinduism and is thus at odds with the political ends of Hindutva (Fosse, 2005).

As will be discussed in the following pages then, India's public diplomacy materials on yoga frequently assert its ancientness and historical continuity, pointing towards the origins of yoga as lying roughly 1000 years before the Vedic period, to which they were then crystallised within *The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*. This, and other factors, including the BJP's affiliation of yoga to the *Upanishads*, a collection of ancient texts from the Vedic period which contain some of the central philosophical concepts and ideas of Hinduism, ensure that the BJP frame yoga as 'belonging', so to speak, to Hinduism, even if it avoids such explicit confirmation by also focussing on its universal applicability.

This historical narrative presented by the BJP, both within its public diplomacy and in its broader historiography of India, centres the Indian nation around an eternal Hindu-centric civilisation. This interpretation has been criticised by social commentators of different persuasions because it implicitly, and sometimes explicitly, marginalises the reality that India is a multi-faith, multi-ethnic and multicultural society, and that this has been the case throughout its modern and ancient history. The BJP's focus on India as a Hindu-centric civilisation marks a new frontier in India's global outreach, and an interesting new frontier in public diplomacy more generally, because it sits in contrast to the more inclusionary narrative that marked India's contribution to public diplomacy in the years following the country's independence from the UK in 1947. Furthermore, it provides an interesting case study of the divergence of public diplomacy as a state activity and that of a government.

The construction of India's international identity and associated public diplomacy had previously been dominated by the postcolonial political project of its first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, which sought, on the surface at least, to construct a more ethical world order (Chacko, 2011). Nehru based India's international narrative on a sense of its civilisational exceptionalism and the country spoke to the outside world of its pluralism, its anti-colonialism, its ability to learn from other cultures, and, as Sarah Graham's chapter in this edited volume explains, its Afro-Asian solidarity. However, with the emergence of Modi this Nehruvian legacy is being replaced by a Hindutva vision in which India's civilisational exceptionalism is seen as more outwardly Hindu and that India must teach other civilisations rather than being a sponge to other cultures and societies. This BJP-led narrative is thus, seemingly purposefully, erasing Nehru from India's foreign policy discourse. Simultaneously Gandhi's memory has been defused with his image transformed into a more benign 'father of the nation' (Doron and Jeffrey, 2018: 256). In contrast, open support for his assassin Nathuram Godse appears regularly from more 'hardcore' Hindutva activists (Davis and Gamble, 2020).

Therefore, despite it being produced and disseminated by the Indian state, the focus on yoga and the IDY forms a partisan narrative profoundly shaped by the ruling party's ideology of Hindutva. To this end,

while the yoga narrative can be understood as an attempt to further India's strategic ambitions, it can also be understood as assisting the BJP government's ideational goals for India and its own consolidation of power and status. Beyond this, India's yoga doctrine also has the role of underpinning its commitment to neoliberalism within its public diplomacy discourse. India's yoga narrative has emphasised that the stress and anxiety of the individual under neoliberalism is the responsibility of the self to alleviate rather than for society to reflect upon and make adjustments that allow the populace the space to engage in yogic pursuits. To this end, unity, emancipation, mindfulness, compassion and, ultimately the pursuit of super consciousness, feature very little in India's public diplomacy narrative on yoga. Most likely, because such a focus would be counter-productive to the priority of upholding of the economic status quo. Instead, India's depiction of yoga has been rather superficial and focussed mainly on coping mechanisms through physical practice.

Materials regarding the IDY originate from the public diplomacy offices of India's MEA and are a key part of its international propaganda narrative being disseminated through the usual public diplomacy channels. However, the materials carry potentially divisive narratives of Indian identity, such as positioning yoga as a pre-Vedic practice. Some of the images reflect postures that are associated with Hinduism, or are rejected by India's Muslim's, such as the *surya namaskar* (sun worship). Others emphasise Modi's personal influence. The materials date yoga in ways which are consistent with the BJP's vision of Indian history, such as the idea of 'pre-vedic yoga'. This narrative is intertwined with, and shaped by, domestic debates about national identity and is marked by the ideational impulses of Hindutva. This occurs against the backdrop of the more traditional desire of communications professionals involved in public diplomacy who want to be viewed as 'effective' communicators.

The physical practice of yoga most commonly seen in gym classes around the world views what is an ancient philosophy as simply as a set of exercises with perhaps a vague addendum to deeper meaning tagged on at the start or end of a class. Hence this chapter used the phrase 'bastardisation' in the introduction. However, this concept of yoga has also absorbed into the toolkits of psychologists and therapists as a mindfulness practice to help anxiety and depression, to process trauma, or to better cope with the stresses of contemporary life. Each of these adaptations form parts of lucrative industries involving expensive lifestyle brands, gyms, medical professionals, personal trainers, fitness technology and exercise studios. In this sense, yoga plays a sizable role within the capitalist world economy and it seems apparent that it is the BJP's intent to depict yoga in a congruent way to these industries (Chacko, 2019). To this end, the BJP's narratives surrounding the IDY and yoga more generally present it as an 'Indian' way of surviving the increasing demands placed on workers by neoliberalism trends rather than a path towards

deeper wisdom. Indeed, the BJP's neoliberal self-interests means that it would be counterproductive to encourage humans to find modes of being other than an individual trying to find contentment in the ownership of material goods.

Analysing the International Day of Yoga

India's public diplomacy around yoga presents what might be called a soft Hindutva narrative. In general, it emphasises the peaceful nature of India, and promotes Indian history and Indian identity through a Hindutva lens, while also trying to appeal to wider non-Hindu audiences around the world. The emphasis on Modi himself as a 'guru' of sorts is less subtle though. This form of political communication is explicitly about Modi himself. One of the most oft-repeated narratives within the materials is that Modi was personally behind the IDY and that it was inaugurated by the international community at the behest of his speech to the UN in 2014. To this end, the success of the initiative, demonstrated by its purported 'billions' of participants, is down to Modi's influence. Thus, while yoga is India's gift to the world, the IDY is Modi's.

IDY materials are produced by three federal Indian ministries: the Prime Minister's Office, the MEA, and the Ministry of Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homeopathy (AYUSH), with the MEA website displaying content from around the world of each of the IDYs held so far. The relevant ministers of these government departments, Narendra Modi, Sushma Swaraj (and her second term replacement Subrahmanyam Jaishankar) and Shripad Naik have all appeared frequently in the promotional materials. In 2017, the Ministry of Defence also took part in the IDY by arranging sessions for the Indian army, air force and navy that received media coverage and the Ministry of AYUSH arranged a two-day conference on the theme 'Yoga for Body and Beyond' in New Delhi for the days following the 2017 IDY. Finally, Indian Embassies and High Commissions around the world are regularly engaged in promoting the IDY. Many host mass yoga displays which feed into the MEA's and their own promotional materials and which also find their way onto the Indian government's official social media accounts and other public diplomacy channels such as the *India Perspectives* magazine. The emphasis on the body rather than the mind is consistent across all the channels discussed here that disseminate the Indian government's messages about yoga. Thus, while it can certainly be argued that a healthier body forms part of the process of having a healthier mind, for the individual to use the physical practice of yoga as a form of respite without commitment to greater wisdom or understanding of self is to neglect the fundamentals of yogic teachings.

India Perspectives has featured the IDY as its cover story twice to date. The first, in 2015, featured a golden figure in a yoga pose sitting in front

of a tree of life, in which the leaves are a variety of national flags (see Sridharan, 2015: 6–9). The story, titled *Yoga in the New Millennium*, draws on Modi's seemingly heroic effort (although there does not appear to have been much resistance) to have the UN approve the IDY and the role that yoga can play in maintaining calm through the stresses of life. Here, the narrative repeatedly emphasises Modi himself creating the IDY and the ways in which yoga, as India's civilisational gift to the world, can benefit all. The story opens: 'With hectic schedules and innumerable commitments likely to assume greater significance in the years to come, yoga seems to be the only advisable remedy' (Sridharan, 2015: 6). Beneath this is an image of a body in the lotus pose, in front of a globe showing the Indian Ocean. Surrounding the globe are 12 smaller circles, each showing bodies in various yoga poses. These depict the 12 stages of a *surya namaskar*, a series of yoga poses that have been controversial in India for implying sun worship. *Surya namaskar* has been rejected by the All India Muslim Personal Law Board for implying worship of a god other than Allah and thereby in violation of Indian secularism when it is incorporated into state-backed yoga demonstrations such as by the police force or Modi's yoga demonstrations (see Press Trust of India, 2016). In a less subtle example, one edition of India Perspectives (2019) also featured the IDY on its cover and included the *Om* or *Aum* symbol on its cover, which is synonymous with Hinduism.

Some of these public diplomacy sources also provide instructional videos that guide viewers in the physical practice of yoga. These materials are narrated in Hindi, English, French, Russian, Spanish and Arabic, with the inclusion of Hindi indicating that these materials are for domestic, diasporic and international audiences with familiarity with the language. The official UN logo for the IDY is featured in all content, if only on the clothing of the participants in some cases (see UN, 2020). The logo features the phrase 'yoga for harmony and peace'. In the foreground, above the text, is a blue figure sitting in a lotus pose. The figure sits in front of a lotus flower. The lotus has significance within Hinduism and crucially is also the BJP's electoral symbol. The flower doubles as a sun. Rotating around this sun, yet visible through the figure's head, is the earth and through the figure's head the Indian subcontinent can be seen.

In the second occasion of India Perspectives (2019) coverage the magazine cover featured a woman sitting in the lotus pose with the headline 'yoga for peace' carrying on the implication that yoga can produce inner peace but also international peace. The article's preface repeats Modi's comment that yoga is 'an invaluable gift of ancient Indian tradition' (Bagal, 2017: 2). The cover story features images of Modi leading a yoga demonstration in Lucknow on the IDY in 2017. Once again the story of Modi's speech to the UN is retold, focussing on Modi's argument that yoga is a gift of ancient Indian tradition to the world. The article also features the AYUSH Minister, Sripad Naik, quoted as saying that 'Yoga is

India's soft power' (quoted in Nath, 2017: 14), explicitly positioning yoga as an element of Indian state and as a foreign policy tool. The 2019 edition of the magazine featured only a photo essay rather than a written article and contained an image of a sand sculpture of Modi performing a *surya namaskar* (see India Perspectives, 2019: 46). He also features in a series of animated videos produced by India's public diplomacy channel. These instructional videos, titled 'Yoga with Modi' (2018), show the viewer how to perform various yoga poses, guided by a cartoon Modi. These videos, despite being published on Modi's personal YouTube channel, are sometimes circulated by India's international missions (for example, India in Australia (2018)).

However, little of the Indian government's public diplomacy content provides guidance on how wisdom, or other central aspects of yoga philosophy pertaining to unity, emancipation, pure consciousness and the overcoming of one's own ego, ought to be achieved. Indeed, for the most part, it appears to indicate that the task of the individual involves stretching through poses either alone or in large groups. This widespread absence of accompanying philosophy, coupled with the positioning of Modi as guru instead of a renowned scholar of yoga philosophy, raises some rather obvious questions about the intent behind India's use of yoga within its public diplomacy. Indeed, if Modi's speech to the UN is examined again with greater critical scrutiny, it can be seen that very little of what Modi promoted yoga and the IDY as being has entered the Indian government's subsequent narrative. Indeed, Modi's original speech to the UN, a section of which was quoted at the start of this chapter, appears frequently throughout the public diplomacy materials (see Government of India, 2015: v)

Having succeeded in getting yoga and Modi onto the international agenda, the subsequent public diplomacy has instead focussed on physical practice rather than the encouragement of philosophical inquiry. The extent of this departure from the original narrative can be seen in a 2017 promotional video produced by the MEA (2017) where Modi states the following:

> Today it is becoming increasing difficult for an individual to live a stress-free life. Due to prevailing lifestyle, work style, rush of activities and responsibilities in life. It is imperative for us to bring such changes in our daily routine that make us stress free and strong even amidst difficulties. This is only possible by regular practice of yoga.

Modi then expands his argument to claim that the practice of yoga (rather than a deep engagement with its philosophy) can assist in bringing about world peace, while also arguing that it can make the lives of workers in the global economy more survivable. However, Modi's discourse here forms a dialectic; for it is the prioritisation of the neoliberal

world economy above environmental concerns that is the single biggest cause of climate change. This means that any 'survivability' of workers ultimately only perpetuates the slow march towards climatic catastrophe. Instead, workers and consumers ought to be moving towards more sustainable positions involving the relinquishing of egocentrism and moving to more eco-centric modes of being that focus on harmony with the natural world. Yoga philosophy can assist with this. As such, India's public diplomacy narratives surrounding yoga are pro-capitalist and not intent on developing the mindfulness and harmoniousness encouraged within yoga philosophy, which would be of real benefit to the world. The cultural nationalism of the BJP ensures that it entwines yoga with its Hindutva priorities, whereas its allegiance to the neoliberal world economy focusses its attention towards yoga as a coping mechanism for the world in its current state rather than leading people away from the superficiality of life under capitalism.

Conclusion

There is a significant overlap between salesmanship and public diplomacy. Indeed, public diplomacy has, more often than not in the modern era, been reduced to flattering messages that seek to attract target audiences without challenging their ready-held views, lest their egos be threatened. It creates a barrier to the achievement of public diplomacy's primary purpose under neoliberalism – a greater ability for the source to do what it wants in international affairs around the growth of its economic capital. To this end, under critical analysis, gaps easily appear between public diplomacy's narratives and the intentions that underpin it, wherein a moralist discourse disguises self-interested goals.

India's use of yoga has provided a useful and interesting case study to the argument contained within this volume concerning hegemony and counter-hegemony and can be seen as part of a broader rise of culture and spirituality being marshalled to state-led communications projects. Had Modi encouraged audiences around the world to investigate yoga philosophy and to begin a path towards deeper wisdom, emancipation, enlightenment and harmony with the natural world, as his speech at the UN hinted at, then the conclusion of this chapter may be one of an intent to overcome some of the major divisions in the world. It would also have shown India's public diplomacy as a frontier operation. Indeed, such an approach could have provided an exemplar to others of responsible and ethical governance. Instead, however, the practice promotes Modi personally and treats yoga in ways that intervene in India's domestic political and ideational debates. It could then be argued that this has been another opportunity missed by public diplomacy to contribute to greater understanding and human harmony, but then it appears as though there was no intent to engage in this way in the first place. Instead, yoga appears to have

been simply deemed 'useful' to the BJP's, and Modi's own power interests as a means of building power capacities and rebranding the concept of India domestically through international political communications.

Bibliography

Bagal, G., (2017), 'Preface', *India Perspectives*, 2 and 3, Magazine, Delhi: Ministry of External Affairs Press.

Chacko, P., (2011), *Indian Foreign Policy: The Politics of Postcolonial Identity from 1947 to 2004*, London: Routledge.

Chacko, P., (2019), "Marketizing Hindutva: The State, Society, and Markets in Hindu nationalism", *Modern Asian Studies*, 53(2), pp. 377–410.

Chaturvedi, S., (2005), "Diaspora's in India's Geopolitical Visions: Linkages, Categories, and Contestations", *Asian Affairs*, 32(3), pp. 141–168.

Constantinou, C. M., (2010), "Diplomacy, Spirituality, Alterity", In: C. M. Constantinou and J. Der Derian (eds.), *Sustainable Diplomacies*, London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Cope, S., (2007), *The Wisdom of Yoga: A Seekers Guide to Extraordinary Living*, New York: Bantam Books.

Davis, A. E., and R. Gamble, (2020), "Constructing an 'Iron' Unity: The Statue of Unity and India's Nationalist historiography", *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, 66(2) pp. 288–304.

de Michelis, E., (2005), *A History of Modern Yoga*, Bloomsbury: London.

Doron, A., and R. Jeffrey, (2018), *Waste of a Nation: Garbage and Growth in India*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Edwards, L., and A. Ramamurthy, (2017), "(In)Credible India? A Critical Analysis of India's Nation Branding", *Communication, Culture and Critique*, 10(2), pp. 322–343.

Fosse, L. M., (2005), "Aryan Past and Post-Colonial Present. The Polemics and Politics of Indigenous Aryanism", In: E. Bryan and L. L. Patton, (eds.), *The Indo-Aryan Controversy. Evidence and Inference in Indian History*, London: Routledge.Government of India, (2015), *International Day of Yoga, 21 June: Common Yoga Protocol*, Available from World Wide Web: http://www.mea.gov.in/images/pdf/common-yoga-protocol.pdf [Accessed 21st August 2017].

Hall, I., (2012), "India's New Public Diplomacy: Soft Power and the Limits of Government Action", *Asian Survey*, 52(6), pp. 1089–1110.

Hall, I., (2015), "Is a 'Modi Doctrine' Emerging in Indian Foreign Policy?", *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, 69(3), pp. 247–252.

India in Australia, (2018), Social Media Content, Available from World Wide Web: https://twitter.com/HCICanberra/status/1009736938096431104 [Accessed July 10, 2018].

India Perspectives, (2019), 33, 03 July–August, Magazine, Delhi: Ministry of External Affairs Press.

Isar, R. J., (2017), "Cultural Diplomacy: India Does It differently", *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 23(6), pp. 705–716.

Jacob, J. T., (2016), "Thinking East Asia, Acting Local: Constraints, Challenges, and Contradictions in Indian Public Diplomacy", In: J. Melissen and Y. Sohn (eds.), *Understanding Public Diplomacy in East Asia: Middle Powers in a Troubled Region*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Kumar, P., (2008), *Limiting Secularism: The Ethics of Coexistence Indian Literature and Film*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Maehle, G., (2006), *Ashtanga Yoga: Practice and Philosophy*, Perth, Australia: Kaivalya Publications.

Ministry of External Affairs, (2017), *Common Yoga Protocol*, Available from World Wide Web: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VT5itSvfn5g [Accessed 21 August, 2017].

Nath, T., (2017), "The world embraces yoga for peace and wellness", *India Perspectives*, 2 and 3, March–June, Delhi: Ministry of External Affairs Press.

Ogden, C., (2010), "Norms, Indian Foreign Policy and the 1998–2004 National Democratic Alliance", *The Round Table*, 99(408), pp. 303–315.

Press Trust of India, (2016), *AIMPLB slams govt over Yoga*, Available from World Wide Web: https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/all-india-muslim-personal-law-board-slams-modi-government-over-yoga-day/article7346994.ece [Accessed 24 December, 2019].

Saraswati, S., (1976), *Four Chapters on Freedom: Commentary on the Yoga Sutras of Sage Patanjali*, Munger, Bihar: Yoga Publications Trust.

Sridharan, Y. S., (2015), "Yoga in the new Millennium", *India Perspectives,* 29, 04 July–August, pp. 6–9.

United Nations (UN), (2020), International Day of Yoga, Available from World Wide Web: http://www.un.org/en/events/yogaday/ [Accessed 17 May, 2020].

Varadrajan, L., (2010), *The Domestic Abroad: Diasporas in International Relations*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Winter, T., (2019), *Geocultural Power: China's Quest to Revive the Silk Roads for the Twenty-First Century*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Yoga with Modi, (2018), *Trikonasana English*, Available from World Wide Web: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLKrFtLRqyz6MWIswWKBazJOux-333ZMyvX [Accessed 11 July, 2018].

9 Cities as Public Diplomacy Actors

Combining Moral "Good" with Self-interest

Sohaela Amiri and
Lorenzo Kihlgren Grandi

Introduction

During the Cold War cities were recognized for their ability to embrace a sense of moral good, to develop strong relations and to be helpful in conflict resolution. This was mainly achieved through twinning agreements and the Sister Cities International. The work of city administrations thus complemented wider state-level public diplomacy projects by facilitating people-to-people exchanges and encouraging peacebuilding and peacekeeping. Since the end of the Cold War though, as part of wider neoliberal pivots seen at different levels of government bureaucracy cities have diverged from their more public-oriented roots to become more trade and development centric (Kihlgren Grandi, 2020a). To this end, this chapter will discuss theories that help to understand modern city diplomacy before providing critical analysis of contemporary neoliberal pivots within the field. The examples that are used in the chapter mainly come from Europe and North America. This is on account of the authors' areas of expertise and focus of their empirical research. However, the trends that are discussed resonate in other parts of the world as well. By revisiting the nature of city diplomacy activities across Europe and the United States, this chapter argues that greater understanding of cities is useful to the wider arguments being made about public diplomacy within this edited volume.

The city of Sheffield in England has five sister cities in different parts of the world and, like all other cities who have entered into these types of arrangements, the relationships reveal a lot about the city's collective sense of self, its past, present and future and its view of the world. Sheffield was once among the largest producers of steel and metalworks in the world and even though that traditional industry has largely disappeared now to be replaced by professional services, high-end manufacturing and a vibrant arts community, the legacy of Sheffield's steelmaking past has been withheld in the city's modern branding of itself (for example, The City Council's slogan is "Stainless Sheffield") and in its sister city relationships with Anshan (China), Bochum (Germany) and Donetsk

(Ukraine); cities also associated with steel production.[1] Interestingly, Bochum, Donetsk and Sheffield are all twinned with each other as part of a European steel city sorority of sorts. However, the city's two other relationships reveal different non-capitalist and to some extent more moralist aspects of Sheffield's collective persona. In 1984, Sheffield would become twinned with the Nicaraguan city of Esteli as the City Council recognized the desire of residents to stand with the country, which, at that time, was engaged in the Contra War against US-backed guerrilla forces. Whereas more recently in 2010, Sheffield became twinned with the city of Chengdu in China as part of the desire by that city's administration to expand its international relationships (between 2009 and 2012 Chengdu secured ten new city partnerships).

