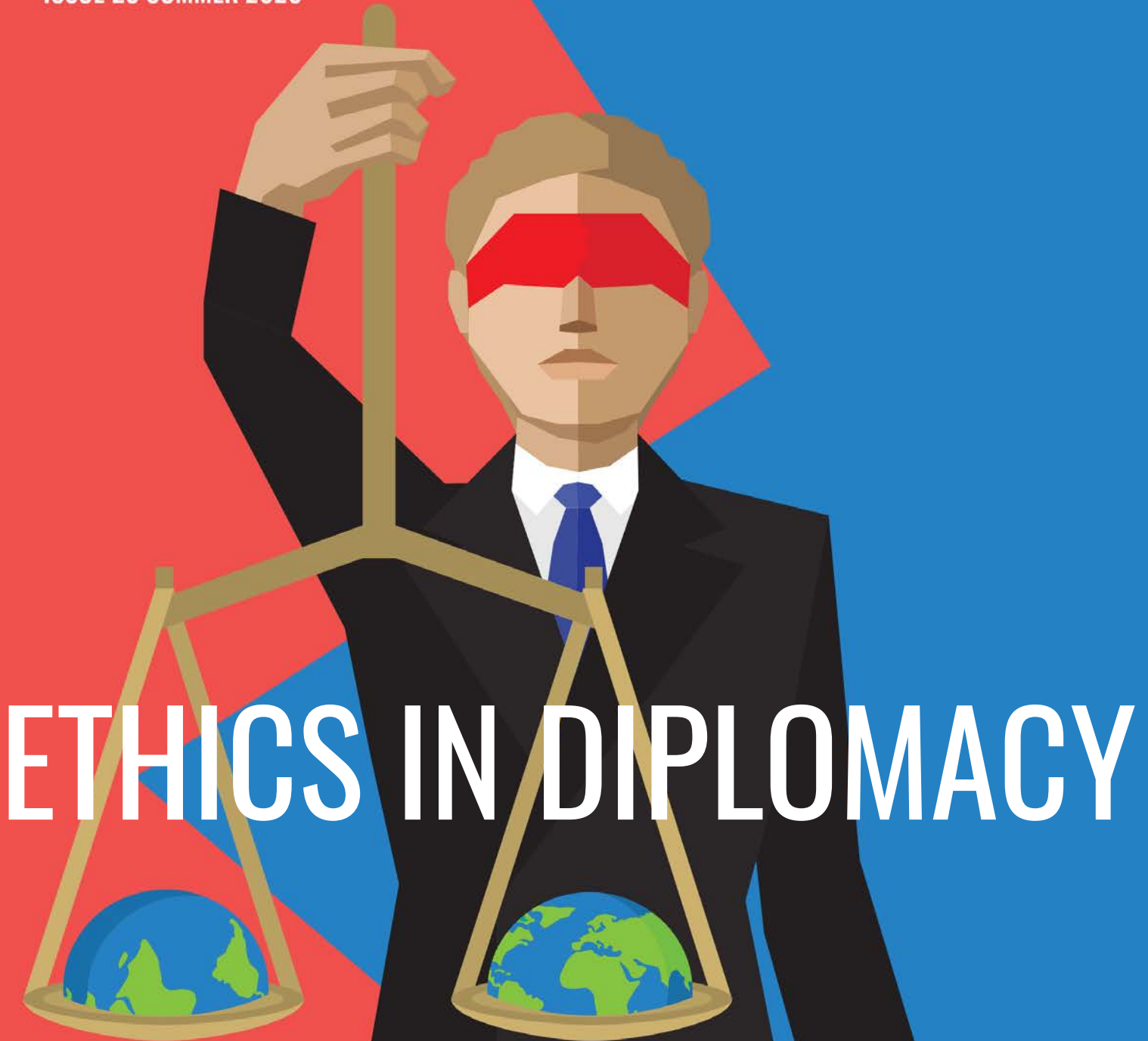


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PUBLIC DIPLOMACY



ETHICS IN DIPLOMACY

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Letter from the Editor

How should diplomats engage with foreign publics ethically?

The twenty-first century seemed to be defying boundaries of time and space until everything came to a stand-still due to the rapid spread of COVID-19 this past Spring. Since the outbreak, the time spent indoors has created opportunities for us to pause and reevaluate the meaning of our lives and role in helping a hurting world. Many diplomats have since returned home to work remotely, which has placed limitations on their ability to engage with foreign audiences personally. Needless to say, it has been an adjustment for all of us.

Over the last 10 years, the Public Diplomacy Magazine has served as a resource for students, scholars, and practitioners to gain a deeper understanding of how governments engage with foreign audiences to further policy goals, known as public diplomacy. As we enter a new decade for the magazine (and world at large), we hope that Issue 23, Spring 2020: Ethics in Diplomacy gives our readers the valuable opportunity to reflect on how diplomatic agents should go about doing their work meaningfully and well.

Meaningful and good work begins with an ethical end in mind.

Joseph S. Nye, Jr., who recently authored *Do Morals Matter?: Presidents and Foreign Policy from FDR to Trump* (Oxford University Press, 2020), addresses the importance of morality in guiding foreign policy despite it being an underrated topic in IR. Without an ethical end-goal guiding decision-makers, diplomats with honorable intentions may unintentionally stray into murky waters.

How then should diplomats engage with foreign publics ethically? After receiving generous inputs from public diplomacy students, academics, diplomats, and other experts in their fields from around the globe, I would like to share the following five principles I found underlying nearly every essay of this issue:

1. Diplomats do not advocate for their own agenda but seek to foster a spirit of collaboration in everything they do.
2. Diplomats operate in humility and are active listeners, seeking first to understand before they are understood.
3. Diplomats do not place great demands on a community without empowering them first.
4. Diplomats recognize when a program has deviated from its original purpose and will put in place measures to realign its outcomes for the benefit of the right audience(s).
5. Ultimately, diplomats use their positions of privilege to serve humanity.

While diplomats are not perfect, their willingness to go about their work ethically, meaningfully, and well will pave the way towards trust, reaping them the reward of cultivating lasting change and rich, genuine relationships in a foreign community.

In our endeavors to publish a magazine on ethics, our Editorial Team had the opportunity to reevaluate our own editorial practices this year to ensure that Public Diplomacy Magazine was in alignment with the ethics we were espousing. Inspired by The Journal of Public and International Affairs (JPIA), we created an entirely new Editorial Review Process for this issue that is now both streamlined and transparent. Moving forward, we trust this will improve the quality of our publication as a whole.

I would like to thank our wonderful Editorial Board for making this possible. I would also like to highlight graduates Devin Villacis (Master of Public Diplomacy, '20), Managing Editor, who has faithfully served the magazine for the past four issues, and Valery Zhukova (B.A. Art, '20), Creative Director, who has designed our past six issues on a voluntary basis. I would also like to thank our wonderful subscribers and contributors. **Since June 2019, the number of our online subscribers has increased by 177% while our digital platform, www.publicdiplomacymagazine.com, has received nearly 5,000 new visitors from 99 countries!**

To carry the magazine to greater heights, I would like to introduce Joshua Morris, who will be assuming his role as the new Editor-in-Chief in June 2020. Joshua is the bright mind behind the theme of this issue, and his enthusiasm for sharing innovative public diplomacy will no doubt inspire you in the issues to come! Joshua is currently in the second year of his Master's degree in Public Diplomacy at the University of Southern California (USC) and Editorial Intern at the USC Center on Public Diplomacy.

It has been an honor to guide the Public Diplomacy Magazine the past two issues. I have truly enjoyed reading the incredible articles submitted by over 50 contributors from around the globe this past year! I am especially thankful to those of you who reached out to me with your encouragement and support during this time.

I pray that we all emerge from this unprecedented season refreshed, reenergized, and renewed.

Blessings,



Jasmine A. Kolano
Editor-in-Chief, 2019-20



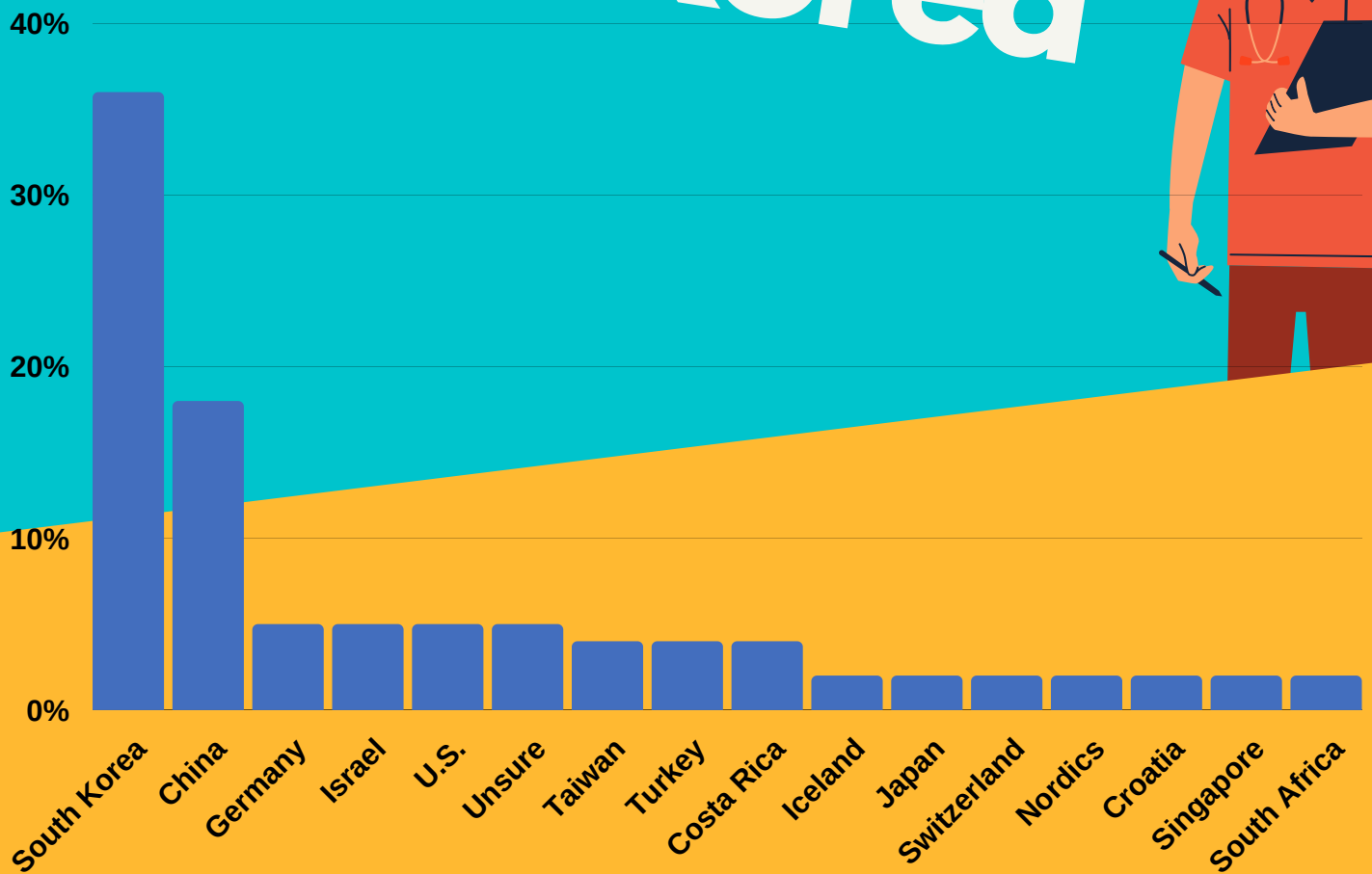
Thank you for participating in
#EthicsinDiplomacyPoll

We asked:

“Which nation has implemented the most ethical public diplomacy initiatives during the outbreak of COVID-19?”

Our readers answered:

South Korea



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A man without ethics is a wild
beast loosed upon this world.

- Albert Camus

**WHAT SHOULD ETHICAL
DIPLOMACY LOOK LIKE?**

Doing the Right Thing: Aristotle for Aspiring Diplomats

David Weeks

Is there a magic ingredient that guarantees success as a diplomat? No! But there is an ingredient, when absent, that guarantees failure. It is prudence.

Although prudence might like seem an old-fashioned word, Aristotle insists *phronesis* is an essential virtue (*arête*), an intellectual virtue. *Phronesis* (generally translated as prudence or practical wisdom) is a habit of the mind that results in knowledge enabling us to do the right thing, the right way, at the right time. Aristotle contends it is vital for everything from living well, to household management, to politics, and surely to diplomacy.

Among ancient Greek philosophers, Aristotle stands out for his attentiveness to how the world works and his guidance on how to live a good life. Most notably, his insights into logic, rhetoric, and ethics remain invaluable, especially for aspiring diplomats.

Protocol, custom, rules govern much of a diplomat's work. All of these exist for a reason—they reflect good judgment based on long experience. But often they are insufficient—not relevant, applicable, or sufficiently subtle or nuanced—to guide one amidst the quandaries and myriad of circumstances faced by working diplomats. You need prudence.

The sad truth remains that bungling and blundering are far too familiar. Prudence is often conspicuous in its absence, which explains my starting point. A careful examination of imprudence reveals a great deal about its opposite, practical wisdom, in the same way that experiencing darkness teaches us about light or studying war teaches us about peace.

Just as there is no recipe, formula, or algorithm for prudence, the same holds for imprudence. Yet, there are three crucial junctures where some slavishly practice the art of imprudence—deliberation, judgment, action. At each juncture, timing and manner offer ample opportunity.¹

Deliberation

The imprudent are masters at deliberating poorly. They practice their art at this initial juncture by spending too much or too little time on the task at hand.

They foolishly avoid deliberation whenever possible, jumping quickly to judgment. The imprudent readily succumb to the siren song of impetuosity, going with their gut at every turn.

However, when circumstances force them to deliberate, the imprudent can simply deliberate too much. Overthinking is as ineffective as not thinking. When mired in detail—frozen—the imprudent experience “paralysis by analysis.” Doing nothing generally ensures that imprudence prevails.

There are other ways to appear to deliberate while still operating in the dark. For example, the imprudent seek counsel from others—but only from those who tell them what they want to hear. Alternatively, the unwise focus solely on the forest (the big picture) or the trees (the myriad of detail), but never both. Lacking an open mind, they seek information to confirm their own bias, but turn a blind eye to inconvenient facts. They carefully assess the costs but not the benefits of alternatives, or vice versa. All of these measures allow the negligent to give the impression of deliberating without risking an accurate grasp of reality.

Deliberating poorly, thus inadequately assessing a situation, almost guarantees one's subsequent judgment will go awry.

Judgment

After deliberation comes time to render a verdict. Judgment too depends on time and manner. The imprudent rush to judgment. Snap decisions are by nature rash, impulsive, and foolish—hastily following one's heart guarantees that desire overpowers

reason. If rushing feels wrong, one can always dawdle. Procrastinators notoriously vacillate until the crucial moment has passed. In this way, timing, properly misused, turns once again into an ally.

Your manner, characteristic style, can also render poor judgment. One imprudent stylistic practice fails to bridge abstract moral principles and concrete action, fixating on one or the other. Imprudent idealists stick to abstract principles regardless of cost. Scorning compromise, they let the perfect impede the good. Imprudent realists, on the other hand, fixate on concrete realities and freely compromise, sacrificing principle on the altar of expediency.

The imprudent can also misjudge by fooling themselves and others with logical fallacies and deceptive arguments. Standard options include equivocation, non-sequiturs, hasty generalizations, and false dichotomies. Other forms of logical chicanery include ad hominem attacks, straw man arguments, and circular reasoning. The imprudent rashly confuse correlation with causation, mistake a part for the whole, brandish appeal to pity, replace argument with assertion, and misuse statistics. These bogus weapons anesthetize reason, exploit human gullibility, and fuel misjudgment.

Action

What if the imprudent “accidentally” deliberate well and judge rightly? Fear not.

When it comes time to act on their judgment, the imprudent will move too fast or too slow—as long as they do the right thing at the wrong time. Hurry and dillydallying, complacency and distraction, are faithful friends.

Even when acting at the right time, alas, their manner provides one more chance for waywardness. Action can prove either too intense, heavy-handed, aggressive, or too cavalier, lackadaisical, accommodating. Both extremes work.

Imprudence’s Prevalence

Why is imprudence so prevalent? Because its opposite, practical wisdom, is hard work.

First, practical wisdom requires reason to prevail when deliberating, judging, and acting. This appears too taxing for many and runs counter to our proclivity to rely

on whim, impulse, emotion.

Second, prudence not only involves mental effort, but it also requires all the virtues. Aristotle insists the cardinal virtues—justice, prudence, courage, moderation—cannot stand-alone. Each one proves necessary but insufficient. “It is impossible,” he states, “to be a man of practical wisdom without moral excellence or virtue.”² Each virtue serves as a buttress for other virtues.

Aristotle asserts, for example, you will not know what is good in a particular situation without a keen sense of justice, or you may know the good but prove unable to do it without courage, or you may know the good and have courage but still not act sensibly and appropriately without moderation.³

Imagining complete virtue as out of reach, the imprudent note that some people succeed in this world, acquiring fame and fortune, power and prestige, or a coveted diplomatic posting, with mere cunning. Cunning, prudence’s evil twin, does not demand the other virtues. It only involves shrewdness when choosing the most advantageous option for oneself. The ability “to perform those steps which are conducive to a goal we have set for ourselves” seems a type of cleverness, but such guile is unscrupulous trickery “if the goal is base.”⁴

The third reason for imprudence’s prevalence is that each imprudent act in one area of life makes it easier to do likewise in all other areas. Once on this path, it is all downhill. To paraphrase the Joker, “imprudence is like gravity. All it takes is a little push.” No wonder imprudence permeates our world.

A Brief Note on Prudence

Practicing the art of prudence begins with due diligence, careful deliberation to ascertain what is needed to make a proper judgment. “The most characteristic function of a man of practical wisdom is to deliberate well,” according to Aristotle.⁵ It is “particular facts that form the starting point,” Aristotle says, and one’s “perception of particular facts” must be accurate.⁶

Thoughtful consideration of what one needs to know also necessitates knowledge of oneself—especially your limitations, what you do not know. Accurate self-knowledge prompts one to ask questions and seek wise counsel until you understand a situation in all its complexity. This includes the broad context as well as the relevant particulars—both the forest and the trees.

Prudence cannot languish in reserve until an occasional need arises. It must be practiced daily. Over time, you hone the ability to ask the right questions, seek the right counsel, consider the right factors, employ the right principles, and make the right judgments.

Thorough research unveils options and their attendant costs and benefits. Once your grasp of reality seems as complete as possible in the circumstances, you are ready to render a judgment.

Good judgment relies on insight—recognizing the correct moral principle for the situation—and discernment—the perception of what is possible.⁷ Given that prudence is the “art of the possible,” discernment sometimes results in compromise simply because there are few perfect solutions in life. Balancing the ideal and the real may entail settling for an approximation of moral aspiration.

Once you judge the proper end, you must also determine “what is conducive to the end.”⁸ Choosing a sensible and appropriate path requires foresight, the ability to foresee likely consequences.

Self-knowledge is also central to judgment. When determining the proper target and the best means to that end, you must know yourself, especially your prejudices, and how to hold at bay your fears, grudges, and ambitions. “Emotion-driven decisions undisciplined by reflection can lead to irresponsible judgments.”⁹

Finally, prudence entails acting in the right way at the right time. Aristotle reminds us that “practical wisdom issues commands: its end is to tell us what we ought to do and what we ought not to do.”¹⁰ Executing that command often calls for agility, finesse, even emotional intelligence.¹¹

Becoming Prudent

Aristotle advocates mastering the art of prudence the way archers learn their sport. It starts with ascertaining the right target. For Aristotle, that bullseye is always *díkaios*, the “just, noble, and good.”¹²

Then, archers practice. Trial and error. Most training is abject failure, missing the mark. That explains the need for coaches and teachers who provide pointers and encouragement.

Diplomats need mentors and role models, judicious people, present and past. For Edmund Burke, “History is a preceptor of prudence” because it enlarges one’s experience, vicariously showing what discernment, foresight, discretion, and good sense look like in the lives of prudent men and women.¹³

Most importantly, aspiring diplomats need experience exercising their mental and moral muscles. “Practical wisdom is . . . learned by practicing the craft.”¹⁴ Only with practice do you develop the habit of seeing situations in their fullness and thinking about them in a particular way. The process transforms, changing us. Aristotle

writes, “the purpose of practical wisdom is not to know what is just, noble, and good, but to become just, noble and good.”¹⁵

Good diplomats live prudent lives. Prudence cannot languish in reserve until an occasional need arises. It must be practiced daily. Over time, you hone the ability to ask the right questions, seek the right counsel, consider the right factors, employ the right principles, and make the right judgments. Once trained, your cognitive and emotional reactions empower you to deliberate well, choose best, and act right.



David Weeks

David Weeks is the founding dean of the Honors College at Azusa Pacific University (APU). He began his 35+ years at APU as a political science professor and has long been a champion for the humanities and the liberal arts. He holds a B.S. from Indiana Wesleyan, a M.A. from Indiana State University, and a Ph.D. in Political Philosophy from Loyola University of Chicago.

Toward a More Ethical Approach to Countering Disinformation Online

J.D. Maddox, Kate Hammerberg, Lauren Protentis, and Molly White

In late January 2020, the sensationalist Russian politician Vladimir Zhirinovskiy made headlines in Russian media when he falsely proclaimed the coronavirus was a ploy by U.S. pharmaceutical companies to profit from Chinese suffering. Zhirinovskiy first made his provocative statement on the Moscow Talks radio station on January 27th. Moscow Today and other official Russian media channels quickly repeated the comment. By the following week global news outlets began reporting on the statement. For longtime Russia-watchers, the Russian state media's use of Zhirinovskiy's disinformation has been eerily similar to Soviet efforts to blame AIDS on the United States – a KGB effort known as Operation Infektion. Unlike the Cold War though, today millions of social media users—wittingly or unwittingly—ballooned the conspiracy theory out of control before governments could formulate and coordinate a response. To date, investigators have reported that the disinformation about coronavirus has become intractable, even for social media platform owners.

This recent event adds to a growing corpus of evidence about social media-based state-sponsored disinformation activities. In late 2019, Oxford University and the Computational Propaganda Research Project reported, "Evidence of organized social media manipulation campaigns taking place is present in 70 countries, up from 48 countries in 2018 and 28 countries in 2017." For example, over 140,000,000 users interacted with Internet Research Agency (IRA) content on Facebook and Instagram between 2015-2017. And

in August 2019, Twitter suspended "936 accounts originating from within the People's Republic of China." According to Twitter, "these accounts were deliberately and specifically attempting to sow political discord in Hong Kong," and represented "the most active portions of a larger, spammy network of approximately 200,000 accounts."

Content Elimination Presents an Ethical Conundrum

Frustration with this abuse of social media by state actors such as the IRA underlies recent U.S. public calls for increased account suspensions and other "take down" efforts. U.S.-based social media platforms usually call these activities "content moderation" and depend on section 230 of US Code 47 for "protection for private blocking and screening of offensive material." For example, in July 2018 Twitter released a suspended data set consisting of 2,973,371 tweets from 2,848 handles, run by the IRA from February 2012 to May 2018. Despite content moderation efforts interrupting some disinformation campaigns, state and non-state actors persist.

Foreign governments have initiated various schemes to enforce content moderation, often taking a hardline against vaguely defined "harms." In February 2020, The UK Government announced that it would "regulate social media companies, holding them to account for harmful content such as violence or child abuse." And Germany's 2018 Network Enforcement Act attempts to hold social media companies responsible for content considered



illegal under Germany's existing hate speech laws, such as "incitement to hatred." In 2019 the Christchurch Call mandated a closer content moderation relationship between signatory governments and social media companies. The Christchurch Call aimed to eliminate the kind of violent content posted on Facebook and 8chan before, and during, the March 15, 2019, shooting at a mosque in Christchurch, New Zealand.

While foreign governments pressed forward with, what could be described as, censorship, the U.S. Government took a divergent path. The U.S. did not sign onto the Christchurch Call despite the acute threat that the shooter's online propaganda seemed to present. Nor does the U.S. Government (USG) directly censor malignant Russian, Chinese, or Iranian disinformation online. Instead, the U.S. increasingly depends on social media platforms to police their own services. While this position aims to preserve free speech protected under the U.S. Constitution and enforce the freedom of the internet, it attracts complaints that the U.S. has ceded control of public commons to private corporations.

Using New Technologies to Address Underlying Conditions

Recent research into human psychology and online disinformation indicates content moderation may not be the best approach to countering disinformation or propaganda. For example, research explains that consumers seek out information that aligns with their worldview, and often because of this they fall prey to disinformation. Bearing this in mind, practitioners

should deliver counter-disinformation messages within the contours of the intended audiences' existing worldviews. They might utilize messages that take advantage of, rather than fight, heuristics as those messages are internalized more successfully. Literature tends to agree, the delivery of counter-messaging is as important as the message itself in achieving desired attitudinal or behavioral outcomes. By nesting persuasive messages within stories, especially those providing descriptive information about normative behaviors, strategic communicators are more likely to achieve the desired cognitive response. For the USG, the greatest challenge in this space is to apply these persuasive and emotional tools to the delivery of fact-based information, because attempting to influence minds, especially when done by fact-checking, often reinforces attitudes we hope to change.

Though technology has advanced by leaps and bounds to enable the rapid identification and take down of disinformation, even the most sophisticated tools fail to safeguard First Amendment principles in protecting free speech while censoring or removing dangerous and fake information. For this reason, content-moderation technologies remain unattractive to U.S. Government practitioners confronted with addressing disinformation and propaganda. Some counter-disinformation efforts might be aided by synthetic content detection, dark web monitoring, or censorship circumvention tools but these technologies require tremendous human capital to monitor and implement—because of this, autonomous technological solutions remain a dream for the future. Here, however, we review some of the cutting-edge



technologies which may present a technological solution to a profoundly human problem, without contravening the right to free speech.

Blockchain-based Content Validation:

Blockchain-based content validation apps validate the origin of a video or other piece of online content. App users record a video on the app, which has a “fingerprint” based on its unique provenance linked to thousands of technical datapoints. The fingerprint is then stored on the blockchain. By storing the fingerprint on the blockchain, the data is unalterable and blockchain users can discover any meddling. This tool is useful for foiling disinformation originators who meddle with evidentiary chains. For example, blockchain-based content validation could prevent frequent Russian allegations of fabricated warzone testimonial videos coming out of Syria. The blockchain system offers a warning to users, triggering critical thinking about the origins of the video.

Crowdsourced Verification of Journalistic Standards:

Societies often distrust national media because of rampant accusations of biases and a lack of trustworthy “fact arbiters.” While dozens of online fact-checking sites exist, users are skeptical and view the fact-checking as a subjective judgment of truth. To avoid perceived biases, researchers developed systems to assess journalistic standards underlying media content. One system relies on thousands of trained volunteers to judge whether a news article contains valid sourcing, evidence, clear language, and other standardized

factors. To avoid skewed results, the volunteers are monitored for their inherent biases. Those biases are factored into the results. Lab tests show, crowdsourcing can be an effective method of assessing the validity of news articles. This offers a potential solution to the societal distrust of the media. By scoring content based on journalistic standards, this system triggers critical thinking about the content originators’ intent.

“Yellow alerts” in Email Inboxes and Social Media Accounts:

The IT industry developed complex “social listening” systems that enable analysts to understand the dynamics of social media interactions and track the movement of fraudulent content online. These systems help analysts catch disinformation campaigns as they develop and before they go viral. However, this analysis is not widely accessible to susceptible audiences. A better system might automate the delivery of “yellow alert” warnings to consumers. Research into these warning systems is under way, with the goal of supporting consumers with analysis that they would consume passively. These systems will trigger critical thinking by raising awareness of disinformation like synthetic content, the same way a spam filter encourages caution about questionable emails.

Tech-enabled Media Literacy Training:

Enhancing disinformation education with fun and engaging exercises can be a challenge, but a handful of organizations have produced entertaining online

games that can quantifiably improve users' abilities to distinguish fact from fiction. These games take different approaches - immersing a user in a humorous effort to defeat disinformation, for example, or tasking a user to develop their own notional disinformation campaign. These games aim to inoculate users against disinformation campaigns by engaging with the user where he or she is most comfortable, and providing an easy and immersive experience. Moreover, these systems encourage critical thinking at the point of information consumption.

Developing National Programs to Assess and Apply Ethical Technological Countermeasures:

The National Defense Authorization Act of 2017 tasked the Global Engagement Center (GEC), housed at the U.S. Department of State, to "direct, lead, synchronize, integrate and coordinate efforts of the Federal Government to recognize, understand, expose, and counter foreign state and non-state propaganda and disinformation efforts aimed at undermining or influencing the policies, security, or stability of the United States, United States allies, and partner nations."

As such, the success of USG counter-disinformation efforts rely on the GEC's ability to coordinate with government departments and agencies, with academics, the media, third-party influencers, and activists. Leveraging cutting-edge data and media analysis, alongside technology solutions, is one way the GEC leads the USG's efforts. This approach helps illuminate emerging disinformation trends as they spread through the information environment. For example, in reaction to a rising tide of state-sponsored disinformation related to coronavirus, the GEC leveraged its in-house analytic tools to expose a Russia-linked disinformation campaign. The campaign hinged on the message that "U.S. was behind the coronavirus outbreak", which was intended to undermine U.S. credibility. The GEC alongside its private sector partners and media outlets, exposed this campaign, and prevented the Russian narrative's growth.

Furthermore, the NDAA requires the GEC to "facilitate the use of a wide range of technologies by sharing expertise among federal departments and agencies, seeking expertise from external sources and implementing best practices." Based on this requirement, the GEC established a Technology Engagement Team (TET) that works to transition technologies from concept to application. This team manages a suite of programs intended to review and integrate ethical technological solutions into the U.S. Government's toolkit for countering disinformation and propaganda. Available to the public, the team established Disinfo Cloud (www.disinfocloud.com) – the USG repository for information

about technologies for use against disinformation and propaganda. This project supports the GEC's efforts to share best practices with the USG and foreign government partners. Moreover, the TET manages the following fora, assessments, and tests in an effort to solicit input and review of technologies for addressing disinformation.

The GEC Tech Demo Series introduces unique technologies for counter-propaganda and counter-disinformation use, and explores the ethical limitations of the technology's use by the U.S. Government. In this, the Tech Demo Series serves as a hub – maintains a community of interest, enables common situational awareness, and encourages information sharing. The Tech Demo Series has hosted more than sixty demonstrations since 2018, and regularly includes representation from the Departments of Defense and Homeland Security, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, the Defense Intelligence Agency, the Department of Justice, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and many others—as well as foreign government participants from the UK, Poland, Taiwan, France, Netherlands, and Germany.

The GEC Tech Challenges are intensive workshops aimed at understanding, assessing, and finding ways to implement effective technological solutions to propaganda and disinformation in foreign environments. Therefore, they focus on supporting foreign technologists, by giving those technologists the platform to demonstrate their capabilities in real time. The GEC expects participating technologists to focus their capabilities on active propaganda and disinformation adversaries, such as Russia, China, Iran or terrorist groups. Thus far, the GEC has convened Tech Challenges in the UK and Taiwan.

The GEC Technology Testbed was established in 2018 and enables the USG to test promising technologies (identified in the Tech Challenges) against foreign propaganda and disinformation. The Testbed runs structured short-duration experiments against specific operational challenges to review a tool's operational, policy and ethical limitations.

Concluding Thoughts

The GEC believes that new technologies offer fresh approaches to addressing the problem of disinformation and propaganda, and can help us avoid the perceived need to judge or censor online content. The Center embraces new technological approaches that enable the Government to combat propaganda and disinformation by arming consumers with the skills necessary to understand and defend against the threat themselves. By bringing to bear the many traditional

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tools the Department and interagency have at their fingertips—such as educational programs and media literacy trainings—alongside emerging technologies, the GEC is innovating the U.S. Government approach to solving the complex challenge of propaganda and disinformation. And, in doing so, is protecting the right of publics all over the world to express themselves free from censorship or intervention.



Lauren Protentis

Lauren Protentis has served for over 10 years at the intersection of policy, communications and national security. Lauren joined the Global Engagement Center (GEC) at the U.S. State Department at the height of the ISIS' recruitment and radicalization efforts; she is responsible for helping to transform GEC communications into an agile and innovative force. Lauren is a frequent speaker on the topic of national security and communications and currently serves as an Acting Director at the GEC.



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Molly White

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The Japanese Schindler: A Diplomat Who Saved Thousands of Jewish Lives

Mieko Araki

There is a memorial in Little Tokyo, Los Angeles to commemorate the “Japanese Schindler” – Chiune “Sempo” Sugihara. During World War II, Sugihara saved more than 6,000¹ Jewish lives. The transit visas he issued as a diplomat working in Lithuania enabled Jewish refugees persecuted by the Nazis in Lithuania to escape via Japan to countries such as the Dutch Caribbean island of Curacao and the United States. Despite his orders otherwise, he made a just decision according to his conscience.

He was born in Gifu, Japan on January 1, 1900. He performed well at school, and his father wanted him to be a doctor. He pursued his interest in language instead. After one year majoring in English literature at Waseda University, he went to Harbin, China to study Russian and German with a Foreign Ministry Scholarship program. He worked at the Manchurian Foreign Office utilizing his linguistic skills, but he became disillusioned by the terrible treatment of the Chinese by the Japanese and resigned his position as Japan’s Deputy Foreign Minister in Manchuria. After that, he was eventually posted to Kaunas, Lithuania as a vice-consul of the Japanese Consulate.

In 1940, there were many Jews in Lithuania escaping from Poland. They wished to acquire transit visas in order to flee persecution. It was complicated for Sugihara to issue visas because he had to account for three political adversaries: the Soviet Union, Germany, and Japan. The Soviet Union at that time was about to take over Lithuania and Sugihara’s embassy was soon to be closed. Germany required Japan to cooperate with the persecution of Jews, and this resulted in pressure

on Sugihara not to issue visas. Sugihara requested many times for the Japanese Foreign Ministry to permit him to issue visas for as many refugees as possible. However, the visas were limited to those people who had enough funds, too much for most Jewish refugees.



The “Japanese Schindler” – Mr. Chiune “Sempo” Sugihara – sits comfortably on a bench located in the historic district of Little Tokyo in Los Angeles, California. Source: Author

on Sugihara not to issue visas. Sugihara requested many times for the Japanese Foreign Ministry to permit him to issue visas for as many refugees as possible. However, the visas were limited to those people who had enough funds, too much for most Jewish refugees.

In spite of all these challenges, he issued illegal visas to Jewish refugees for approximately one month, beginning July 1940. His memoirs described his dilemma:²

On the day I received the first guidance from the government, I thought about it through the night. If I followed orders as stated, I figured I would be praised for being obedient to the ministry. If it were anyone other than me, probably 100 percent would do as they

were told and choose the easy path of refusing the applications. Moreover, there was a real fear that a failure to follow the rules in any way could be grounds for denial of further promotion or outright dismissal. When I received the order, I thought about it all night. ...

After hard thinking, I ultimately reached the conclusion that humanity and compassion come first. I risked my career and duly executed my mission without hesitation. I'm confident even now that I did the right thing.

In the 1983 interview, then 83-year-old Sugihara was asked why he disobeyed his orders regarding the refugees. He answered, "I knew they would be sent to the gas chambers, so I did it."³ Sugihara risked his career, life, and his family to help people he didn't know. According to a witness, he kept signing visas up until the time his train was about to leave for Berlin.⁴ By this heroic act, he saved thousands of Jews and that is how he earned the nickname, "Japanese Schindler."



The author poses with Mr. Sugihara as he 'issues' her a visa. Mr. Sugihara issued visas to approximately 6,000 Jews in Lithuania nearly 80 years ago. Source: Author

In 1985, Sugihara was awarded the honor 'Righteous among the Nations' by the Israeli government and he is the only Japanese to receive the award.⁵ Over the years, even after Sugihara's death in 1986, Samuil Manski, a Holocaust survivor, said that thanks to Sugihara, he "has organized intercultural programs, such as calligraphy classes and a panel on ethics focusing on Sugihara."⁶ Sugihara left this remark, "What I did must have been wrong as a diplomat, but this was totally the right thing to do as a human being. I could not leave someone to die."⁷

The Japanese government in contrast took time to recognize his humanitarian action. In 1991, Mr. Muneo Suzuki,⁸ the parliamentary vice Minister of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) of Japan then, officially apologized⁹ to Sugihara posthumously and helped to restore his honor. According to Suzuki, it took so long to correct because

MOFA insisted that he voluntarily left the ministry in 1947, while Sugihara himself felt forced to resign due to the visa case.

Finally in 2000, although Sugihara had passed away in 1986, MOFA praised him publicly for his unrecognized effort. Foreign Minister Yohei Kono then officially apologized and commemorated him with a plaque at the Diplomatic Archives of MOFA to mark the 100th anniversary of his birth, in the presence of his widow, Mrs. Yukiko Sugihara.¹⁰ Since then, several films, dramas and countless books featuring Sugihara were released that gradually resulted in more recognition especially within Japan. In 2018, half the publishers of ethics textbooks for sixth graders included this case for the first time.¹¹

Usually history occurs as a result of uncountable intertwined incidents, not due to a singular event or action. National policy and ideology vary and may conflict with personal beliefs and ethics. Further, in this new era of technology, where individuals have the power to create a new wave and influence the world via the internet, the importance of individual morality is even more crucial. Now more than ever it is important to remember that like Sugihara, one person can make a difference. Sugihara's story proves that justice and honesty can outweigh diplomacy and hierarchy in history.



Mieko Araki

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Why Active Listening is an Essential Ingredient in the EU's Science Diplomacy 'Laboratories'

Zane Šime

The views expressed in this article are those of the author and may not reflect those of the United Nations University Institute on Comparative Regional Integration Studies (UNU-CRIS).

'Science diplomacy' is a term used to refer to the recognition of the overall diplomatic value of multilateral and bilateral or cross-border research collaborations and networks.¹ With the growing international interest and importance of science diplomacy,² it is time to elaborate on this strand of diplomatic studies in greater detail. This article discusses how science diplomacy contributes to the overall aspirations of well-crafted public diplomacy.

The European Union (EU) has recently begun to invest in projects aimed at improving its understanding of science diplomacy. These projects cater to different aspects of science diplomacy but all share one thing in common: active listening. Recent examples illustrate how listening as "the foundation for all effective public diplomacy"³ strengthens ethical foreign relations. The conceptual intersection between the EU's science diplomacy and ethical public diplomacy practices contributes to greater transatlantic relations.

To achieve the aforementioned, this article first elaborates on the identified intersections between public diplomacy and the EU's science diplomacy. Then,

it clarifies some specific occasions which have inspired the intersection. Finally, it concludes by suggesting more extensive scholarly examination beyond the concise format of this article.

Active Listening and Public Diplomacy

Public diplomacy is a promising point of departure to elaborate on how science diplomacy fits into the broader array of various diplomatic strands. Public diplomacy is a two-way interaction between a government and a foreign public.⁴ Dr. Nicholas Cull emphasizes that careful listening to a foreign public "should have a key role to play in defining and shaping the policies."⁵ Building on this core thinking, Luigi Di Martino, PhD, discerns five types of listening on social media, active listening being one of them. Active listening is understood as listening and engagement being "mutually embedded as if they were two sides of the same coin."⁶ Active listening helps tailor communications appropriately for targeted foreign audiences. Great importance is attached to the dialogue. Representatives of the corresponding institutions are expected to demonstrate in a convincing manner their process of listening and interest in the interaction.⁷ According to Di Martino's typology, no other mode of listening is as well placed to achieve long-term strategies and mutual trust and understanding.⁸

While this typology was developed for social media, this

Active listening is an academically-supported form of ethical "listening" that requires a shift from a mere quantitative and relatively superficial assessment of message-reach to a thorough examination of its qualitative dimensions.

article claims that the core values of active listening also apply to in-person encounters, especially those which are actively depicted on social media. Just as online data is often subjected to participants' active engagement and feedback, so are structured and moderated in-person encounters subjected to mutual processing. Both in-person and online feedback are highly relevant for shaping a tailored approach to foreign publics.

Active listening is an academically-supported form of ethical "listening" that requires a shift from a mere quantitative and relatively superficial assessment of message-reach to a thorough examination of its qualitative dimensions.⁹ Thus, adopting this form of listening in the diplomatic practice strengthens the ethical dimension of public diplomacy.

According to new forms of diplomatic practices (e.g. Twiplomacy, #Diplomacy¹⁰), listening should not be a task performed solely by the diplomatic corps. Contemporary developments, as well as the scholarly analysis, incorporate non-state actors into this extended diplomatic process. As Geun Lee and Kadir Ayhan point out,¹¹ a relaxed definition of non-state actors in the realm of public diplomacy includes not only non-governmental organizations (NGOs), corporations and inter-governmental organizations (IGOs), but also non-governmental entities, such as university bodies and informal communities that operate on an international level. These actors can carry out listening tasks as well.

Both state and non-state actors alike can appreciate publics as engaged parties in interaction rather than just mere recipients of messages crafted by the diplomatic corps. These types of connections between individuals, groups and institutional agents falling outside of the traditional understanding of diplomatic outreach have been explored within the ambit of relational public diplomacy.¹² Through active listening, relational public diplomacy brings its full value via a long-term perspective on interpersonal relationship-building.¹³

Science Diplomacy

Science diplomacy is understood as "a practice that aims to maintain, cultivate, deepen, and prolong relations,"¹⁴ which are not restricted solely to the creation of new knowledge.¹⁵ Science diplomacy "is used as a frame of reference for an array of different interactions taking

place within the global politics-science interphase and, more importantly, as a heuristic tool to navigate and distinguish between different types of interactions"¹⁶ most vividly captured by three taxonomies – diplomacy for science, science for diplomacy and diplomacy in science.

The on-going attempt of defining the EU's science diplomacy demonstrates an inclusive approach. Among the driving forces in this intellectual engagement are not only EU institutions but also universities, the private sector, and civil society.¹⁷ From a public diplomacy perspective, universities are treated as non-state actors. To enhance the role of universities, Prof.

Christian Bueger's concept of laboratories as "'crucial nodal points' and 'major hosts of epistemic practices'"¹⁸ should be pointed out. Bueger's line of reasoning about the diversity of sites relevant to the epistemic infrastructure has caught attention among the scholars who are analysing the wider field of entities engaged in science diplomacy.¹⁹ The dual role of universities becomes very clear. On the one hand, universities are non-state actors engaged in the exploration and examination of science diplomacy and performing active listening. On the other hand, universities serve as geographically located and intellectually situated spaces which, via opening the doors to a range of their facilities and centres of competence, become a physical location where the practice of science diplomacy comes to life.

EU Science Diplomacy 'Laboratories'

The EU Framework Programmes for Research and Innovation support academic and commercial research across its member states and other countries that pay to join.²¹ Horizon 2020 is the 8th multi-year (2014-2020) programme which funds three science diplomacy projects – European Leadership in Cultural, Science and Innovation Diplomacy (EL-CSID), Inventing a Shared Science Diplomacy for Europe (InsSciDE), and Using Science for/in Diplomacy for Addressing Global Challenges (S4D4C). All three form a science diplomacy cluster. It is an epistemic infrastructure of 'laboratories' which facilitate the international reflection process on how the future of EU science diplomacy should be shaped.

This intellectual engine might as well be seen as a loose form of an EU-funded think-and-do tank. Through

On the one hand, universities are non-state actors engaged in the exploration and examination of science diplomacy and performing active listening. On the other hand, universities serve as geographically located and intellectually situated spaces which, via opening the doors to a range of their facilities and centres of competence, become a physical location where the practice of science diplomacy comes to life.

an extended engagement with both domestic and external audiences as well as various types of actors and consortiums, the science diplomacy cluster assists EU institutions in an active listening exercise. Thereby, EL-CSID, InsSciDE, and S4D4C help craft a strategic approach and generate crucial inputs for a future policy document (an EU science diplomacy roadmap, as earlier mentioned by the S4D4C implementers,²¹ or strategy²²). The modes of interaction chosen by these consortiums demonstrate the EU's orientation towards active listening in a remarkable diversity of forms.

In naming some illustrative examples of the active listening formats adopted by these consortiums, the second EL-CSID workshop, hosted by the University of Warwick's Brussels office, and the first InsSciDE Open Conference, hosted by Jagiellonian University in Kraków, come to mind. Both institutions act as 'major hosts of epistemic practices' which revolve around EU science diplomacy.

The EL-CSID workshop gathered researchers from various parts of the world who shared their science diplomacy-related research findings based on case studies from Europe, Kazakhstan, China, and Africa. Similarly, the first InsSciDE Open Conference gathered experts, graduate students, and young professionals to engage them in various intellectual exchanges. It was a great example of how to tap into a vast pool of diverse expertise and synthesise it in multiple ways to draw general conclusions. S4D4C, on the other hand, broadened the accessibility of live discussions via the webinar, "Diplomacy of Innovation and Science Diplomacy: A Vision for EULAC," which was organized in cooperation with the Horizon 2020-funded EULAC FOCUS project.²³ EULAC explores the relations between the EU and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC). This online meeting had an interactive component with webinar attendants being invited to offer input throughout one of the presentations.

Bearing in mind Di Martino's line of thinking, the social media content generated by the aforementioned EU science diplomacy events was useful, not solely for disseminating insights among a broader pool of interested audiences, but also for the traditional diplomatic institutions interested in exploring the public sentiment and perceptions of the on-going thinking process revolving²⁴ around the EU's science diplomacy.

Overall, the EU's science diplomacy dialogues are structured around traditional modes of in-person meetings, similar to public diplomacy. Scholarly publications acknowledge²⁵ that in-person interactions, especially short-term university exchanges, are the most effective means of establishing collaborative and

trust-based ties with potentially lasting positive effects on international relations.



The Way Forward

Luigi Di Martino states: "Listening has been correctly recognised as a key component of public diplomacy. It is now time to put listening firmly on the agenda of research and practice."²⁶ By outlining the EU-funded science diplomacy circles and their chosen modes of interaction with a wider array of consortiums and audiences, this article demonstrates that the EU's science diplomacy reflection processes are an area of growing importance to diplomatic studies and public diplomacy scholarship.