Taken at random then, Sheffield's experience within the global project of city diplomacy is typical of outward looking metropolises over the last 100 years. Here, foreign relations have been formed through a combination of determined self-interests, shows of goodwill and the expression of moral "good". Within the wider diplomatic landscape then, city diplomacy represents a particular space where genuine compassion for humankind and for the natural world has been given greater opportunity to emerge and become part of policy. This is in comparison to state-level diplomacy which tends to be more focused on self-interest and coercion. To this end, beyond the political economy factors of a city's foreign relations, these sub-state entities have also engaged internationally based on environmental protection, climate consciousness, human migration (particularly the sheltering of refugees), notable residents who developed links and even the experience of similar wartime atrocities (the cities of Coventry in the UK, Volgograd (formerly Stalingrad) in Russia, Hiroshima in Japan and Dresden in Germany have all made efforts to create a network of cities heavily bombed during World War II).

This chapter discusses the role of cities as international actors. At its broadest level, the chapter argues that most forays by cities into international politics are motivated by the same egocentricities that underpin diplomacy at other levels of governance. Diplomacy in this context represents attempts to signal to other international actors that they have similar interests, see the world in a similar way and/or conform to the values and priorities of the prevailing hegemonic coalition. However, in much the same way as Sheffield developed relations with Esteli during the 1980s, cities have greater opportunity to engage internationally in ways that the nation-state feels are unavailable to it within the great game of world politics. Indeed, cities can sometimes engage in ways that are in direct contravention to the foreign policy of the nation-state that the city is in.

Following on from Colin Alexander's introduction to this book, this chapter examines the role of cities within international affairs as both power accumulators and moral actors. Entering the field of morality is a

rather haphazard undertaking, particularly when it comes to issues surrounding global politics. Nevertheless, the authors of this chapter consider a moral act to be that which is inspired by a sense of wider "good" or one that complements other tools of statecraft to ultimately enhance self-interest. Indeed, moral goods need not be selfless acts and can be important for prosperity, security and safety. Local governments act based on the knowledge that "the interest of others are entwined with their own" (Kohn, 2008: 86). On this subject moral good the modern philosopher Iris Murdoch writes the following:

> Goodness is connected with the attempt to see the unself, to see and to respond to the real world in the light of a virtuous consciousness. […]. 'Good is a transcendent reality' means that virtue is the attempt to pierce the veil of selfish consciousness and join the world as it really is.
>
> (Murdoch, 1970: 91)

Murdoch (1970: 89) also contends that, "[Good] is a concept which is not easy to understand partly because it has so many false doubles, jumped-up intermediaries invented by human selfishness to make the difficult task of virtue look easier and more attractive". As such, governments are particularly prone to the creation of these "false doubles" in pursuit of positive image and wider self-interests. However, it may be that cities as smaller, localized and more participatory governmental entities have greater potential to engage in acts of genuine goodness than do other levels of public administration, although as Murdoch (1970: 78) says, "[t]here is no transcendent reality. The idea of good remains indefinable and empty so that human choice may fill it".

Theoretical Understandings and the Rise of Cities as International Actors

The term "city diplomacy" was first used by Rogier van der Plujim and Jan Melissen (2007) earlier this century. Wang and Amiri define "city diplomacy" as a form of sub-state diplomacy that reflects the interplay between "diplomatic and urban practice". As such, city diplomacy seeks to impact the international environment in a way that is beneficial to the safety, security and prosperity of the local citizens within the city's jurisdiction, advancing their global interest and identity (Wang and Amiri, 2019). However, the activities of what are today included under the umbrella of the term "city diplomacy" have become more economically driven. For the most part, cities developing foreign relations has been a twentieth-century phenomenon that has continued into the early twenty-first century. The development of cities in this way stands as a recognition to the continuing growth in the percentage of humans residing

in cities around the world and wider trends in social, cultural, economic and political affairs that have diluted the monopoly of leadership once held by the nation-state. As such, analyses of the development of cities as international actors should be positioned against the backdrop of wider trends in globalization and their associated human interactions.

In 2014, the U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy – the American institution that identifies key policy areas for their diplomats to focus on – emphasized that in light of the globalization, urbanization and fragmentation of the practice of diplomacy, "cities are increasingly important" actors because they are the "incubators for empowerment and demographic shifts and are the sites where global challenges ranging from climate change and food security to terrorism, energy security, and poverty are played out" (Cabral et al., 2014: 1). The Advisory Commission urged policy-makers in the public diplomacy domain to "focus more on cities" (Cabral et al., 2014: 4). Moreover, they warned diplomats that "excessive focus on capital-to-capital engagement between foreign policy elites misses the critical, even fundamental, importance of municipal-to-municipal interaction", which, they implied, can carry more authentic and potentially more moralist sentiments (Cabral et al., 2014: 4). Indeed, modern public diplomacy carries with it the domestic objective of facilitating domestic public inclusion where possible and city-to-city foreign relations are perhaps the most obvious platform upon which that can be achieved (Cabral et al., 2014: 4).

Thus, while perhaps not stating it explicitly, the Advisory Commission clearly recognized the potential problems that can occur when diplomacy becomes neoliberal: humans valued as consumers rather than citizens; ethical integrity as market-facing veneer rather than genuine expression of moral standing; "friendships" that are really just transactions. To this end, it had concluded that cities had greater potential for diversity of motive within their foreign relations portfolios. However, the Commission's encouragement that the diversity be requisitioned for wider strategic purposes represents a paradox because it is that very independence and authenticity (moralist or otherwise) that encapsulates the value that cities have within global politics. Any such commandeering of it thus devalues the contribution that cities make to international relations. To this end, the authors of this chapter have isolated three interwoven theoretical factors that help to explain the frontiers and realities of city foreign relations and each will now be discussed in turn.

Cities as Pluralists

It is of little controversy to argue that diplomacy is pluralizing and that the nation-state is no longer the sole institution on the international stage. Advances within information, communication and transportation technologies have been among the major facilitators of the pluralization

of diplomacy. However, perhaps the main theoretical issue here is whether the international activities of cities ought to be thought of as "diplomacy" at all. For example, if surveyed, would Sheffield school children and their teachers on exchange to Bochum (or vice versa) perceive themselves as having an informal city ambassadorial role that feeds into the wider defined power goals of the city as part of their inclusion in a global diplomatic project? The answer is most likely not. Ultimately then, while cities grow their foreign relations in a variety of ways, only a part of this ought to be considered "diplomatic" and rightly so. This is because the end goal or ambition of some of the projects do not conform to those of diplomacy. Namely, the acquisition or retention of power for the source. Cities have the opportunity to engage in foreign relations out of a sense of shared conscience or grassroots experiences among the populations or, as the case of Sheffield's relationship with Esteli highlights, the lobbying of local government by the people of the city as an expression of their collective will against what they perceived as a moral wrong. These avenues of authenticity are not as readily available at state level where expressions of goodwill are often disingenuous virtue signals aligned to wider power-based strategic objectives. However, opportunities for the authentic and sometimes moralist expression of a collective group of people living together in a city may be reducing in the age of neoliberalism. Indeed, rather than any more simple attempt to bring more divergent academic literature concerning cities under a collective single term, the emergence of the term "city diplomacy" in 2007 may in fact be one of the most indicative reflections of the neoliberalization of city foreign relations. Thus, as city diplomacy can accurately be described as the manifestation of safety, security and prosperity concerns within international policy, cities can also achieve such goals through doing "good", beyond trade.

Cities as Mediators

John Robert Kelley's (2010: 288) work has recognized the "in-between" power of cities and local governments. Building on this, Van Ham (2010: 14) has argued that political legitimacy grows as the sense of community strengthens and the physical and metaphorical distance between those in authority and the general public reduces. At the crux of this argument then is the belief that governance is improved when decisions are made based on a shared sense of community and when they are underpinned by collective norms. As such, while national governments can often be accused of detachment from the everyday lives of the citizens that it governs – a "city upon a hill" mentality of sorts that can lead to amoral policies – city administrations and other subnational entities can offer greater opportunities for participation in public and political processes which can lead to more diverse ends. Furthermore, state-level encouragement of cities to engage in foreign relations likely reflects the awareness

of national governments around the world that the form of politics that they reside over can be alienating to those without much social and/or economic power. Indeed, rather than look inward as part of a fundamental desire to change the structures, processes, priorities and values that perpetuate the sense of their detachment, their answer has been to advance the portfolios of local government to allow citizens to participate in foreign policy formulation and implementation at that level. Accordingly, city administrations have been tasked with becoming the participatory arm of contemporary politics. However, rather than serve as a mediator (in approaches to foreign relations and between national governments and their citizens), the city's role in foreign relations only serves to enunciate more clearly the detachment of states government and its unwillingness to make changes to this effect. This is particularly the case when cities encourage moral bearing upon the happenings of international politics.

Cities are not immune to the trend of detachment though and this is particularly the case in the neoliberal age. Van Ham's (2010: 36) work also considers the interplay between transparency, accountability, integrity and legitimacy in relation to sub-state actors. Here he argues that accountability is an integral part of legitimacy and is a perception that is ultimately dependent upon some sort of mechanism to "kick the bastards out" (Van Ham, 2010 15). Less crudely put, legitimacy comes from the domestic and international policies of a political administration reflecting the feelings and priorities of the public under their jurisdiction at the time, and if not, for voters to have a mechanism to replace that administration with one that does. Van Ham's argument is thus that sub-state governments benefit from an increased sense of closeness to those who they govern and the perception that there are avenues open for citizens to participate in politics should they wish to explore them.

This can be contested though. Since the late twentieth-century governments around the world at all levels have made efforts to neoliberalize themselves. This has taken the form of privatization within public services, the replacement of real transparency (if it did previously exist) with transparency veneers, decision-making powers being withdrawn from public view and placed into the hands of unelected individuals or contractor organizations, and increases in branding, slogans and logos aimed at compensating for the reduction of transparency and removal of power from citizens. In short, as governments at all levels spend more time and effort telling us that the power is in our hands, the likelihood is that we as citizens are simultaneously having our powers withdrawn. Within city administrations then, the end result has sometimes led to decreases in provision of services but above-inflation increases in rates of local taxation. This has been combined with the use of public relations strategies geared toward emphasizing the positivity or essentiality of neoliberal changes and aimed at dissuading residents from making

causal connections and protesting such pivots. This relates to Colin Alexander's discussion in the introduction to the book wherein he quotes Gerald Sussman:

> The maintenance of the corporate state requires an intensification of public persuasion […] in order to divert citizens from the cognitive dissonance that follows the unwillingness of the neoliberal state to protect public interests.
>
> (Sussman, 2012: 42)

In Sheffield profit-making companies how have responsibility for many of the services that the City Council used to provide itself. Within the realm of Estates, for example, corporations currently provide road and walkway maintenance, waste collection and disposal and tree and parkland management. This last provision has been a point of conflict in recent years and has furthered the sense of disconnect from local government being experienced by the residents of the city. Amey, a private profit-making company, won the rights to provide, among other contracts, maintenance to the city's many tree-lined streets. However, since 2017 Amey's actions have been met with widespread civil protests, which have in turn exposed the extent to which the public are, in reality, excluded from decision-making at the City Council. The environmentally conscious protestors' disgruntlement is that Amey are felling healthy trees around the city on disingenuous premises (the trees are not diseased or creating problems for public safety as they so claim). In short, Amey has been accused of attempting to fell as many trees as their profit margins, business strategy and shareholder dividends sustainably requires. Such a situation is the result of Sheffield City Council's decision to move responsibility for public services (labor carried out for public good or health purposes) to profitmaking hands (labor motivated by the accruement of private capital) and has significantly increased the disconnect between city residents and city authorities. These neoliberal pivots thus have potentially important consequences for the claim that city administrations can offer a mediatory role in either domestic or international affairs.

Cities as Listeners

Nicholas Cull's (2008, 2013) work on public diplomacy has been critical of states for not actively listening enough when it comes to devising their communications strategies. Too often for Cull, and despite modern communications technologies making it far easier for states *to* listen, public diplomacy has focused on convey the perspective of the source or transmitting and even "pushing" messages as though audiences were waiting passive consumers. Ministries of Foreign Affairs around the world

have thus failed to consider either their domestic publics or their foreign audiences as shapers of policies and tend to treat public diplomacy as a marketing tool. Gary Rawnsley's chapter in this book also focuses on this aspect of public diplomacy. As such, with such a widespread failure to *listen* at state-level there is an opportunity for cities to provide a more inclusive platform upon which the residents of the city in question, and the foreign publics touched by the city's forays into international relations, can feed into and even help to create policies. Perhaps then in the absence of state-level engagement of this kind, cities can be sites where morality and the greater ideals of global community, compassion, tolerance and understanding can be realized.

In practical terms, the greater ability of cities to listen as part of their foreign relations manifests itself in several ways. Arjun Appadurai (1986: 37) has identified five aspects or "scapes" that offer clues as to the collective identity of a city, region or country. These are its ethnoscape, its mediascape, its technoscape, its financescape and its ideoscape, Cities have always been hubs of one kind or another and with such draw has come an intensity of diversity that is rarely found in more rural settings and which can be diluted at national level. The argument then is that the human landscape over which a city administration presides – thought of in terms of the five "scapes" – can transfer into a different and perhaps more moralist worldview from that of the state within which the city is located. In different contexts around the world this has been seen in how cities engage with a range of issues including refugees, women's rights and political prisoners.

Perhaps nowhere has this moralist tone been as apparent as in Glasgow, Scotland, where, in 1981, Nelson Mandela was awarded the Freedom of the City (in absentia for he was still in prison in South Africa). This was a period when Mandela was still being labeled a "terrorist" by the Apartheid regime in South Africa and its foreign allies, which included Margaret Thatcher's Conservative government in London no less. Glasgow City Council, in that moment, listened to the prevailing will of its citizens who wanted to take a moral stance against the oppression of people thousands of miles away and created a divergent foreign policy that seemingly had no self-interest at stake. In 1993, shortly after his release from prison Mandela came to Glasgow to accept his award in person. Interestingly, and in reflection of the city's reputation for moralist and sometimes counter-hegemonic thought, the University of Glasgow can boast a long line of notable international "rogues" elected by the student-body to be the Rector of the institution. In neoliberal times these have included Winnie Mandela (political activist and wife of Nelson Mandela) (1987–1990), Mordechai Vanunu (whistleblower on Israel's clandestine nuclear weapons program) (2005–2008) and Edward Snowden (computer analyst and whistleblower concerning espionage and global data usage by the US authorities) (2014–2017).

Neoliberalism and City Foreign Relations

For Jan Art Scholte neoliberal policy-making "rests on economic analysis [with] cultural, ecological, geographical, political and psychological aspects of globality generally approached as functions of, and subordinate to, economics, if they are considered at all" (Art Scholte, 2005: 15). To this end, during the Cold War cities put more emphasis on increasing mutual understanding and solidarity within their foreign relations and were thus more likely to take moralist stances than other levels of government. However, today city foreign relations have tended toward the presence of mutually beneficial cooperation, inter-governmental and foreign aid activities, socio-cultural tourism, international trade and investment, and global policy collaboration. As such, in recent years, the concept of city foreign relations is looking a lot more like the "city diplomacy" of the neoliberal age that was explained earlier, and diverging from the prevailing contributions made by cities to international affairs during the Cold War. For, as hubs of commerce, cities are obvious places for neoliberal policies to emerge and occupy foreign policy thinking.

In Europe, France stands as one of the countries to have developed the most multi-level cooperation across its tiers of government with regards to foreign policy. Despite some reluctance to use the term "diplomacy" in reference to the international activities of cities (many prefer terms like "decentralized cooperation" and "external action"), the French government created the Delegation for the External Action of Local Authorities (*Délégation pour l'Action Extérieure des Collectivités Territoriales,* DAECT) in 1983 as a sub-division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Then, in 1994, a National Commission for Decentralized Cooperation (*Commission Nationale de la Coopération Décentralisée*, CNCD), was established with the purpose of enhancing dialogue and cooperation between state and local governments. Similarly, in the United States the bipartisan "City and State Diplomacy Act" was introduced to the House of Representatives in 2019, the House Foreign Relations Committee has passed the bill which is expected to be signed into law by the end of the year, 2020. The Bill has the intention of establishing an office within the Department of State that will make regional and municipal governments a more strategic part of the diplomatic system of the United States. These efforts to strategically integrate local governments into diplomatic and foreign affairs started during the presidency of Barack Obama when the then Secretary of State, Hilary Clinton, pushed for the immersion of US sub-state actors into the diplomatic system. These efforts flourished with the launch of the Cities@State initiative but were terminated in 2017 by the Trump administration. However, the recent City and State Diplomacy Act attests to a continued interest in this topic by Washington's political class at the very least.

Whether such entwinements with state-level bureaucracy represents a positive step for cities depends on several factors though. During the 1980s, 27 US city administrations condemned Washington's policies in Central America including its support for the Contras in Nicaragua. While in the same decade over 100 US cities divested billions of dollars in assets from local firms doing business in South Africa with the objective of ending Apartheid. This was despite Washington's support for the regime (Leffel, 2018.) As such, the entwinement of cities within state-level bureaucracy reduces the potential for cities to make moral stances pertaining to the issues of the day. Certainly there are some benefits for city administrations in terms of coordination, networking and access to funds, but these benefits are almost entirely related to power accumulation, leaving less wriggle room for the ethical will of the people residing within the city to shape their city's foreign relations. Indeed, there would be a very real prospect that if a city were to adopt a policy that conflicted with the policy of the state (think: Glasgow giving Mandela the Freedom of the City et al.) then that city would then be marginalized within these national agencies.

The neoliberal pivot within city foreign relations has thus resulted in municipalities spending a lot more of their time implementing international strategies aimed at other cities in the developed or fast-paced developing world. This has the primary purpose of encouraging international investment, appealing to foreign tourists, attracting international talent and supporting the internationalization of local firms. In contrast, less time is now being spent on more idealistic or solidarity-driven pursuits that may raise some political eyebrows or jeopardize the more economics-focused activities listed above. Furthermore, as Lorenzo Kihlgren Grandi (2020b: 25) has recently argued in another publication, the clearly defined goals or evaluation mechanisms that more moralist pursuits tend to lack make them incongruent with the worldviews of the analysts and communications professionals employed within municipal decision-making and who have more influence over decision-making in these neoliberal times.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the theoretical frameworks and trends through which city foreign relations should be understood. Ultimately, city foreign relations ought to be advancing self-interest through a combination of trade activities and the expression of what amounts to "good" conduct vis-à-vis social justice, equality, human rights, respect for the natural world and other expressions of moral principle. At an individual level all humans seek comfort in authentic relationships with family and friends that are beyond the preconditions of self-interests or economic transactions. City administrations ought to recognize this

and to provide an international outlet for those very basic human desires through the fostering of relations that build trust, goodwill, respect and appeal through acknowledging, appreciating and understanding cultural differences. These goals sit at the heart of public diplomacy but are all too often sacrificed in the pursuit of other interests. Hence cities have the potential to play a strategic role in complementing a country's public diplomacy goals while also advancing the specific interests of the local constituents.

It is not a given that cities will pursue a strategic balance between generating moral "good" and economic gains though. Moreover, it cannot be guaranteed that cities will systematically contribute to national public diplomacy. Indeed, nor should they if there is a feeling of immorality over the prevailing narrative of the parent state. At its core then city diplomacy ought to be about relationship building and maintenance. These relationships are strengthened through acts of solidarity, show of goodwill and the pursuit of moral good. These relationships flourish as a result of international collaborations that put the citizens at the center of the experience rather than the vested interests of a handful of powerful organizations. To this end, city administrations have the potential to enhance the safety and security of the citizens through the pursuit of moral "goods" but also through the facilitation of prosperity for all.

Postscript: City Foreign Relations after COVID-19

As this chapter was being finalized the world entered a period of lockdown to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic and it seemed important to the authors to try and articulate what the world after the virus may look like for cities and public diplomacy. As a result of the pandemic and the decline of international trade, the authors have witnessed a strengthening of narratives of solidarity, peacebuilding and cooperation at the city level of government. After a number of American cities sent their Chinese sister cities medical supplies in the early stages of the pandemic the help was reciprocated as soon as the virus reached the United States. Meanwhile, the heavily hit city of Barcelona in Spain launched a call for projects to support COVID-19 responses in its partner cities and territories in developing countries. This is unsurprising given the impressive array of public diplomacy projects and outputs that the Catalonian government has enacted in recent years (see Alexander and Royo i Marine, 2020). Across the world, countless cities have been offering and receiving help from their peers (Kihlgren Grandi, 2020b; Wang and Amiri, 2020).