The on-going science diplomacy initiatives of the EU are good sources not only of diverse reading material on the topical currents in science diplomacy, but also the EU's external actions. Moreover, the EU science diplomacy cluster offers plenty of empirical evidence for further analysis of how the EU is crafting its perspectives on future diplomatic initiatives. As some of the briefly discussed gatherings show, it is done based on inclusive multi-stakeholder partnerships which do not strictly delineate between the EU's internal and external debates. The composition of attendees at the indicated events shows that EU science diplomacy reflections benefit from a regular interaction between EU-based and foreign actors – creating an epistemic infrastructure that spans beyond EU geographical borders.

Besides such a diverse composition of engaged parties, the cluster should be praised for organizing and encouraging an active online and in-person listening mechanism via a remarkably diverse range of methodological approaches. The importance of this dimension of EU science diplomacy should not be underestimated since the form of the analytical process can have a considerable impact over the types

of conclusions and suggestions for further action drawn. From an academic methodological perspective, the diversity of employed methodologies and their generated information might be of potential value in terms of offering good sources for the triangulation of future research findings.

This article offers a glimpse into the various forms of active listening employed during the EU's science diplomacy debates. These activities are enriching the expertise of organizing universities and research centres, as well as, providing EU institutions, the Directorate-General for Research and Innovation, and the European External Action Service in particular, with information regarding what domestic and foreign publics think about various thematic angles relevant to the overall evolution and future course of EU science diplomacy. From the reviewed public diplomacy literature, it is clear that the cluster has adopted the right, ethical means for directing the overall analytical process towards long-term goals and the promotion of trust and understanding between EU-based entities and their partners across the world.



Zane Šime

Zane Šime specializes in regional integration and its multifaceted diplomatic dimensions. Her PhD research proposal, "The EU Science Diplomacy Towards the Southern Neighborhood: Reappraising the EU Structural Diplomacy," explores the engagement of Morocco and Tunisia-based higher education and research institutions in EU-funded multilateral projects throughout the time frame of 2014-2017. This mapping exercise is conducted to examine whether these domain-specific relations serve the overarching EU foreign policy goals of strengthening resilience and sustainable development of the EU Southern Neighborhood or if the role of EU-funded projectized activities remains to be discovered by the national and EU foreign policy-makers. Her previous analysis on macro-regional cooperation and smart specialization in the Baltic Sea Region is published in the European Structural and Investment Funds Journal and the Smart Specialization Platform of the European Commission.

“Merchants of Misery” No More: A Media Toolkit for Ethical Storytelling

Christopher Scott Carpenter

I've spent a lot of time analyzing international media, some of which, in the context of public diplomacy or development, I consider damaging. For the sake of this article I'd like to first mention a few commonalities found within such media; for each, I'm sure you can think of your own examples. First, there seems to be an unabashed insistence on perpetuating the narrative of the White Savior - of a community in the developing world only achieving its needs through the intervention of a Western, white-skinned volunteer. Second, oftentimes the stories featured are nothing more than pleas for survival, a gross oversimplification of what in actuality are nuanced and complex human lives. This further highlights the incorrect assumption that all adversity looks the same, manifested, in one popular example, as the Starving Child, face dirty and dressed in rags. Third, they promote the ideology that only charity, and not activism and empowerment, can solve the world's problems, shaping a narrative of victimization that creates artificial distance between a struggling developing world and a prosperous developed world.

What this all amounts to is the erosion of dignity and agency for those with and for whom practitioners work. In his seminal 1981 article “Merchants of Misery,” published in the *New Internationalist*, author Jorgen Lissner writes, “Good intentions aren't good enough if they are pursued with little or no understanding of what such images do to the mentality, the attitudes, the political emotions and behavior of their audience.”¹ Lissner is warning us of the dangers of what we call “poverty pornography,” the commodification and commercialization of a human body in a manner that abandons all piety and dignity for the persons involved and shortcuts its way into the base emotions of the audience for the sake of things like fundraising. It's an exploitation of the most vulnerable.

I'd like to use my experiences as an international filmmaker to impart the importance of ethical storytelling when dealing with the narratives of other nations. By offering critical analyses of some of my works, I hope to demonstrate and dissect the philosophy and practice of ethical storytelling, because storytelling, I would argue, is the backbone of public diplomacy - of generating knowledge and creating understanding. I hope to leave you with a toolkit to utilize in your own pursuits as a public diplomacy practitioner.



Filming on-location at a student-led event in Bangalore, India, as part of a fundraising campaign for the South Indian non-governmental organization Dream a Dream. Source: Prasanna H., Dream a Dream, with permission.

A bit of my own story: in the winter of 2019 I was asked by the Government of New Delhi to document, explore, and interpret the stories of individual transformation emerging from their monumental education reform initiative. This initiative, which endeavors to instill within the young people of the New Delhi government school system the mechanisms to navigate and overcome the obstacles of life through social and emotional life skills learning, was launched the previous July and quickly

became a cornerstone of the ruling party's platform. Colloquially dubbed "The Happiness Curriculum," it was an effort to counteract an upsetting array of rising trends in a variety of issues, from a slipping national ranking in international happiness studies to student suicides related to academic performance.² With my camera in-hand I dove headlong into an education system undergoing radical transformation to direct, produce, shoot, and edit a series of films we named *The Happiness Diaries*. I will use these films to illuminate my points.



Conducting and filming an interview at the government-run School of Excellence, Kalkaji, in New Delhi, India, for the documentary series *The Happiness Diaries*. Source: Social Media Team, Government of New Delhi, with permission.

THE TOOLKIT

1. Explore and familiarize yourself with the filmic language

The filmic language is powerful and draws directly on an audience's subconscious recognition of spatial relationships. Something as simple as a camera's position can greatly impact an audience's attitude. Looking down on someone, for instance, creates in that person immediate inferiority, and, in the audience, a sense of superiority or ownership. You wouldn't be hard-pressed to find instances in development-sector media of young, wide-eyed children gazing longingly upwards into the camera - nothing but victims. The viewer, the supposed savior, looks down from a place of power and privilege.

In the first installment of *The Happiness Diaries*, "Great Man (Bada Aadmi)," I used this awareness of camera angles to maintain the dignity of the students despite highly emotional moments of vulnerability. In one sequence, a young woman started to cry after sharing a story of appreciation for her parents; in response to what was occurring in the classroom while filming, I chose to kneel down before her to capture the moment from a low angle, which imbued her vulnerability with power and dignity. As a result, the audience "looks up

to" her, a phrase we commonly assign to persons we admire manifested in the visual language of the film.



A young woman has an emotional moment during a Happiness Curriculum reflection-based sharing session. Note the low angle which maintains the young woman's dignity, even in a vulnerable state. Source: "Great Man (Bada Aadmi)," *The Happiness Diaries*, dir. Christopher Scott Carpenter.

The camera should, more often than not, be at eye level or lower when capturing stories of adversity. If at eye level, the audience can "see eye to eye" with those featured in the story; if lower, the audience can "look up to" those whose struggles, always dignified, are being shared. This is not to say a multitude of angles cannot be used; the visuals, I argue, should simply work in the service of dignity.



Filming a young man as he delivers a poem to his class, an act of bravery made possible, he said, through his Happiness Curriculum sessions. Note my posture in filming; I am hunched such that the camera sees the young man at his eye level or lower, which forces the audience to "see eye to eye" with him, or even "look up to" him. Source: Social Media Team, Government of New Delhi, with permission.

2. Create ways for everyone to speak for themselves

Filmic experiences provide surrogates for audience members through modes other than the visual. Third-party voice-over audio narration can be useful in conveying information, but, as author Mary Ann Doane writes in *The Voice in the Cinema: the Articulation of Body and Space*, voice-over narration "speaks without

mediation to the audience, by-passing the 'characters' and establishing a complicity between itself and the spectator.¹³ In other words, it creates an additional omniscient presence speaking on behalf of the subject of the media - the one whose story is being explored - which removes that subject's involvement in their own story. This creates distance where there should be familiarity and understanding.



A young man is interviewed outside his school for the segment "The Boy Who Found His Voice" of *The Happiness Diaries*. Source: Christopher Scott Carpenter.



A mother is interviewed in the courtyard of her child's school for an introduction sequence of *The Happiness Diaries*. Source: Social Media Team, Government of New Delhi, with permission.

While it may be appealing to hire narrators to tell stories of adversity, practitioners should work to capture the voices of those whose stories are being told and construct opportunities for them to speak for themselves and articulate their life experiences, their adversity, and their growth. Throughout *The Happiness Diaries*, the students, family members, teachers, administrators, and community members provide the narrative information for their own stories, in their own words. As a non-native Hindi speaker working intimately with Hindi-speaking communities, I found myself challenged on two levels when directing the films: first, by committing to the words of the subjects themselves, as already discussed;

and second, by committing, despite my own limited comprehension, to their native language, Hindi, and not my own, English. These creative decisions helped avoid the danger of crafting a relationship with the audience in which "we" have to help "them." Instead, the decisions promoted conversation, a convergence of information and emotion between us all.

While it may be appealing to hire narrators to tell stories of adversity, practitioners should work to capture the voices of those whose stories are being told and construct opportunities for them to speak for themselves and articulate their life experiences, their adversity, and their growth.

3. Trust the audience to see the full picture

Oftentimes, media producers will choose to highlight certain elements in a story they deem necessary to establish a portrait of struggle. This comes at the expense of two things: dignity and honesty. It creates a false association between people and problems, using the emotional heft of the latter to force sympathy for the former. It cherry-picks elements of someone's context to create for an audience a picture that is incomplete or irrelevant. Be it undue emphasis placed on living conditions, physical disabilities, or other aspects, what can be left is an impression of a human being that is no better than a stereotype. Time spent on these details serves little purpose, a feeling exacerbated by the fact that these same details may not even be considered worth mentioning at all by the subjects of the media themselves.

Instead, practitioners need to trust the audience with the ability to perceive the adversity, rather than make it explicit for its own sake. Trust grows between a piece of narrative media and the viewer when understanding comes implicitly. A viewer can be shown the context of adversity without editorialization or sensationalism and glean all that is needed. In the third segment of *The Happiness Diaries*, "Home Remedy," I told the story of a young woman who took an appreciation-based Happiness Curriculum activity from her classroom into her home and used it to improve her parents' relationship. In telling that story, I focused on the qualities of the human beings and not on their physical reality. In one scene, the audience sees the young woman facilitate the lesson with her parents in the family's home, a living space that is sparse and simple. However, the living space is not the focus of the scene; the young woman is. It is through the portrayal of her growth and through

the full picture of the story being told that the adversity is shown, honestly and with greater dignity.



*A young woman facilitates a gratitude exercise with her parents, an activity she learned and internalized during a Happiness Curriculum session in her school. Note how the characters interact in their living space. No one aspect is highlighted; instead, everything is taken together to portray a fuller portrait. Source: "Home Remedy," *The Happiness Diaries*, dir. Christopher Scott Carpenter.*

4. Speak through stories, not for stories

Let the individual human stories illuminate the issues that may affect many others. This serves two purposes. First, it creates a singular protagonist or group of protagonists within the piece of media with whom an audience can develop relationships. Impactful media creates shared emotions, and in the interest of raising funds or awareness, it's always the emotion that drives the viewer to reach for a pen or pocketbook. Second, it avoids generalizations while maintaining issue-based validity. When attempting to explore the importance of social and emotional learning in the Indian context via the Happiness Curriculum, I did so through individual stories of young people who, in their own ways, found meaning in the various components of the Curriculum. In "Great Man (Bada Aadmi)" I explore familial duty, sacrifice, and appreciation.⁴ In "Home Remedy" I investigate domestic relationships, authority dynamics, and gender roles.⁵ In "Stephen Hawking and Me" I tap into ablist and inclusiveness.⁶ Embedded in each is the value of education reform, as interpreted through the specifics of these stories. The films don't speak on behalf of all young people; they can't. They do, however, have to find the truth of an issue through the eyes of one young person.

5. Embrace differences — let them fuel understanding and creativity

My final point in this toolkit to promote ethical storytelling is perhaps the most fundamentally important: to be inspired by the differences inherent to our beautifully diverse human species. Throughout the production of *The Happiness Diaries* I was often acknowledged and thanked for providing a new perspective to the stories of the Happiness Curriculum - an outsider's perspective.

In many instances outsiders can be valuable because they more reliably ensure perspectives free of biases or conflicting interests. When in the classrooms filming the sessions I could not rely on language to guide my lens to the story unfolding in real time. I had to turn up my awareness of the emotions and dynamics of the group to discern where to seek truthful moments. This was highly creatively liberating. Being outside of the verbal exchange positioned me to tap into something deeper - perhaps into the emotion-based communication the Happiness Curriculum strives to impart - because that was all I had to work with given the difference in language. And thankfully so; through the practical limitations provided by beautiful differences came creative freedom, and from an outsider's perspective came an intimate understanding.



Being honored at a special flag-raising ceremony before the student body of the Government Boys Senior Secondary School, Sultanpur, in New Delhi. Source: Social Media Team, Government of New Delhi, with permission.

Conclusion

Public diplomacy practitioners must maintain and refine toolkits to utilize when in the field or on the job, working to explore, convey, and promote the stories that can help strengthen partnerships, solve problems, and generate understanding between peoples in ethical ways. I hope these lessons, gained from my own experience, can be added to your toolkits. Our toolkits can formalize trends, and trends can crystallize into paradigms. However, by no means do I advocate a strict adherence to these points. Rather, it all simply serves to champion ethical storytelling that considers dignity, maintains agency, and preserves one of the most crucial aspects of our roles as practitioners - the ability to consider, challenge, and change what it is that we are saying and doing to better our world.



With the staff and community members of the School of Excellence, Kalkaji, in New Delhi, following a day of filming. Source: Social Media Team, Government of New Delhi, with permission.



Christopher Carpenter

Christopher Carpenter graduated magna cum laude and Phi Beta Kappa from the University of Southern California where he earned B.A. degrees in Film & Television Production and Cognitive Science, and a Minor in Advertising. He has consulted with and produced media for organizations in Japan, Kenya, India, and other nations, measuring impact to inform policy. Christopher produced and directed "The Happiness Diaries," a documentary series exploring the Government of Delhi's Happiness Curriculum initiative. Christopher held the William J. Clinton Fellowship for Service in India, the Global East Asia Fellowship for Study in China, and has led service trips to Thailand. Christopher was awarded the Schwarzman Scholarship, and will be earning a Masters in Global Affairs from Tsinghua University in Beijing this fall.

A Toolkit for 21st Century Public Diplomacy Practitioners

Katie LaMattina

The study of ethics has been the subject of scrutiny by the world's greatest scholars for thousands of years as humans attempt to identify a fit code of ethical values. Defining and understanding ethics is a difficult feat, as there are no objective ethical truths or moral rights to authority that have been universally agreed upon at any point in history (MacKinnon, 2012). Moral beliefs have varied across the world as different cultures developed their own ideas, values, and ethics (Benn, 2012). This makes the pursuit of ethical diplomacy in the modern age all the more challenging, as public diplomats cannot rely upon any one set of ethical values that can be successfully applied to all publics. However, steps can be taken to avoid unethical diplomacy and pursue conscientious and effective diplomacy through a concentrated effort and adaptability. This evaluation of ethics in diplomacy is a summation of all I have learned as a Master of Public Diplomacy student at the USC Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism. Equipped with a strong knowledge of international ethical theory and an unshakable respect for cultural differences, diplomats can craft effective public diplomacy initiatives. This analysis of ethics and diplomacy delves into the intricacy of ethical theory and provides public diplomacy practitioners with an ethical toolkit for formulating foreign policy programs.

Understanding Ethical Theories for Foreign Policy

At its foundation, diplomacy is a philosophical approach that attempts to forge relations and remedy issues between governments and individuals (Iannone, 1994). Ethics plays an important role in diplomacy, particularly when governments diplomatically interact with foreign publics directly (Bulley, 2014). It should be the primary concern of a nation to prioritize ethical treatment of the public when interacting with the citizens of a foreign nation. To do so, public diplomats must understand ethics

first. Perhaps one of the greatest moral philosophers in history, Adam Smith, postulated in "The Theory of Moral Sentiments" that man derives ethics from the natural order and that justice, laws, and jurisprudence aim to construct a social order in which the promotion of mankind's happiness is the primary goal (Smith, 1976). Given the natural diversity of cultures and ethical theory across the world, the ethical diplomat is one who is not only guided by circumstance, but also implements a set of standard moral tenants in each official action.

It should be noted that engaging in ethical public diplomacy is not just constructive for the foreign nation in question, but can also entail many benefits for the practicing nation. Nations viewed as ethically superior increase their standing with the international community and reap many geopolitical benefits. International relations scholars have long asserted that nations are primarily concerned with their own security and suspicious of foreign governments (Radasanu, 2013). As governments are cautious to invest in unstable relationships, nations that appear trustworthy and competent are the most attractive for alliance building. It is these attractive nations that wield the greatest political power due to foreign investment, resulting in tremendous economic and political benefits. Ethical practices, such as respect for human life and the tenants of democracy, are a key feature of a stable nation and portray a reputation of strength, trustworthiness, and stability. This makes the ethical nation a coveted partner for various sectors, such as military assistance, economic trade, and political dealings. Therefore, building an ethical reputation can serve as a security measure for nation states on various dimensions.

Given the importance of ethics in public diplomacy, it is necessary that public diplomats make ethical values a top priority in their work. Thus, the following should

be utilized as a toolkit for modern public diplomacy practitioners when crafting future programming in any foreign nation. This public diplomacy toolkit can and should be utilized by governments, non-governmental organizations and corporations seeking to engage with foreign publics.

ETHICAL TOOLKIT FOR MODERN PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

Do Not Harm the Interest of Other Nations, Especially Foreign Publics/Governments, Without Good Reason

The ultimate goal of public diplomacy is to interact with a foreign public in order to influence support for strategic policy objectives. The ethic of reciprocity is a philosophical theory common in many cultural groups that places value in treating others with the respect one wishes to receive (Mavelli, 2014). The ethical diplomat recognizes the importance of mutual respect and brings this understanding to the work of public diplomacy. In many instances, there is a temptation to harm the interest of a foreign nation in order to promote the interest of one's own nation. However, this zero-sum game tactic of international relations pays little consideration to ethical concerns and has a negative impact on the target audiences of public diplomacy. In many instances, foreign policy without the ethic of reciprocity can have tremendous negative impacts for all parties involved. Extreme instances of unethical foreign policy can result in physical violence, military intervention, and economic sanction. In order to avoid conflict caused by unethical foreign policy, diplomats must be primarily concerned with ethical public diplomacy. For nations to move forward with ethical public diplomacy, public diplomats must be able to formulate initiatives that can mutually further foreign policy goals while also being considerate of the host nation's interests and goals.

The ethic of reciprocity can be observed in diplomatic relations between the United States and South Korea. Geopolitically speaking, the alliance between these two countries serves both national interests that seek to weaken the aggressive actions of the North Korean regime. In this relationship, the United States clearly holds most of the power through its economic and political hegemonic legacy. With regard to the United States' power as an economic and military giant on the world stage, American forces could easily exercise this power over the South Korean government to promote American values at all cost, even to the point of harming the South Korean people. However, rather than utilizing public diplomacy as a means to build up personal national interest while suppressing the South Korean agenda, the United States uses public diplomacy for the mutual benefit of both countries. Over decades, the United States has invested heavily into the economy and

military of South Korea in order to build up South Korean culture and society, rather than simply overpowering and Americanizing the nation (Heo & Roehrig 2018). As such, both the American and South Korean publics have formed an appreciation of each other's cultures. This has resulted in a strong alliance between the two nations both economically and politically, which has reaped various benefits. Thus, ethical public diplomacy has shaped the U.S.-South Korean relationship in a positive and constructive way that balances the interests of both nations for the common good.

Refrain From Major Acts of Dishonesty, Unless Absolutely Necessary

Honesty is a moral trait that has been valued in many cultures throughout history and is considered to be one of the great virtues. The famous American political philosopher Benjamin Franklin once said "honesty is the best policy." Commonly associated with justice and integrity, honesty is a tenant of ethics that calls upon nations and individuals alike to prioritize truth over lies and deceit, even in the most extreme circumstances. Likewise, dishonesty is a commonly despised trait across nations and is often looked down upon (Stanley 2015). When governments, non-governmental organizations, or companies seek to enter a diplomatic relationship with a foreign public, honesty is an essential component of forming ethical connections. As an organization stepping into a foreign territory to engage in direct communication with a foreign public, ethics calls upon the public diplomat to speak openly and honestly about their intentions and actions when occupying a space that belongs to said public. However, honesty quite frequently acts as an obstacle to foreign policy goals, as governments frequently observe that dishonest action could further foreign policy goals more effectively than honest action. Despite this appraisal, though, the misrepresentation of reality is a clear violation of the trust and justice of the host nation and should be avoided at all costs if possible.

With the importance of honesty in mind, it is also integral that public diplomats acknowledge and consider the dangers honesty might pose to both their foreign policy goals and foreign publics. While honesty should always be aspired towards, many scholars are critical of "too much" honesty that could be more detrimental than beneficial. For example, it would be unethical for a nation to release highly sensitive information regarding an issue that could detrimentally harm the quality of life or security of a foreign public. Therefore, the complex reality of a situation may make honesty unethical under certain circumstances. This conundrum calls upon the public diplomat to exercise critical thinking through the application of cost-benefit analysis when handling sensitive information. In all situations, the public

diplomat must attempt to be as honest as possible to the point where further honesty would incur more harm than good for the foreign public in question.

In recent history, the United States has failed to prioritize and practice honest foreign policy making in its diplomatic and military actions in the Middle East. Spurred by the 9/11 attacks in 2001, the United States has utilized anti-terrorism rhetoric to justify the ongoing War on Terror. However, many have accused the United States' actions as purposefully misrepresented and dishonest as a way to further its foreign policy goals and destabilize a geopolitically strategic region (Chomsky et al., 2007). In particular, many question the honesty of the American government's assessment of Iraq's nuclear capabilities and frequently criticize American leaders for misrepresenting their intentions in the Middle East both domestically and abroad. This has proved a major public diplomacy disaster which to this day continues to harm American soft power overseas. Views of dishonesty are high amongst the American public and countries in the Middle East, which have correlated with high disapproval ratings within these audiences (Harvey, 2016). If the United States, or any country engaging in public diplomacy, wants to be considered ethical and attractive, it must prove to the international public that it is a nation that upholds and values honesty. For example, the government of Germany has been praised for its recent policies regarding the Holocaust and the treatment of the Jewish people during World War II (Gross & Stevick, 2015). The country has embraced honesty and has an extensive public educational record regarding the topic, making the country appealing to many foreigners. Thus, it is evident that honest and ethical governance can yield public diplomacy success.

Respect The Boundaries of the Host Nation's Government and/or Culture

When engaging in public diplomacy, practitioners should be aware of sensitive issues in the host nation and adapt programming around these issues respectfully. As a guest in the host nation, it is ethical of public diplomats to understand the limits of the host government when creating programming. Balancing the tenants of sovereignty with one's foreign policy goals, public diplomats must avoid both intolerance and chauvinism when engaging with a foreign public. Instead, public diplomacy should focus on seemingly innocuous and mutually beneficial programming. Failure to do so can result in extreme backlash from not only the host government, but also the host public. In the most extreme cases, crossing governmental boundaries can lead to the severing of diplomatic ties between two nations and the expulsion of diplomats.

The United States' public diplomacy initiatives in China

between 1970 and 2000 serve as a prime example of ethical and unethical public diplomacy regarding governmental and cultural boundaries. The post-Mao opening of Chinese society to the West resulted in a number of U.S. public diplomacy initiatives throughout the country, including educational exchanges, cultural programming, and increased tourism. These public diplomacy initiatives were crafted to promote mutual tolerance between the American and Chinese publics. As such, these programs were carefully crafted to highlight respect between the nations and avoid sensitive issues. However, these efforts were marred by U.S. involvement in Chinese domestic politics and the spread of anti-communist ideology (Fitzgerald, 2015). In particular, U.S. involvement in the Tiananmen Square era resulted in heavy censorship of U.S. media and increased tensions between the two governments. Contrastingly, the ethical public diplomacy initiatives that respected Chinese societal boundaries have played a major role in cultural understanding and tolerance between the two publics.

Practice Tolerance of Cultural Differences

Similar to respecting the boundaries of the host nation, ethical public diplomacy should also tolerate the cultural differences of a host nation. In the past, involvement in foreign countries has resulted in cultural erasure and imperialism that has negatively impacted many nations throughout the globe. Most notably, the Western colonization of Asian and African countries yielded disastrous outcomes for the colonized nations. Common consequences of imperialism included mass deaths from biological warfare, slavery, institutionalized prejudice, and cultural erasure (Hobson, 2011). Today, the impact of imperialism can still be clearly observed in most previously colonized countries. For example, the Dutch colonization of South Africa resulted in decades of apartheid, which has left behind a legacy of institutionalized racism and inequality in modern day. South Africa currently suffers from one of the highest unemployment rates in the world and has some of the highest rates of corruption and poverty, in large part due to poor infrastructure and lack of historic democratic institutions (Skinner, 2016). Similarly, in Latin America, countries once occupied by the Spanish have suffered the loss of ancient native culture, such as language, clothing style, food, and religion. Once areas characterized by rich Native American culture, almost all culture in modern South America has been influenced and redefined by Spanish and Portuguese imperialists. Additionally, the colonial economic institutions resulted in the direct manipulation and exploitation of indigenous labor and land. These practices, such as the Encomienda, Mita, and Repartimiento systems, directly contributed to the modern levels of staggering inequality in these countries (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2012). Given

the recent history of human rights abuses caused by imperialism, ethical public diplomacy demands that nations avoid any kind of imperial imposition in its practice of public diplomacy.

The previously mentioned countries are a few of many cases in which imperialism drained countries of culture and riches, resulting in a legacy that has disadvantaged developing nations for centuries. It is clear imperialistic behavior is unethical through its violation of human rights and sovereignty, and should be at the forefront of every public diplomat's mind when crafting policy. Therefore, the ethical diplomat should work with officials in the host country to create public diplomacy that embraces cultural appreciation in lieu of imperialism and imposition. Additionally, foreign publics will be much more receptive of public diplomacy initiatives that appreciate rather than suppress the local culture, resulting in greater chances for alliance building and partnership. The ethical public diplomat can avoid imperialism a number of ways. First of all, the ethical public diplomat should have a holistic and thorough understanding of the local culture of the target country in order to enable appropriate programming. This understanding includes, but is not limited to, language, religion, customs, traditional belief, the local economy, local etiquette, and gender roles. Additionally, the ethical public diplomat should understand the concept of moral relativism and attempt to understand and implement morality in ways that are acceptable in the host nation. Overall, the ultimate goal of ethical diplomacy should be to find ways to mutually engage the host culture as a means to achieve diplomatic goals rather than forcing one's own culture and/or values on the host nation for personal benefit.

Conclusion

Though the study and implementation of ethics is considered to be ambiguous, this paper sought to provide public diplomats with the foundational principles of ethical public diplomacy. Going forward into the 21st century, public diplomacy will continue to grow in prominence as a key tool of governance and foreign policy making. Technological innovation and globalization have made public diplomacy and communication more accessible than ever before, creating an optimal opportunity for public diplomats to further foreign policy goals. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance to mankind that ethics play a large role in public diplomacy going forward.



Katie LaMattina

Katie LaMattina is a second year master's of public diplomacy candidate at the USC Annenberg School of Communication and Journalism. She received her bachelor's in political science with a concentration in political thought and philosophy. She has experience working in the public sector at multiple levels of government and the private sector. Her research interests include foreign policy, human rights, and public diplomacy evaluation.

35-Foot Human Towers and the Power of Trust: Lessons from Catalonia

Laura Foraster i Lloret

Building human towers (castells) is a unique Catalan tradition that dates back to the 18th century. It is an extremely spectacular festive open-air activity, hardly comparable to anything you have ever seen and difficult to imagine if you have not been lucky enough to see one in person. Nothing compares to the excitement of seeing up close how these human constructions rise, sway, and finally culminate (it goes without saying that they must also be dismantled quickly!). There are about a hundred groups that build human towers anywhere from April to November every year and the tallest can involve hundreds of people and reach ten levels, about 35 feet high.

The creed of Catalonia's human tower builders has ethical and moral overtones in its four components: strength, balance, courage, and wisdom. With so many positive values associated with constructing human towers, it is not surprising that some multinational organizations and companies today will organize castell-building on a smaller scale for their team bonding days. The most obvious value is the collective effort needed to achieve a common goal. Either everyone gives their all or the human tower is destined to fail.

Another value is inclusivity: The groups are made up of people of all backgrounds, ages, genders and strengths. The dozens of people who form the base of the tower, called pinya (pinecone), do not inquire of each other about their birthplaces or how much money they have in their individual bank accounts as they intertwine to

form a solid foundation. No matter where participants come from, taking part in castell-building allows them to feel part of a larger community, in a similar way as FC Barcelona football fans around the world are part of a big family. Catalonia's human towers are thus a free and open invitation to integrate into Catalan society and culture.

Last but not least, there is trust. No one can be part of a human tower if they do not trust the rest of the team or if they do not earn the trust of others. When you are a part of a living human construction that defies the law of gravity, you have to trust that others will play their part!

Cull argued that public diplomacy has an incontrovertible ethical dimension which is usually lacking in propaganda.

Cultivating trust is a pillar of public diplomacy, the prerequisite for any public diplomacy initiative that aspires to be successful. Yet, it is the most difficult to achieve and the easiest to undermine.

Trust is what distinguishes public diplomacy from its more sinister cousin, propaganda. At an international conference on the role of public diplomacy in the digital era hosted by the Public Diplomacy Council of Catalonia (Diplocat) in Barcelona in May 2019, Nicholas J. Cull, Professor of Public Diplomacy and founding director of the Master's in Public Diplomacy program at the University of Southern California, spoke about the differences between public diplomacy and propaganda, which had often been confused in the past and can still be muddled up today. Cull argued that public diplomacy has an incontrovertible ethical dimension which is

usually lacking in propaganda. Similarly, the values he associated with public diplomacy were always in a higher moral and ethical category than those of propaganda: flexibility, respect, openness, two-way communication, listening to others, the search for truth, and so on.

At the same event, Professor Cull outlined one of the great challenges of today's public diplomacy: To respond to and counteract disinformation. In the midst of the fake news boom during a vulnerable time like the present COVID-19 pandemic, for example, public diplomacy practitioners need to impart truth to the general public and partner with non-state actors to promote free and honest media platforms throughout the world.

Corneliu Bjola, Associate Professor of Diplomatic Studies and Head of the Digital Diplomacy Research Group at Oxford University, argues that most government institutions no longer have any credibility owing to their political hue, the propaganda they put out, and the relationships they strike up. Many are struggling to cope with the loss of credibility in the digital world we live in and realize that the classical approaches to public diplomacy will not always be successful.



The strongest castellers form the base (the pinya), the most agile people form the 'building,' and young children - called 'enxanetes,' who are protected by helmets - climb to the peak. Source: Martí Estruch Axmacher, with permission.

It is at this point that I would like to introduce the Public Diplomacy Council of Catalonia (Diplocat), the Catalan institution I have the honor of leading. I believe that Diplocat demonstrates how collaboration, inclusivity,

and trust are essential to transforming public diplomacy initiatives in the twenty-first century. Diplocat is an organization founded with the specific purpose of conducting public diplomacy on behalf of the regional government of Catalonia and the rest of its member entities.

Even though most of its backing and funding comes from the regional government of Catalonia, Diplocat is set up as a public-private consortium made up of 38 members who represent the diversity and plurality of Catalan society. In addition to the leading public institutions in Catalonia, these 38 members include representatives from universities and business schools, trade unions, employers' associations, chambers of commerce, and social and sports organizations. Diplocat creates invaluable spaces for them to dialogue and collaborate, and allows for Catalonia's multi-sector leaders to get directly involved in creating Catalonia's brand and evaluating her public diplomacy programs, which has been a great asset.

When Diplocat projects Catalonia to the world, it is not the government doing it, but rather 38 organizations and entities that are not limited to a particular ideology or short-term political strategy. When Diplocat's international visitors come to visit Catalonia, they experience all of her diversity because this very diversity is an intrinsic part of Diplocat. Although some internal procedures like decision-making might take longer in an organization like ours, the crucial transparency that comes with including 38 stakeholders around the table also makes maintaining clear and firm ethical principles virtually a guarantee.

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It should be borne in mind that notwithstanding the growing demand for a vote on its political future, Catalonia is not a state. The public diplomacy that we pursue is, therefore, as a non-state actor. Many people like James Gregory Payne, an expert in public diplomacy and Director of Communication Studies at Emerson College in Boston, believe non-state actors are best positioned to conduct public diplomacy. This is what he acknowledged in his acceptance speech for the honorary doctorate awarded to him by Ramon Llull University in Barcelona, a member of Diplocat, in November 2019: "As we have witnessed all too vividly, stories told by governmental diplomats are often constrained by the ideology of the president, prime minister or whomever

is in office. This often runs counter to their own beliefs. As a public diplomat, my responsibility is only tied to my own ethical core and values. For the public diplomat, the first step is to establish a context that invites dialogue and discussion."



Building a human tower is much like building a successful and ethical public diplomacy program: both require collaboration, inclusivity, and trust. Source: Martí Estruch Axmacher, with permission.

Like Professor Cull, Payne is a strong advocate of a new model of public diplomacy that is rooted in legitimate and shared leadership. This type of diplomacy extends from the bottom up (like human towers!), from citizen to citizen, association to association, non-governmental organization to non-governmental organization, and educational institution to educational institution. This is the kind of public diplomacy model we strive to build in Catalonia and we welcome you to collaborate with us in the future. In the meantime, if you ever visit Catalonia, we encourage you to take part in a human tower building experience. Once the castell has been dismantled and you say goodbye to those participants you had just linked arms with, remember to take the Catalan spirit of collaboration, inclusiveness, and trust with you wherever you go.



Laura Foraster i Lloret

Laura Foraster i Lloret (Barcelona, 1976) holds a degree in Economics and Business Administration at the Universitat Pompeu Fabra (UPF), a degree in Humanities at the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (UOC) and an MA in European Studies at the KU Leuven. She also has specific education in Public Diplomacy and in Election Observation Missions. Prior to her current position as Secretary General of Diplocat, she was Executive Director of the entity until its temporary closure in April 2018.

Foraster has been Chief of Cabinet of the Minister for Innovation, Universities and Enterprise and of the Minister for Trade, Tourism and Consumer Affairs of the Government of Catalonia during two consecutive legislative terms, where she was responsible for the management of the Minister's Cabinet, the political assistance to the Minister and for European Union and international issues.

Prior to these positions, she worked in Brussels, undertaking various jobs in the European Commission, the Committee of the Regions, the Delegation of the Government of the Generalitat of Catalonia to the European Union and the European Parliament.

SPECIAL FEATURE: Saying Goodbye to USC's U.S. Diplomat in Residence

An Interview with Elizabeth McKay

Joshua Morris

My name is Joshua Morris, incumbent Editor-in-Chief of Public Diplomacy Magazine, 2020-21. I have the pleasure of being joined by Elizabeth McKay who is a Visiting Scholar at USC's Center for Public Diplomacy from the Department of State at the tail end of her two year assignment. In her time here, she has been conducting research, teaching courses, and advising USC students and staff. Prior to her time at USC, Elizabeth was the Acting Deputy Chief of Mission and formerly the Minister Counselor for Public Affairs at the U.S. Mission in South Africa. Previously, she has held overseas public diplomacy assignments in Rome, Ankara, Vientiane, San Jose, Chiang Mai, Bangkok and Calcutta. She has also served as the Director of Public Diplomacy for the State Department's Bureau of Europe and Eurasian Affairs (EUR), the Director of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) for Mexico, and subsequently as Deputy Director for INL's Office of Africa, Asia and Europe.

Today, we would like to honor Elizabeth McKay, U.S. Diplomat in Residence at USC, for her wisdom, grit, and pursuit of excellence. Since 2018, she has served as a wonderful mentor and role model for USC students seeking to join the Foreign Service.

Joshua Morris: After an extensive service spanning the globe with the Department of State, what was the impetus of you switching gears and accepting

an appointment at USC with the Center on Public Diplomacy?

Elizabeth McKay: There are many reasons and factors that played into my decision to come to USC. It has been a privilege and honor to represent the United States as part of the Foreign Service, and particularly so through public diplomacy. I believe deeply in diplomacy and the value to our work of expertise developed through experience. The contributions to our discipline by the USC Center on Public Diplomacy and the PD scholars at Annenberg were key considerations as I have long admired their work. I also recognize that innovation

is extremely important as well and I knew I would find that at USC. I knew this university would be the ideal forum to share my experience and encourage students to pursue public service themselves.

JM: You have been an invaluable resource and teacher to USC public diplomacy students, myself included, but what have you learned in your time here?

EM: Thank you, Joshua. I have come to better appreciate the relationship between academia and practice and how each approach enriches the other. In a globalized environment, the need for forward thinking public diplomacy research and analysis is tremendous. A practitioner-academic collaboration will be even more necessary in a post-pandemic world.

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- Elizabeth McKay**

PUBLIC DIPLOMACY MAGAZINE

Separately, I have been really impressed with the increase in public diplomacy occurring on the domestic front that is independent of government. It is encouraging to see the neglected “second mandate” of public diplomacy flourishing at grassroots levels.

During my time here, I have renewed my focus on long-standing issues for public diplomacy practitioners-- the relationship between the medium and the message as well as the message to the solution. The responsibility of media to their publics in healthy democracies is another really important issue.

Lastly, my experience at USC and my interactions with students have given me great optimism about the future.

JM: There are of course major fundamental differences between the public diplomacy contributions here in academia and what is done at the Department of State, but what philosophical differences do you see between the two realms?

EM: Diplomacy is informed and guided by the nation’s values and founding principles. The job of a diplomat is to advance the national interest. In practice, public diplomacy is one of many factors taken into consideration at the foreign policy table. I think the challenge for Academia is to take into account the depth and breadth of the strategic policy imperatives that diplomats must consider while developing and executing responses to the immediate challenge at hand. On the flip side, practitioners benefit from the research and analysis developed by academics. The job of the academic is to build or enhance a body of knowledge and share that with students and other users. We speak a great deal in our classes about modern public diplomacy and the benefits of mutuality, collaboration, and empowerment. The field recognizes the importance of these approaches, particularly in today’s globalized world, and has been applying them for a number of years.

JM: Based on your time here, what do you think the practitioners’ public diplomacy realm needs to focus on more? And what do you think the academic public diplomacy realm needs to focus on more?

EM: Focused and long-term strategic thinking about the role of the United States in the emerging world order will allow us to design a PD road map to our desired destination. That must include greater engagement and dialogue with policy makers and practitioners in a variety of cultures and political environments. Academia can do much to provide us with historical perspective and foundational thinking as well as thoughtful analysis of our successes and failures and what may or may not work for audiences in the future.

JM: With your breadth of experience you undoubtedly have a good sense of the direction our field is moving. What Public Diplomacy trends do you expect us to soon see?

EM: Actually, no. I can’t pretend to know where the field is going and what will be the impact on all matter of things after this pandemic. There is potential for change, perhaps even great change. I have no doubt public diplomacy will be characteristically dynamic enough to adapt for those changes. Public diplomacy must be agile and proactive to be effective.

JM: Through these changing times there are many ways to practice public diplomacy unethically, whether it be through subversive and malicious means or towards immoral ends. But how do you define an “ethical” public diplomat?

EM: Well I don’t equate PD with propaganda, the latter of which carries negative, subversive, or malicious intent. What we have learned is that credibility is essential to effective public diplomacy and that it is hard won and easily lost. A professional diplomat would not squander his or her credibility. Integrity is absolutely essential to public service.

JM: I want to thank you so much for your time and valuable insights. On behalf of Public Diplomacy Magazine, I want to thank you for all the work you have done for USC, the Center on Public Diplomacy, and the public diplomacy community!



Elizabeth McKay

Elizabeth McKay is a senior Foreign Service Officer, rank of Minister Counselor at the US Department of State. She has served at US Missions in Asia, Latin America, Europe and Africa. She is currently the Public Diplomacy Diplomat-in-Residence at USC’s Center on Public Diplomacy.

Without 'ethical culture,' there
is no salvation for humanity.

- Albert Einstein

WHAT ARE
IMPORTANT ETHICAL
CONSIDERATIONS?

Should Indiana Jones Eat the Monkey Brain?

Iain King

A banquet in an exotic location eating unusual food with dubious characters: it is an iconic movie scene, seared into the memory of anyone who went to the cinema as a child in the 1980s – and probably many more who have seen re-runs in the decades since.

In the second film in the Indiana Jones franchise, the hero is invited to eat the local delicacy of chilled monkey brains. Although he makes an unlikely diplomat, Jones is on a diplomatic mission: he represents the parents of children whom he suspects – correctly, it turns out – are held captive by his host in the ‘Temple of Doom.’ Jones doesn’t want to offend the local chief, the ‘Kali,’ but neither does he want to eat the monkey brains. What should he do?

Indiana Jones’ predicament is an exemplar of many diplomatic dilemmas: should an envoy respect or reject a local custom which makes them uncomfortable? Should they risk upsetting their interlocutor, or suffer something distasteful to seek favor with them? When should a diplomat stand on principle, and when should they flex in the wind?

There are professional answers to these questions and diplomatic academies around the world provide training for them. Many would start by suggesting Indiana Jones dress more smartly and be more polite.

But these issues also reach beyond diplomacy as a skill and into the philosophical. They are about what diplomacy is and what it is for. They are about how we cope with the confrontation of cultures. They are about what we stand for and what we try to do. To be a serious diplomat requires an understanding of the philosophical issues around diplomacy.

‘Yuk!’ - Primal Disgust or Cultural Conditioning?

In the 1984 movie, while Indiana Jones is repelled by the cuisine, his co-star, Willie, played by the actress Kate

Caplan, is shocked. She is appalled by an ‘appetizer’ of soup, in which eyeballs float to the surface, and faints when served the monkey brains. This reaction is a combination of primal disgust and cultural conditioning.

The first of these, primal disgust, has its roots in evolution. Our natural repulsion at eating the brains of another primate may well have evolved directly: our ancestors were able to reproduce because they didn’t do it; early humans that did eat monkey brains died out, taking the monkey-brains-are-appetizing gene with them. Like the near-universal disgust at the smell of sewage and the taboo against incest, there are reasons why humans who balk at the idea of eating monkey’s grey matter are favored in the evolutionary lottery. ‘Yuk!’ helps us survive.

Cultural conditioning against eating the inside of another primate’s head is more complicated, but there is still an evolutionary link. As humans we absorb the culture of our immediate environment. These cultural norms – such as a shared appreciation of parenthood and a collective revulsion at murder – generally bestow evolutionary advantages on a community.

Different places nurture diverse customs. It is fairly easy for communities detached from each other and facing different local environments to evolve towards distinctive positions on what culture should permit. The consensus in one place on polygamy, child marriage, and what to eat will vary from the unanimous view elsewhere. Almost all human cultures seem to share some practices, anthropologists have discovered, but diversity still abounds.

This is important for Indiana Jones as he is served the monkey brain. It means that if his disgust comes from his own American cultural roots, perhaps he should overcome this instinct. After all, local culture in the ‘Temple of Doom’ area may have, at one point, depended on the delicacy for their survival. Monkey brains may be



as important to them as turkeys are to Thanksgiving in the United States.

So, does that mean Indiana should accept the monkey brains as a local custom, and just assimilate? Not necessarily – it's not that simple.

The Spectrum of Moral Instinct

Imagine that, instead of monkey brains, Dr. Jones had been offered the brains of children. This would mean young humans had been killed for his culinary pleasure, the ultimate form of conspicuous consumption. There's no way our hero could feast on such cannibalistic specimens. Indiana Jones would protest at the cruelty and probably bring out his bullwhip.

Like Indiana Jones, we cannot jettison our revulsion at the thought of killing children to eat their brains. (If you find someone who can, then tell the police.) So, why can we accept it might be OK to eat monkey brains as a matter of culture, while we definitely can't stomach the idea of eating children?

The problem is this: we cannot dismiss our own moral instincts and reactions as arbitrary, or interchangeable with an alternative set of beliefs.

This may seem odd, given that our moral intuitions are rooted in something we know to be arbitrary: evolution, which is the adaptation of a species over time to random

factors in the environment. Think about how casually we accept evolution in other settings: rarely do we care whether crows displace sparrows, and if weeds take root amid our flowers it's just annoying – definitely not a moral issue. But we are a product of genetic and social evolution and we cannot escape these forces when they apply in a certain sort of way, which generally means things which are close to our own human lives. Darwin was right, but murder is still wrong.

We can, though, place our moral views on a spectrum. This spectrum runs from trivial (how to shake hands) to important (views on capital punishment) to fundamental (genocide is wrong). Where on that spectrum something we perceive as wrong determines how we should respond to it.

So, at the trivial end, like how to greet people, we should copy, assimilate, and revel in cultural exploration. Foreign dishes with familiar foods are next: different cultures make bread in different ways and it's fun to try them out. Since the ingredients of bread are benign, these are all worth trying.

When foreign cuisine involves riskier elements, like raw fish, there may be a case for some restraint, especially if we have a sensitive stomach: not everyone should try sushi. As we move further along the spectrum towards items which differ more seriously from our moral instincts, like eating live food, we are likely to abstain, perhaps pointedly pushing the dish away, while

tolerating others who continue with it.

Soon, we move into territory where we try to persuade our hosts and others to stop the activity too. Cruel spectator sports may fit in here. At first, we'd use polite arguments. But further along the spectrum, we'd react even more fiercely, for example by actively trying to prevent something, such as violent actions or murder. At the far end of the spectrum, for the most egregious activities, like systematic mass murder, we should deploy everything we can muster to stop it from happening.

Eating monkey brains falls somewhere near the middle of that spectrum – worse than, say, eating horse meat, but better than kicking babies. Indiana Jones should abstain and explain why to his hosts, but also show some tolerance to people who insist the dish is a tradition with deep cultural resonance.

Diplomats need to go further, though. This is not really a culinary issue, but about something far more serious.

The Follies of Consequence-Based Decision-Making

For Indiana Jones, like many diplomats around the world, the stakes are high. Indiana Jones is at the start of an investigation to secure the release of several hundred children. If he offends his hosts, his mission will be over, and the children doomed. The fate of these kids matters much more than whether monkey brains will offend Indy's taste buds.

Diplomats have a range of tasks, from promoting their nation's interests, to trying to change a nation's policy on a key issue – like climate change or the treatment of a minority – to trying to negotiate an accord that benefits the whole world. In the most extreme cases, diplomats prevent wars and thus save many lives. All of these objectives – the ends – are worth achieving. If the means are simply putting up with unpleasant food, then they should be done.