During April 2020 the Global Economy and Development Program at the Brookings Institution (2020) hosted a conversation with Maria Vittoria Beria, Director of International Affairs for the city of Milan, Italy and Nina Hachigian, Deputy Mayor for International Affairs for

the city of Los Angeles. Within the seminar these two powerful women highlighted that city-to-city relations have played, and will continue to play, a key role in the response to COVID-19. Formed over many years of positive and helpful interactions, city-to-city relationships have fostered a culture of cooperation, openness and trust at several social levels and this appears to be coming to fruition in these times of crisis. Perhaps even filling gaps where to state-to-state relations are strained. Cities are on the frontline of the response to global challenges like pandemics, climate change and terrorism. As such, city administrations have access to vital information about trends and approaches, are often responsible for the provision of the essential services themselves and have a large overall role to play in the safety and security of their residents. To this end, cities have a remarkable amount of power to shape whatever the post-COVID-19 future looks like.

Note

1. Note that the relationship with Donetsk was terminated in 2014 during the Ukraine crisis as the city fell to pro-Russian forces.

Bibliography

Alexander, C., and A. Royo i Marine, (2020), "Prohibited Sub-State Public Diplomacy: The Attempt to Dissolve Catalonia's DIPLOCAT", *Journal of Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*, 16(1), pp 70–86.

Appadurai, A., (1986), *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, Cambridge New York: Cambridge University Press.

Brookings Institution, (2020, April 23), *Global city cooperation in the response to COVID-19* [Video file]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oxCMEQjUcio.

Cabral, R., P. Engelke, K. Brown, and A. T. Wedner, (2014), Diplomacy for a diffuse world. *Atlantic Council.* Retrieved from https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/resrep03429.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3A09eba7de19dd5478ea374e7986527e08.

Cull, N. J., (2008), "Public Diplomacy: Taxonomies and histories", *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 616(1), pp. 31–54.

Cull, N. J., (2013), "The Long Road to Public Diplomacy 2.0: The Internet in US Public Diplomacy", *International Studies Review*, 15(1), pp. 123–139.

Kelley, J. R., (2010), "The New Diplomacy: Evolution of a Revolution", *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, 21, pp. 286–305. DOI: 10.1080/09592296.2010.482474.

Kihlgren Grandi, L., (2020a), *Le nouveau rôle international des villes (et pourquoi il faut l'encourager)*, Paris: Terra Nova. Retrieved from http://tnova.fr/notes/le-nouveau-role-international-des-villes-et-pourquoi-il-faut-l-encourager.

Kihlgren Grandi, L., (2020b), Les villes, une alternative diplomatique à la gestion de la pandémie. *Telos*. Retrieved from https://www.telos-eu.com/fr/les-villes-une-alternative-diplomatique-a-la-gesti.html.

Kohn, M., (2008), *Trust: Self-Interest and the Common Good*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Lee, J., (2009), Security & values. *The White House.* Retrieved from https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/blog/2009/05/21/security-values.

Leffel, B., (2018), "Animus of the Underling: Theorizing City Diplomacy in a World Society", *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy*, 13(4), pp. 502–522.

Murdoch, I., (1970), *The Sovereignty of Good*, London and New York: Routledge.

Scholte, J. A., (2005), *The Sources of Neoliberal Globalization*, Geneva: UNRISD.

Sussman, G., (2012), "Systemic Propaganda and State Branding in Post-Soviet Eastern Europe", In N. Kaneva (ed.), *Branding Post-Communist Nations: Marketizing National Identities in the "new" Europe*, New York: Routledge.

van der Pluijm, R., and J. Melissen, (2007), City diplomacy: The expanding role of cities in international politics. *Netherlands Institute of International Relations clingendael.* Retrieved from https://www.uclg.org/sites/default/files/20070400_cdsp_paper_pluijm.pdf.

Van Ham, P., (2010), *Social Power in International Politics*, London: Routledge.

Wang, J., and S. Amiri, (2019), Building a robust capacity framework for U.S. city diplomacy. *USC Center on Public Diplomacy.* Retrieved from https://www.uscpublicdiplomacy.org/sites/uscpublicdiplomacy.org/files/City-Diplomacy-Building-Capacity-Framework-2019-02-20_9am_1.pdf.

Wang, J., and S. Amiri, (2020), 5 Takeaways on U.S. City Diplomacy during the COVID-19 Crisis. *USC Center on Public Diplomacy.* Retrieved from https://www.uscpublicdiplomacy.org/blog/5-takeaways-us-city-diplomacy-during-covid-19-crisis.

Yinmeng, L., (2020), US cities send supplies to sister cities to battle virus. *ChinaDaily.Com.Cn.* Retrieved from https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202002/19/WS5e4c0b96a3101282172787f2.html.

Part IV

The Fourth Frontier: Public Diplomacy at the Edge of the World

Taylor & Francis
Taylor & Francis Group
http://taylorandfrancis.com

10 Public Diplomacy at the Top of the World

Sub-state Communications between Russia's North-west and Its European Neighbours

Alexander Sergunin[1]

Introduction

Sub-state actors, such as regions, members of federation, autonomies, administrative units, cities and municipalities are increasingly charting an independent path on international issues and using public diplomacy to help their cause. Within this field, the concept of paradiplomacy (parallel diplomacy) is used to distinguish the international activities of sub-state actors that have limited portfolios within the foreign policy sphere when compared to nation-states. According to Panayotis Soldatos (1990) and Ivo Duchacek (1986, 1990), the emergence of paradiplomacy reflected trends in globalisation and regionalisation, through which sub and non-state actors began to play an increasingly influential role in the power dynamics of world politics as Cold War preoccupations subsided.

Existing scholarship on paradiplomacy has identified six strategic priorities of such sub-state actors. First, to establish permanent offices in foreign capitals or centres of commerce and industry to represent a regional government abroad. Second, to ensure that the foreign trips of leaders of sub-state governments are widely covered by local and international media. Third, to encourage short-term, professional fact-finding missions sponsored by sub-national units. Fourth, to support trade and investment exhibitions that showcases the technology, tourism, investments and other attributes of the region or city. Fifth, to establish of free trade zones. And sixth, to facilitate the participation of the representatives of the regional or local government at international conferences or summit meetings (see Duchacek, 1990: 14–15). Each of these strategies can be considered pro-hegemonic wherein the actor in question seeks to position themselves within the core of the status quo at a given time rather than challenge or push its frontiers.

Sub-state actors in Russia's north-west have been particularly active in developing contacts beyond their borders both quantitatively (number of international partners and projects) and qualitatively (intensity of relations and diversity of methods and forms of international cooperation) (see Joenniemi and Sergunin, 2014; Sergunin and Joenniemi, 2017). Their proclivity for such relations can be explained by their relatively advanced

economic status in comparison to other parts of the Russian Federation, the opportunities presented by their proximity to European Union (EU) member states, the willingness of European nations to covet such relations and the geographical reality of administering a harsh landscape where international borders are seen more as an abstract hindrance to daily life than a reflection of geostrategic loyalties.

As part of what appears to be a genuine willingness from all sides to foster better ties at local level, public diplomacy has become one of the most important instruments within the paradiplomacy ambitions of these north-western regions and their Arctic partners. However, the public diplomacy of these Russian actors appears to be somewhat at odds with the power game of the Russian state. Rather than attempt to disrupt, apply pressure to and present counter-narratives to prevailing issues in international affairs (a significant part of Moscow's international communications strategy) as part of a greater game of global power politics, the public diplomacy of these sub-state regions appear more interested in trying to build partnerships with foreign counterparts that respect the international status-quo (Cull, 2009: 12). In contrast to Moscow then, Russia's sub-state actors in its north-west are more likely to promote and advertise themselves as attractive and reliable collaborators who are open to foreign direct investment, improved people-to-people relations and international tourism from some of the countries that are Moscow's collective 'target'. Public diplomacy thus represents a means of capacity-building to guarantee consistent and sustainable development for these Arctic regions rather than any attempt to reshape prominent international issues into greater congruence with either the Russian state view or that of Europe. To this end, the public diplomacy being performed by sub-state entities in Russia's north-west represents an interesting case study, not just because of the sparsely populated, extreme climatic, 'frontier' public diplomacy location that forms the backdrop to these international political communications, but also the extent to which it brings the dynamics of power, hegemony and counter-hegemony into sharp focus.

The chapter will thus examine the public diplomacy activities of three sub-state units at the top of the world in Russia's north-west: Arkhangelsk, Murmansk and the Republic of Karelia. However, before this occurs the chapter engages in a contextual discussion about the implications of public diplomacy activities by north-west actors upon the power dynamics of centre-periphery relations within the Russian Federation and the impact upon Russia's wider hegemonic struggles.

Background and Perspective: Local Goes Global in Russia's North-west

During the Cold War, when Westphalian principles largely prevailed, world politics had little space for actors other than states. The politics and

ambitions of sub-state entities were very much reserved for the domestic sphere. However, with states gradually losing their monopoly towards the end of the Cold War amidst expanded flows of globalisation and increased leverage for corporations, NGOs and powerful individuals, sub-state actors, usually within democratic states, managed to establish semi or quasi-independent ties, sometimes without decisive supervision (or with a minimum of control) from their respective parent states. To this end, some sub-state actors have been afforded a portfolio that has allowed them to gradually migrate from passive international policy-takers to proactive policy-makers and have become active players not only in their traditional realms but also on different levels of sub-regional, regional and global governance. To this end, sub-state governments are using public diplomacy to protect and promote their interests and establish horizontal and vertical links with foreign partners.

The harsh realities of the post-Communist 1990s provided the initial thrust for the pursuit of connections with the outside world for Russia's sub-state actors. The administration of President Boris Yeltsin (1991–1999), preoccupied by a continual sense of instability verging on impending crisis or even collapse, permitted Russia's regions broader autonomy to develop their own international contacts independent from Moscow. During this period many north-western territories accepted foreign aid and direct investment as short-term measures to keep their troubled local economies afloat. Indeed, alongside the Western turn of many of the Soviet Union's former Satellite States, within the ideological vacuum of the 1990s the regional governments of Russia's north-west acknowledged European economic and political models, European ideology, and that Europe itself represented a progressive future. It was from within this western pivot that interest in sub-state public diplomacy strategy emerged.

As the socio-economic situation in Russia improved during the early 2000s, international cooperation became more of an integral part of sub-state administration rather than part of an emergency or survival strategy as it had largely been in the 1990s. However, even today Russia's north-west governments still struggle to build the capacity of their international communications resources in what has become a far more competitive diplomatic environment. This scarcity of resource has resulted in a significant amount of the diplomatic focus of Russia's north-western sub-state actors being on the central bodies of the EU rather than building bilateral, state or sub-state relations. This is similar to the diplomatic strategies of other sub-state governments within or on the periphery of the EU who also focus a considerable amount of their scant time and attention on relations with Brussels (see Alexander and Royo i Marine, 2019).

For formerly closed spaces during the Soviet era such as Kaliningrad, Nikel and other large Russian cities close to what are now borders with the EU, relations with the administrations to their west are as much

about geostrategic location and trade networks as they are the availability of external funding. Central Brussels budgets for the development of Euroregions, city twinning projects and other forms of integration have become important sources of income for these regional and municipal actors. The availability of these monies has greatly influenced the allocation of public diplomacy resources and the development of public diplomacy practices in Russia's north-west. In particular, the EU's introduction of a 50:50 funding match rule in 2007 under the European Neighbourhood Instrument has meant that collaborative projects originating from Brussels' funding bodies have had greater emphasis on achievability (for fear that failure to achieve set goals will lead to future reductions in support) rather than project ambition. These projects have also been somewhat subservient to the EU partner's normally self-interested requirements rather than developing longer-term networked capacities more likely to bring mutual benefits. Therefore, more often than not, Russia's sub-state actors are considered to be the junior party in these agreements resulting in an acquiescence to the interests of outsiders when devising foreign policy strategy.

More recently, actors in Russia's north-west have also had to adapt to a tightening of restrictions imposed by Moscow as it increasingly sits at odds with the international hegemonic coalition. Initially this was over Russian strategies closer to home in Abkhazia, Chechnya and South Ossetia, but now also includes strategic activities further afield in Syria, Ukraine and Crimea. In addition to these conflicts, Russia has been accused of meddling in the outcome of the 2016 US Presidential election, is alleged to be a major producer of fake news, has been suspended from the G8 inter-governmental forum, has had to accept international criticism for the levels of social and judicial prejudice against its LGBTQ community, and has had some of its sporting associations banned from international competition after allegations of state-sponsored performance enhancing drugs programmes. Finally, allegations of Moscow's involvement in the deaths of Russian dissidents living in the United Kingdom including Alexander Litvinenko in 2006, Alexander Perepilichnyy in 2012, Boris Berezovksy in 2013 and Sergei Skripal in 2018 have all added, rightly or wrongly, to a sense of international distrust of Russia and its intentions. In some cases, Moscow's standoff with other international powers and the restrictions it has imposed on the sub-state diplomacy of its regions has scuttled what many in the north-west considered to be promising international projects or relationships. For example, the creation of an industrial park along the Finnish–Russian border between Imatra and Svetogorsk or the establishment of the Pomor Special Economic Zone (SEZ) on the border between the Sør Varanger community (Norway) and Murmansk Region (Russia), both of which had to be abandoned (see Joenniemi and Sergunin, 2014: 22; Sergunin and Joenniemi, 2017: 490).

Nevertheless, many of the regions and municipalities around Russia's north-west continue to work together to develop spaces for mutual benefit with their Arctic neighbours and to solve shared local issues. To this end, sub-state actors towards the edge of political territories can make use of their geographical location to build their own capacities but may also be able to acquire a mediator or bridge role between adversarial larger powers. Moreover, there is the potential to turn their peripherality from a domestic disadvantage into an international advantage, transforming themselves from remote and sometimes desolate 'frontier' territories into attractive places transiting international flows of goods, services, capital, technologies and people. However, such a strategy for Russia's north-west may result in significant environmental degradation to a delicate Arctic ecosystem that relies on its status as a wilderness being protected. Indeed, there is a strong argument that the primacy of neoliberal economics within modern public diplomacy, and the celebration of economic development as 'success' under the prevailing ideology, will lead to irreparable damage to a pristine landscape. This point should be kept in mind as the chapter moves to discuss the specifics of public diplomacy by Russia's north-western administrations. Most notably in the distinction between public diplomacy strategy being predominantly the portfolio of city administrations in the case of Murmansk and Arkhangelsk (and thus more humancentric) and the portfolio of the regional administration in the case of the Republic of Karelia (where greater balance between human and ecocentric practices has been encouraged).

Public Diplomacy Strategies in Russia's North-west

The remainder of this chapter focusses on the sub-state public diplomacy strategies of three of Russia's Arctic frontier provinces: Arkhangelsk, Murmansk and the Republic of Karelia. These three provinces border each other at Russia's western edge and all have at least some territory within the Arctic Circle. Despite their geographical proximity, each has taken its own distinct approach to sub-state public diplomacy and so this section will provide critical analysis of these contrasts.

In the case of Arkhangelsk, it includes some of the most northerly land in the world. Whereas the Republic of Karelia is home to the Karelian people who also live in modern Finland. These are climatically brutal and sparsely populated territories but in recent years they have all received increased attention in the form of natural resource exploration by domestic and foreign actors looking for new sites to exploit the world's finite resources. Murmansk is probably the most familiar name to those readers less acquainted with Russian geography. This is because its warm waters (by Arctic standards) waters have meant that it has played host to Russia's northern naval fleet based at Severomorsk near Murmansk City since the 1930s. Due to its strategic importance, Murmansk was a near

relentless battleground throughout World War II but was never captured by the Axis powers despite land close to it being occupied. Murmansk continued to have strategic importance during the Cold War and it came to international prominence again after the explosion and sinking of the K-141 Kursk submarine in the Barents Sea in August 2000.

Public Diplomacy Administration and Overview

Murmansk responsibility for external relations is controlled by the Committee for Economic Development (CED) as a key unit within the Murmansk City Administration. In addition to the CED other sub-state governmental units such as the committees on culture and education have some involvement in international cooperation. However, it is the CED that leads Murmansk's sub-state diplomacy efforts suggesting that this region considers economic prosperity to be at the forefront of its efforts to engage externally. According to the CED's statute, it prioritises two forms of international activity – city-twinning and cross-border cooperation – with both having public diplomacy aspect to them. Currently, Murmansk city has partnerships with Rovaniemi (Finland), Luleå (Sweden), Tromsø and Vadsø (Norway), Jacksonville (US), Groningen (the Netherlands), Szczecin (Poland), Akureyri (Iceland), Alanya (Turkey), Minsk (Belarus) and Harbin (China). In terms of cross-border cooperation Murmansk has agreements with the Sør Varanger Community (Norway) and Rovaniemi (Lapland, Finland), the latter of which markets itself as the official home of Santa Claus.

Sub-state public diplomacy by Arkhangelsk falls within the portfolio of their Department on External Relations and Tourism within the Arkhangelsk City administration. This structural approach permits greater top-level oversight of the province's diplomatic activities unlike in Murmansk where the primacy of economics and investment is more obvious. However, this is not to say that Arkhangelsk is less focussed on the economic rewards of public diplomacy than its neighbour. Indeed, it may be that this is an acknowledgement of neoliberal economic complexes, which seek to coordinate all government portfolios towards wider mercantile goals. To this end, Arkhangelsk's Department for Economic Development is responsible for attracting foreign investment, while the departments of education, culture and youth politics are responsible for developing international relations in their respective realms. Arkhangelsk city is twinned with Portland (USA), Tromsø and Vardø (Norway), Slupsk (Poland), Emden (Germany), Mulhouse (France), Oulu (Finland), Kiruna and Jusdal (Sweden), Sukhum (Abkhazia (Georgia)), Ashdod (Israel) and Jermuk (Armenia). Arkhangelsk has signed cooperative agreements with two Norwegian, two Finnish, one Belorussian and one Armenian province. Notably, this region has also been permitted by Moscow to develop relational activities not only with foreign sub-state

units but also with national governments: they entered into an agreement on trade, research and humanitarian cooperation with Armenia and signed another deal with Norway on children and families at risk. Moscow appears to allow such agreements when it believes that this does not challenge its supremacy in foreign policy or cause separatism. This is done on an exceptional basis and is always subject to negotiations between the local/regional and federal actors.

The pub-diplomacy structure of the Republic of Karelia is different again. Rather than public diplomacy being the responsibility of city administrations, as is the case in Murmansk and Arkhangelsk, in Karelia there is greater emphasis on the regional administration as coordinator. In addition, public diplomacy activities by Karelia are conducted more by a network rather than hierarchical approach. This means that several different government agencies engage in international activities with some overlapping and others at tangents to each other. Nevertheless, the Department of International Cooperation and Exhibitions (part of the Karelian Ministry of Economic Development and Industry) is the focal point of the Republic's public diplomacy activities, with the Ministries of Culture and Education and the Department of Tourism also involved as part of their respective portfolios. However, Karelia also has a Ministry of Ethnic and Regional Policies, which is responsible for domestic and international cooperation between Finno-Ugric peoples located in Finland, Estonia, Hungary and elsewhere.

Beyond this, since the year 2000 the Republic of Karelia has engaged as a Euroregion under the joint name of Euregio Karelia in cooperation with three Finnish provinces. The Republic also partakes in several regional and sub-regional organisations including the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, Council of the Baltic Sea States and the Nordic Council of Ministers programme. To this end, it is Karelia's 'republic' status, and image of itself as a land of distinct heritage, which is largely responsible for its different approach to sub-state public diplomacy. This is in comparison to its neighbouring Arctic Russian provinces where focus tends more towards local economic imperatives.

Russia's Federal Law on foreign trade stipulates that regions and municipalities must fund their own representative offices abroad if they feel inclined to open such agencies. However, none of the Arctic regions in the spotlight here can afford to establish such missions. This has not prevented these administrations from allowing neighbouring state governments to set up foreign consulates and representative offices within their territories though. Arkhangelsk has a Norwegian consulate, while Murmansk has Finnish, Norwegian and Swedish consulates and a division of the Belorussian embassy in Russia. Petrozavodsk in Karelia has a Finnish consulate.

Murmansk, Arkhangelsk and the Republic of Karelia have enthusiastically cooperated with several international political organisations.

This appears to be motivated by a bid to emphasise the advantages of their marginality, to build local capacities and to confirm their status as international actors. These regions have cooperated with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the EU, the European Congress of Municipal and Regional Governments, the Council of Europe, the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS), the Helsinki Commission (Helcom), the Arctic Council (AC), the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC) and several other smaller Nordic institutions. These organisations have been broadly supportive of the ambitions of Russian sub-state actors to be involved and that support has been reciprocated by the north-west regions as they seek to profit from trends in globalisation and regionalisation, gain additional leverage in the power struggle with Moscow, and overcome what might be called a 'marginality complex'. Indeed, some of these international organisations have lobbied Moscow, likely on the subtle request of the sub-state actors, to grant greater decision-making powers to Russia's regional administrations.[2] Interestingly, Moscow appears to be slowly realising that these sub-state actors can serve as bridges to more positive state relations with western neighbours. For example, cooperation between Finland and Karelia has contributed to the process of bringing about an eventual solution to the Karelia territorial dispute after Finland ceded parts of Karelia to Russia as part of the Winter War of 1939–1940. While the cooperative links between Murmansk and various Norwegian sub-state actors have contributed to the striking of a compromise between Moscow and Oslo on the demarcation lines of the Barents Sea.

Constructing a Positive Image Abroad

Russia's north-western sub-state actors have all launched their own international public relations campaigns as part of initiatives to attract foreign direct investment and to gain international support for local social and economic development projects. These initiatives have included exhibitions, international fairs, 'cooperation days' and festivals with foreign towns and regions. The sub-state governments have bought advertising space in their international partners' local media with some regional leaders undertaking regular foreign trips with public relations in mind. The prevailing narrative of these initiatives revolves around an attempt to overcome a self-perception of marginality and remoteness that is believed to hinder the economic potential of the regions. Murmansk, Arkhangelsk and Karelia thereby present themselves in typical neoliberal public diplomacy terms as creative and innovative, and connected to trends in globalisation, but, crucially, also eager to be even more integrated with the help of foreigners.

However, by so doing, the regions are simultaneously belittling their frontier heritage, geographical and climatic reality and perhaps even their wider responsibility towards the natural world, such is the seeming incompatibility between neoliberal globalisation and environmental protection. Thus, by structuring their public relations campaigns around these messages, the sub-state regions are tacitly acknowledging the primacy of market economics to internal and external perceptions of 'backwardness' and are placing as a secondary concern the environmental damage to one of the world's most important pristine wildernesses. Evidence of environmental damage to this region is already in abundance such is its extreme vulnerability to climate change, the levels of deforestation it is currently experiencing and the pollution that usually accompanies growths in human population and natural resource exploration. Moreover, this Arctic wilderness sits at the heart of the cultural heritage of the traditional communities of the region where people are encouraged to respect and protect its natural state. For while the extremes of the wilderness make it capable of deprivation and death it also provides nourishment and life to all of the animals living upon its terrain. Such public relations campaigns thereby bring into sharp focus a prevailing perception among neoliberals that the primary value of the natural world is its servitude to short-term human economic interests. Indeed, a dialectic exists where on the one hand there is an emphasis on increased familiarity between Arctic peoples across international borders, while on the other hand that very way of life is being eroded by those same forces.

Increasing Familiarity between Arctic Peoples

In such a harsh climatic environment with sparse human population outside of the remote cities the notion of an official state border can be as abstract as it is distressing to those living there. While still limited, and very much controlled by state interests around economic, military, ideological and national preservation, the Russian border territories of Arkhangelsk, Murmansk and the Republic of Karelia enjoyed more international contact during the Soviet period (1917–1991) in comparison to much of the rest of Russia. This meant that improved cross-border industrial and civic relations could be re-established quickly in the aftermath of the Cold War such was the eagerness of both sides to engage in the process. Nevertheless, the propaganda of the Cold War certainly influenced popular views held by those on either side of the iron curtain. These mainly negative views held by the different sides of each other have gradually faded since the 1990s though. The sub-state governments of Russia's north-west have encouraged reciprocal cross-border economic and social relations as part of public diplomacy cooperation with their Arctic neighbours. This has been conducted with an emphasis on shared historical memories and experiences. In the case of Murmansk and the bordering

Finnmark region of northern Norway the two sides have promoted a somewhat idealised legacy of Pomor trade and the region's experiences of German attack and/or occupation during World War II. These Pomor coastal trading contacts, which lasted for nearly three centuries, before dwindling after the 1917 Soviet Revolution, were important for the initial development and permanent settlement of the Arctic areas by humans. As such, today's cooperation and cross-border ties are being presented by the governments of both sides as a return to a pre-Soviet normality of sorts. Additionally, the experience of German occupation and the collaboration between Norwegian and Soviet forces in the subsequent Liberation of Finnmark and parts of northern Russia during late 1944 and early1945, is being used to emphasise shared history and mutual interests. As part of these sub-state public diplomacy efforts, the governments and their respective cross-border communities now come together in October each year in a shared event to acknowledge the beginning of the campaigns to liberate the area from Nazi occupation in October 1944.

Along the Russia–Finland (Karelian) border, the reassessment of regional histories has also promoted a sense of shared cross-border space. This process has clear political and economic motivations though. Nevertheless, the use of historical and cultural narratives has still produced greater familiarity between Finns and Russians based on a shared sense of the past (Spierings and van der Velde, 2013: 3). Intercultural dialogue has been inspired by a degree of nostalgia and curiosity tourism from both sides and has contributed to a shared notion of a cross-border community. Memories of Russo–Finnish confrontations from the first half of the twentieth century remain somewhat poignant among oldest living generation even though most of them were too young to participate in combat at the time. While for those Finns who grew up during the Cold War the ideological divide of iron curtain meant that Russia loomed large as a threatening and unfamiliar neighbour. However, for younger generations the perception of Russia as a threat has decreased considerably. The case of the Republic of Karelia can therefore be considered a positive anecdote of mutual rediscovery. However, much like the case of Murmansk and Finnmark, these re-emerging relations remain somewhat vulnerable to the vicissitudes of wider security policies between central governments, border and visa requirements and the ups and downs of EU–Russia relations (Scott, 2013).

In addition, some of the smaller communities in Russia's north-west have been encouraged to contribute to cultural cooperation by their sub-state governments. The Skolt Sami culture across borders project was launched in 2010 as a collaboration between Finland, Norway and Russia who all have Skolt Sami indigenous communities. Its aim has been to contribute to a strengthening and revitalisation of Skolt Sami culture, language and identity. The project offices are located in Sevettijärvi (Finland), Neiden (Norway) and Murmansk (Russia) with visitors from

Murmansk and Pechenga district visiting the community's centre at Neiden on a regular basis (Joenniemi and Sergunin, 2013: 14–15b).

Away from acknowledgements of indigenous culture, the Sør-Varanger community in Norway and the Pechenga district of the Murmansk region have established multifaceted cultural cooperative ties with each other. At the centre of these cultural activities is the Barents Spektakel, a festival which has been held in Kirkenes in Finnmark, northern Norway, on an annual basis since 2004. The main aim of the festival is to promote cultural contacts between different countries and peoples within the Barents region with the goal of developing a common Barents/Arctic culture. The festival has a clear political purpose as an accompaniment to wider geopolitical intentions to solve existing disputes over territories, borders, natural resources and environmental problems in a peaceful, collaborative and non-violent way. In addition to the Barents Spektakel, these twinned communities have established direct contacts between local writers, poets, artists, actors, dancers, libraries and museums, forming a network of cultural cooperation across the region.

To this end, the Norwegian border town of Kirkenes has emerged as the focal point for regional public diplomacy activity. In addition to its Norwegian majority, the number of Russians living in Finnmark has increased substantially with Russians now accounting for about 10 per cent of the population of Kirkenes town. Combined with a Sami population, and a considerable number of Finnish speakers, this gives the town a distinctly multicultural feel. In her sociological research of these contemporary encounters, Anastasiya Rogova (2009) has noted that a considerable number of Russians living in the Murmansk Region now view the Norwegian–Russian border as a shared territory, with the border becoming far less divisive in terms of culture and identity as well as politics and administration since the end of the Cold War. Rogova (2009: 31) has argued that a territory is emerging that is neither Russia nor Norway but a shared regional space. The increasing numbers of Russians visiting Kirkenes have acknowledged an increasing familiarity which Rogova argues is indicated by Kirkenes now being referred to as 'Kirsanovka' or 'Kirik', words carrying connotations of a small, local, nearby entity or village in the dialect used in the Murmansk Region. Russian visits to Kirkenes are normally motivated by the town's shopping facilities or the use of the airport that has easier links to Europe than the airport at Murmansk.

Freedom of Movement

This desire to intensify contact between Finnmark in Norway and Murmansk, and to make Kirkenes a regional hub, has led to improved visa entitlements for residents of these frontier Arctic regions. After much lobbying of Moscow and Oslo by the respective sub-state entities, on 2 November 2010 an agreement was reached on a Local Border Traffic (LBT) zone and

the introduction of a border resident identification card. Those who live within 30 kilometres of the border area on the Norwegian and Russian sides are eligible to get a three-year identification card and are able to cross the border without a visa and stay on the other side for up to 15 days at a time. The whole Sør-Varanger community, with the exception of the Sami village of Neiden, as well as the Murmansk towns of Nikel, Zapolyarny, Pechenga and Korzunovo were covered by these arrangements. The agreement was ratified by the Norwegian and Russian central governments in early 2011. However, the scheme encountered numerous technical difficulties and only entered into force on 29 May 2012, one and a half years after it had been signed. The technical difficulties ranged from the provision of reliable identify cards to delays in the renovation of the Borisoglebsk–Storskog border-crossing. Nevertheless, at the Kiruna BEAC summit on 4 June 2013, the Russian and Norwegian Prime Ministers signed a protocol expanding the 2010 visa agreement to Neiden to cover the whole of the Sør-Varanger community. These agreements have been seen both by the European and Russian sides as a model for future engagements of this kind, with the territories thereby serving as experimental cases to be replicated in other border regions elsewhere. However, what was initially considered to be a largely positive experience to be replicated has been hampered by the atmosphere of mistrust and hostility that dominated Russia's relations with Europe in the aftermath of the Ukrainian crisis.[3]

To assist with these cross-border developments, the education authorities on both sides have encouraged local universities to engage in collaborative projects specifically aimed at satisfying local and regional trends. Russia's north-western universities are now active members of the Baltic Sea Region University Network and promote academic exchanges in the region. Moreover, in December 2012 a collaborative international Masters programme in Border Studies was launched by the University of Nordland in Bodø, Norway, and the Murmansk State Institute for Humanities. Its purpose is to train students to become specialists in border management. The first group of 20 students were enrolled from candidates with Bachelors' degrees and composed of 10 Russian (five slots are reserved for students from Nickel and Pechenga) and 10 Norwegians and they trained in Murmansk and in Finnmark for three and a half years. The programme is a combination of classroom-based lectures and seminars and web-based distance-learning. Courses are taught in English by teachers from Norwegian and Russian universities with the assistance of practitioners from relevant governmental and municipal bodies (Grimmer, 2013; Pogoretskaya, 2013).

Conclusions

This chapter has demonstrated the extent to which Russia's north-western provinces have tried to use public diplomacy strategies as part

of the foreign policies that have emerged since the end of the Cold War. These activities have included making direct agreements with international partners, attracting foreign investment, creating a more positive international image that has overcome older stereotypes, cooperating with international organisations, establishing representative offices in foreign countries, city-twinning, participation in Euroregions and other sub-regional arrangements, and capitalising on Russia's national diplomacy and federal infrastructures.

The case study of Russia's north-west has thus brought into sharp focus several of the concerns that this volume on public diplomacy's frontiers has sought to explore. At the most basic level the chapter has offered insight into public diplomacy activities in one of the most remote and climatically extreme parts of the world – somewhere that many readers would have heard little about before. However, it has also presented a case of post-Cold War ideological transition from communism to market economics and thus fits well with the themes of hegemonic endorsement presented in the introduction to the book. Finally, and perhaps most contestably, the chapter has highlighted the dialectic faced by many frontier provinces in the age of neoliberalism. Public diplomacy under these conditions demands obedience to mainstream practices out of fear that the communications be irrelevant to foreign audiences. To this end, and despite an awareness of the importance of individuality, public diplomats often create messages that end up saying a version of the same thing as other actors in the field, with this lack of willingness towards real innovation as apparent in the Arctic Circle as it is among the most intensively researched public diplomacy sources.

Murmansk, Arkhangelsk and the Republic of Karelia all appear to be preoccupied by a sense of their own backwardness as frontier lands, with any sense of preservation of the wilderness of their territory being secondary to concerns around globalisation, integration and marketisation. Indeed, for the Republic of Karelia an additional dialectic exists within its public diplomacy output wherein an interest in the cultural preservation of the Finno-Ugric peoples is being undercut by other communications that make the prospect of the dilution of those traditions more likely. More broadly, these frontier territories find themselves surrounded by wider geostrategic issues concerning Russia's declining relations with significant proportions of the hegemonic coalition. Modern Russia is certainly not counter-hegemonic in any ideological sense with most of these standoffs motivated by inter-elite competition for financial and strategic power. Much of the aim of Moscow's own public diplomacy has focussed on exposing the hypocrisy of the selective and normally pretend outrage of foreign governments when they themselves are perpetrators of similar behaviours or endorse suspect regimes with dubious records. The substate actors of Russia's north-west have found themselves in the middle of this conflict. However, their role as facilitators of dialogue or bridges

between the sides shows little sign of maturing beyond the nuts and bolts of their parts.

Notes

1. This work was supported by the National Science Foundation under the PIRE project, ERA.Net RUS Plus/Russian Foundation for Basic Research (RBRF) no. 18-55-76003 project and RFBR project no. 20-514-22001.
2. For example, the Barents co-operation regime has a two-level decision-making structure. On the national level, the Barents Council, consisting of the foreign ministers (or other ministers, e.g. ministers of environment or transportation) from the six founding states (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia and Sweden) and the EU, as well as representatives from other interested nations, makes strategic decisions. The leaders of regional governments meet in the Regional Council to discuss more concrete problems, such as economic co-operation, environment, regional infra-structure, science, technology, education, tourism, health care, culture and the indigenous peoples of the region. National secretariats in each state co-ordinate activities of these two bodies.
3. The similar 2011 LBT Polish-Russian agreement with Kaliningrad and two Polish border provinces was unilaterally suspended by Warsaw in 2016. The plans to have such agreements with Estonia, Finland, Latvia, and Lithuania were also dropped.

Bibliography

Alexander, C., and A. Royo i Marine, (2019), "Prohibited Sub-State Public Diplomacy: the Attempt to Dissolve Catalonia's DIPLOCAT", *Journal of Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*, 16(3), pp. 238–250.

Cull, N., (2009), *Public Diplomacy: Lessons from the Past*, Los Angeles: Figueroa Press.

Duchacek, I., (1986), *The Territorial Dimension of Politics: Within, Among, and Across Nations*, Boulder: Westview.

Duchacek, I., (1990), "Perforated Sovereignties: Towards a Typology of New Actors in International Relations", In: Hans Michelmann and Panayotis Soldatos (eds.), *Federalism and International Relations: The Role of Subnational Units*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Grimmer, T., (2013), "Politicheskaya Filosopfiya – Osnova Uspekha [Political Philosophy Is a Precondition for Success]", Pechenga, 6 February 2018. http://pechenga-gazeta.ru/index.jsp?view=article&id=6449 (in Russian).

Joenniemi, P., and A. Sergunin, (2013), "Kirkenes–Nikel: Catching a Second Wind of Twinning?", In: Lassi Heininen (ed.), *Arctic Yearbook 2013*, Akureyri: Northern Research Forum, pp. 143–63.

Joenniemi, P., and A. Sergunin, (2014), "Paradiplomacy as a Capacity-Building Strategy: The Case of Russia's North-western Subnational Actors", *Problems of Post-Communism*, 61(6), pp. 18–33.

Pogoretskaya, O., (2013), "Uchis', Student!" [Learn, student!], *Pechenga*, 1 June. http://pechenga-gazeta.ru/index.jsp?view=article&id=6855 (in Russian).

Rogova, A., (2009), "Chicken Is Not a Bird – Kirkenes Is Not Abroad: Borders and Territories in Perception of the Population in a Russian–Norwegian Borderland", *Journal of Northern Studies*, 1(1), pp. 31–42.

Scott, J., (2013), "Construction of Familiarity in Finnish–Russian Karelia: Shifting Uses of History and the Re-Interpretation of Regions", *European Planning Studies*, 21(1), pp. 75–92.

Sergunin, A., (2006), *Kaliningrad and the Euroregions*, Nizhny Novgorod: Nizhny Novgorod State Linguistic University Press (INTAS Working Paper, no.3).

Sergunin, A., and P. Joenniemi, (2017), "Does the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) Mobilize the Municipal Level? City Twinning in Northern Europe", *Journal of Baltic Studies*, 48(4), pp. 481–495.

Soldatos, P., (1990), "An Explanatory Framework for the Study of Federal States as Foreign-Policy Actors", In: Hans Michelmann and Panayotis Soldatos (eds.), *Federalism and International Relations*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Spierings, B., and M. van der Velde, (2013), "Cross-Border Mobility, Unfamiliarity, and Development Policy in Europe", *European Planning Studies*, 21(1), pp. 1–4.

11 Outsourcing Public Diplomacy Operations

Neoliberalism and the Communications of the United Nations since the End of the Cold War

Jacob Udo-Udo Jacob

Introduction

The United Nations (UN) was established in 1945 by the Allied victors of World War II as part of efforts to avoid a repeat of the horrors of that conflict and the many before it. The UN was determined not to meet the fate of the League of Nations, which had been established at the end of World War I, but which was rendered ineffective following Germany's withdrawal from it in 1933 and its subsequent failure to prevent the calamity of World War II. That conflict saw the systematic and industrialised murder of six million people during the Holocaust, the death of up to four million people during the Bengal Famine of 1943–1944, the near total devastation brought to the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki after the first aggressive uses of the atomic bomb, the sexual enslavement of females as 'comfort women' by the Japanese and the firebombing of the German city of Dresden, which drew the irk of many for lying beyond any sound military strategy.

World War II thus raised several moral and psychological quandaries, not least a doubt over the presupposed notion that 'enlightenment' led the human mind away from barbarity, nor that technology is synonymous with civilization. Indeed, discussions of cruelty form part of Max Horkheimer and Theodore Adorno's seminal work from 1944, the 'Dialectic of Enlightenment', wherein they argue that, as part of the process of Enlightenment, '[…] mankind, instead of entering into a truly human condition, is sinking into a new kind of barbarism' at least partly on account of individuated consumption (Horkheimer and Adorno, 1997: xi). As such, the reality that had to be confronted at the end of World War II was that, while humanity had evidently evolved scholastically and technologically, there was a great deal more uncertainty over corresponding psychological development. Into this breach, the UN was given a distinctly moralist task focussed around the protection of human life from the excesses of those conferred with power, to which the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) (1948) became the organisation's

flagship affirmation. This was despite Saudi Arabia, the Soviet Union and several of Moscow's Communist puppet regimes in Eastern Europe abstaining from the vote.

The UN has been an outwardly communicating organisation since its inauguration in 1945 and throughout its existence those communications have been keen to reflect the competing and prevailing trends of global hegemony. This includes the UN's own efforts at public diplomacy: mass communications that have primarily accompanied their peacekeeping and conflict resolution tasks and general explanation and legitimation of itself and its purpose to the world. However, the UN spent the first 45 years of its life being largely superseded by the bi-polar power structures and major events of the Cold War, which only rarely provided opportunity for the organisation to take a lead role. This changed in the 1990s though as the end of the Cold War opened potential windows of opportunity for the UN to assert itself on international affairs in ways that had not existed before. Nevertheless, it is the argument of this chapter that, at the very moment when the UN had an opportunity to lead international actors into a furthering of their moral gaze, neoliberal pivots within the organisation curtailed the prospect of that becoming a positive reality. Indeed, such was the organisation's coveting of neoliberalism as it spread around the world, the changes that it ultimately made sabotaged much of the prospect for an advancement of the role of morality and ethics within global affairs that the UN had been well-placed to lead.

Amidst a changing world then, during the 1990s a new band of neoliberal advocates entered roles within the UN and this in turn led to increased outsourcing – one of the hallmarks of neoliberalism – across the organisation (Cingolani, 2019). Rather than keeping its pool of resources predominantly inhouse, as had been the case during the Cold War, the UN began to work more vigorously with external partners including NGOs, bespoke aid agencies, charities and specialist commercial organisations (for example, private security firms, logistics partners and professional communications agencies) to achieve its neoliberally affected goals. However, it is perhaps in the realm of celebrity culture that the UN's neoliberal pivots have been most clearly visible to the non-academic audience. The 'capitalist celebrity machine', as Ilan Kapoor (2012) calls it, epitomises neoliberal obsession with the manufacture of self-image and its tendency to trivialise issues that require far more than a veneer to solve. As such, Mark Alleyne (2005) has argued that the employment of celebrities by the UN, most notably the expansion of its Goodwill Ambassador programme under Secretary General Kofi Annan (1997–2007), was an attempt to win favourable coverage and continued legitimation after a general malaise as to the organisation's purpose had set in following several high-profile blunders during the early 1990s.

These outsourced partners – organisational and individual – would gain greater leverage within the decision-making processes of the UN

during the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. The UN itself advocated for the adoption of these structures based on the well-rehearsed neoliberal tack of enhanced efficiency and responsiveness, which has some merit. In reality though, the outsourcing of a public service to external, self-interested and sometimes profit-making contractors usually does little for the prospect of alleviating the relevant social issue(s) at hand. In the UN's case, this surrounds the creation of a more peaceful world and the fundamental betterment of human security. This is primarily because most contractors have little interest in the decline of the issue that they are attentive to because they are reliant upon its prevalence for income and/or prestige and continued patronage.