Do the ends justify the means for Indiana Jones in this way? If the ends were the release of a thousand children from slave mines to their loving parents, and the means were simply eating one monkey brain, then the answer would be yes. But, in the movies as in life, the real situation is more complicated.

Ends may justify means in theory, but much less often in practice, and it is in recognition of that fact that the phrase, 'The ends justify the means,' is so often disdained. Hardly ever is the connection quite so direct: Indiana Jones cannot be sure that eating brains will mean the kids are released, nor is it the only way he can help the children.

Both the means and the ends are also more complex than they appear. If he eats the monkey brain, Indiana Jones may inadvertently condone monkey farming. He would also be acknowledging the legitimacy of the 'Temple of Doom' hierarchy – an establishment which incarcerates children and performs ceremonial killing.

Indiana Jones cannot know all the consequences of what he does. In the movie, when Jones releases the children, he also effects regime change, which turns out to be a good thing. But it might be bad – there could have been a sequel in which one of the freed children turns out to be an evil genius or a genocidal dictator.

Consequence-based thinking is complex and uncertain, and involves making assumptions about unknowable facts. That is one reason why diplomats like Indiana Jones need principles and he often allows himself to be guided by them.



Jones is committed, for example, to the principle that artifacts belong in a public museum rather than a private collection. It's a good rule, even though putting an artifact in a museum may be bad occasionally – for example, if the item turns out to be explosive or infectious. Similarly, Jones can go with the principle, 'Eating primate brains is wrong,' whether it frees the children or not. It might demonstrate his moral fiber, elevating the Kali's respect for him, and help him release the enslaved kids.

Every decision a diplomat makes – and this applies to Indiana Jones, too – can be weighed as right or wrong, good or bad – at any place along the decision-making process. There is a line which runs from the character or motive behind a choice, to the deed itself, to the consequences it brings about, and all points on that line offer a valid place to make a moral assessment.

Sound Judgements and Messy Morals

The trouble comes when making moral judgements

at different points along these lines leads to different verdicts. This isn't so much a problem for Indiana Jones, but it can bedevil diplomacy. A diplomat may have a virtuous motive, and achieve a wonderful peace deal, but only manage to do so through lies and double-dealing. Is it better to be a cynical and nasty diplomat who achieves the same peace deal but also manages to tell the truth? Or perhaps an envoy 'with saintly virtues, and is absolutely honest, but who fails to achieve the deal?



Virtues, motives, actions and consequences are the main ways of gauging what we do, and there are well developed schools of thought based on each of them. All these schools can offer consistent advice on what we should do – including when we are confronted with a bowl of monkey brains. But, if we recognize all of them have some validity, as I think we must, then we must also accept the verdict will often be messy: good in one way, but bad in another.

We can partially overcome this problem by tuning our moral antennae to the situation. When consequences are certain and important, then that's probably what matters most – so, if eating monkey brains will definitely free many hundreds of children with few adverse side-effects, then outcome-based thinking is the best way forward (and Indiana Jones should eat what's in his bowl). Where the upshot of what we do is more clouded, or the options finely balanced, we're forced to rely on principles, such as the rule that we should be polite to our hosts at dinner. Where these provide confusing advice – for example: because the politeness rule conflicts with an obligation not to eat primates – we're forced back on virtue. Good virtues include being respectful, honest, and selfless. Where even our virtues fail to point in a single direction, we can complete the loop by considering which virtues bring about the best consequences. Through an iterative process, drawing on consequences, principles, and virtues, and reflecting

on the situation at hand in each case, we can come towards the best decision.

This is where a diplomat needs judgement. Judgement tells a diplomat what can be known, how their actions will be perceived, and how their interlocutors can be persuaded. Indiana Jones' judgement is pretty good: he may not dress like a traditional diplomat, and he has a rougher turn of phrase, but he always makes good judgements about the people he meets and the situations he faces.

Interestingly, none of this judgement is moral judgement. It's all about understanding what's true, how the world works, and what will happen. At the heart of all ethical quandaries are questions about facts. Sometimes these facts can never be known but, if they were, the quandary would no longer be a quandary at all.

Indiana Jones – the Ultimate Diplomat

The sort of judgement diplomats need is best learned through experience, although some academic subjects, like history, can be instructive. As an archeologist, Indiana Jones is perhaps the ultimate historian, with a professorial understanding of some of the earliest human cultures. In the movies, though, when he's tested to the limit – sometimes with lives at stake, including his own – he doesn't draw on his academic knowledge, but rather on intuition. His judgement has become instinctive. He can decide what is right as fast as he can draw his whip. By absorbing an understanding of right and wrong so thoroughly, Jones is the ultimate diplomat – although we should be wary of diplomats and others who think they have similarly well-honed moral instincts, because it's possible they are over-estimating their abilities, and merely ignoring difficult moral issues.

So, should Indiana Jones eat the monkey brain? In the 1984 movie, we never get to see whether Jones actually eats the monkey brain or not – we only see the dish presented and his co-star faint before the screenplay takes us elsewhere.

If they had extended the scene, I hope Jones would push the bowl away, perhaps with a line like, 'I don't think we should monkey around,' before he cuts to the chase, but my view is influenced by seeing the rest of the movie and knowing his polite hosts turn out to be truly nasty people. Indiana Jones ultimately fulfills his diplomatic objective to free the children, but through other means. He sets diplomacy aside and he is a better 'diplomat' for it.

Was he right? Do you think Indiana Jones should have eaten the monkey brain?

If you were Indiana Jones in the Temple of Doom, what would you do?



Iain King

Iain King CBE is the UK Visiting Fellow at CSIS, the Center for Strategic and International Studies, in Washington DC. He is the author of five books, including the satirically-titled hardback, 'How to Make Good Decisions and be Right All the Time', which has been acclaimed for providing innovative solutions to several long-standing problems in moral philosophy and meta-ethics. King is a former diplomat and academic, and became one of the youngest people to be made a Commander of the British Empire (CBE) in 2013 for his work in war-torn Libya, Afghanistan and Kosovo.

Tweaking the Laughing Track: The Ethics of Orchestrated Responses

Freddy Nager

Freddy Nager, an award-winning creative strategist and Entrepreneurial Communication Expert In Residence at USC Annenberg, warns against the unethical implications behind organizations who leverage influencer marketing strategies to orchestrate their popularity in a communication campaign. He uses recent examples, namely the recent Bloomberg presidential campaign, to point out that paid endorsements and vanity social media metrics technically follow the letter of the law but fail to deliver bona fide results.

Nearly twenty years ago I worked as a writers' assistant on one of the worst TV shows in history. Critics skewered it, audiences avoided it, even the actors complained about it. Yet no one did anything to fix it.

One day, as I walked by the office of the showrunner (the show's lead producer), he called me in. "Freddy, can you hear that?" he asked while repeatedly playing a few seconds of the laugh track. "There's an odd laugh there. It's driving me crazy." I told him I couldn't hear it, so he waved me away.

For those not familiar with the term, a laugh track (also called "canned laughter") is pre-recorded laughter used in television shows to tell the audience when something is supposed to be funny. Even if filmed before a live audience, some shows will use laugh tracks to augment the real responses. While canned laughter has thankfully

fallen out of favor with most showrunners, you'll still hear it on the occasional network comedy.

The show I worked for got mercifully canceled after just a few weeks. Yet I still ponder the showrunner obsessing over an errant guffaw in a laugh track — which no one in the show's meager viewership would ever notice — instead of devoting the same time and concentration to fixing the actual product.

That said, the showrunner was far from alone in focusing on audience manipulation instead of critical issues. Many professional communicators today employ a variation of the laugh track: we call it "influencer marketing."

Cue The "Influence"

By influencers, I'm not referring to the bona fide experts who can shape thinking and behavior, such as media critics, religious leaders, editorial writers, politicians, and the like. I fully endorse working with them, as I tell the students in my Influencer Strategies course. For this article, I'm referring to the social media stars who get paid to smile, cheer, and endorse products on cue. Living laugh tracks, if you will.

Earlier this year, New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg paid social-media influencers to endorse him for president. According to The Daily Beast, Bloomberg gave each influencer a flat \$150 to create and post content "that tells us why Mike Bloomberg is the electable candidate who can rise above the fray, work across the aisle so

ALL Americans feel heard & respected." In addition, Bloomberg hired a company called Meme 2020 to place sponsored posts on popular Instagram accounts, all to create the illusion of popular support among young voters.

Like the showrunner, Bloomberg used canned responses in hopes of influencing the real audience. Did it work?

In most influencer campaigns, measuring "success" is challenging, with correlation confused with causation (often intentionally by marketing agencies). That said, according to a Forbes Under 30 Voter Survey published in late February, Bloomberg came in second behind Bernie Sanders among young voters — albeit, a distant second (16% versus Sanders' 38%).

As we all know, Bloomberg's campaign eventually failed. In addition, on Super Tuesday, young voters didn't even turn out in sufficient numbers to support their preferred candidate, Bernie Sanders, who later admitted, "Have we been as successful as I would hope in bringing in young people in? And the answer is 'no!'"

Given that all the paid influencers — combined with Sanders' legitimate influence — couldn't even draw young voters to the polls, perhaps Bloomberg should have paid more attention to his product instead.

But what if the fake endorsements had worked?

Fake It Till You Make It?

It's one thing to lobby newspaper editors, politicians, or celebrities for an endorsement — those are time-honored practices, and the endorsements seem legitimate (though some involve not so honorable quid pro quo arrangements).

It's quite another to overtly pay for endorsements. The U.S. Federal Trade Commission requires paid endorsements to publicly state that they're paid ads, and the endorsements must be truthful (endorsers may not make false claims, such as experience with a product they've never tried). In addition, some websites, such as Amazon, ban paid endorsements (though the e-commerce giant is drowning in fake reviews).

Yet, what if paid endorsements and responses follow the letter of the law? Are they ethical?

In the social-media influencer industry, a variety of fraudulent behaviors have become common practices

— ironic, since no industry uses the term "authenticity" more frequently. (That's why I don't let my students use any variation of "the A-word" except in a critical context). A 2019 anonymous survey by HypeAuditor found that 60 percent of American Instagram influencers admitted to having committed some type of fraud, such as buying followers, likes, and comments, or participating in comment pods (organized groups of influencers who comment on each other's posts to boost their viewability, since social-media platform algorithms favor "engagement"). Similarly, a 2018 New York Times exposé ("The Follower Factory") revealed that hundreds of thousands of Twitter users — from politicians to professors — had purchased followers.

So I submit for your consideration: if contrived, orchestrated, and even faked responses lead to social good, are they justifiable?

The motivation behind faking it is obvious: large vanity metrics (followers, likes, etc.) attract sponsors and deals. I once pitched a book idea to a publisher, who subsequently

asked me how many followers I had. I didn't bother responding, but I wish I had replied, "How many do you want me to have?"

The large vanity metrics have another value: they attract legitimate followers. Social media users are more likely to follow someone who appears popular; the vanity metrics confer credibility, even if they're faked.

Cue the laugh track.

An old Hollywood saying goes, "Sincerity is everything. If you can fake that, you've got it made." The quote has been reworded by various actors over the decades, but it keeps percolating regardless of generation or media technology. Although I've singled out influencers for scrutiny, contrived popularity has been alleged in bestselling book lists, top 40 music charts, nightclub opening crowds, even academic publishing (see Duffy & Pooley 2017, "'Facebook for Academics': The Convergence of Self-Branding and Social Media Logic on Academia.edu").

Social causes are not immune. One PR firm in Los Angeles hires actors and other gig workers to conduct protests and picketing on behalf of their clients. Their pitch: if your cause doesn't yet have enough supporters, put on a show. There's even a term for this fake grassroots enthusiasm: "astroturfing," named after the artificial surface in Houston's Astrodome stadium.

So I submit for your consideration: if contrived, orchestrated, and even faked responses lead to social good, are they justifiable?

Saving The World, One Cut Corner At A Time

Imagine that you're directing a communication campaign to convince teenagers to quit vaping. You decide to pull a Bloomberg and hire social-media influencers to spread your message. Unfortunately, their initial posts receive little response — some of your influencers may not be as influential as they claim — so you decide to spend a few hundred dollars to “prime the pump” with fake likes and a comment pod. Neither activity technically violates federal laws, and though the social-media platform prohibits such fraud, their feeble attempts at enforcement mean that few offenders get caught. Even if the platform chances upon your chicanery, the worst they can do is delete your profile and ban you from the premises. Should that happen, you can simply use a different email address to start a new profile.

So your ruse works. The boosted posts attract real followers along with real influencers — professional athletes, pop music stars, and young politicians — who attract even more followers. It's a virtuous cycle launched with a little vice. For the teenage followers, these power influencers' collective efforts make vaping appear as distasteful as their parents' dance moves. And by the end of the run, you can point to a decline in vaping rates within this target audience, with the teens crediting your campaign for motivating them.

Now, not only did you achieve a social good, you enjoyed professional success, invitations to speak at conferences, and enough income to make a dent in your student loan debt. The ends justify the means, yes?

In addition, you discovered that vaping companies have used the same deceptive social-media tactics to attract teenagers in the first place. So you were just fighting fire with fire, right?

Costs And Considerations

Before you exhaust your supply of self-justification clichés and embark on this slippery slope, consider these scenarios:

1. If your disingenuous tactics get publicly exposed, what will happen to your reputation and your campaign? Will you lose all credibility? (“If they faked their number of followers, what else are they lying about?”) Will you lose the support of the athletes, musicians, and politicians? At the least, will you get fired from the campaign and even ostracized from your profession?
2. By relying on artificially inflated metrics, will you escalate an arms race that will come down to which side can outspend the other? Imagine that

Bloomberg had won the youth vote and, ultimately, the presidency. For every election season from now on, every candidate would feel obligated to play the faux influencer game despite little chance of gaining a competitive advantage. Instagram would come to resemble our physical mailboxes overstuffed with cheap political ads.

3. What if you were to invest your time and resources into fixing the campaign instead of faking the metrics? Your research and analysis might generate insights into your audience — insights you can transfer to other campaigns, causes, clients, and colleagues who share your values.

Yes, when it comes to orchestrating public responses, there is a lot to evaluate in terms of potential rewards and possible repercussions. While I will neither promise outcomes nor advise anyone on values, I can and do encourage critical thinking. In doing so, you'll dedicate your time to analyzing what matters most, instead of obsessing over canned laughter.



Freddy Nager

Freddy Tran Nager is the Entrepreneurial Communication Expert in Residence at USC Annenberg, where he has taught graduate courses since 2012, covering such topics as influencer marketing, entrepreneurial communication, and website strategies. Freddy also founded and runs the consultancy Atomic Tango LLC (<https://atomictango.com>), and has over 30 years of professional experience in marketing and media, including lead creative positions at ad agency Saatchi & Saatchi and major music label MCA Records/Universal Music Group. A second-generation Trojan, Freddy received his MBA from USC and his AB from Harvard.

Deadly Information: An Ethical Discussion of the Bryce Report

Tong Guan

In 1914, the Great War broke out involving more than 30 countries and drawing in nearly 1.5 billion of the world's population; but it was not another war of weapons in the traditional sense. The concept of propaganda and psychological warfare also sprouted during this period. One pertinent example of this is the Bryce Report, published in 1915 by the British War Propaganda Bureau (WPB).¹

The report presents an outrageous Germany to the world. In one instance, it is said a German soldier fired three shots at a five-year-old girl in BoortMeerbeek. In another, the report claims that about 400 Belgians were forced to go ahead of the troop when the German army

Here I would like to make an analogy: if propagandists choose to discard ethics, causing factual information to lose credibility, then bullets on the battlefield will lose their direction as well, flying about in every direction.

engaged in warfare with the French in Tournai. On page 128, the report reads that Belgium women cried when girls aged 14 to 16 years-old were seen bare-chested with torn clothes and wrinkled skirts after having been raped by German soldiers in turns. Though later studies have found that none of those stories could be substantiated,² this report is a noteworthy example of the huge power of propaganda during wartime.

In Britain, the depiction of German atrocities evoked a sense of patriotism in the British people. In 1915, the year the report was published, 1.4 million new volunteers joined the army and prepared to serve the country.³ In fact, spurn and scorn awaited those who refused to join. That same year, Lumley drew a famous recruitment poster that read, "Daddy, what did **YOU** do in the Great War?"



First World War recruiting poster, placing guilt on men who did not volunteer. Made by Savile Lumley in 1915, United Kingdom. Source: Wikimedia Commons.

On the German side, the British War Propaganda Bureau (WPB) damned the German army from the beginning, while shaping Britain's own image as the savior of Europe. Information delivered by the Bryce Report turned the world against Germany – resulting in the

deterioration of the country's image and that of its soldiers.⁴ According to famous English writer Rudyard Kipling, the world was divided in two, that is, "human beings and Germans."⁵

Eventually, the publication reached neutral countries like the United States. Six days after the sinking of Lusitania, a passenger ship on which 128 Americans were killed by a German torpedo, Americans finally read the Bryce Report. Some American newspapers related the Lusitania sinking to the German army's decimation of the Belgians, as laid out by the Bryce Report. The WWI expert Peter Buitenhuis notes:

"The Bryce Report continued to exert a powerful influence on American opinion throughout the war."⁶

The country's mainstream newspapers, including the New York Times, set columnists on wartime reports, and some then covered the story of German atrocities.

The Bryce Report, to some extent, maintained the unity of the British army, destroyed the German military psychologically, and effectively reached allies. However, there were consequences. People around the world began to suspect any form of war reporting as being propaganda. In one striking and disturbing example, many did not believe reports about Nazi atrocities towards the Jews during World War II as they believed the information had once again been fabricated.⁷ This is the so-called "cry wolf" effect derived from the familiar fable of the shepherd boy and the sheep. People have a limited tolerance for dishonesty. If they discover they have been fooled in the past, they will protect themselves from falling into the same trap. In the realm of today's public diplomacy, it takes significant energy and time to gain trust from an audience, let alone to rebuild trust in adversary countries. It is not worth the cost, then, to use immoral strategies, even if for a moral end.

Here we can see the ethical quandary of propaganda. The consequences of the dissemination of exaggerated facts via propaganda, especially during wartime, have proven to be far too dire. As the war led millions of young men to set foot on the battlefield, the WPB should have recognized the long-term repercussions of its sensationalization of the Bryce Report. This case exemplifies how the definition of unethical state behavior should not only include the killing of innocent people or the use of weapons of mass destruction, but also to the employment of deception on the home front.

Wars can be encouraged by stirring up various populist sentiments, such as patriotism, anti-imperialism, etc.⁸ Tools like mass media can turn these intangible sentiments into a viable weapon. Once wars erupt and lives are lost, it is only right that the people who

propagandized information in the first place be made responsible for their messaging outputs and its deadly effects on both intended and unintended audiences. Here I would like to make an analogy: if propagandists choose to discard ethics, causing factual information to lose credibility, then bullets on the battlefield will lose their direction as well, flying about in every direction.

With this in mind, I am of the opinion that British propaganda during the First World War inflicted the same amount of harm as the German army did to Belgian civilians. The Bryce Report, when applied to today's society, is an ethical discussion on the conduct of public diplomacy in modernity. In any and all circumstances, taking steps to not falsify the facts is an essential prerequisite. Freedom of speech does not excuse the exaggerated stories of the Bryce Report. In other words, "freedom" can never be achieved at the cost of fabrication and the undermining of others' interests in the long-term. As globalization becomes more prevalent, public diplomacy plays an increasingly important role and must adhere to a new requirement – to take the high road when communicating with foreign audiences so that more lives are preserved, not lost, in the process.



Tong Guan

Tong Guan is currently a USC Master of Public Diplomacy student, class of '21. She comes from Yunnan province, China. As an undergraduate she majored in Vietnamese, which led her to participate in a six month exchange program at Vietnam National University, Hanoi. She previously worked at the Research Center for Multilingual International Public Opinion of Guangdong University of Foreign Studies, where she conducted media content analysis related to the Belt and Road, the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP).

So, You Want to Go to Africa? Ethical Volunteerism & Public Diplomacy

Brooke Adams

Brooke Adams, Public Diplomacy Magazine Editor-in-Chief 2018-19, shares what she has learned serving as an ethical citizen diplomat in countries around the world. Brooke was in South Africa as a Peace Corps Trainee preparing to work in HIV/AIDS education and prevention before the global Peace Corps evacuation in March 2020 due to COVID-19.

Author's Note: In light of the recent COVID-19 outbreak, considering the ethics of traveling to remote places in developing countries is especially important. The potential for volunteers to carry COVID-19 to a remote village after long international travel has serious repercussions. Poor health systems, lack of resources, and misinformation would make an outbreak in rural areas of developing countries catastrophic, especially those with a high prevalence of diseases like tuberculosis (TB) and human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS). Now more than ever in this globalized world the ethics of volunteerism must be considered.

With increased access to the world, Americans with certain benevolence and extra resources can easily travel to developing countries to volunteer. Volunteer activities could be related to public health, infrastructure, or education. For a week up to the maximum time allowed on a tourist visa, US citizens can do work meant to improve people's lives.

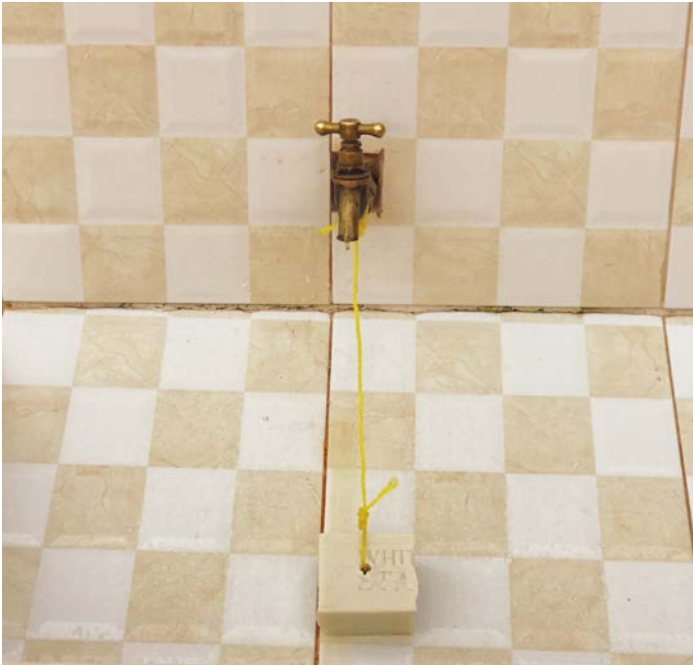
Volunteering US citizens (for the purpose of this paper) may go to developing countries to "aid in development" or enact "community development" activities. Even if the goal of volunteer trips is not diplomacy, the inherent engagement with the host nation's people and subsequent exchange of culture, ideas, or skills between

them and US citizens is public diplomacy in action. That exchange is not transactional but thematic, often rooted in ideas of cooperation and improved human security for the mutual benefit of both. But often volunteers abroad are unequipped to adequately interact with foreign publics to achieve characteristically altruistic development, falling short of the standard of a good, effective volunteer.

For this reason, I will offer a discussion of ethics in volunteerism as it relates to public diplomacy drawing from my experiences as a volunteer in four countries, my studies in public diplomacy, and now my current role as a Peace Corps Trainee in South Africa. I am confident there is a need for this argument based on my volunteer experience around the world and the organizations I have been exposed to. Ethical foreign public engagement must be enacted by American volunteers abroad. If ethics is a moral imperative, then a volunteer's moral imperative should be the exchange of information and the building of mutual understanding for the purpose of development.

First, volunteerism is diplomacy, whether it intends to be or not.

Public diplomacy is an international actor's policy-based communication activities designed to understand, engage, inform, and influence foreign publics in support of national or international interests. Volunteers communicate in this way with locals, but their interests are often their own as volunteers. Therefore, volunteers should utilize diplomacy's tools to set an agenda focused on the needs of a community. Then, volunteers can engage in participatory development with locals.



In Uganda, this is an innovative solution locals have adopted at handwashing stations where there are no soap pump dispensers. Source: Brooke Adams (All photos copyright, 2019)

Volunteerism is movement of “citizen diplomats” around the world. According to the State Department, citizen diplomacy can be done, on the most basic level, by obtaining a passport. The State Department characterizes a citizen diplomat as one who is engaging with the world in, “meaningful, mutually beneficial dialogue” (2018). To emphasize, this is stated by the

State Department as the general role of Americans abroad, not only those with a motivation to help others. The “mutually beneficial” aspect is what I have observed to often be lacking in volunteerism.

For example, while volunteering for a week in Mexico, my team and I would sit in our vans eating sandwiches for lunch every day as we waited for the kids to come to the day camp we were operating. On our final day, a local church made us a traditional meal. We eagerly filled our plates and an hour later, waved goodbye. I went home feeling good about the time I spent running the camp for kids. However, I later asked myself what culture, if any, did I learn from that one shared meal? And more importantly, what did the locals think of our large white coolers of food while their means were more modest? My team and I felt discouraged when kids would stop coming throughout the week, but now I ask myself whether they even needed our camp? Volunteers may be positively impacted by experiencing a developing world, but by contrast are they really making the long term impacts they hope for? Americans often communicate their desired activities and learnings with no consultation of what locals think is needed. Ethics are needed in volunteerism partly because perceptions of Americans are spread by volunteers but more importantly because a lack of ethics entails irresponsible and ineffective volunteer work.

Second, volunteers are sometimes, unfortunately, white saviors.

Development as defined by Everett Rogers (2002) is: “a widely participatory process of social change in a society...for the majority of people through their gaining greater control over their environment” (p. 9). Development increases people’s control over their environment, positively impacting health, economic mobility, education, and more. Mutual understanding is required for mutual participation in development. Locals should gain tools from volunteers they will use in their community to address problems they have identified. When the Americans get on the plane, the locals stay. This is how countries develop, as a long-term, locally led process with mutual participation.

An unfortunate, but aptly named, stereotype in volunteerism is “white savior” (to learn more, search #whitesavior on social media). A white savior is a well resourced volunteer who does not “exchange” skills or ideas, but rather swoops in with their own personal agenda - often significantly different from the host country’s needs - for an ineffectively short time period. They do not understand development hurdles beyond a very surface level. The white savior’s higher socio-economic status elevates them to an unearned position of believing any volunteerism in developing countries

is “helpful.” This is a major ethical dilemma because it can be potentially detrimental to the host by disrupting the local economy, creating a sense of paternalism or dependency, or even just misallocating their resources relative to the host’s needs.

For example, a shoe company (which shall remain nameless and has since improved practices) began delivering shoes to communities in South America. This company had learned children were getting diseases from walking barefoot. (In my experience, this is often to keep school shoes clean and something kids are used to.) Volunteers would go and distribute shoes to kids, resulting in pictures of Americans kneeling in the dirt fitting kids with shoes.

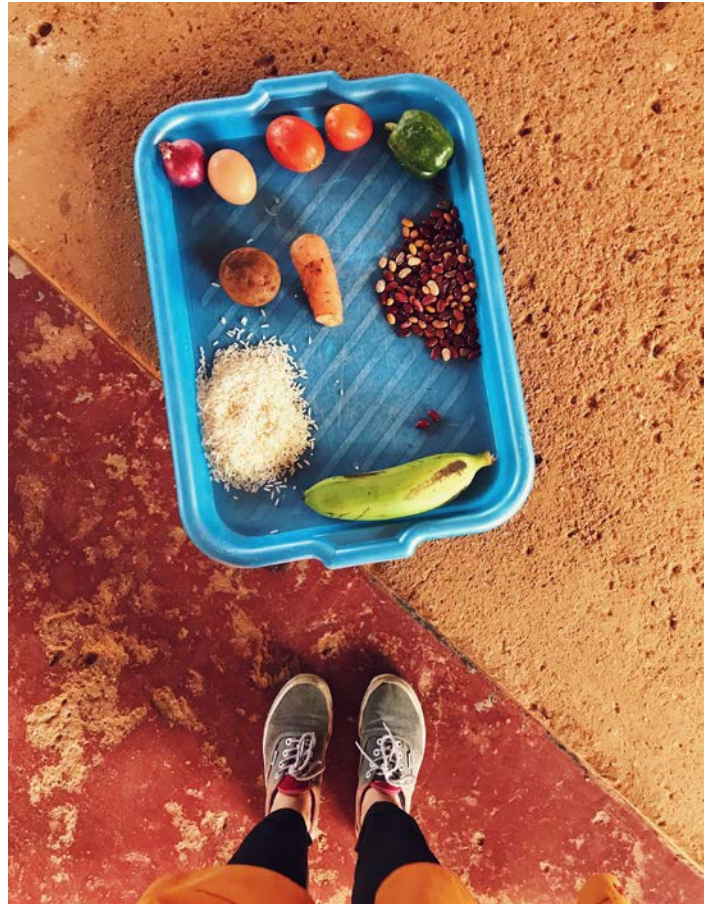
When analyzing the actual impact of giving shoes, researchers were unable to show a positive impact. In fact, some argued the donations of shoes put local cobblers out of business. This was not the intended effect of the giving. But, having extra shoes to give away trumped a long-term development process. In development, disempowering locals puts them in a place of dependency. Just because a developing country may lack goods does not mean material things are the answer.

Could volunteer work be done in a way that puts a volunteer out of a “job” because a community is educated and equipped to do the development work themselves? That is the foundation of sustained change.

Third, it is possible to be an ethical volunteer engaging in development.

To provide an example of ethical volunteerism within the thoughts of this paper, it is helpful to look at the Peace Corps. Established in 1961 by John F. Kennedy, the Peace Corps expanded the US’s involvement abroad through American volunteers doing development projects alongside locals. Today, Peace Corps volunteers work in education, agriculture, youth development, health, and more.

In the best cases, Peace Corps Volunteers (PCVs) live and work in a developing country for two years at a local organization with community members conversing in the local dialect, attending cultural events, and exchanging ideas. Peace Corps requires volunteers to work in partnership with host country nationals. In this way, locals can acquire skills from American citizens. Ideally, when a PCV leaves their community, they leave behind a seed of change that is in the hands of locals. The role of small communities in developing countries should not be underestimated. These are the places leaders are born and where social change begins



A health education seminar on nutrition in Uganda using locally available foods. Source: Brooke Adams (All photos copyright, 2019)

For example, as a health volunteer in South Africa, I will be working at a local organization to promote HIV/AIDS

awareness and education for vulnerable populations in the community. After training, I will spend the first three months in my villages learning about my community. The community's needs, resources, challenges, and strengths will be understood before any program begins. Peace Corps imparts the moral imperative on volunteers to do good by understanding communities for the purpose of development, not by our own agenda.

While PCVs do not always get it right, the training and concurrent evaluation of a volunteer's service help maintain a focus on ethical work by volunteers. Their training and mindset set a good standard for how volunteer work should be done; a standard unfortunately often ill-met. Many volunteers outside of the Peace Corps do not meet this bar and as such are acting somewhat unethically. While attempting to make some charitable work, that lack of full devotion means they are falling short of fully executing their responsibilities. This can and must be fixed for the good of both the volunteers and the communities they serve and I hope to share some insights on how to do so.

Learn First

PCVs undergo training in a variety of topics ranging from culture, to learning to live at a local standard, facilitation skills, and a large amount of language tutoring in local dialects. Learning the local language is a pillar of the Peace Corps as PCVs have "learned more than 200 languages and dialects" (JFK Library, 2018). Obviously, the long-term nature of PCVs makes this easier and more viable.

While recently visiting my future home and workplace, I greeted people and introduced myself in the local language. This surprised many people, opening a door to connection and conversation that will serve me in the coming 24 months. Not all US volunteers are privileged with Peace Corps language training, but I would guess basic greetings in developing countries are Googleable.

Even for short-term volunteers, such as religious groups, it would be interesting to know how many missions trips prepare volunteers with basic greetings and introductions in the local language—a few easily memorized sentences. Language is a door into diplomatic communication with local communities.

Ethical volunteerism means investing in basic education of the country and culture volunteers will travel to. It, in my view, is a moral imperative. A volunteer inhabits someone's world for a short period of time. It is not the responsibility of the locals to know what the Americans do and do not know about local culture. Having an attitude of learning before flying a thousand miles to help others sets the stage for the next best practice.

Understand Others

To understand you must first listen. Ask questions. Be observant and slow to speak. If you can't speak the local language, have a translator identified beforehand to ensure at least on the most basic level, there can be understanding. Ask local stakeholders what are the identified problems and what activities would help these problems. Find out the strengths of locals. Use what and who is present and willing in the developing countries for projects.

Promoting global welfare is of the utmost importance. But not at the cost of small communities being absent from their own development process. Ethical volunteerism first understands others.

As a personal example, I worked with a team of Ugandans to implement health education programming in a clinic. To develop content for public health seminars, the clinic staff and a team of local volunteers gathered information on what people's knowledge was on preventable diseases the clinic often treated. This was highly informative and helped us then target health education interventions to the local knowledge. For instance, a common belief discovered was urinary tract infections (UTIs) are transmitted through toilet seats. This is highly unlikely. Dispelling this myth would not have been included in education if my American health team and I were the ones developing content.

In a foreign country, the foreign volunteer is never the expert. A volunteer from the "developed world" will never fully understand the developing world. But, keep listening.

Exchange Information

When debating the ethics of volunteerism, the question is not if development is good, "but whether these Westerners possess the necessary capacities and motivations to produce effective help" (Palacios, 2010, p. 863). Ethical volunteerism is cooperative action in the apt transfer of knowledge and skills to those who did not previously possess it. Having American volunteers with tangible skills to teach local communities abroad is sustainable because when the volunteer leaves, locals can continue teaching, building, caring for, etc. as demonstrated by the volunteer. If a volunteer has been adhering to the previously suggested practices, there should be a mutual exchange.

For instance, an expert American engineer might train a maintenance team in an East African country on how to maintain a new water well being drilled. While the engineer may have expertise on the mechanics, likely the local knowledge of things such as seasons and soil

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would help him better educate. In this way, the moral compass for exchange of information is built on the first two suggested best practices: learn before you go and understand others. Both of these skills will then maximize the volunteer's impact and effectively launch development projects.

The power of volunteerism comes through public diplomacy principles. If volunteers desire to act ethically, seeking to do good and to not harm over their own agenda, then they will learn before they go, work to understand the local context, and exchange information with partners. Volunteerism inherently embodies aspects of public diplomacy and when allowing this frame to provide a moral compass, volunteerism can push the tide of global development in massive ways.

Do not go, do, and leave. Go and listen. Go and learn. Go and teach. As artist and activist Lilla Watson said, "If you have come here to help me, you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together."



Brooke Adams

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Quick to Listen, Slow to Speak: Silence and Discretion in Public Diplomacy

Mariana Rosales Aymerich

“Don’t stick your neck out, be modest. Try to do more listening than talking. If you are not sure if you should talk, it is better to keep silent.”¹

– Andrei Gromyko, USSR’s Foreign Minister 1957-85

Public diplomacy focuses on managing communication to build and maintain relationships for a political purpose.² While this includes many “active” communication elements such as advocacy, cultural diplomacy, exchanges, and international broadcasting,³ my work experience as a diplomat has taught me that there is one “passive” component vital to this profession: silence.

Silence can be associated negatively with fear or suppression, but in the realm of diplomacy, it should be likened to wisdom and sagacity. Gromyko served as Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) during the Cold War, a period when Khrushchev, Brezhnev, Andropov and Chernenko rose and fell out of power. His career exemplifies a main lesson: silence and discretion are two essential qualities for surviving in the field of diplomacy. Just as rest symbols in music carry the same values as notes, silence in communication is a part of a greater strategy – and can be a masterful way of conveying powerful messages.

When a diplomat refrains from speaking unnecessarily, it demonstrates extraordinary self-discipline and active listening. This is not easy, and we see that even the most experienced communicators can falter in managing their personal emotions when engaging with others. In this article, I would like to highlight the importance of silence in the practice of diplomacy and encourage

all diplomats to exercise their discretion both in the spheres of public and private communications.

Silence in Public Communications

Trust is essential in diplomacy. Once it is established, it makes negotiations easier and grants diplomats access to privileged information and the right to participate in the making of future historic moments.

Serving a country is a privilege. All diplomats must recognize that they must act with the highest discretion to avoid losing their access to privileged information or unknowingly betraying the trust of their sources. While this is never easy, it helps to remember that offending a foreign state with our words can have very serious repercussions. According to Article 9 of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, “The receiving State may at any time and without having to explain its decision, notify the sending State that the head of the mission or any member of the diplomatic staff of the mission is persona non grata (...). In any such case, the sending State shall, as appropriate, either recall the person concerned or terminate his functions with the mission.”⁴

Having to resign due to a lack of restraint generates political criticism against the diplomat’s sending government which might result in bilateral tension and administrative instability in a foreign mission. The amount of time and energy a mission must dedicate for the necessary transition of a diplomat’s replacement is one thing, but it is still far less effort than rebuilding trust with allies, reshaping public opinion, or fixing a bad reputation.

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Instructions from the capital can often include keeping a situation quiet to defend national interests. This might come against a diplomat's personal values or point of view. It is important to remember that the difficulty in maintaining such silence is worthwhile if it is for a greater good, such as securing an important public investment, a mutual agreement, an international candidacy, or perhaps the protection of many lives.

I am not insinuating that diplomats are political puppets at the mercies of their sending state. On the contrary, diplomats are skilled communicators who understand that every word has the potential of contributing to important decision-making processes, and their messages can ultimately shape foreign policy that they will later have to implement.



Mariana Rosales (right), Minister Counselor for Public Diplomacy and Economic Affairs, Embassy of Costa Rica in the United States of America, and Laura Elsey (left), President, Women's Diplomatic Series. Presenting "Challenges We Overcome: Costa Rica and Women in Diplomacy." Culture and Conversation Panel co-organized with "The Women's Diplomatic Series" on November 14th 2019. Source: Mariana Rosales

Silence in Internal Communications

The strength of a public diplomacy program hinges upon receiving clear direction from the sending state's capital. The capital is only able to make the most accurate, ethical judgment calls if diplomats relay them information that is timely and as objective as possible.

This is a challenge, because from my experience, we diplomats are often afforded the privileged position of accessing classified information or witnessing events that, from a cultural standpoint, seem unjust or unfair. However, it is not our role to evaluate the virtue of a situation. We are to report it bias-free back to base. Human emotions are natural (yes, even for diplomats), but when reporting back to the capital, we must withhold voicing our own opinions if it clouds information pertinent for the capital's analysis.

Professional diplomats might forget the importance of remaining neutral in their internal communications. Even

though these messages are not intended for the public, the consequences of these indiscretions are high.

The unfortunate experience of the preceding United Kingdom's Ambassador to the United States, Kim Darroch, is a cautionary tale: He strongly criticized President Donald Trump and the Trump administration in a cable to his capital. Even when it was an internal document, that cable was leaked.⁵ Ambassador Darroch, a seasoned diplomat, presented his resignation some days after the event in late 2019.

Silence in Personal Communications

Exercising prudence was at one time necessary mostly in a diplomat's work settings, but times have changed. In our current information era, absolute privacy is difficult if not impossible to achieve. Even stating personal opinions in private settings can travel beyond to unintended audiences and have serious implications.

Discretion must now be part of every diplomat's personal life.

Diplomats live in an era of social media where words can live on in cyberspace forever, and a moment of folly can dismantle trust that has taken years to build. Even in private, before disclosing any personal opinion, all diplomats must ask themselves how it could affect their country's position or their own careers should it be made public.

Months ago, Colombian Ambassador to the United States, Francisco Santos, expressed some negative opinions of the U.S. Department of State during a private conversation with a high official from his own country. Unfortunately, this private conversation had taken place in a public setting, it was recorded by a third party and leaked.⁶ The leak casted a shadow on his otherwise diligent work.

As recent examples suggest, "leakings" of personal conversations are increasingly common, and even the most senior diplomats are not immune to this phenomenon.

Diplomatic Disclaimer: Facing the Music

But what if keeping quiet means allowing for injustice? Ginetta Sagan once wrote, "Silence in the face of injustice is complicity with the oppressor." To what extent can diplomats raise their voices to expose injustices when on post? It is a challenging question and a decision that usually has to be made by the capital. That being said, keeping silent when addressing a public audience does not mean neglecting to offer constructive feedback that can yield a collaborative search for solutions.

In defense of ethics, some silences are worth breaking when diplomats feel it is necessary; however, they must know this will come with a cost. When Ambassador Melvin Saenz criticized a reporter for her disrespectful interview of Laura Chinchilla, President of Costa Rica 2010-2014, the reporter turned against him by exaggerating his comments, hurting his personal reputation and turning public opinion against him, despite the fact he was one of the Costa Rican foreign service's brightest minds. Certainly, the Ambassador's response could have been more discreet, but he felt his actions were justified to defend the honor of his state and president and, after assessing the potential personal cost, he bravely decided to face the consequences.



In the picture left to right: Esteban Solorzano (Boston Scientific), Ambassador Fernando Llorca (Embassy of Costa Rica), Jose C Quirce (Director Trade Office Ministry of Foreign Trade), and Mariana Rosales (Minister Counselor for Public Diplomacy and Economic Affairs). Solorzano, Llorca, Quirce, and Rosales come together to discuss policies to strengthen government relations with the medical device industry. Source: Mariana Rosales

When dealing with the press, it's important for diplomats to remember that silence is a double-edged sword. On one hand, diplomats can use silence to their advantage in order to keep media representatives interested in a particular issue and encourage follow-up interviews. However, these intentional and explicit silences should be avoided if a diplomat foresees that it could inadvertently attract unwanted public attention to a particular issue.

Conclusion

In the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights, freedom of speech is explicitly stated for all individuals. But, the voices of diplomats and public servants do not belong only to themselves anymore. Diplomats must understand that once they enter this profession, they embody the voice of their sending state.

Deciding when to speak and when to remain silent are ethically challenging dilemmas that almost every diplomat face during his or her career. Discretion - knowing what to say, when to say it, and whom to say it to - comes with experience and a desire to serve a higher value: patriotism.



Mariana Rosales Aymerich

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Ethical Public Diplomacy or Propaganda? U.S. and Russia's Public Diplomacy Spheres of Influence in Georgia

Mariami Khatishvili

Questions on moral principles add a new dimension to what we imagine when we think of public diplomacy and global engagement. Ethical public diplomacy – the promotion of ethics through public engagement and spreading morally correct messages – is an approach all countries should be committed to in order to be a step forward in communicating foreign policy priorities.

Given the rising interest of ethics in public diplomacy, it is worth pondering how ethics can outline boundaries between public diplomacy spheres of influence. At a time of complicated relations between the United States and Russia as well as Georgia and Russia, the case of the Republic of Georgia can draw modern and comparative lessons for this issue. The U.S. and Russia's public diplomacy initiatives towards Georgia define the ethical boundaries of the U.S. and Russia's public diplomacy realms. Initial observations suggest that Russia's public diplomacy activities in Georgia are different from the U.S.' in several aspects. Significant differences include the consistency of messaging, objectives, sources, and tools.

U.S. Public Diplomacy Strategy vis-à-vis Georgia

During the Cold War, Georgia was a focus of the U.S.' public diplomacy activities. At this time, presenting an objective image of the U.S. and its values to the people living in the Soviet republics was one of the primary goals of American foreign policy. However, following Georgia's 1991 independence from the Soviet Union, U.S. public diplomacy objectives changed and sought to consolidate Georgia's democracy in the upcoming decades.

Much of Georgia's continuing democratic developments made in the last 29 years are a result of U.S. public diplomacy. Mutual cooperation between the U.S. and Georgia have also strengthened and expanded, especially through the signing of the U.S.-Georgia Charter on Strategic Partnership in 2009.¹ Since then, deepening cooperation with the U.S., its major ally, became one of Georgia's modern foreign policy² and national security chief concerns.³ On the other hand, the U.S. has demonstrated consistent willingness via its public diplomacy initiatives to help Georgia achieve a more promising future.



Statue of St. George. This monument is dedicated to the freedom and independence of the Georgian nation. Source: Pixabay.com

The diverse and well-coordinated public diplomacy tools of the U.S. – including but not limited to exchanges and educational and cultural programs – meet the present and future needs of Georgia. Democratic principles and values, such as rule of law and civic participation, are themes that often inform U.S. public diplomacy initiatives to support a new generation of Georgians. Promoting these democratic values through public diplomacy is instrumental in several ways. Firstly, it will advance the U.S.' foreign policy reputation in Georgia in the decades to come. Secondly, it will help Georgia to enhance its own burgeoning democracy. Moreover, utilizing democratic values to synchronize public engagement strategies is an ethical way to invariably maintain soft power.

Most importantly, the U.S. has cultivated a practice of making public diplomacy decisions considering the long-term impacts of those decisions on Georgian society. U.S. public diplomacy in Georgia is based on respect to and support of Georgia's national interests and national values, including maintaining sustainable economic growth, ensuring sovereignty and territorial integrity, and deepening Euro-Atlantic integration. By supporting, respecting, and strengthening Georgia's national interests, U.S. public diplomacy serves as one of the best examples of ethical public diplomacy. Such an ethical approach provides a solid ground for the U.S. to maintain and expand its spheres of public diplomacy

influence in Georgia.

Russia's Public Diplomacy Characteristics in Georgia

During the Cold War, Georgia was a direct target of Soviet propaganda and disinformation. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Georgia remained the subject of Russian messaging, illustrating Russia's attempt at maintaining influence over the independent state.

In the first decade after the Russo-Georgian War of 2008, Russia theoretically developed its own understanding of soft power. Prioritizing the practical use of soft power in modern Russian diplomacy, Russia began to broadly articulate its public diplomacy interests toward Georgia. However, Russia today does not practice public diplomacy as the Americans do. A probable explanation for this can be that Russia does not utilize the Western concept of public diplomacy in its foreign policy; rather, it focuses on a one-way dissemination of information that suits its own foreign policy interests.

The aforementioned issue is instrumental in understanding the role of morality, credibility, and relevance in Russia's public diplomacy approach towards Georgia in a time when formal diplomatic relations are absent between these two countries. As mentioned in the Strategic Defense Review of Georgia for 2017-2020, Russia's use of soft power elements to counter Georgia's national interests represents a challenge in the security environment.⁴



Tbilisi, capital of Georgia. Source: Pixabay.com

Russia's public diplomacy in Georgia is not based on truth. It does not aim to strengthen people-to-people ties vis-à-vis two-way communication. Thus, it more closely resembles propaganda. Russian messaging, including those being disseminated by pro-Russian media outlets, presents Georgia's national interests, values, and foreign policy priorities in ways that are biased and misleading. For example, in 2018 Russian propaganda



Tbilisi is home to historic neighborhoods with names that date back to the Middle Ages.