This chapter explores the UN's public diplomacy narrative surrounding peace and human rights, with a particular interest in the organisation's communication activities in crisis zones and failed states during the twenty-first century. As an international but also supranational organisation, in many respects *the* international and supranational organisation of our time, the UN provides the premier platform from which conflict issues can be debated and hopefully resolved, but also controls, mainly through the International Criminal Court (ICC), the prospect that the leaders of regimes or organisations found to have committed crimes against humanity can be brought to justice. It is therefore the belief of the author of this chapter that the neoliberal pivots evident within the UN over the last 30 or so years ultimately compromise its grand purpose of creating a safer, fairer and more just world.

The chapter fulfils the book's wider interest in the 'frontiers' of public diplomacy in several ways. First, the communications under scrutiny are from lesser-known and lesser-understood parts of the world: frontier territories a world away from decision-making in the corridors of power of Europe, North America and East Asia but still highly vulnerable to their preoccupations. As such, the UN's public diplomacy operations that occur in these volatile regions have the potential to impact the nexus of life and death perhaps more acutely than anywhere else. Public diplomacy here has little to do with branding, scholarships, concerns over marginal fluctuations in GDP or seducing foreign publics into endorsing the source and what it argues it stands for (although all of these aspects can be found to some degree). Critiqued within this chapter then are efforts by the UN – a vehicle through which the neoliberal hegemonic coalition ultimately preserves itself – to engage in conflict zones in ways that do little to bring lasting and meaningful peace, security and prosperity.

The 'New' Public Diplomacy of the UN

The first academic characterisation of the UN's strategic cultivation of global public opinion as public diplomacy appeared in Thomas Hovet's (1963) survey of the diplomatic methods of the UN. This 'public' method

of diplomacy, Hovet noted, hinged on the political power of world public opinion and was 'inherent in the minds of the drafters of the United Nations Charter' (p. 31). Nevertheless, traditional academic literature on public diplomacy has been reticent about characterizing such cultivation of global public opinion as public diplomacy. Traditional approaches see public diplomacy as an exclusively state-to-state activity. More recently however, there has been a growing shift away from this state-centric view of public diplomacy (see for example Cull, 2009; Fitzpatrick, 2011; Melissen, 2005; Riordan, 2005; Zaharna, 2009;). The 'relational turn' in public diplomacy was prompted by the post-9-11 security environment and the escalating consequence of non-traditional security threats such as climate change, pandemics, poverty, migration, religious extremism, online radicalisation, transnational organized crime, including drug trafficking, human smuggling, intellectual property theft, among others. These new threats compelled a more collaborative approach to national and international security and a more engagement-focussed approach to public diplomacy (Zaharna, 2018). It birthed the broader concept of new public diplomacy, which defines the term more expansively to include the engagement activities of non-state actors, including supranational organizations, sub-national organizations and non-governmental organizations in the global public sphere (Melissen, 2005). Nonetheless, as Cull (2019) has observed, the uptake of the term 'public diplomacy' to its current usage, owes more to the coincidence of the need to explain the post-Cold War role of publics in foreign affairs than its theoretical perfection or otherwise. Although it fits the concept of *new public diplomacy,* there is nothing manifestly new about the UN's public diplomacy intentions. What is new, and has almost escaped the radar of scholars, is the neoliberal outsourcing and privatization of the UN's public diplomacy operations in crisis states to proxies and surrogates. Before we explore this further, a brief policy history of the UN's communications is in order.

Beginnings: Strategic Communications and the UN during the Cold War

Alongside public communications about the negotiations over a Jewish homeland and the eventual creation of the State of Israel in 1948, one of the first major tasks of the UN's Department for Public Information (DPI) was to 'sell' the UDHR (1948) to publics around the world. This was a difficult proposal given the remaining bitterness over the events of World War II and the developing 'frost' of the Cold War. However, it was also a world wherein activities by the major powers sat incongruently with the proposed legislation of the UDHR itself. In particular, the Soviet Union's prolific, if somewhat hidden, use of political prisons (gulags) under Josef Stalin, the lack of civil rights for African Americans in the United States, and the reality of the power structures imposed

upon colonial subjects by Western European imperialism. Nevertheless, to buttress the importance that the infant UN wanted to give to human rights, General Assembly Resolution 217 D (III), 1948 specifically tasked the Secretary General himself, then the Norwegian Trygve Lie, with ensuring that the UDHR's agenda was widely promoted 'using every means at his disposal' (UN General Assembly, 1948).

Beyond this, an additional hurdle to overcome in the UN's quest to convince the world of the merits of human rights protections was that the organisation's statute decreed for it to desist from propaganda. The UN's Public Information policy, which was set out at the organisation's creation and adopted by General Assembly Resolution 13 (I) during February 1946, was explicit in its stance against the use of propaganda:

> The department of Public Information should not engage in "propaganda" (quotation marks theirs). It should on its own initiative engage in positive informational activities that will supplement the services of existing agencies of information.
>
> (UN General Assembly, 1946: ANNEX I)

The UN was born into a post-war environment in which disdain for propaganda for war was widespread (Whitton and Arthur, 1964; Alleyne, 2003). No matter the perceived moral virtuosity of the UN or the UDHR then, to be successful in getting its message across, it was advisable for global communication campaigns on any subject to be mindful of the recent history of wartime manipulation and misinformation. Any association with similar questionable intentions in respect to the new discourse on global collective security or universal human rights could have severely damaged the UN's credibility particularly with international audiences from the outset. The consequence would have been outright dismissal of the messages regardless of their moral imperatives.

As such, the Technical Advisory Committee on Information, which was one of the first committees created by the Preparatory Commission of the UN, did not state what constituted or did not constitute 'propaganda' in the general assembly resolution 13 above. However, through the quotation marks that surround the word in the UN's official documentation it can be inferred that when a year later, the UN in General Assembly Resolution 110 (II) (*Measures to be taken against Propaganda and the Inciters of a new war*) (see UN General Assembly, 1947), requested the governments of each member state 'to promote by all means of publicity and propaganda available to them', friendly relations among nations based upon the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, it was fully aware that manipulation of public discourse (to favour the UN's goals) was the task at hand. The UN was tacitly asking member

governments to deploy propaganda to sustain a global status quo that favoured its legitimacy, and a global public opinion that sustained its supranational authority.

Furthermore, in the earlier General Assembly Resolution 13, the UN's DPI had been requested to 'primarily assist and rely upon […] governmental and non-governmental agencies of information to provide the public with information about the UN's (1946: Annex I). This filtering of information about the UN through governmental agents, news agencies, and other proxies was the strategy that the organisation believed would alleviate the risk of accusations that it was peddling its own agenda distinct from those of member states. Another objective of this strategy was to mobilize a supranational public opinion favourable to the UN's mission, albeit through third parties. By using surrogates, the UN could exempt itself from criticism for using the very tools of propaganda it condemns, and thus retain its moral authority.

The UN's system of dissemination had several vulnerabilities though. Most importantly, as mainstream news media organisations made their neoliberal pivots during and after the 1980s, the UN's reliance upon them meant that its interest lay in the continuation of a harmonious worldview. This was despite the UN's public communications strategy being devised in the late 1940s through cross-ideological consensus rather than in acknowledgement of neoliberal values themselves. Furthermore, this experience of working with and relying upon external agencies as part of its strategy meant that its communications divisions could adjust to the organisation's wider neoliberal pivot during the 1990s with relative ease and in some respects be internal advocates for such changes. As such, by the end of the decade, the UN was firmly in the process of moving towards an outsourcing model for some of its key public diplomacy operations in volatile parts of the world.

This was not just the result of neoliberal pivots within the organisation though. Calls for change and restructuring were also motivated by the catastrophe of the UN's operations in Rwanda during the mid-1990s and high-profile errors during the conflict in the former-Yugoslavia around the same time. This led academics like Monroe Price (2000) to conclude that an alliance between NGOs and IGOs provided the optimum opportunity for media transformation in post-conflict states. Advice that the UN appeared to heed. Thus, while outsourcing allows proficient contractors to be hired and retired when no longer required (and thus not leaving the UN with a sedentary resource when in between responses to crises), the question of who gets hired for this important work leaves the UN open to influence that may or may not be congruent with the values of the organisation. As such, the two case studies within this chapter will critically examine instances of when the UN has outsourced to an NGO and to a profit-making corporation.

The Neoliberal Outsourcing of UN Public Diplomacy

Within UN Missions, particularly those with Chapter VII mandates, the post-Cold War era has witnessed an increasing proclivity to hire military information experts as consultants to design and implement public diplomacy operations. The easily foreseen consequence has been that techniques frequently used in military information such as Psyops and Deception Operations have appeared in UN peace missions. Philip Taylor's (2002) work on military propaganda and public information observes that although both techniques emphasise the importance of information to a given strategy during times of conflict they should not be mixed. Taylor acknowledged that when information becomes an element of strategy in a post-conflict situation and not merely an expression of the public sphere, it becomes difficult, if not hypocritical, to apply traditional thinking on free expression or even public information. Drawing on comparable cases from NATO information campaigns in Kosovo aimed at transforming ethnic hatred, Taylor observed that information warfare and the techniques thereof are gradually becoming part of the arsenal used during post-conflict information campaigns. This leads to fundamental questions as to whether the phrase 'post-conflict' is actually appropriate if the information war environment is continuous and whether the UN can rightly frame its mission public diplomacy activities as 'Public Information' or its peace operations as neutral.

The very nature of a crisis means that time is of the essence. However, with that pressure also comes the potential for errors to be made if due diligence is lacking. Striking a balance between these two factors is thus one of the most important aspects of any crisis response. Unfortunately, though, the age of neoliberalism has been accompanied by advances in communications technology that have reduced the amount of time available to governments and other public and supranational bodies to make decisions. This has resulted in greater expediency and less propriety within crisis situations, wherein the emotional call to 'Do Something!' arguably now holds greater currency than a rational and methodical plan to get the response right from the start. This has left big bureaucracies like the UN vulnerable to accusations of incompetence and/or cumbrousness from a range of voices but particularly from neoliberal-aligned mainstream news organisations or those looking for contract work from them. To avoid such allegations, warranted or not, governmental organisations have thus found it easier to outsource to smaller NGOs or corporate firms, which pitch themselves as being able to avoid much of that bureaucracy and sometimes at reduced costs. Doubtless, the neoliberal wave is complex and nuanced. However, as the following two case studies show, there are consequential moral and accountability questions when such neoliberal thinking informs the UN's public diplomacy operations in conflict affected societies.

Fondation Hirondelle

After the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement was signed in 1999 by the six warring countries in Africa's Great Lakes Region (the Democratic Republic of Congo [DRC], Angola, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Rwanda and Uganda) and the non-governmental belligerent forces in the DRC, the UN Security Council deployed liaison to support and monitor compliance with the ceasefire agreement. The liaison office became the UN Organization Mission in the DRC (MONUC). Acting under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, UN Security Council Resolution (SCR) 1291 expanded the size and mandate of MONUC (see UN Security Council, 2000).[1] However, while the resolution authorised MONUC to support and cooperate closely with the facilitator of the Inter-Congolese Dialogue – the political negotiation summit mandated to resolve the contentious political issues in the country, it provided no specifics on the provision of independent information to the Congolese on the proceedings of these discussions. Furthermore, at this time, the DRC, a country the size of Western Europe, did not have any national radio or television stations, resulting in a clear information gap between the country's capital Kinshasa – tenuously held by government forces – and other regions, then controlled by different rebel and guerrilla groups. Rather than the UN setting up its own radio network across the DRC, the UN's solution to this problem was to outsource the radio project to the Swiss-based NGO, Fondation Hirondelle.

Fondation Hirondelle is an organisation of media professionals that specialise in setting up and operating media services in crisis areas. It traces its origins to *Radio Agatashya*, which operated between August 1994 and October 1996, and was established by the Swiss section of Reporters Without Borders/Reporters sans frontières in the town of Bukavu on the Congolese border (when Congo was called Zaire) with Rwanda. Its purpose was to counter and provide an alternative narrative to the partisan hate media operating in Rwanda at the time, especially Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines (RTLM), which contributed to the 1994 genocide of an estimated one million Tutsis in the country. The initial funding for *Radio Agatashya*, and what would become Fondation Hirondelle in 1995, was provided by the Swiss government's Department for Development and Cooperation and was thus not initially an NGO operating within the UN.

The Rwandan genocide is an important part of the UN's modern history and one of the main reasons for its hasty desire to partner with external actors in response to crises. In its operations in the small sub-Saharan African country during the mid-1990s the UN is accused of not doing enough to prevent the genocide before it happened, of pulling its meagre resources out of the country as the situation deteriorated (rather than ramping them up), of then re-engaging too late, of not having

enough understanding of the situation that it was re-engaging with, and finally of deploying its resources in such a way as to further many of the issues that the country and wider region was experiencing and therein leaving feelings of distrust and a sense of ineptitude towards itself from all sides in the conflict (Dallaire and Beardsley, 2005; Gourevitch, 2000). More critically, the UN failed to respond to RTLM's hate propaganda which encouraged the genocide against the Tutsi (see Berkeley, 1994; Carruthers, 2011; Kirschke, 1996; Metzl, 1997; Thompson, 2007).

Rwanda was a disaster for the reputation of the UN and events in the former-Yugoslavia around the same time – notably the UN's failure to prevent the Srebrenica massacre of July 1995 despite the presence of a battalion of Dutch UN peacekeeping soldiers in and around the town at the time – only added to the argument that the UN's own resources were incapable of delivering effective crisis response. Into this breach came a plethora of outsourcing partners who the UN could pay to undertake operations in collaboration with their in-house operations or on their behalf as endorsed contractors. Since its origins during the Rwandan genocide, Fondation Hirondelle has partnered with the UN on radio projects in Liberia, Kosovo, the DRC, the Central African Republic (CAR) and East Timor.

In order to better understand the specifics of the UN – Fondation Hirondelle partnership it is worthwhile looking at the DRC as a prominent case study of their work together. Fondation Hirondelle partnered with the UN to establish *Radio Okapi*, which was launched in February 2002 and continues to operate today. Operationally, Fondation Hirondelle ran *Radio Okapi* but the programmes were under the general authority of the UN Secretary General's Special Representative in the DRC. The two organisations have contrasting public information philosophies: while Fondation Hirondelle favours a purely information-giving or public information approach, MONUC's public information hierarchy favoured a more behaviour change or strategic communications approach (Jacob, 2017). Strategic communications in this sense implies the deliberative design of communication contents to persuade a specific audience to uptake a form of awareness and behaviour that support the strategic interests and objectives of the source (read: propaganda). Fondation Hirondelle's public information approach on the other hand involved providing only news backed by rigorous checking and analyses so that audiences can make informed judgments for themselves. These contending approaches were evident in two of *Radio Okapi's* flagship programmes –*Dialogue Entre Congolais* ('*Dialogue'* hereafter) produced by Fondation Hirondelle and *Gutahuka* produced by MONUC's public information department. Gutahuka means 'go back home' in Kinyarwanda.

According to the then President of Fondation Hirondelle, Jean-Marie Etter, Radio Okapi's operating philosophy was derived from Fondation Hirondelle's ethical principles of professional journalism and the experiences of its media personnel in conflict situations over the years who

have noted that 'just giving news is by itself a tool of peace and a very important one, […] in conflict zones people have a tremendous need for accurate information' (cited in Jacob, 2017: 76). Fondation Hirondelle's media ideology is driven by the primary objectives of delivering accurate information without frills, spin or emotional enticement and creating a platform for responsible and civic-minded exchange of opinions and dialogue. Its approach to public information operations is thus rooted in a belief that objective information eliminates or reduces fear and creates a platform for citizens to be engaged with transformational or conflict resolution processes. This approach is evident in the flagship programme *Dialogue*.

Dialogue is a political magazine programme. It was originally designed as a space for the Congolese to express their opinions on any subject discussed at the Inter-Congolese Dialogue at Sun City (Taunya, 2004). However, the programme grew to become one of the most popular programmes on *Radio Okapi*. It drew on a model of dialogue or information sharing that seeks not necessarily to achieve behaviour change but to achieve mutual understanding.

MONUC's communications philosophy on the other hand, was intimately linked with its strategic objectives in the DRC. One of the key objectives of the UN Mission during this time was to disarm and repatriate foreign combatants in the eastern region of the country. To achieve this objective, MONUC adopted a 'push and pull' strategy involving the application of military pressure and at the same time offering voluntary disarmament and repatriation for Rwandan Hutu combatants operating in eastern DRC. As part of its 'pull' strategy, MONUC had embarked on one of the most sophisticated information campaigns in UN history. The objective was to convince thousands of Rwandan Hutu rebel fighters in eastern DRC to voluntarily disarm and join the UN's Disarmament, Demobilisation, Repatriation, Reintegration and Resettlement (DDRRR) Programme. The DDRRR programme was designed to demobilise ethnic Hutu fighters and return them to their Rwandan homeland. Most of the Rwandan Hutu fighters in the DRC are accused of complicity in the 1994 Rwandan genocide.

Gutahuka was an integral part of the UN's DDRRR operations. The programme, which started broadcasting in 2002 was designed to reach individual combatants and persuade them to quit fighting, come out of hiding and return 'home' to Rwanda. Unlike other programmes on *Radio Okapi*, *Gutahuka* was produced directly by the Audio and Video Production Unit of MONUC's Public Information Department. The programme consisted of three key components. First it explained the DDRRR process and then featured stories of ex-combatants who had returned to Rwanda. Families of ex-combatants and former commanders who had returned were also interviewed. Usually they talked of conditions in the Rwandan homeland and urged fighters to set aside their

fear or grievance and return home. The third component was the call. Here, the narrator implored combatants to take up MONUC's offer of repatriation while it was still possible.

Gutahuka, despite what many would see as promoting the cause of peace, was a clear example of more propaganda circulating in a part of the world that has had to deal with all manner of misdirection emanating through the radio waves. Being included as a propagandist within this environment was indeed a dangerous path for the UN to tread. Not only did *Gutahuka* contravene the UN's own Public Information policy's explicit stance against the use of 'propaganda' (as explained earlier) it also ran the risk of discrediting the important public information work of other programming on *Radio Okapi*. What happens if combatants heed MONUC's call and return to Rwanda only to find that the situation was not as depicted in *Gutahuka*? More critically, the programme unwittingly framed the DDRRR of the mainly Hutu FDLR combatants as the only impediment to peace in the DRC (not the corrupt political-military system nor the weak democratic institutions in the country), and thus provided a basis for making moral judgements not only about the FDLR fighters but also more significantly Rwandan Hutus in general, many of whom were living as refugees in eastern DRC (Jacob, 2017). In a country where citizenship and identity are contentious political bargaining chips, MONUC's approach seemed to be grossly short-sighted and ran the real prospect of the UN, once again, finding itself an inadvertently distrusted catalyst of a future conflict.

More broadly, the case of Fondation Hirondelle exemplifies the extent to which a neoliberal haze has descended over the UN during the twenty-first century. MONUC's public communications content favours the fulfilment of operational, mission-focussed and programmatic objectives rather than a more sustaining peace process. It also favours the simplistic over the complex and the short-term over the long-term. Whereas MONUC itself appeared pre-occupied with tangible targets that allow the Mission to quantify or qualify its impact to the outside world and to justify itself at UN committee and security council meetings in a neoliberal language not too dissimilar to the venture capitalist looking for quick returns on an investment. It can therefore be concluded that, as large IGOs engage in neoliberal pivots, outsourcing becomes a self-fulling path as many have to be saved from the risk of reputational damage that comes with such movements. As such, neoliberalism becomes a juggernaut in which organisations have to expend more communications resources simply to retain the allure of public spirit – in the UN's case a commitment towards the protection of human rights and a more peaceful world.

Bell Pottinger

The African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) was mandated by UN Security Council Resolution 1744 to, inter alia, support dialogue

and reconciliation in Somalia and provide protection to the country's transitional federal institutions to help them carry out their functions of government (see UN Security Council, 2007). The UN Support Office for AMISOM (UNSOA) was mandated by UN Security Council Resolution 1863 to support AMISOM in this regard and with various other logistical needs (see UN Security Council, 2009). In November 2009, UNSOA awarded a $7.25 million a year contract to a consortium led by the now defunct London-based PR firm Bell Pottinger. This contract involved, among other strategic communications activities, the running of a radio station for AMISOM, which has overall responsibility for supporting the fragile state-of-affairs in the Horn of Africa country. Not without controversy, Somalia represented the first case of the UN contracting critical strategic communications functionality in a peace support mission to a consortium of private consultancy businesses. The consortium operated and functioned as the AU-UN Information Support Team (IST), and had approximately 60 staff.

The key strategic goals of the contract included creating a positive information environment to facilitate the cooperation and commitment of the parties to the peace process; foster the cooperation and support of the local population for the Somali transitional government and AMISOM; influence international opinion about the mission in order to sustain the support of troop-contributing countries and international donors; and garner the support of national and local authorities to create an environment conducive for peace and national reconciliation (Jacob, 2011; Williams, 2018a; 2018b). In short, a full spectrum of communications functions were included in the contract including speech writing for Somali government officials, media monitoring, website development, issuing of press releases on behalf of AMISOM and various other messaging and branding activities. The consortium drafted numerous op-eds on behalf of AMISOM's senior leadership, which were published in a range of regional and international media outlets including Foreign Policy magazine (Williams, 2018a).

Even more significantly, the contract also included audience research and media effects analysis, including tracking public opinion and testing products to measure effects on audiences (Williams, 2018a). The inclusion of these tasks for the Bell Pottinger-led consortium is an example of the extent to which the UN underwent a neoliberal doctrinal shift within its public communications strategy during the early years of the twenty-first century. Alongside their approach to communications in the DRC, particularly their commissioning of the *Gutahuka* programme, the UN's public diplomacy migrated from public information provision in support of mission objectives to propaganda operations. Wherein, the UN saw their audience in these countries as propaganda subjects to be influenced, manipulated or moulded to fit the UN's objectives. As such, the UN asked the Bell Pottinger consortium to

undertake research and expectedly show evidence of the effects of its operations on targeted audiences.

The controversy here, however, surrounds Bell Pottinger itself, a company that was notorious for its work with all manner of unsavoury individuals, governments and organisations looking to exploit, distract, tarnish rivals or spin their way out of trouble. In 2011 it was uncovered by investigative journalists for the UK's Independent newspaper that Bell Pottinger had been working closely with the government of Sri Lanka since 2009 to provide perception management services following the end of the country's 26-year civil war (Newman and Wright, 2011). In the final months of the conflict, the regime was accused of human rights abuses and crimes against humanity with respect to the country's Tamil population. Bell Pottinger then worked closely with the country's Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa, ghost-writing his speech to the UN General Assembly in December 2010.

Bell Pottinger's reputation for working with tyrants, despots and wealthy individuals was well-established before it gained the UN contract in Somalia. Indeed, the firm's employees were familiar faces in the corridors of the UN headquarters during the 1990s and early 2000s as they had lobbied there on behalf of several governments and multinational corporations. However, the firm was forced into insolvency in 2017 – ironically its own reputation lying beyond redemption – after it was revealed that it had stoked racial hatred in South Africa on behalf of the billionaire Gupta brothers and their close ally, the country's then President Jacob Zuma.

Irrespective of the quality of strategic communications that AMISOM needed, the very notion that the UN would consider outsourcing the entire IST operations to a private consortium led by Bell Pottinger is at best one of its most misguided decisions. A crisis of conscience and conflict of interest surely exist if a company that has a history of offering reputation management assistance to those accused of gross human rights violations is then contracted to help pick up the pieces from the devastation wrought by such instances. The UN, an international organisation founded on a moral inclination towards the upholding of the UDHR and the bringing about of a more just and peaceful world, is at serious risk of having its own reputation ruined by contracting work to firms that have vital business interests in the unscrupulous retaining of power. Think of the serial arsonist who also happens to be the owner of a private fire brigade and a cleaning-up company. To be sure, Bell Pottinger was a duplicitous organisation, but more worryingly, the UN did not seem to have a problem with that. Indeed, showing ascendance of its commitment, the UN Security Council Resolution 1910 extending the mandate of AMISOM and logistical support to the mission, emphasized the importance of public information and communications operations to the mission and the political process in Somalia and requested the

Secretary General's continued support along this line (see UN Security Council, 2010).

Aside from the moral, ethical, policy and accountability questions it raises, outsourcing IST to Western consulting firms was replete with risks. First, the entire UNSOA mission ran the risk of being perceived as a Western propaganda tool meant to serve anti-Islamic interests. It does not matter that most of its lower-ranked staff were local. Second, there is the danger of the UN and its agencies becoming a part of the conflict by entering the propaganda sphere. Third, it provided an additional incentive and ferocity to the al-Shabaab Islamist propaganda and violence against AMISOM, the UN and the transitional government in Somalia.

The UN seemed to have recognized its error though, when in 2014, it terminated its relationship with the Bell Pottinger consortium. But this turned out to be a false dawn. The contract was re-awarded to another private consulting firm: Aethos – a specialist influence communications division of Aegis Defence Services. Aegis was a London-based private military and private security company that had executed contracts worth hundreds of millions of dollars for the US Department of Defense (DoD) in Iraq and Afghanistan. Expectedly, nothing much changed aside from the name on the contract document. The personnel remained the same – senior Aethos personnel were drawn from the Bell-Pottinger led consortium, while several lower ranked staff simply changed ID cards and contracts, and as Williams (2018b) observed, the Tasking Order arrangement previously put in place continued under the new contractor.

Aegis, the parent company of Aethos, was not without its own controversies. Soon after Aegis was acquired by the Canadian private security firm, GardaWorld in October 2015, investigative journalists uncovered that the company had recruited former Sierra Leonean child soldiers to work in Iraq as mercenaries and security guards in their DoD contracts. *The Child Soldier's New Job* – a 2016 documentary by Danish investigative journalist and film maker, Mads Ellesøe, revealed that the Sierra Leoneans were paid far lower than Western mercenaries and guards despite doing the same job and facing the same risks. Some of the ex-child soldiers were paid as low as $16 a day (Ross, 2016). Aegis recruited them knowing that they were children when they were forced into fighting in Sierra Leone and could thus still have been haunted by their experience and could likely be retraumatised from further violence. To be clear, Aegis recruited ex-child soldiers from one of the poorest countries in the world to maximise profits while also reducing the cost of US presence in Iraq.

Indeed, one does not require great detective skills to track Aegis' connection with Sierra Leone and the neoliberal industrial complex that ferried ex-child soldiers from its brutal civil war to Iraq. The links are relatively transparent. Senior Director of Aegis, retired Brigadier James Ellery, is a former UN employee who worked in the UN's Sierra Leone

Mission as Chief of Staff between 2001 and 2003. This was a period when the Mission was undertaking the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of 75,490 combatants including 6,845 child soldiers in this part of Africa. It seems clear enough then that rather than positively affect the likelihood of a more peaceful world, Aegis have been able to use first-hand experience of multiple conflict and post-conflict zones to profiteer from human misery. Moreover, the UN appears to have done nothing to prevent this from occurring and may even endorse such policies. As such, the controversy surrounding Aegis and the broader UN policy of partnering with disreputable firms pierces the moral heart of the UN as an entity created for the encouragement of peace.

Conclusion

Such is the advance of neoliberal ideology around the world today, it is normatively acceptable to outsource critical UN mission public information operations in one of the most volatile parts of Africa to Western-based private consulting firms. It raises several questions in relation to hegemonic struggle, most notably the extent to which such an approach offers the leverage for marginalised groups to alter their status. In short, public diplomacy in this vein is very much an act of hegemonic conservation. It is the core speaking to the periphery on the core's terms and largely denying the periphery the agency to find solutions to its own quandaries.

While various factors determine the outcome of UN procurement processes, the UN's decision (and it very much is their decision) to outsource communications operations to external partners suggests that the UN can now be classified (if it was ever required) as an IGO working primarily for the interests of a neoliberal hegemonic coalition. To this end, outsourcing the UNSOA's communication components to a consortium led by Bell Pottinger – an organization known for its rather unwholesome alliances – fundamentally questions the integrity of the UN's outsourcing policy (if there is one) and explicitly reveals the organisation's neoliberal pivot.

The case of Fondation Hirondelle is not as clear though. At first glance the UN partnering with an organisation founded on the principles of Reporters without Borders – integrity, respect for the audience's personal volition and the provision of unbiased (as much as is possible) public information – seems to be a well-thought-out decision. However, the coalition collapsed soon after the mission in the DRC entered the stabilisation phase. The collapse was fundamentally due to irreconcilable philosophical differences between the two organisations and contestations over who should be in charge of the mission communication steering wheel. Unsurprising. Alliances between an IGO and an NGO may not always work even in cases where they ostensibly share similar goals. This is particularly so when there are incongruent organisational

values, philosophies and outcome goals. For UN peace missions, the outcome goals are mission-specific, mandate-bound, time-bound and budget-bound. Peace thus becomes a target that must be achieved within a set time – as if it is a destination or a product. The journey of sustainable peace however can be long and tortuous – peace is a process of long-term transformation of a war system at the personal, social, cultural and structural levels (Lederach, 1997; Miall, 2004). Such transformation processes are not achieved with the signing of peace agreements neither do they always fit into institutionalised, time-bound, structured and sub-contracted mandates. The prevailing outsourcing and privatization of war and influence operations are part of the neoliberal wave, and unfortunately UN peace operations have not been spared its reach. The consequence is a weakened capability to build sustainable peace in conflict affected societies, as the two countries in the case studies above have only too well indicated.

The UN was created by the victors of World War II who, despite their differences, saw that an IGO with means beyond the League of Nations was required if the horrors of the World Wars were to be consigned to history. A major power resigning from the UN may prove fatal for the organisation. As such, the UN has been a chameleon to prevailing ideologies and political and economic tides as they have ebbed and flowed since 1945. However, it is highly unlikely that public diplomacy immersed in neoliberal allegiance can bring meaningful change to those living on hegemonic frontiers. Indeed, it may be a wider acknowledgement that the UN's primary goal is to quarantine conflicts at a safe distance from where power really lies. But even then, its reach and authority is on a decline, as the major powers to whom it owes its existence are retreating from internationalism. It has become increasingly apparent that the UN can no longer depend on governments to benevolently use their own tools, resources and capabilities to promote the UN's causes, as envisaged by the founders of the UN's Public Information policy. Bolstering its public diplomacy thus appear to be the only pathway to restoring its moral authority in an increasingly nationalistic and less multilateral world. As the concept of *new public diplomacy* becomes congealed in theory, policy and practice, there is need for a doctrine customised for the UN. It must be built, not on neoliberal instincts, but on moral integrity and accountability in ways that elevate local participation, cooperation and capacity building to serve the greater good of international society.

Note

1. On May 28 2010 the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1925 (2010) to extend the mandate of MONUC. Effective July 1 2010, Resolution 1925, renamed the Mission as the United Nations Stabilisation Mission in the Congo (MONUSCO). Throughout this chapter 'MONUC' is used to refer to the mission prior to its expansion to MONUSCO.

Bibliography

Alleyne, M. D., (2003), *Global Lies? Propaganda, the UN and World Order*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Alleyne, M. D., (2005), "United Nations Celebrity Diplomacy", *SAIS Review*, XXV(1), Winter–Spring.

Berkeley, B., (1994), "Sounds of Violence: Rwanda's Killer Radio", *New Republic*, 21(8–9), pp. 18–19.

Carruthers, S., (2011), *The Media at War*, 2nd ed., New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Cingolani, P., (2019), "Neoliberalism, Outsourcing, and Domination", In: A. Scribano, F. Timmermann Lopez and M. Korstanje (eds.), *Neoliberalism in Multi-Disciplinary Perspective*, Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.

Cull, N. J., (2009), "Public Diplomacy before Gullion: The Evolution of a Phrase", In: N. Snow and P. M. Taylor (eds.), *Routledge Handbook of Public Diplomacy*, New York: Routledge.

Cull, N. J., (2019), *Public Diplomacy: Foundations for Global Engagement in the Digital Age*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Dallaire, R., and B. Beardsley, (2005), *Shake Hands with the Devil: the Failure of Humanity in Rwanda*, New York, NY: Carroll & Graf.

Ellesøe, M., and M. Heide (Producer), (2016), *The Child Soldier's New Job* [Documentary film]. Plus pictures.

Fitzpatrick, K. R., (2011), "U.S. Public Diplomacy in a Post-9/11 World: From Messaging to Mutuality", *CPD Perspectives on Public Diplomacy* 6/2011, Available from World Wide Web: https://uscpublicdiplomacy.org/sites/uscpublicdiplomacy.org/files/legacy/publications/perspectives/CPDPerspectives_Mutuality.pdf [Accessed: 20 October, 2020].

Gourevitch, P., (2000), *We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed With Our Families: Stories from Rwanda*, New York: Picador.

Horkheimer, M., and T. Adorno, (1997), *The Dialectic of Enlightenment*. London: Verso.

Hovet, T., (1963), "United Nations Diplomacy", *Journal of International Affairs*, *17*(1), pp. 29–41. http://www.jstor.org/stable/24381290 [Accessed 23 October, 2020].

Jacob, J. U., (2011), "Battling Radical Islamist Propaganda in Somalia: The Information Intervention Option", *Small Wars Journal*, 7(5).

Jacob, J. U., (2017), *Convincing Rebel Fighters to Disarm: UN Information Operations in the Democratic Republic of Congo*, Berlin: DeGruyter.

Kapoor, I., (2012), *Celebrity Humanitarianism: The Ideology of Global Charity*, New York: Routledge.

Kirschke, L., (1996), *Broadcasting Genocide: Censorship, Propaganda and State Sponsored Violence in Rwanda 1990-1994*, London: Article 19.

Lederach, J. P., (1997), *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*, Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press.

Melissen, J. (ed.), (2005), *The New Public Diplomacy: Soft Power in International Relations*, Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Metzl, J. F., (1997), "Rwandan Genocide and the International Law of Radio jamming", *American Journal of International Law*, 91(4), pp. 628–651.

Miall, H., (2004), "Conflict Transformation: A Multi-Dimensional Task", In: A. Austin, M. Fischer and N. Ropers (eds.), *Transforming Ethnopolitical Conflict*, Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.

Newman, M., and O. Wright, (2011), "We wrote Sri Lankan President's civil war speech, say lobbyists", *The Independent, London,* 6 December. Available from World Wide Web: https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/we-wrote-sri-lankan-presidents-civil-war-speech-say-lobbyists-6272765.html [Accessed 19 July, 2020].

Price, M. E., (2000), "Restructuring the media in Post-Conflict Societies: Four Perspectives: the Experience of Intergovernmental and non-Governmental organizations", *Cardozo Online Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 31(1), p. 3.

Riordan, S., (2005), "Dialogue-Based Public Diplomacy: A New Foreign Policy Paradigm?", In: J. Melissen (ed.), *The New Public Diplomacy: Soft Power in International Relations*, Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Ross, A., (2016), "UK firm 'employed former child soldiers' as mercenaries in Iraq", *The Guardian,* London, 17 April. Available from World Wide Web: https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2016/apr/17/uk-firm-employed-former-child-soldiers-as-mercenaries-in-iraq [Accessed 22 October, 2020].

Taunya, J. N., (2004), "Public Information and the Media: Radio Okapi's Contribution to the Peace Process in the DRC", In: M. Malan and J. G. Porto (eds.), *Challenges of Peace Implementation: The UN Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo*, Pretória: Institute for Security Studies.

Taylor, P. M., (2002), "Information Warfare and Information Intervention", In: M. Price and M. Thompson (eds.), *Forging Peace: Intervention, Human Rights and Management of Media Space*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Thompson, A., (2007), *The Media and the Rwandan Genocide*, London: Pluto Press.

UN General Assembly, (1946), *General Assembly Resolution 13(I), ANNEX I, Recommendations of the Technical Advisory Committee on Information Concerning the Policies, Functions and Organization of the Department of Public Information*, 13 February.

UN General Assembly, (1947), *General Assembly Resolution 110, Measures to be taken against Propaganda and the Inciters of a new War*, 3 November 1947.

UN General Assembly, (1948), *General Assembly Resolution 217 (III) D, Publicity to be Given to the Universal*. 10 December.

UN General Assembly, (1999), *General Assembly Resolution 815, S/1999/815, DRC: Ceasefire Agreement (Lusaka Agreement)*, 23 July.

UN Security Council, (2000), *Security Council Resolution 1291, The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 55th Sess., 24 February.

UN Security Council, (2007), *Security Council Resolution 1744, S/RES/1744, The Situation in Somalia*, 21 February.

UN Security Council, (2009), *Security Council Resolution 1863, S/RES/1863 Renewal of the authorization of member States of the African Union to maintain the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM)]*, 6068th meeting, 16 January.

UN Security Council, (2010), *Security Council Resolution 1910, S/RES/1910 Renewal of the authorization of Member States of the African Union to maintain the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM)*, 28 January.

UN Security Council, (2010), *Security Council Resolution 1964, S/RES/1964, The situation concerning Somalia*, 22 December.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights, (1948), Available from World Wide Web: https://www.ohchr.org/en/udhr/documents/udhr_translations/eng.pdf [Accessed 15 June, 2020].

Whitton, J. B., and L. Arthur, (1964), *Propaganda: Towards Disarmament in the War of Words*, New York: Oceana Publications.

Williams, P. D., (2018a), "Strategic Communications for Peace Operations: The African Union's Information War Against Al-Shabaab", *Stability: International Journal of Security and Development*, 7(1), p. 3.

Williams, P. D., (2018b), *Fighting for Peace in Somalia: A History and Analysis of the African Union Mission (AMISOM), 2007-2017*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Zaharna, R. S., (2009), "Mapping Out a Spectrum of Public Diplomacy Initiatives: Information and Relational Communication Frameworks", In: N. Snow and P. M. Taylor (eds.), *Routledge Handbook of Public Diplomacy*, New York, NY: Routledge.

Zaharna, R. S., (2018), "Global Engagement: Culture and Communication Insights from Public Diplomacy", In: Kim A. Johnston and Maureen Taylor (eds.), *The Handbook of Communication Engagement*, Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Blackwell.

12 Public Diplomacy on the Frontiers of Madness

North Korea and the Hegemonic Coalition

Colin R. Alexander

Introduction

The great writer of diplomacy, Niccolo Machiavelli (2008), argued in 1517 that the simulation of madness can be useful to political leaders when faced with certain scenarios. In the modern sense, madman theory is a term within International Relations most notoriously associated with Richard Nixon while he was President of the United States (1969–1974). During the period of direct US military involvement in the Vietnam War (1965–1973) the Nixon administration wanted to create the impression that the President held his dislike for Communism at a level so deep as to make him emotionally unstable, prone to psychotic rage and capable of pressing the nuclear button and causing the inevitable genocide that would follow. Of course, Nixon and his administration were not the first to consider the simulation of madness within their political gameplay. Human history (and perhaps the present as well) is littered with examples of leaders losing touch with reality, having psychotic or manic episodes, being severely incapacitated and even being removed from power on account of poor mental health. The simulation of madness has thus profited from the creation of doubt that those in power may well be 'mad' or that the power bestowed upon them has corrupted their minds to the point of making them psychotic.

Vivian Green (1993) has argued that while most historians consider the past through social, economic, political and religious frames, ill health, thought of collectively in terms of a population and individually in the case of its leadership, has also had a profound impact upon the course of events. However, Green makes it clear that madness is not a diagnosis found within modern healthcare. Indeed, for Simon Cross (2010) madness is an imprecise term and a cultural construct that does not require a trained medical professional to identify it. This chapter is not interested therefore in the critiques of models of psychiatry that emerged during the 1950s and 1960s that were authored by the likes of Gilles Deleuze, Franz Fanon, Michel Foucault, José Guilherme Merquior and Thomas Tzasz.

Madness and 'mad folk' have been a recurring theme within cultural narratives and folklore around the world. For Cross and other academics

including Stephen Harper (2009), our perception of what represents 'madness' is based on uncritical interpretations of the past, fantasies and inclinations within the human mind towards self-haunting. These tropes are perpetuated, confirmed and even encouraged at the persuasion of powerful individuals and the mass media. Madness does not therefore have a psychiatric definition and does not directly correspond to tighter understandings of what it means to have mental ill health. In short, the term is vague and often used to derogate an individual or group but it resonates with ease when uttered. To pretend to be 'mad' though when one is not or to impersonate mental illness with the purpose of gaining advantage is likely to be met with scorn, consternation or offence today if revealed. However, within international politics and within public diplomacy no less, it remains an available if perhaps uncomfortable and unkind strategy for actors to use.