Source: Pixabay.com

messages asserted that Georgia's NATO membership would cost Georgia its territories that are occupied by Russia and that NATO is ultimately unable to defend Georgia.⁵ In addition to Russia's ongoing violations of Georgia's territorial integrity and sovereignty, purveying this propaganda narrative does not seek to promote Georgia's present and future foreign policy objectives. These messages can generate anti-Western sentiments in Georgia's population and weaken their faith in Georgia's democratic future.

It can be concluded that propagating disinformation to communicate with a target audience is certainly not an ethical public engagement strategy. Decidedly, disinformation of any form is unacceptable to achieve public diplomacy goals.

From a short-term perspective, propagating propaganda weakens Russia's credibility, which is necessary to build public diplomacy spheres of influence in Georgia. From a long-term perspective, Russia will be left without favorable options for the efficient coordination of its public diplomacy interests in Georgia because disinformation is not a viable or useful tool for building and maintaining trust.

Scope of Ethical Boundaries and Future Perspectives

The breadth of U.S. and Russian public diplomacy spheres of influence in Georgia can be measured based on the ethical implications of each and the degree to which each promotes democratic ideals. Russia's public diplomacy strategies in Georgia are not ethical or based on the principles of democracy; rather, it challenges Georgia and her partners' foreign policy interests. On the other hand, American public diplomacy activities enhance and support Georgia's national interests while strengthening its own foreign policy goals. Furthermore, the U.S. utilizes public diplomacy to plan, promote, and advance democracy in Georgia through transparent bilateral public and diplomatic engagement.

U.S.' and Russia's public diplomacy interests and actions in Georgia reflect the historical and modern developments in U.S.-Russian, U.S.-Georgian and Georgian-Russian relations. Using ethical public engagement strategies helps the U.S. maintain its public diplomacy presence in Georgia. On the other hand, Russian propaganda narratives rampant in Georgia are beginning to fall out of favor with Georgia's public and prove to be incongruous with the fast-evolving public and digital global engagement strategies of the 21st century.

Gaining and wielding influence via public diplomacy is ultimately Russia's soft power goal in Georgia. Though Russian disinformation may appear to be the faster and quicker way to achieve this goal by generating uncertainty in Georgian society, i.e. promoting narratives of instability concerning Georgia-NATO relations, the pervasiveness and speed of the U.S. and Georgia's Western partners' public diplomacy efforts to eliminate the spread of Russian propaganda will ultimately prevail in guiding the present and future landscapes of ethical public diplomacy.

Unethical approaches to diplomacy are devastating for the states that choose to get involved in these practices – knowingly or unknowingly. On the contrary, incorporating ethical public diplomacy practices in foreign policy processes establishes trust as a driving force of influence, which is the foundation for lasting partnerships and positive change.

The best public diplomacy puts ethics in the center. Nations that want to emerge with dominant public diplomacy spheres of influence need to take advantage of ethical public engagement strategies – which are mutually beneficial to all the nations involved – to reach more publics.



Mariami Khatishvili

Mariami Khatishvili is a pioneering scholar of public diplomacy from Georgia who developed the first university course on public diplomacy in Georgia titled "U.S. Public Diplomacy since 1945." She is a summa cum laude graduate from Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University (TSU), holding a PhD in American Studies with an emphasis in U.S. public diplomacy objectives in Georgia during the 1980s. In June and July of 2017, Mariami completed the U.S. Department of State's exchange program Study of the United States Institutes for Scholars on U.S. foreign policy at Bard College in Annandale-on-Hudson, New York. From 2017-2019, she served as a board member of the U.S. Government Exchange Program Alumni Association of Georgia. She is currently a lecturer at St. Andrew the First-Called Georgian University of the Patriarchate of Georgia.

Situations and Human Behavior: Toward a Contextual Ethics of Diplomacy

Paul Lachelier

People act differently in different social contexts. That simple fact is essential to understanding human behavior and to shaping contexts that help determine the success of any ethical and diplomatic plan. Indeed, the future of ethical diplomacy may well rest at least in part, on our attention to context.

About ten years ago, I taught a course called “Power and Evil” at Stetson University in Florida, where I was then an Assistant Professor of Sociology. As a political sociologist keenly interested in power and authority (the legitimate exercise of power), I wanted to impart one central and ambivalent point to my students through this course: the exercise of power is inescapable and not necessarily evil, but it is always context contingent, and people are capable of remarkably different behaviors in different contexts. To bring this point to life, we, among other things, read and discussed social psychologist Philip Zimbardo’s 2007 book, *The Lucifer Effect: Understanding How Good People Turn Evil*. The book mostly covers Zimbardo’s famed 1971 Stanford Prison Experiment, which randomly assigned psychologically normal male college students to serve as prisoners or prison guards in a mock prison scheduled to last two weeks. While Zimbardo stopped the experiment after six days due to the rapidly deteriorating situation, the book also reviews numerous other experiments and historical cases (Abu Ghraib Prison, the Rwandan Genocide, etc.) to support Zimbardo’s tripartite model for understanding human behavior: “acting people in particular situations, created and maintained by systemic forces” (Zimbardo 21).

Using the “bad apples” metaphor, a dispositional view of human behavior focuses on the bad apples. Meanwhile, Zimbardo’s situational or contextual view focuses on

“the apple barrel,” or the situations and systems that turn apples bad. This is not to discount the importance of disposition or character. Clearly, not everyone acts the same way in the same situation. However, attention to context does help explain searing studies like the Stanford Prison Experiment, and confounding cases of good apples turned bad, like Pauline Nyiramasuhuko—a Tutsi social worker, women’s empowerment advocate, and Rwandan Minister for Family and Women’s affairs, who in 1994 orchestrated the betrayal, brutal rape, and murder of Tutsis in the Rwandan village of Butare, near where she grew up.

Diplomacy is all about context, and perhaps more consciously so than any other domain of human endeavor. On the job, diplomats do not only pay attention to the historical contexts (past diplomatic relations, cultural practices and beliefs, individual biographies, environmental, political and economic conditions, etc.), but also to potential future situations. They ask questions such as where the next event will take place, who will be in attendance, who will speak with and sit or stand next to whom, what to say and how to say it, what symbols and equipment will be deployed (flags, insignia, podiums, seating, etc.), what food will be served, what music will be played, and so on.

Just as situations shape the success of diplomacy, so too can they shape the success of any efforts at cultivating ethics in diplomacy. This has implications for how diplomatic ethics are taught in schools, as situations to ponder and practice rather than just norms and histories to memorize. This also has implications for diplomatic practice as it invites contextual/situational questions like:

- How do different diplomatic situations shape the behavior of their participants?
- What are the situations in which diplomacy tends to work better and worse?
- What particularities of diplomatic situations can be added, removed, and adjusted to improve outcomes?

Since 2016, Learning Life, a small Washington DC-based nonprofit education lab I direct, has been developing Family Diplomacy Initiative. The Initiative connects families online, across borders and classes, to share and learn from each other with an eye to advancing a new family form of citizen diplomacy. Foundational to FDI is an important contextual insight: families, at their best, are social contexts that encourage responsible, caring behavior in an often irresponsible, uncaring world. Moreover, families are ubiquitous and widely valued across cultures, deeply impacted by international affairs, yet under-represented in international diplomacy and governance. For instance, families get relatively few opportunities to voice their needs and concerns in international governmental bodies, let alone participate in international policy-making, compared with constituencies like business executives, farmers, youth, and women.

Of course, families often do not speak with one voice (spouses may disagree, children may disagree with parents, etc.), and they can be contexts of oppression, especially for women and children. Nonetheless, giving diplomatic voice to families, as families, in international diplomacy and governance can nurture more caring behavior in and out of families precisely because the family context at least publicly demands caring. Further, just as bringing children and family life into work contexts can soften the hard edges of work life, so too can bringing families into world affairs soften the hard edges and stiff formalities of diplomacy and government. Adversaries can find common ground in their devotion to family. This has perhaps greatest consequence for public diplomacy since publics may be moved more than are hardened diplomatic professionals by the needs, fears and aspirations of families.

Thus, families – as social contexts that set norms for behavior – can breathe life into international diplomacy and governance, and nurture an ethic and politics of care that prioritize the wellbeing of families and the most vulnerable. More generally, an ethics of diplomacy that pays serious attention to contexts may help improve diplomatic outcomes and build a more peaceful, prosperous world.



Paul Lachelier

Paul Lachelier is a sociologist, and founder and director of Learning Life, a Washington, DC-based nonprofit lab devoted to innovating education and citizen engagement. He leads Learning Life's three programs, including the Family Diplomacy Initiative, an International Mentoring Program, and Democracy Dinners. Before founding Learning Life in 2012, he taught at Stetson, Harvard, Tufts and the University of Wisconsin. Paul holds a B.A. in sociology from Georgetown University, and an M.A. and Ph.D. in sociology from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. His writings on democracy, diplomacy and education can be found at paullachelier.info and academia.edu.

Ethics of USAID: A Call for Explicit Guidelines

Pat Wiedorn

Foreign aid can be an extremely potent tool of public diplomacy. However, if conducted unethically, it can potentially undermine a public's perception of a country on the world stage. The main agency for the United States' foreign aid programs is its Agency for International Development (USAID). For many non-Americans, their only interactions with the United States are through USAID projects, which are proudly branded "FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE." Moreover, in terms of budget, USAID is also the largest aid organization in the world. In 2019, the agency's budget of over \$30 billion¹ outstripped similar agencies, such as the United Kingdom's Department for International Development at \$18 billion,² or the United Nations' Development Programme at \$5.5 billion.³ Given its size, influence, and position as vanguard of the United States' reputation abroad, USAID has a particular responsibility to ensure that its power is used ethically.

However, USAID lacks an explicit ethical framework to evaluate its projects with. Instead, it relies on technocratic methods to select and run programs, a trend codified by the Foreign Aid Transparency and Accountability Act of 2016. This leads to ethical blind spots within the agency, and can encourage projects which meet easily measurable objectives, but fail to consider broader negative impacts. Although USAID has taken steps towards more comprehensive impact assessments, it should establish and publish explicit ethical guidelines against which projects can be judged. Otherwise, the United States could run a reputational risk, undermining other diplomatic efforts, as well as harming those people USAID aims to help.

The Ethical Framework of USAID

The most salient fact about USAID's ethical framework is that there isn't an explicit one. There are no USAID guidelines that describe or call for an ethical review of projects before they are selected to be carried out abroad. However, when USAID guidelines do explicitly

address ethics, it is in regards to personal conduct. One version of USAID's "general ethics principles" bans employees from having "financial interests that conflict with the conscientious performance of duty," or from using "public office for private gain."⁴ Although important, these guidelines do not provide insight into how projects should be chosen to produce ethical, sustainable, and mutually beneficial programs for both the United States and partner countries.

Clues about how USAID thinks about ethics are found in the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, which is the legal foundation of USAID. The Act's first sentence explains US foreign aid focuses on benefitting "the individual liberties, economic prosperity, and security of the people of the United States." This establishes that USAID is not an altruistic endeavor, but serves the interests of the United States and its people. A cynical reading could allow USAID to benefit the United States at the expense of other nations. However, it then explains that its goals are best achieved by enhancing "individual civil and economic rights" and working together with a "community of nations." These goals include alleviating the worst effects of poverty, promoting "equitable distribution of benefits," and improving the quality of people's lives. Although the purpose of its foreign aid is to serve the interests of the United States, USAID does so by also benefiting other people around the world. This cannot be fulfilled by undertaking projects in an unethical manner.

Technocratic Methods

The Foreign Aid Transparency and Accountability Act of 2016 passed with the primary goal of benefiting the "American people," and to make sure it was possible for them to "know how their tax dollars are being spent."⁵ The bill provides a number of objectives to agencies that administer US foreign aid, including USAID. Most importantly, it directs agencies to "develop specific project monitoring and evaluation plans, including

measurable goals and performance metrics" and to "ensure verifiable, reliable, and timely data, including from local beneficiaries and stakeholders, are available." This act therefore means that a primary consideration for choosing USAID projects is the ability to measure and report specific outcomes. The agency is unlikely to implement projects that lack measurable outcomes, and the agency does not focus on attaining the institutional capability to understand results that aren't measurable metrics.

In response to the Foreign Aid and Transparency Act, USAID's agency guidelines favor Randomized Controlled Trials (RCTs) when choosing new projects to implement. Specifically, USAID requires that projects include an impact evaluation, and notes "for impact evaluations, experimental methods generate the strongest evidence. Alternative methods should be utilized only when random assignment strategies are infeasible."⁶ USAID adopted RCTs to evaluate the effectiveness of aid interventions with rigor. The focus on RCTs, however, raises concerns about the types of interventions they favor and the ethical problems associated with their implementation.

In an international development context, RCTs are always performed on human subjects – the trial is designed to see how an intervention affects individuals under study. USAID's Scientific Research Policy describes the need to ensure the protection of human subjects, which includes informed consent procedures. The requirement for informed consent may be impossible to achieve in an RCT. Some RCTs, in order to avoid effects that result from only some individuals in a community receiving an intervention, instead implement interventions to a whole village or cluster. Individuals may be unaware they are part of an experiment.⁷ Informed consent also requires that individuals fully understand the intervention and any "reasonably foreseeable risks."⁸ Achieving that level of understanding among the population relies heavily on the ability of the researcher to deliver that information, which can be difficult in a developing country setting. To implement its Scientific Research Policy, USAID calls for projects to be approved by an institutional review board (IRB). However, USAID does not maintain an IRB of its own, and so an external IRB review is required.⁹

Without an in-house IRB, USAID cannot conduct its own project reviews. It is therefore not fully taking on the responsibility of ensuring that experiments carried out on its behalf are conducted ethically. A potential scenario would be an RCT where the advantages of an intervention are explained to the members of a community without the downsides explained adequately. If the intervention fails to deliver on its promises, the reputation of USAID, as the sponsoring agency, and by extension the United States, could be irreparably harmed.

Unintentional Tools of Oppression

A focus on measurable outcomes can make US foreign aid administered by USAID an unintentional tool of oppression. Although the aid that reaches recipients likely improves their lives, the leverage it can provide to an oppressive government may negatively affect the people as a whole.

Ethiopia is one of the largest recipients of USAID aid, receiving over \$788 million in 2018.¹⁰ Starting in 1961, Ethiopia has one of the longest-lasting partnerships with USAID. This includes providing humanitarian assistance during the rule of the Derg, an oppressive military regime, from 1974 to 1992.¹¹ USAID notes that "Ethiopia has made tremendous development gains in education, health and food security, and economic growth." Despite these efforts, "approximately 9.5 million Ethiopians require humanitarian assistance, in addition to 8 million chronically food insecure,"¹² out of a total population of 105 million.

The food and agricultural aid provided by USAID, however, has been used in Ethiopia as a tool to "discriminate against the opposition and punish dissent," as detailed in a report by Human Rights Watch. Such a large portion of the population's dire need makes this a potent tool. The ruling party of Ethiopia, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), denies political opponents the "seeds and fertilizer, agricultural land, credit, food aid, and other resources for development" provided by USAID. These same benefits are also used as enticements to join the EPRDF.¹³ With the way that USAID measures impact, it is simultaneously possible for a project to improve the livelihoods of Ethiopians while strengthening the grip of the ruling party. Human Rights Watch found that the EPRDF used the Productive Safety Net Program, which USAID helped fund, as a tool of oppression. A 2019 evaluation of the program positively evaluated wait times to receive food aid, efficiency of measuring rations, and public awareness of USAID branding.¹⁴ USAID achieved its goals, but potential remained for abuse by the ruling EPRDF party.

This is potentially a worst-case scenario for the public diplomacy aspects of foreign aid. For desperate Ethiopians unfamiliar with a larger geopolitical context, they are only aware of proudly branded USAID food aid being either denied to them due to their political affiliation, or else used as bribes for their votes. This would inevitably associate the United States with the ruling regime of Ethiopia.

The appropriate option in this case is to rescind aid, in order to prevent its use in strengthening an autocratic regime. However, recipient countries know this is largely

an empty threat. Even when the Derg was in power, USAID provided humanitarian assistance. USAID, when at its best, is motivated to help people in need. Rescinding aid to punish government transgressions is seen as punishing its people most in need. There are also more cynical explanations, such as continuing aid in a bid to retain influence with a government, even if that government is autocratic. However, if aid can never be rescinded, any potential leverage disappears.¹⁵ Without ethical guidelines, USAID has no consistent framework with which to justify rescinding aid to a country, nor a consistent set of times when such an action may be appropriate. This makes it much easier for autocratic governments to use foreign aid to strengthen their own position.

Recommendations

USAID, as a result of its history and more recent legislation, focuses on projects with measurable outcomes. This can force too narrow a scope when the agency considers what projects to undertake. USAID has recently begun an effort to expand the scope of its project evaluations. Instead of focusing narrowly on “the extent to which its programs generate their expected outputs,” USAID is now moving towards impact evaluations. These evaluations try to explore the larger effects of aid interventions, for better or for worse.¹⁶

That is an excellent first step in expanding the footprint of USAID’s ethical considerations. Lacking, however, is a well-targeted goal. USAID lacks a set of specific, written ethical guidelines for how to balance the benefits and costs of each of its aid interventions. Impact analysis will allow the agency to take a retrospective look at the effects of its projects, but without a prior ethical framework to explain which benefits outweigh which costs, it will be impossible to judge the outcomes of projects fairly and dispassionately. An explicit ethical framework that focuses on larger goals of development would force USAID to consider those goals better in their totality.

To implement an ethical framework within the agency, USAID should establish an Assistant Administrator for Ethics, along with an internal institutional review board. This office will develop ethical guidelines for the agency, and review potential and ongoing projects. With explicit guidelines it can make decisions that are consistent and known throughout the implementing arms of the agency. By keeping a careful eye on projects, an Assistant Administrator for Ethics can ensure that USAID is held to the highest standards. The office will also be able to provide timely advice on rescinding aid, along with ethical justification, in order to prevent the misuse of aid from negatively impacting United States interests abroad.

USAID is the largest and most well-funded aid agency in the world, and is one of the most visible representations of the United States government abroad. Given its power, and to burnish the reputation of the United States, it has the responsibility to deploy its aid ethically. By having clear, consistent, well published guidelines, the agency can demonstrate the leadership of the United States in aid and international development, and argue for the benefits of the American way of life to the people of the world.



Pat Wiedorn

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- Otto von Bismark

WHAT CAN DIPLOMATS LEARN ABOUT ETHICS FROM THE PAST?

Justifying Force: The Use of International Law in Foreign Policy Justifications

Kyle Rapp

Why are foreign policy decisions – especially decisions on the use of military force – so often accompanied with complex international law justifications? Why is it that international law, a set of rules at least tacitly based on the idea of noninterference and peaceful conflict resolution, is so often used to justify military force? At the same time – who are these justifications for? And what do these international law justifications tell us about morality and law in foreign policy?

While a sizeable body of research claims these justifications are for domestic audiences,¹ my research demonstrates that they are primarily intended for building support from international audiences. Importantly, using international law like this does not require decision-makers to believe in its normative and ethical components. Instead, decision-makers use international law strategically to build these justifications, often cynically employing the language of law in a calculated effort to build support and head-off criticism.

In my research, I examine how foreign policy decision-makers in the UK and US created international law justifications for the use of force, with implications for current policy debates. Studying the UK's invasion of Egypt in 1956 and the US' invasion of Grenada in 1983, I demonstrate why powerful states spend time and resources developing international law justifications. Importantly, I demonstrate that these are primarily about justifying the decision to international – not domestic – audiences. At the same time, I demonstrate that these justifications are strategic and that legal

appeals do not necessarily represent a sincere belief in the law. This raises questions about the ethics of legal justifications and the strategic role of law in ethical foreign policy making, in particular how we should treat legal claims from policymakers, knowing that they are often strategically – not ethically – motivated to build policy support?

Analysis

My analysis focuses on two cases – the UK's 1956 invasion of Egypt and the US' 1983 invasion of Grenada. Both are powerful democracies using military force abroad. Thanks to their power, both are 'least-likely' cases for international law to matter as both should depend less on international support. At the same time, their democratic nature should increase the importance of domestic justifications as leaders need to maintain electoral support. Both cases occurred after 1945 and the adoption of the United Nations Charter which spells out the general prohibition on the use of force, meaning leaders in both situations were operating in the same general international legal environment.

In these cases, I examine three hypotheses. The first is that international law matters in foreign policy decision-making. This cannot be taken for granted – skeptics claim that international law is 'cheap talk' and unlikely to meaningfully shape policy making.² Second is that decision makers use international law primarily as a tool for international justifications. The third is that decision makers prefer legal justifications that reference treaties or written legal agreements over general uncodified

Instead, decision-makers use international law strategically to build these justifications, often cynically employing the language of law in a calculated effort to build support and head-off criticism.

legal principles – which will, in turn, be preferred over nonlegal justifications.

For this analysis, I draw on previously classified records from both the UK and US, including minutes from cabinet meetings, inter-office memos, and diplomatic records. Focusing on declassified private records provides greater insight into the strategic calculations behind these justifications as decision makers are freer to express their sincere beliefs when off-the-record.

Cases

As discussed, my analysis focuses on two historical cases – the UK's 1956 invasion of Egypt during the Suez Crisis and the US' invasion of Grenada in 1983.

On July 26, 1956, Egyptian President Nasser announced the nationalization of the Suez Canal, which had previously been managed by the Suez Canal Company. UK Prime Minister Eden saw nationalization as a challenge to the UK's power and prestige, especially in its remaining colonial holdings east of the Mediterranean. He, and his government, raised these concerns almost immediately, arguing that acquiescing to the nationalization could also further embolden Nasser and destabilize the region.

In response to these concerns, Eden and his government began planning both diplomatic and military responses to the nationalization. Throughout these processes, legal concerns remained near the forefront, particularly as a tool of justification. Indeed, while Eden supported military intervention, he recognized that a military intervention without legal backing – or at least an appeal to the UN system – would be “unjustifiable.”³ Trying to address these concerns, the UK government organized a conference of 18 major seafaring nations in London and, when that failed, attempted to gain support through the UN Security Council – a decision which, the Foreign Minister noted, was driven by concerns about the international reaction if the UK ignored the UN.⁴

As these initiatives failed, the UK – along with France and Israel – conspired to invade Egypt in an effort to ensure international control of the canal. Even at this stage, international law arguments continued to be made. Over the protests of career legal advisers, the UK argued that the invasion was justified “on the highest legal authority...under the [UN] Charter...”,⁵ a claim which would come back to haunt Eden's government in the following months.⁶ This decision – to claim a justification

where there was none, and to delay military action for months despite the preferences of senior politicians – highlights the value seen in these legal justifications.

The US case began on 13 October 1983, when the New Jewel Movement – a far-left movement seeking closer relations with the USSR – seized power, executing Grenadian leader Maurice Bishop. In response, the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) suspended – and soon recommended military action against – Grenada. The OECS also decided to request US support for this military action.