Within the context of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (hereafter, 'North Korea') and the international concerns that often surround it madman theory has been used as part of attempts by both Pyongyang and its adversaries to influence the international narratives surrounding the state's depiction and the likelihood of certain events unfolding. Pyongyang's use of it to describe itself is important as this limits the extent to which these communications might be considered political warfare rather than public diplomacy. Writing in 1994 and then again in 2017, Denny Roy has explained how the notion of madness has emerged during the dynasty of Kim rule (1948–present) as a descriptor of the country's leadership. Discussing the incumbency of Kim Il Sung (1948–1994), Roy (1994: 308) wrote that outside of North Korea the state administration is assumed to be illogical, inconsistent, uncivilised, sub-human and prone to 'inexplicable spasms of violence'. Then in 2017, Roy reinforced his 1994 analyses when he wrote that

> Thanks to constant reinforcement by news and entertainment media and by US government officials (Donald Trump, for example, has repeatedly called Kim Jong-un a "madman"), the average American thinks he or she knows two things about North Korea: (1) that it is hostile toward the United States; and (2) that its government is irrational. The phrase "North Korea crazy" returns over 3 million results in a Google search. Similar searches with the words "unpredictable," "irrational," and "erratic" substituted for "crazy" each yield about half a million results.
>
> (Roy, 2017: 2)

Of greatest interest though is Pyongyang's realisation that under some circumstances the cultivation of this sense of irrationality can help it wield power against more powerful adversaries. Roy rather neatly explains the concept through an analogy of military confrontation:

> […] with the presumption of irrationality on its side, a weaker player can intimidate a stronger player. In the event of a confrontation, irrationality compensates for a shortfall in military power; the weaker player announces, in effect, 'I am willing to risk my life in an attempt to cut off your arm.' Convinced the weaker player is not bluffing, and unwilling to trade an arm for the opponent's life, the stronger player backs down.
>
> (Roy, 1994: 311)

The simulation of madness can therefore be included as one of public diplomacy's most obscure frontiers. Indeed, while Italy is associated with good food and expensive cars and France with fashion and chic, North Korea's 'brand' is psychotic, suicidal brutality and ultimately madness. This aspect of denigration (by the self and by others) is an under-researched part of public diplomacy understanding. At its broadest level then this chapter taps into the idea that not all public diplomacy is about positive messaging and that the ability of actors to control the international narratives that surround them largely depends on their perceived alignment with, and contribution towards, the priorities of the global hegemonic coalition. On the one hand public diplomacy can involve actors creating a sense of hostility around themselves, scaring people, emphasising their victimhood or attempting to make themselves less attractive to foreigners. However, perhaps more menacingly, public diplomacy can be used within the contestation of worldviews to drown out counter arguments that may challenge prevailing authority. Calling a world leader or an entire regime 'mad' within this contest thus forms part of an international actor's public diplomacy.

In the context of North Korea in the early twenty-first century this 'drowning' has been most clearly seen in the global uptake of the concept of the 'axis of evil' that was first used by George W. Bush's US presidential administration in 2002 as part of its attempts to legitimise American verbal aggression and in some cases proactive violence towards Cuba, Iran, Iraq, Libya, North Korea and Syria. The ability of these countries to counter the 'evil' (an imprecise term much like madness rooted in religion) narrative laid upon them has been decidedly limited.[1] The selection of those countries by the US and other leaders of the hegemonic coalition as being 'evil', and all the connotations that go with such a word, casts a dark shadow over all the other international communications that they may try to engage in. It ought to be concluded then that the selection of which countries are shackled with evilness and which are not has little to do with moral concern for the welfare of the citizens of these 'rogue' nations but is based on the extent to which their economies and the orientation of their central banks in particular exist on the fringes of the predominant global capitalist network led by the United States. This thesis enjoys added support when one considers the long list of other countries

who engage in violent, suppressive, exploitative, unscrupulous, kleptocratic and unlawful activities either domestically or on the international stage but who do not find themselves routinely labelled with the 'evil' tag seemingly on account of their economies being more integrated into the prevailing world system.

Utilising the framework presented by Cross (2010) then, it can be argued that the 'madness' of North Korea is as much a cultural construct as any other attempt to label madness at an individual or collective level. Moreover, the global flow of madness labelling within international politics reflects the landscape of hegemony and counter-hegemony, the core and the periphery of international affairs, who enjoys the perceived right to their power and who does not, and most importantly who has most influence over the flows of global media communications. This chapter will now discuss the history of North Korea's public diplomacy and the counter-narratives that continue to surround it. The chapter then turns to look at the madness narrative within the contemporary Kim Jong Un era (2011–present) against the backdrop of Pyongyang's development of nuclear weapons capability and its refusal to allow its people and economy to be influenced by external forces. The original research presented within the chapter comes in the form of an auto-ethnographic account by the author of his experiences engaging with the mainstream international media as an academic expert on Asia – Pacific international relations.

North Korea's Public Diplomacy

North Korea has been embracing forms of public diplomacy since before the state's foundation in 1948. However, since the end of the Cold War it has found itself increasingly isolated and with fewer supportive international audiences. Cathcart and Denney (2013) note that during the 'liberation' of the late 1940s Pyongyang was an attractive place for leftist intellectuals and artists residing in the southern part of the peninsula. Then, after North Korea and the Soviet Union signed an agreement on cultural exchange in 1949, Russian became North Korea's official second language and artists and performers from both countries travelled to and from Moscow and Pyongyang to exhibit their talents. North Korean culture and cultural learnings were also esteemed by audiences in Northeastern China and the Pyongyang government was somewhat revered in Beijing during this period as a good example of Communist brotherhood.

North Korean public diplomacy expanded considerably during the late 1960s and through the 1970s. This was partly in response to the increased volume of US resources focussed towards East Asia but also as part of the international export of the cult of personality that by this time surrounded the leadership of Kim Il Sung. North Korea focussed much of its public diplomacy efforts during the 1970s on the Global South. Benjamin Young's (2020) recent work on this subject looks at

North Korea's cultural diplomacy with African nations during the 1970s and 1980s. Here, North Korea sought to circulate Kim Il Sung's philosophy of *Juche* that focussed on ideas of self-reliance, national harmony and patriotism. Kim Il Sung's philosophy – particularly the concept of 'ilsim-dangyeol' (single-minded unity) – appealed to some of Africa's postcolonial kleptocratic despots, notably Idi Amin in Uganda, who, Young argues, considered North Korea's teachings useful to the consolidation of his own power base. These concepts continue to form part of Pyongyang's mechanisms for social control within North Korea.

The extent of North Korea's public diplomacy undertakings during the mid-late Cold War have also been researched by Brandon Gauthier:

> From 1971–1978 alone, North Korea established ties with more than sixty new states; gained admission to the Non-Aligned Movement; and became a member of several United Nations organizations. Pyongyang focused much of its diplomatic efforts on Africa in particular, presenting Kim Il Sung's wise leadership as a model for the post-colonial world. Alongside these initiatives, Pyongyang launched public diplomacy campaigns in approximately fifty countries and funded some 200 "friendship" organizations abroad. Through "people-to-people diplomacy", North Korea hoped to improve its standing in the international community and foster support for its positions in the United Nations General Assembly.
>
> (Gauthier, 2015)

North Korea's exploits in the Global South during this period should be positioned within the wider perspective of the Cold War's contest for ideological supremacy and North Korea's own contest with the Republic of Korea (hereafter 'South Korea') to be perceived as the rightful government of the entire Korean peninsula and its inhabitants. However, as Gauthier's (2015) work also explains, North Korea made considerable efforts during the latter Cold War years to harvest relations with hard-left socialist groups in Western countries. He notes in particular its links with the American – Korean Friendship and Information Center (AKFIC) that was based in New York City. In close cooperation with the North Korean government, members of the Communist Party of the United States, and a select few others, the AKFIC sought to harness the anti-war public opinion in the United States by arguing for the removal of American military facilities and personnel from South Korea. It was ultimately unsuccessful in that pursuit though.

As the global events that ended the Cold War occurred, North Korea's entrenched Communist stance saw it increasingly at odds with prevailing liberal, economic and capitalist international thought and less able to attract receptive international audiences. Its international marginalisation, together with Pyongyang's economic shortfall created by the

collapse of the Soviet Union, China's crisis after the Tiananmen Square massacre of June 1989, the death of Kim Il Sung in 1994 and Pyongyang's own economic mismanagement of its affairs, led to significant domestic problems (including a famine) during the 1990s and early 2000s. As a result, many of North Korea's public diplomacy initiatives of the Cold War era dwindled.

In its place North Korea's prevailing international image has been reduced to a swirling narrative of madness mainly communicated by external parties but which Pyongyang has also played up to at times. North Korea is not actually 'mad' though as madness is undefinable as a clinical term. Alternatively, one can think of North Korea as being no madder than a great many other administrations around the world who display aspects of collective psychosis not least in environmental policy where current trajectories will surely result in ecocide. Nevertheless, Roy (1994, 2017) has questioned whether or not successive US governments and their allies have actually come to 'believe their own story' (1994: 308) when it comes to North Korea's madness. This is despite US international communications being largely responsible for the creation and maintenance of the madness perception. In Roy's view this derogatory narrative appears to be limiting the foreign policy options available to successive regimes in Washington DC as it recycles itself and has become ingrained within the policymaking process.

It should be noted at this point that during their lifetimes on no known occasion have either Kim Il Sung or Kim Jong Il been assessed by psychologists and proclaimed to be suffering from mental ill health. This is also true of Kim Jong Un, the country's current leader. More importantly though, North Korea's economic policy is not irrational as it suits Kim interests very well. Indeed, any real economic liberalisation within the country would likely jeopardise the Kim family's supremacy. While militarily, aside from moral questions regarding the development of weapons of mass destruction, it makes sense for North Korea to engage in a nuclear programme when it is continually threatened by countries that already have these arsenals. This has led Roy (1994: 310) to conclude that, 'The behaviour of the Kim regime, in both its domestic and foreign policy, has been ruthless, amoral and often despicable. But it has not been irrational'. A statement that remains accurate today.

Madness in the Kim Jong Un Era

To begin this sub-section let it be imagined that North Korea has thirty thousand troops and a variety of other military resources including battle ships, fighter planes, weaponised drones and reconnaissance equipment stationed in the Caribbean and focussed on intimidating or pressurising the administration in Washington DC to conform to its worldview. In addition, North Korea has engaged resources from its foreign office

and intelligence services to financial support and train US dissidents in subversive radio broadcasting campaigns that are to incite rebellion among the US public. Within this dystopian paradox let it be imagined that North Korea has the largest nuclear weapons capacity in the world and its head-of-state claims willingness to use these armaments if challenged. The United States is not a nuclear power but desires nuclear technology because it may provide greater deterrent or act as a bargaining tool if it had to negotiate with this intimidating and aggressive external power. However, upon the United States trying to develop an atomic weapons programme, North Korea engages in a propaganda campaign that wants to position the United States as the overwhelming threat to world peace, that its leader is a paranoid, psychotic madman who cannot be trusted with such capabilities lest he starts a nuclear holocaust on a whim. Hopefully by now the irony, and indeed absurdity, of this scenario is clear for all readers to see and that the ability of the hegemonic coalition to frame an international narrative about North Korea, beyond North Korea's control, is apparent. The United States, alongside other adherents to the hegemonic coalition, has done all of the above to North Korea in the recent past, while at the same time the United States and its allies have engaged in numerous military campaigns on foreign territory that have resulted in the deaths of millions of civilians.

The pursuit of capitalism forms the purpose behind the international aggression towards North Korea. Indeed, Marx and Friedrich Engels note such an argument in *The Communist Manifesto* when they declared that, 'the need for a constantly expanding market for its products chases the bourgeoise over the whole surface of the globe. It must nestle everywhere, settle everywhere, establish connexions everywhere' (Marx and Engels, 2015: 5). Far from the propaganda of moral concerns over the people of North Korea or the fate of the world then, the motive behind the singling out of North Korea and other 'axis of evil' states is the security of the hegemonic coalition's status and the elimination of resistance to free market capitalism. North Korea's advance of its nuclear weapons technology (and that of the Islamic Republic of Iran) makes their integration much less likely given that the development has come at a substantial sacrifice to the small nation. In short, these countries are unlikely to liberalise their economies and integrate into the wider world system having just spent so much time, money and effort developing a nuclear capacity as part of a resistance to inclusion. Moreover, because no state has a moral right to nuclear weapons over that of another state, global prevailing public acceptance that some do have a moral right must be developed through propaganda strategies that seek to create the perception that some actors are more virtuous than others. Beyond the specifics of weaponry then, these communications essentially want to split the world into international actors who are responsible, trustworthy and noble (hegemonic) and others who irresponsible, untrustworthy

and devious (peripheral/counter-hegemonic) despite such a polarisation being at the very least more debateable than what these communications make them out to be. This polarisation is encouraged not just through explicit communications regarding foreign policy but also wider more implicit perception management strategies involving the export of popular culture. However, all actors can be perceived as having all or none of these attributes depending on individual interpretations, persuasions and selections of information that adhere to previously conceived biases. Indeed, the United States is, after all, the only state to have used nuclear weapons as an act of war (twice) and yet it declares North Korea to be a nuclear threat.

North Korea is studied by a small but growing band of international scholars interested in different aspects of the small Asian nation. Ji Baek, Adam Cathcart, Kevin Gray, Virginie Grzelczyk, Sojin Lim, Udo Merkel and several others within British universities, have all made excellent contributions to understanding. There are many more worldwide, some of whom have already been mentioned in this chapter. However, despite recent positive movements, accurate information can still be difficult to come by for foreign researchers and North Koreans alike when it comes to the Pyongyang regime. North Korean academics make little impact on international academia because they do not tend to travel overseas, are not taken seriously and work in an environment hostile to academic autonomy. Restrictions on movement remain in place for those living in North Korea and travel around the country is logistically difficult because of degraded or non-existent infrastructure. Aside from diplomats, foreigners are almost always chaperoned when in North Korea or go to the country as part of excursions organised by companies like *Young Pioneer* and *Koryo Tours*.

Nevertheless, several commentators, including Cathcart and Denney (2013), have expressed a degree of cautious optimism over the Kim Jong Un administration's willingness to engage with the outside world. Since he took charge in 2011 the incumbent North Korean leader has shown greater willingness for state visits abroad in comparison to his father (Alexander, 2018b). Kim Jong Il, who apparently had a fear of flying, rarely left North Korea. He travelled by rail to Russia to meet Vladimir Putin in 2001 and again in August 2011, shortly before dying of a heart attack on his train in December 2011 within North Korea. In comparison, Kim Jong Un travelled to Singapore and Vietnam for summit meetings with Donald Trump while he was US President, to China to meet their leadership and he has met President Moon Jae In of South Korea at the Demilitarized Zone and stepped over into foreign territory there amidst global media attention. Cathcart and Denney (2013) also note the photography exhibitions that Pyongyang has organised overseas during the youngest Kim's reign. However, it is perhaps in the sphere of celebrity culture that the current administration has had greatest impact,

most notably Kim's friendship with American basketball star Dennis Rodman, which began after 2013 when Rodman first visited the country, and which has captured a sizable amount of international attention and more than a little bemusement.

As such, North Korea's contemporary public diplomacy has elements of conformity to wider trends being pursued by other international actors around the world. However, in terms of uptake of media communications technologies in pursuit of foreign policy goals, North Korea has been decidedly lacking. There is no official Kim Jong Un Twitter account, no North Korean international television station available on the internet, and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK, 2020) government website (in English) is 'clunky' to say the least. This is in comparison to President Hassan Rouhani (2020) of Iran, as another example of a marginalised leader, who has been tweeting since May 2013 and famously had a public conversation with US President Barack Obama over Twitter in September 2013 (see McCann, 2013). One of Kim's few appearances on Twitter has been the 'selfie' that was taken with him by Singapore's Foreign Minister Vivian Balakrishnan (2018). The selfie was a major talking point within the coverage of Kim's summit meeting with Donald Trump in June 2018. Indeed, it interestingly informed the watching international audience that, despite North Korea's seclusion from the outside world, Kim knew what the recent phenomenon of selfie-taking was and appeared comfortable with the process.

North Korea has displayed limited thinking in other aspects of public relations and media management strategy though. These limitations were evident during Kim's meeting with President Moon of South Korea in April 2018 at the Demilitarised Zone when Kim appeared uncomfortable at the press conference and gave the television audience several views of the top of his head as he read clumsily from notes. However, he appeared more accomplished when it came to gesture and the more symbolic aspects of diplomacy. This was evident when he suggested that he and President Moon step over into North Korea in what was apparently an unscripted deviation from what had been negotiated between the two teams but which captured many of the global news headlines that followed. As such, while these events do help to reduce the image of North Korea as mad, the way in which the nuclear issue is reported by the international press and the reports of maltreatment of North Korean citizens by the regime undoubtedly remains the overwhelming international chronicling of the country.

To confound this position, the Hollywood films *Team America: World Police* (Parker, 2004) and *The Interview* (Rogen and Goldberg, 2014), despite being satires, likely confound the global public's interpretation of North Korea as being mad. This is on top of the US President at the time, Donald Trump (2017), explicitly referring to Kim Jong Un as 'madman', 'crazy' and 'little rocket man' at a rally in Huntsville, Alabama in

September 2017 and the global mainstream news media reporting stories about North Korea that raise questions about their professional journalistic standards of inquiry. Perhaps the best example of dubious reporting relates to the purges of North Korean officials during August 2016. Just before the most recent nuclear crisis began in September of that year it was reported around the world that Ri Yong Jin, a senior official in the North Korean education ministry, and Hwang Min, the former Agriculture Minister, had been strapped to an anti-aircraft gun before it was fired blowing them to smithereens. Such an elaborate assassination has shades of the villainous character Auric Goldfinger from the James Bond franchise who attempted to cut *007* in half using a laser, and when that failed, handcuffed him to a nuclear bomb. The origins of the story of death by anti-aircraft gun were *JoongAng Ilbo*, a right-wing newspaper in South Korea, who did not name their sources (see Lee and Kim, 2016). From the story's opaque beginnings, it gained momentum and was covered by both tabloid and broadsheet print publications and radio, television and online media around the world often as though it was factual and the culmination of thorough journalistic investigation. US official sources did little to downplay it or to question its circumspect authenticity and critics selected by the media only said that such instances were always difficult to verify.

Ultimately, the decision to run this and other stories surrounding the 'mad' behaviour of the Kim administration, despite a lack of source credibility and journalistic due diligence by the various international publishers, is because it fits the mainstream media's presupposed pro-hegemonic agenda and their ready-held views of the Kims. In short, it fits the aura of madness surrounding North Korea, which in turn reduces the extent to which it matters whether it is true or not in the eyes of many. Stories like these recycle themselves and receive widespread coverage because content producers and audiences alike fetishize the main characters as folk devils and are essentially overcome by a desire for shocking content that forsakes the importance accuracy so as to achieve the desired excitement. Moreover, it is highly unlikely that the Kim administration would legally challenge such reporting on the basis of libel or defamation, as perhaps a British national labelled 'mad' would, making the legal risks of publishing what is essentially a rumour without a declared source (black propaganda) minimal.

The Kim regime's lack of challenge to the portrayal of madness can therefore be put down to three factors. First, North Korea appears to lack expertise in the ways of public relations and may not care much to learn such a neoliberal practice. Second, assuming Pyongyang's position is more strategic, it may be perceived as beneficial to the Kim administration to be thought of in these terms, as it makes prospective challengers more apprehensive for fear of the unpredictable. Indeed, it is in the regime's interest to discourage a more detailed analysis that could

reveal the extent of the country's poverty, the possible fragility of the regime's status or other frailties surrounding Kim's inexperience, character or health (mental and/or physical) and thus ultimately reduce the aura of mysticism that the reclusive state benefits from. And finally, these stories may be true, or have some element of truth. Indeed, on this final point, we know that authoritarian regimes around the world often carry out purges of officials and some of the most effective propaganda is that which is at least based on truth albeit a selective and/or stretched truth.

One Academic's Auto-ethnographic Account of Madness

The mainstream media is aligned to those who adhere to certain modes of being. Today it manifests itself in outputs that are essentially neoliberal in their content and character and which marginalise, or treat with suspicion, those who sit towards the periphery of the hegemonic sphere either on ideological grounds or through a lack of capital. This can be seen in media representations of, for example, environmental protestors, animal rights activists, vegetarians and vegans, those engaged in the pursuit of mindfulness, 'backward' tribes in remote areas, pirates and piracy, traditional ways of subsistence living, those engaged in alternative lifestyles where involvement in the capitalist system is deliberately limited, some subjects within academia, and even people living in poverty who appear to be increasingly mocked and/or vilified for their destitution particularly by tabloid journalism and the makers of daytime television. However, beyond this, we also find nation-states being depicted in similarly depreciating ways based on their hegemonic position. In recent decades, the Kims and North Korea, Muammar Gaddafi and Libya, Ayatollahs Khomeini and Khamenei and Iran and Fidel Castro's Cuba have all been on the receiving end of coverage intent on creating the image of a depressed, repressed and oppressed society clamouring for the opportunity to enjoy the full bounty offered by global capitalism if it was not for the authoritarian rule of a delusional/deranged/tyrannical/megalomaniac madman. Such an argument is, of course, more effective when juxtaposed against the framed virtuosity and serenity of *our* 'civil' society existing under the 'freedom' of democracy, which upholds the rule of law and has a keen eye for social justice, where any slip in such standards is merely an isolated glitch that should not detract from the integrity of this project of enlightenment. The irony then that nation-states within the hegemonic coalition have the potential to engage in similar or perhaps even more destructive activities as those of the counter-hegemons appears to be lost on many journalists and audiences alike.[2]

During the most recent North Korea crisis (September 2016–June 2018) this author appeared on dozens of English-language news and current affairs television and radio shows both in the UK and internationally. He was also a regular source of commentary and critical opinion for the

international mainstream press on North Korea issues, including publications and corporate media websites based in the UK, the US, China, Russia, Australia and mainland Europe. During the crisis he authored four articles on North Korea as a freelance columnist for the UK's *The Independent* newspaper (see Alexander, 2017, 2018a, 2018b, 2019). The following discussion provides some of the most interesting occurrences that happened to this author during the crisis in relation to the madness of North Korea.

In November 2017 this author gave an interview to a journalist from the *Daily Star* newspaper in the UK who stated that he wanting to better understand the North Korea crisis (see Anglesey, 2017). The subsequent article that was published, and which featured this author as the sole authority, had a doctored photograph of Kim and Trump facing each other with super-imposed orange flames between them. It had the following headline and standfirst:

> REVEALED: THIS is what Kim Jong-un CRAVES more than anything – and it's terrifying.
>
> NORTH Korea's crazy leader Kim Jong-un continues to revel in shocking the outside world following a series of deadly nuke tests which he is using to get what he wants, according to an expert.

The article bears little resemblance to the interview that occurred where a moderate, critical and crucially pacifist response was given to the journalist's uncritical assumption of Kim's madness and implied psychotic and suicidal intent towards military violence. Indeed, if one reads the latter quotations in the article then that position does come across. However, the opening sentences and accompanying imagery are of a clash between the United States and North Korea, and its leaders (shades of toxic masculinity) that the journalist implies may end in nuclear genocide. The article uses derogatory words to describe Kim and his supposed plans including 'craves' (as though he is an addict in withdrawal), 'terrifying', 'crazy', 'deadly', 'masterminding', 'doomsday' and 'sworn enemy' (think: Inspector Gadget vs. Dr. Claw). A photograph of Kim laughing while wearing clothing that is likely to be unfamiliar to many *Daily Star* readers adds to the implication that Kim is a delusional outsider intent on upsetting the 'innocent' lives of the newspaper's readership. He is thus being caricatured as the evil madman villain often seen in popular entertainment programmes, set upon the extortion or destruction of the world, most likely whilst stroking a long-haired white cat and laughing uncontrollably.

The themes of the *Daily Star*'s coverage, and its lurid discourse, are largely the same as other mainstream print, broadcast and online news media's coverage of North Korea as most have sharing agreements with other organisations and employ freelance staff who produce content on

multiple platforms and for several organisations. Indeed, while tabloid media may use more colourful language, the overall substance and angle of the coverage of North Korea can be consistent across all mainstream products. The themes are: North Korea as the aggressor; North Korea as a pariah and secret state (and thus untrustworthy); the North Korean government as oppressor of its people; and Kim Jong Un and his father and grandfather before him as madmen.

In terms of audio and visual broadcasting, during telephone interviews with British and international media professionals this author began to observe the regularity with which journalists and producers casually referred to Kim Jong Un as a 'psycho', 'nutter' or 'lunatic' during questions or in informal discussion before or after the interview. Perhaps the best, or most profound, utterance of this kind came from a BBC producer of a current affairs radio programme. As this author waited to be interviewed over the phone the producer (who will remain nameless as lack of documentation means that it cannot be proved that they did indeed say this) came on the line and said, 'Thanks for doing this on a Saturday morning, Colin, we're just finishing the weather report and then we'll get you on to discuss what this *nut-job* is up to'. In response to this, and each time an utterance like this was heard, the media professional was corrected that there was no evidence of Kim Jong Un suffering from mental ill-health, that such derogatory terminology is outdated and unprofessional (if a disparaging word was used), and that a psychologist or healthcare professional would only diagnose mental ill-health after they had been given the opportunity to fully evaluate a patient. Cue a figurative rolling of the eyes by those on the receiving end of this lecture.

Kim Jong Un is not the first world leader to be defamed by the international mainstream media in this way. Stephen Harper's (2009) work on the media explains how journalism has a long history of labelling all types of people who have been perceived as a threat to the status quo as being mad. Madness is of course a cultural construct and an oft-recycled mythological trope within the storytelling of different cultures that can be found in a host of examples across modern popular culture, entertainment and even news media. It resonates with easy when uttered. The Kims, Saddam Hussein and Muamar Gaddafi are prominent examples of 'mad' world leaders from recent history but the portrayal has also been uncritically applied to suicide bombers and other jihadis, all of whose actions, in a bid to invalidate them, must be framed as madness rather than acknowledging that their malcontent may have some merit however upsetting, disgusting or uncomfortable we find their actions. Such an argument goes to the centre of the ethicist Reinhold Niebuhr's contention that privileged groups seek to invalid claims that aim to dilute that privilege.

> Privileged groups have [...] persistent methods of justifying their special interests in terms of general interest. The assumption that

> they possess unique intellectual gifts and moral excellencies which redound to the general good, is only one of them. […] Those who would eliminate injustice are therefore always placed at the moral disadvantage of imperilling its peace. The privileged groups will place them under that moral disadvantage even if the efforts toward justice are made in the most pacific terms. They will claim that it is dangerous to disturb a precarious equilibrium and will feign to fear anarchy as the consequence of the effort. This passion for peace need not always be consciously dishonest. Since those who hold special privileges in society are naturally inclined to regard their privileges as their rights and to be unmindful of the effects of inequality upon the underprivileged, they will have a natural complacence toward injustice. Every effort to disturb the peace, which incorporates the injustice, will therefore seem to them to spring from unjustified malcontent.
>
> (Niebuhr, 1932: 78)

However, perhaps the most interesting part of this critique of North Korea's portrayal has been the flak that even an academic providing analysis to news media can receive should they attempt to challenge the madness narrative. Following an appearance on BBC television news (both UK and World Service) during summer 2017, when North Korea was testing its new Hwasong-12 missile by firing one over Japan into the Pacific Ocean, this author received several emails from public relations firms based in the United States firmly requesting a conversation because of a difference of opinion on the matters that had been discussed in the interview. One such organisation was Park Strategies, based in Manhattan, New York City, and owned by former US Senator Alfonse D'Amato (Rep – NY: 1981–1999). An email from their Senior Vice President arrived two hours after the broadcast on the BBC World Service. A conversation was sought by the individual (who will remain anonymous) because it had been said by this author that North Korea was not the threat it was made out to be, that such a threat was primarily a construct of the US-led hegemonic coalition, that nuclear war was unlikely, and that Donald Trump was being simultaneously reported by the same media as repeatedly lying in other matters of governance and yet his rhetoric on North Korea was not being challenged for its accuracy, authenticity and appropriateness. It was clear from the email that this firm's interest lay in keeping up the perception of North Korea as the 'mad' aggressor state and that it was their task to apply pressure to any deviations from this narrative by academics and other experts invited by news media to provide analysis. Theirs, and the requests of other similar firms, for a conversation were not responded to by this author. However, such instances nevertheless provide a useful anecdote as to how the concept of madness is perpetuated within international affairs and

the hegemonic networks that have an interest in depicting North Korea in this way.

Conclusion

The concept of hegemony provides a useful framework to understand issues pertaining to public diplomacy and its role within the manufacture of a sense of core and periphery within international affairs. Broadly conceived of, international actors have a sense of what their interests are and engage in strategies to achieve them. These interests pertain to different conceptualisations of power, with the corresponding strategies deemed moral or immoral and proper or improper depending on the preconceived worldview or critical position of the evaluator. This chapter has demonstrated some of the methods by which the hegemonic coalition have sought to create a perception that there is something to be feared from North Korea's conduct that is beyond the actions of other states. Many readers will disagree with what the North Korean regime does and some will find the administration despicable. Perhaps rightly so. However, that does not mean that they are mad. The madness is a creation of public diplomacy.

As such, it is erroneous to claim that the volume of scrutiny given to North Korea in terms of its supposed threat to world peace accurately corresponds to the reality of the threat that it poses. Since 1950 North Korea has not started a war anywhere nor has it engaged its military forces anywhere beyond the Korean peninsula. Moreover, while the aggressive rhetoric and game of brinkmanship played by North Korea in respect to its nuclear capacity may be unnerving, it is not irrational or 'mad', even if Pyongyang itself tries to make us believe it is. In interviews with leaders of nuclear powers around the world most will say that they would be prepared to push the button that begins a nuclear genocide. Indeed, Harry S. Truman as US President did push the button – twice – causing the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people. There is an argument then that any head of government who today claims in their public rhetoric to be willing to engage in nuclear holocaust should be immediately removed from office on the basis of possible psychosis, worrying levels of misanthropy and an overwhelming lack of fitness to govern. This does not happen though as publics often see declarations of genocidal readiness as strength of the leader's character. Ultimately then, public diplomacy involves attempts to manage perceptions in ways that feed into and reflect back the process through which entitlement and virtuosity is determined within international affairs. Public diplomacy can therefore also involve attempts to add legitimacy to the actions of some actors and illegitimacy to those of others, even if those actions are remarkably similar. Such scenarios do however cloud the frontier of where public diplomacy stops and political warfare begins.

Notes

1. The regimes in Iraq and Libya were overthrown in 2003 and 2011, respectively. At the time of writing the Assad regime in Syria continues to fight a civil war backed by an array of external forces.
2. See, for example, Ruth Blakeley's (2009) work on the role of torture and terror by Western governments in the Global South.

Bibliography

Alexander, C., (2017), *Now North Korea is a nuclear power, the capitalist societies which would love to exploit it will have to start respecting it instead*. Available from World Wide Web: http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/north-korea-nuclear-power-weapons-test-west-capitalist-communist-exploit-kim-jong-un-us-sanctions-uk-a8132961.html [Accessed 1 June, 2019].

Alexander, C., (2018a), *Trump's cancelled summit with Kim Jong-Un has more to do with greedy capitalism than ballistic missiles*. Available from World Wide Web: https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/north-korea-capitalism-us-donald-trump-summit-cancelled-nuclear-missiles-a8369241.html [Accessed 1 June, 2019].

Alexander, C., (2018b), *After Mike Pompeo's trip to North Korea, this is what we can work out about Trump and Kim Jong-un's upcoming talks*. Available from World Wide Web: https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/north-korea-us-mike-pompeo-trump-kim-jong-un-meeting-a8310101.html [Accessed 1 June, 2019].

Alexander, C., (2019), *What to expect from the Trump-Kim summit in Hanoi – and why Venezuela might have changed the mood*. Available from World Wide Web: https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/trump-kim-summit-venezuela-hanoi-meeting-vietnam-jong-un-a8798446.html [Accessed 1 June, 2019].

Anglesey, A., (2017), *REVEALED: THIS is what Kim Jong-Un CRAVES more than anything – and it's terrifying*. Available from World Wide Web: https://www.dailystar.co.uk/news/world-news/657248/north-korea-kim-jong-un-ww3-donald-trump-united-states-america-nuke-nuclear-bomb-war [Accessed 1 June, 2019].

Balakrishnan, V., (2018), Social Media Content, @VivianBala (11 June 2018). Available from World Wide Web: https://twitter.com/VivianBala [Accessed 1 June, 2019].

Blakeley, R., (2009), *State Terrorism and Neoliberalism: The North in the South*, London: Routledge.

Cathcart, A., and S. Denney, (2013), "North Korea's Cultural Diplomacy in the Early Kim Jong-Un Era", *North Korean Review*, 9(2), pp. 29–42.

Cross, S., (2010), *Mediating Madness: Mental Distress and Cultural Representation*, London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), (2020), *Official Webpage*. Available from World Wide Web: https://www.korea-dpr.com/ [Accessed 1 March, 2020].

Gauthier, B., (2015), *North Korea's American Allies: DPRK Public Diplomacy and the American-Korean Friendship and Information Center, 1971–1976*. Available from World Wide Web: https://www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/north-koreas-american-allies [Accessed 1 March, 2020].

Green, V., (1993), *The Madness of Kings: Personal Trauma and the Fate of Nations*, Stroud: Alan Sutton.

Harper, S., (2009), *Madness, Power and the Media: Class, Gender and Race in Media Representations of Mental Distress*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Lee, H., and S. Kim, (2016), *Kim Jong-un executes two North Korea officials "using anti-aircraft gun*", Available from World Wide Web: https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/kim-jong-un-north-korea-execute-officials-death-penalty-anti-aircraft-gun-a7215906.html [Accessed 1 June, 2019].

Machiavelli, N., (2008), *Discourses on Livy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Marx, K., and F. Engels, (2015), *The Communist Manifesto*, London: Penguin Classics.

McCann, E., (2013), *Hassan Rouhani Twitter account deletes Obama tweets*. Available from World Wide Web: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/sep/28/hassan-rouhan-twitter-deletes-obama [Accessed 1 March, 2020].

Niebuhr, R., (1932), *Moral Man and Immoral Society: A Study in Ethics and Politics*, New York: Charles Scriber's Sons.

Parker, T., (2004), (Dir.), Team America: World Police, [Film], Los Angeles: Paramount.

Rogen, S., and E. Goldberg, (2014), (Dirs.) *The Interview*, [Film] Los Angeles: Sony Pictures.

Rouhani, H., (2020), *Social Media Content, @HassanRouhani*. Available from World Wide Web: https://twitter.com/HassanRouhani [Accessed 4 June, 2020].

Roy, D., (1994), "North Korea and the `Madman' Theory", *Security Dialogue*, 25(3), pp. 307–316.

Roy, D., (2017), "Understanding North Korea", *Asia Pacific Issues*, No. 133.

Trump, D., (2017), *Rally speech at Huntsville, Alabama (22 September 2017)*. Available from World Wide Web: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mWyX-yqxxAM4 [Accessed 1 June, 2019].

Young, B. R., (2020), "Cultural Diplomacy with North Korean Characteristics: Pyongyang's Exportation of the Mass Games to the Third World, 1972–1996", *The International History Review*, 42(3), pp. 543–555.

Conclusions

Colin R. Alexander

In Chapter 3 of this book, Molly Bettie discussed the 'hagiography' that surrounds educational exchanges. However, it may be that this issue of undue reverence can be applied to writings on public diplomacy more generally both when they are focussed on wider conceptual matters and on the specifics of certain strategic communications activities. At its most basic level then this book has provided a platform for the research and arguments of communications scholars willing and able to see past the hagiography of some of their peers in order to provide the necessary critical analysis that public diplomacy has often lacked. Of course, this is not to say that there is currently no critique of public diplomacy in the academic domain. Questions surrounding public diplomacy's relationship with propaganda, political warfare and the psychological operations of militaries have abounded for many years and in this volume, Gary Rawnsley in Chapter 2, Jacob Udo–Udo Jacob in Chapter 11 and myself in Chapter 12 have covered those debates within different contexts. Nevertheless, it remains largely uncontroversial that there is a dearth of theoretical and philosophical awareness within public diplomacy literature when compared to overlapping areas of the Humanities – social theory, culture studies and postcolonial studies in particular.

However, the debate here is not over whether public diplomacy is a 'good thing' or not. Such a conclusion cannot be drawn and is too simplistic. As ever, when it comes to the analysis of communications the most important aspect to consider is the *intent* of those who put forth the various activities and programmes that make up what is commonly referred to as public diplomacy today. If the intent is to deceive, manipulate, coerce or to induce behaviours or thought processes within individuals or societies that would most likely not have occurred independent of those communications and which may go against better instincts of judgments then questions can be raised around the moral fabric of those who devise such methods. However, if the concern of public diplomacy is to place information (albeit selective information) into the public sphere for people to draw their own conclusions or where there is a genuine desire to facilitate a greater good for humanity and its place in the natural

world then public diplomacy does have the potential to be virtuous. All too often public diplomacy is egocentric rather than compassionate or ecocentric though.

The prevailing egocentrism of the sources of these strategic communications thus forms the backbone of public diplomacy. Indeed, were it operate with compassion or ecocentrism at its core there would be debate over whether the communications were in fact public diplomacy at all. Chapter 10 by Alexander Sergunin discussed the idea that the sub-state administrations of Russia, Norway and Finland within the Arctic Circle have an obligation to preserve the wilderness that surrounds them but that much of their public diplomacy has been motivated by neoliberal concerns over competitiveness, development and open trade. However, egocentrism was most explicitly demonstrated in Chapter 8 by Alexander Davis when he discussed the yogic narratives that have developed during the incumbency of India's ruling BJP party and its leader Narendra Modi since 2015. Here, Davis argued that there has been clear opportunities for public diplomacy to assist the development of human consciousness around the world through helping people to overcome their fears, irrationality and egotistical concerns and to offer compassion and higher wisdom in its place. However, the conceptualisation of yoga put forward by the BJP has been a simple coping strategy for the stresses of life under neoliberalism. There has been little development of the ancient philosophical teachings of the *Yogasutras* within the BJP's public diplomacy. Nor has there been encouragement of individuals towards a less stressful journey through life and a challenge to the exploitative hegemonic status quo. This is because such a discourse would be counterproductive to the BJP's goal of retaining political power and it would thus be erroneous to deduce that the BJP's conceptualisation of yoga within Indian public diplomacy represents a missed opportunity as its absence is clearly part of its communications strategy. Herein lies public diplomacy's dialectic: it has the opportunity to do so much good in the world and yet it is bound by its own power structures and rendered unable to do so. The story of modern India, and indeed the focus of Benjamin Ho's Chapter 7 on modern China, leads to the conclusion that major powers are therein bound by their power status only to use moral narratives when they are deemed useful to those power goals.

Moral stature can be found on the frontiers of public diplomacy though, and this has been a major contribution of the book to understandings of the subject. In Chapter 6 by Sarah Graham, the discussion concerned the narratives of the Indian National Congress (INC) as it campaigned in different parts of the world for the end of British colonial rule. The leaders of the INC were clearly motivated by their own prospective achievement of power. Indeed, this is a determinant factor in deciding whether their strategic communications represented public diplomacy or not. However, the INC also sought to right a moral 'wrong' and then

made their advocation for the abandonment of such wrongs elsewhere the mainstay of their post-independence foreign policy. Moreover, particularly through their endorsement of the Civil Rights movement in the United States, the INC joined with other groups around the world that also sought to overcome the wrongs of oppression and racial prejudice.

Moral fibre has also been seen in the activities of cities as public diplomacy actors. In Chapter 9 by Sohaela Amiri and Lorenzo Kihlgren Grandi, there was a pertinent example of the city of Glasgow in Scotland, which, in 1981 made a moral stand against the Apartheid regime in South Africa by giving the imprisoned Nelson Mandela the freedom of the city. Glasgow, a city thousands of miles from South Africa and with virtually no connection to the African National Congress that was campaigning to end the white supremacist regime in the country, juxtaposed itself against the pro-Apartheid foreign policy of the British government at the time. However, as Amiri and Kihlgren Grandi make clear, it may be that the opportunity for cities to act with such independence from state government is closing as neoliberal concerns tighten their grip around contemporary politics.

The final demonstration of virtuosity from the frontiers came from Chapter 4 written by myself. The main protagonist in this chapter was Anthony McCall of the Indian Civil Service. McCall was a colonial administrator and certainly tied to the upkeep of the British Empire. However, he approached his role as Superintendent in the frontier lands of the Lushai Hills on the India–Burma border with a sense of goodwill, respect and generosity of spirit towards the local people of the region. This was a quality that was in rare supply by the administrators of colonial regimes. The extent of his immersion is perhaps most evident in his admission that he would have died for the people of the Lushai Hills and had bought potassium cyanide capsules for himself and his wife in the event of their being captured by the invading Japanese Imperial Army. There was also a considerable amount of empathy for McCall after he was dismissed from his role in 1943 seemingly for the roguishness of his actions. For public diplomacy though, this only adds to the weight of the argument that international actors tend to pursue self-interested goals and that those who attempt to do anything other than that are sooner or later perceived by policymakers to be disruptive and then removed from post.

For this editor and for the authors of the chapters in this volume then, research into public diplomacy ought to be framed around discussions of hegemony, morality and power. Whether at the core, the middle or the periphery of global hegemonic structures, the public diplomacy activities of international actors at a given time reflect the interplay of global power dynamics and the various roles, opportunities and pressures therein. Moreover, public diplomacy almost always involves the depiction of moral virtuosity (implied or otherwise) and what amounts

to responsible and integral behaviour within the international system. It involves actors explaining their actions to the world but more importantly it involves them making a case for why they have a right to hold the power that they do and why they may be entitled to more of it.

No actor has a fundamental right to its power though. Empires come and go and Enlightenment philosophy tells us that there is no single moral standard to be judged by. Nevertheless, today, morality tends to be conceptualised at the level of what brings health, happiness and virtuosity to the individual. Oppression, domination, authoritarianism and exploitation are widely viewed as moral wrongs with few, if any, mitigating factors. Most international actors are therefore at pains to demonstrate that they do not undertake such activities and that their actions are underscored by a deep sense of fairness, if not virtuosity. The truth of this is variable but the narrative remains constant and the uptake of political positioning favourable to the worldview of the source is achieved, in part, through public diplomacy.

Ultimately though, and despite what public diplomacy narratives may say, the world has not made any great leap forward in terms of moral consciousness. The threat of genocide remains on the horizon as does the barbarity of war, famine, torture and mass incarceration. Psychologically, we as humans are just as capable of cruelty as we were 200 or 2000 years ago. Moreover, humankind is employing all manner of defence mechanisms to keep from view the rapidity with which the planet is hurtling towards a manmade environmental disaster of existential proportions. A reality that is perhaps the ultimate barbarity. As such, much like the glamorous façade of show business as a tool of social control, public diplomacy's focus on the short-term trivialities of trade, exchange, culture and values ought to be viewed as an attempt to distract humans from the pursuit of the deep consciousness that is required if we are to avert the coming ecocide.

Index