In the US, policymakers began drafting plans for action in Grenada as soon as the news broke, with a focus on evacuating US medical students in the country. While US policymakers realized they could try justifying intervention on the need to protect US nationals in Grenada – an argument with a long history in international law – they hesitated to justify invasion solely on these grounds. Instead, US Secretary of State Schultz contacted the Dominican Prime Minister, requesting that the OECS submit an official request for US military assistance so the intervention could be better justified under international law.⁷

The US also requested a letter from the Governor-General of Grenada – despite questions about the Governor-General's ability to provide such a letter – as a further justification for invading. These formal invitations allowed Reagan to justify the invasion with specific legal references as well as arguments about protecting US nationals in the country. The Reagan administrations dogged pursuit of a legal justification for the intervention – despite the obvious material ability to act unilaterally – indicate the value of these claims as a justification.

Findings

It is clear that, in both cases, decision makers were concerned with international law. Discussions of international law permeate both decision-making processes. In the case of Suez, there are repeated discussions of the UN Charter and the 1888 Constantinople

Convention – which governed the management of the canal, along with international legal principles of free trade and the rights of nationals abroad. In the case of Grenada, US decision makers made repeated reference to the OECS' and Governor-General's letters and the legality of intervention by invitation.

There is also significant support for the claim that these

Indeed, while Eden supported military intervention, he recognized that a military intervention without legal backing - or at least an appeal to the UN system - would be “unjustifiable.”

justifications are made for international audiences. For example, in the very first cabinet meeting, after Nasser nationalized the canal, for example, Prime Minister Eden noted the need for an international law justification to “sustain and justify international opinion.”⁸ In another frank discussion, a UK legal advisor referred to developing an international law justification to put “as good a face on our legal case as possible” ahead of discussions with representatives from several different countries.⁹

Finally, it seems that decisionmakers deliberately tried to justify using force with written international law – even if these justifications were tenuous at best. The US, for example, delayed several days waiting for formal written notice from the OECS and the Governor-General. Secretary of State Schultz stated that these delays were so the intervention would be “consistent with our interests and with international law,” even though the US was also willing to justify intervening on a general right to protect its nationals in Grenada.¹⁰ The more specific justification was not necessary, but decisionmakers seem to have seen some particular value in it.

Similarly, UK decisionmakers tried to justify the use of force with appeals to the UN Charter and the 1888 Constantinople Convention. Indeed, they only moved to more general appeals when it became clear that they could not create a tenable justification on these standards. However, even recognizing that, UK decisionmakers attempted to justify the action on “the highest legal authority...under the [UN] Charter.”¹¹ In fact, the desire to claim this international law justification – over the protests of the legal advisers¹² – would later contribute to claims that Eden lied to Parliament, accusations which would later collapse his government.

Conclusions

So, why are foreign policy decisions like the use of force accompanied by international legal justifications? It seems that the answer has much to do with the desire to ‘sell’ the action to an international audience – to “sustain and justify world opinion” in the words of Eden – and less to do with any inherent belief in the law or domestic political concerns. For the same reason, decision makers are willing to expend considerable resources in both time and energy in trying to develop justifications that use written legal standards – even if those justifications are weak at best.

What does this mean for law and ethics in foreign policy decision-making? On one hand, these findings caution against seeing international law – or any law – as an ethical good. Law, in many regards, is a language and tool for actors to use. These uses may be ethical, but there is nothing stopping a disingenuous use of the language

of law. At the same time, the fact that decision makers feel constrained by international law – that they care enough about its utility to work on these justifications – may give some hope. While the law of self-defense can, for example, be stretched to justify many cases, it is not limitless. So, while legal restraints are not absolute and do not – on their own – guarantee ethical policymaking, actors remain limited by how far they can stretch the law. In that way, international law may serve to either justify ethically questionable policies or as a restraint by limiting what policies can be justified.



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National Objectives and Diplomatic Reality: A Case Study of Operation Ajax

Franklin T. Burroughs, Ed.D.

Diplomacy and ethics. In theory these two terms differ, but in practice they remain inseparable. Diplomacy represents the observable behavior of one individual or group in relation to another individual or group; ethics, at least to a degree, dictates the moral principles on which the behavior is based.

Throughout history, the dominant political structure has dictated the code of ethics accepted and practiced by the political elite, and the code of ethics in effect at any given point in history has greatly influenced the ethics of professional diplomats and the practice of diplomacy. The early empires, kings and tyrants preferred secretive, surreptitious statecraft. Diplomats were expected to declare and maintain allegiance to their particular heads of state. Their task was to ensure the safety and tenure of their leaders.

In the nineteenth century, the modern nation-state began to evolve, moving diplomacy from the use of a personal set of skills to please and protect particular heads of state to an established profession. As the nation-state concept grew, two schools of practical or public diplomacy developed: coercive or "forceful persuasion" and commercial. Both engage government and many non-government elements.

Various dictatorships adopted the coercive concept and based their international relations thereon. They viewed diplomacy as "the civilian version of war." Coercive diplomacy is considered the hard version of the art and can result in open conflict between nation-states.

Countries that adopted the commercial approach to diplomacy attempted to accommodate diverse interests of nation-states in a way that would satisfy a variety of national concerns and objectives without open

conflict. They focused on the development of business through trade and investment. Commercial diplomacy is considered the soft version of the art.

The world is constantly changing, and public diplomacy between two countries may change accordingly. U.S. diplomacy toward Iran in 1953, for example, became very coercive. The CIA collaborated with Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi in the conduct of Operation Ajax intended to overthrow the elected government of Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh and consolidate the power of the Shah.

Scholars don't always agree on the specific measures the CIA used in launching the 1953 coup, but such authors as Stephen Kinzer and Ervand Abrahamian accept that the CIA employed rather strong tactics in initiating and conducting the coup. Kinzer presents his conclusions in his book titled "All the Shah's Men: An American Coup and the Roots of Middle East Terror;" Abrahamian shares his thoughts in his publication titled "The Coup: 1953, the CIA, and the Roots of Modern U.S.-Iranian Relations." The techniques employed resulted in the arrest of Prime Minister Mossadegh and the deaths of several hundred Iranians.

Operation Ajax destroyed the only democratic government Iran has ever known; for a number of years Ajax served as the blueprint for U.S. covert operations against various governments. It fueled hostility against the West and may have played a role in the Islamic Revolution of 1979.

From the successful Operation Ajax until the mid-1970s the U.S. pursued commercial diplomacy with Iran. Thousands of Americans lived and worked in Iran while thousands of Iranians lived and studied in the United

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States. Increasing numbers of Iranian students sat for the TOEFL Examination, sought academic counseling at the several offices of American Friends of the Middle East located in major Iranian cities and applied for admission to a broad range of American colleges and universities.

Major U.S. companies established facilities in Iran; in the mid-1970s, U.S. Ambassador Richard Helms oversaw the establishment of a U.S.-Iran Chamber of Commerce, which boasted a number of large U.S. firms among its members. The U.S. Embassy provided significant support for the Chamber and its activities until the Islamic Revolution when the embassy was attacked and the hostages taken.

In December 1977, President Jimmy Carter visited Iran and offered his famous tribute to the Shah and the country, declaring Iran "an island of stability in one of the most troubled areas of the world." The declaration pleased and encouraged the Shah, but soon after Carter's speech, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini condemned the presentation and declared the Shah a tyrant and traitor.

In 2016, the British Broadcasting Company (BBC) suggested in a report that the Carter Administration began to work with Ayatollah Khomeini and his followers shortly after President Carter's visit to Iran. Iranians prominent in the conduct of the Islamic Revolution deny that suggestion, but this writer can personally declare that the Carter Administration abandoned the Shah in 1978. The Shah personally asked me to represent him to the Carter Administration in an effort to establish a constitutional monarchy the Shah hoped would keep his regime in power. I took the Shah's request to both the White House and the U.S. Department of State but experienced only rejection. The Shah was forced to leave Iran. The Islamic Revolution occurred, and the Islamic Republic was established.

U.S. diplomacy toward Iran over several decades clearly shows that changes in government attitudes and codes of ethics can greatly affect international affairs and domestic affairs within countries targeted by major powers. The diplomacy toward Iran also shows the long-term advantages of the use of commercial over coercive diplomacy.



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Dual Morals, War Memories, and Soft Power

Eriks Varpahovskis

World War II and Great Patriotic War discourses can be used as a public diplomacy tool and an instrument for political destabilization.

War memories are a huge part of a country's history; they are full of symbols, individual and communal tragedies, that function as nation-building elements (Anderson). War memories can urge cooperation between countries and undermine mutual agreement between nations as well. The Russian government masterfully uses Victory Day, nostalgia, and the fear of the heritage of the victory being attacked as a source of soft power in most of ex-Soviet republics, including Baltic states.



This case demonstrates the duality of how war memories could be used in bilateral and multilateral relations, how war memories can become either a point of communication or cooperation and contribute to mutual understanding, or how the same memories can be turned into a propaganda weapon that makes people draw a line between them and us.

123 Victory Day: Simple concept For Russians and Complex For Baltics

May 9 – Victory Day – is a special day for Russians. On this day, Russians and citizens from most former Soviet Republics commemorate losses in the war and celebrate the victory of the USSR over Nazi Germany. On the 8th of May (it was already the 9th of May in Moscow's time zone), Nazi Germany signed unconditional surrender and ended the war. Every year on this day, Russia, as the main successor of the USSR, conducts massive parades, shoots fireworks, and runs commemorative activities. Four years of war (1941-1945) devastated the country; it is estimated that the USSR lost about 27 million of its citizens (Ellman and Maksudov), while many of its facilities and infrastructure were ruined. The price that the people of the USSR paid for this victory is disastrous and cannot be disputed. It is hard to imagine a family that was not touched by the war.

Victory Day became a traditional holiday for many people who lived in the USSR or their descendants. Preparations for this day's celebration are massive, especially when it is a significant anniversary (for example, this year it is 75 years since Nazi Germany capitulated).¹

Some may be confused by my claim that the war lasted 4 years when it is known that the war began in 1939 and ended in 1945. The events that happened during these two years are game-changers in the understanding and perception of Victory Day. The two years should not be erased from the memory of people because the events that happened within this period demonstrate an extremely complex political situation between countries and reveal the aggressive intentions and actions of the Soviet Union towards its neighboring countries, whom for the population of which is nowadays problematic to perceive the USSR as an innocent victim of the war. The years 1939 and 1940 are critical for understanding the discourse about the war, the duality of morals, and ethics of the use of the war-related heritage as an instrument of soft power.

Among critical events that happened during these two

years were:

1. The Treaty of Non-Aggression between Germany and the USSR was signed on August 23, 1939, which included secret protocols that defined the borders of Soviet and German spheres of influence across the territories of Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, and Finland.
2. Germany started the war by invading Poland on September 1, 1939 from the West, while on September 17, 1939, the Soviets invaded Poland from the East. With the occupation occurring from two sides, Poland soon ceased to exist. The occupation and separation of Poland were accompanied by a joint military parade conducted by Soviets and Nazis in Brest-Litovsk on September 22, 1939 (Marples and Rudling).
3. Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia were incorporated into the Soviet state after the USSR occupied it with its military forces and established puppet governments. Latvia formally joined the USSR on August 5, 1940, Estonia on August 6, 1940, and Lithuania on August 25, 1940.

Knowing that these events happened puts the Soviet Union in a different light as they hint that Nazi Germany was not the only one expanding through attacking and occupying lands of neighboring states. This is why the Soviet propaganda machine and, nowadays, Russian successors, tend to focus on the period of 1941-1945, where the USSR could be portrayed as a victim of Nazi Germany aggression and the main contributor to the victory over Hitler's inhumane regime, leaving aside the fact that a predatory Soviet regime contributed to the commencing of WWII.

Politicizing Victory Day

Unfortunately the celebration of this day cannot escape political agenda. Observance of this date reinforces nostalgic memories about the Soviet past and of those who died during the war, and by speculating on patriotic feelings and memory for victims and veterans of the war, the government re-cultivates the feeling of being surrounded by enemies (Zhuharenko). The mainstream narrative on the government-controlled channels is built following the logic that those who see the Soviet regime as totalitarian and criminal automatically disregard victory of the Soviet Red Army in the war, and consequently, disregard Soviet people's losses in the war, which turns them into supporters of Nazi and fascist regimes (Sukhankin). Propagators back up their message for quite a loyal Russian-speaking audience with fact-based, impressive, and robust information that there were troops of Latvians, Lithuanians, and Estonians



who fought against the USSR on behalf of Wehrmacht (Kazyrytski; Hiio), and some of them collaborated with or joined Einsatzgruppe, a group that was leading the Holocaust in the Baltic territories (Arad). This simplified message implies that those who try to find bad things in the Soviet past (i.e. Latvians, Lithuanians, Estonians) are enemies of Russian citizens because they disregard the memories of veterans and victims and can, thus, become a security threat for Russians (not only citizens) around the globe.

The official position of Baltic states, supported by local media, implies that republics were forcibly incorporated into the USSR, one of the aggressors and starters of WWII. Furthermore, another portion of discontent is arising due to facts that the Soviet regime conducted mass deportation of Latvians, Lithuanians, and Estonians in 1941 and 1949 (Mälksoo), and that after the liberation of these republics from Nazi occupation in 1944, Soviets remained and continued their occupation of Baltic states, which lasted until the USSR collapsed.

War Memories and Russia's Public Diplomacy and Anti-Public Diplomacy in the Baltics

The period of occupation as a part of the USSR brought considerable changes in the Baltic republics, one of the most significant of which was the increase of ethnic Russians in their populations. Right before the USSR dissolution, about 35% of Latvia's population, up to 30% in Estonia, and 9% in Lithuania, were Russians (Harris). Many of them remained in these countries after the USSR dismantling even though newly established nationalist governments of Baltic states applied specific restrictive and discriminatory measures against peoples of non-titular nations. It is estimated that there are up to 1 million Russians among the overall 6 million people who live in the Baltic states. Moreover, they settle very densely in significant cities and are quite proactive both in the political and business sectors.



Voluntarily or not, during the eve of Victory Day, the Russian-speaking minority is united by tradition to celebrate this day, fueled by Russian propaganda-style messages delivered through local Russian speaking media channels, which is invigorated by irresponsible and discriminatory policies of local governments against Russian-speaking minorities (Alijeva; Best); these things, spurred by a contrary interpretation of Soviet past, transform into an instrument used by the Kremlin to incite political instability.

Hence, in the current situation, the Kremlin is equipped with a diaspora, which is quite well-organized as a political power (there are Russian minority-oriented political parties) and is somewhat loyal to the Kremlin because of heritage memories, alienating the policies of local governments and indirect material support (Grigas). By promoting and politicizing heritage narratives about the role of the Soviet Union during WWII among the Russian diaspora in the Baltics, Moscow, instead of finding room for cooperation, rather uses the diaspora as a soft power instrument to destabilize the political situation in the Baltics. In other words, Moscow conducts anti-public diplomacy causing greater misunderstanding and harsher alienation between people (Kuczyńska-Zonik).

Simultaneously, Russia and the Baltic states are utilizing consequences of the military actions conducted in the Baltic territories from 1941 to 1945 to exercise exemplary, moral-based heritage diplomacy that urges cooperation between official authorities as well as more

active collaboration and better mutual understanding between non-state actors. Such practices include the spreading of information about the burial places of soldiers who served in the Red Army, including archeological procedures, identification procedures, and burial ceremonies of the remains of soldiers. For example, in 2017, among the actors that participated in the reburial ceremonial event were representatives of Russian, Ukrainian, Kazakhstani, Belarus, and Azerbaijan embassies in Latvia, officials from the Latvian government, and representatives of military archeology organizations (MID). Thanks to this cooperation descendants of those who fought in the war can now locate where their relatives are buried and pay respect to them.

Multi-Edged Sword of War Memories

The trickiest thing about morals and ethics in the use of war memories in politics is that the same event can be perceived differently by different actors; the context and symbolism associated with war memories can be 100% different for various involved parties. For some, the memory about a grandfather who was killed in a war is sacred because he was fighting against aggressors; for others, the same person represents the occupying regime which brought disgrace to their land while serving the interests of an evil regime; for a third-party, war memory narratives are a populist instrument that are used to distract the attention of a country's population that suffers from corruption and incompetence of their

government; for a fourth-party, war memory turns into the source of activity that engages non-state and state actors for a common goal and creates a better understanding of each other through cooperation.

State and non-state actors who choose to address heritage and war memories, which - per se - have grand symbolical meaning, are obliged to choose how to manage the narrative. Direct or indirect involvement of the government in public diplomacy activity and messaging involves a political background. This message is ultimately delivered not only to the foreign public but to local voters as well. Is it ethical to use war memories for anti-diplomacy and local electoral rallying? Perhaps there is no "yes" or "no" answer to this question, but the public should address memory and history more responsibly.

Lessons for the Future

Unlike animals, humans record their own history. Thanks to globalization and informatization, these records become more and more available to the public, and the amount of information and details available also grows. Relations between countries become incredibly complicated as all steps in these relations are recorded. Especially knotty relations exist between neighboring countries. Any neighborhood has experienced episodes of peace, love, and hate in its history. These moments cannot be forgotten or wiped out of their context and mutual memory. If people would like to coexist peacefully with neighbors in this extremely globalized and interconnected universe, they have to learn how to reflect on populist agenda based on war memories and dark heritage exploitation. The public should learn how to perceive these complicated narratives and understand how irresponsible interpretation of war memory-related information and facts are used to manipulate people's behavior.



Eriks Varpahovskis

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Case Study: Ethical Controversy in the Confucius Institutes as a Mode of Chinese Cultural Exchange

Chen Wang

The Confucius Institute is a non-profit educational institution established by China in foreign countries and has developed rapidly over the past ten years. With the purpose of teaching the Chinese language and spreading Chinese culture, the Confucius Institutes have been widely regarded as a vital measure of Chinese public diplomacy, which is conducive to improving China's soft power around the world. So far, there are 541 Confucius Institutes and 1,170 Confucius Classrooms in 162 countries and regions around the world (Hanban, 2020). The reasons for this significant increase include the resources and institutional incentives provided by Hanban, as well as the demand for Mandarin teaching due to the world's growing interest in China.

Why is the Confucius Institute Controversial?

In recent years, there have been more and more questions about the Confucius Institute. In 2014 one hundred professors at the University of Chicago opposed the establishment of the Confucius Institute. Since then, ten American universities, including the University of Pennsylvania and Beverly State University, have terminated their cooperation with the Confucius Institute. Last year, the United States Government Accountability Office and the United States Senate Standing Committee of Inquiry respectively issued reports proposing adjustments and reforms to the Confucius Institutes established by China in the United States. If these suggestions for adjustments and reforms cannot be met, it would result in direct closures of Confucius Institutes.

In the documentary, *In the Name of Confucius* (2017) former CSIS Asia-Pacific bureau chief, Michel-Juneau Katsuya commented in an interview that the Confucius Institute was not only used by the CCP to control the Western educational institutions it depends on, but also used to have more impact on the unexpected social test drive on campus. He even described the Confucius Institute as a "Trojan Horse," performing a spy-like function. Taking advantage of this to some extent, according to his words, the Confucius Institute has become a political propaganda tool of the Chinese government. Some American scholars held similar views. In 2014, the American Association of University Professors released a report calling on universities



A Mandarin phonetics poster used to teach students Chinese pronunciation of Chinese characters. Source: Free image

to close their Confucius Institutes or renegotiate agreements to ensure academic freedom and control (Redden, 2019). Apart from this, some faculty members of the Confucius Institutes have complained about the content of some textbooks, which they believe reflects the Communist Party's ideological propaganda



purpose, running counter to the values promoted by other countries and damaging their national interest.

Finding A Balance

As a tool of public diplomacy, the Confucius Institutes have promoted communication between the people of China and other countries and developed academic and cultural exchanges between different countries. However, in the process, they have also been subjected to moral tests. The question lies in how to coordinate public diplomacy that is good for the exporting country but may not be good for the host audience. Target audience's criticisms of controversial issues need to be handled reasonably. In regards to the Confucius Institute incident, China regards the Confucius Institute as a national brand that helps shape the national image and improve its soft power, while some scholars and politicians in other countries consider it a vehicle for China's political propaganda campaign.

I think the importance of the principles of objectivity and morality in public diplomacy can be reflected in this matter. One of the feasible solutions to the current problems of the Confucius Institutes is to ensure academic freedom and the objectivity of the content of the textbooks, including those on topics not related to politics. The Confucius Institutes also need to actively cooperate with educational and cultural institutions in different countries so that the teaching content does not violate the society and values of other countries and promotes understanding and communication in different cultures. To achieve a positive cultural exchange, the Confucius Institutes should also continue to innovate, develop a variety of activities, and engage

more participants. In sum, the development of public diplomacy in any country should be based on not jeopardizing the national interests of other countries.

In my opinion, in order to maintain the balance between ethics and public diplomacy, any institute that aims at cultural exchanges should not take profit as its primary purpose or be overly politicized. This also applies to any public diplomatic campaign. Even public diplomacy campaigns initiated by government departments should not be used as a means of political propaganda, because excessive politicization may induce resistance from the target audience, thereby causing loss of trust by the people in countries. Additionally, cultural education institutes like Confucius Institutes, as an apparatus of a country's soft power, need to establish cultural exchanges based on mutual respect for cultural differences in the process of cultural export. Therefore, they need to avoid overt self-promotion and the degradation of a specific culture. To achieve this goal, I think these institutes should reduce excessive government intervention to ensure objectivity.



Chen Wang

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Confucius Institutes: Growing Ethical Problems of China's Soft Power

Lindsay Cai

The Confucius Institute has been a public educational organization under the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China since 2004. Just like other countries' cultural centers, the Confucius Institute aims to spread culture and language around the world through various exchanges. In 2014, Xi Jinping, the Chairman of People's Republic of China, expressed admiration for the Confucius Institute and said, "Confucius Institute belongs to China, and also belongs to the world."¹ After Xi's speech, the Confucius



Institute became integrated into state policy and was quickly promoted around the world.² According to official data, there are now over 480 Confucius Institutes around the world, as well as 1,193 Confucius classrooms based in primary and secondary schools.³ The number of Confucius Institutes increased rapidly after the first one was established at the University of Maryland College Park in 2004, with 103 Confucius Institutes now located in the United States.⁴ This massive number showcases that the United States is a prime target audience for the Chinese government.

Although Chairman Xi Jinping announced that the Confucius Institute is "a bridge reinforcing friendship" between China and the world, the Confucius Institute did not develop as successfully as he expected.⁵ This organization has been criticized due to concerns of rising Chinese influence in the countries in which it

operates. As a result, though there are 103 Confucius Institutes in the United States at present, 33 Confucius Institutes have closed or are in the process of closing.⁶ If the goal of creating the Confucius Institute is to provide foreign publics with a chance to learn Chinese and more about China, why did this seemingly moral engagement strategy become "unethical public diplomacy" in other's eyes, leading to what some describe as an immoral result?

Many countries have language and culture organizations, such as South Korea's Korean Culture Center, Portugal's Instituto Camões, Britain's British Council, France's Alliance Française, and so on. Those countries' governments help develop independent cultural organizations in main cities all around the world. Creating language and culture promotion organizations in foreign countries is a common strategy and should be a win-win, beneficial for both the exporting and host countries and their people. However, instead of setting up cultural organizations independently, China's Confucius Institute always partners with universities and colleges and sets up offices on campus. The Confucius Institute gets millions of funds from the Chinese government every year and works closely with the PRC. The Confucius Institute is overseen by Hanban, the Office of Chinese Language Council International, and Hanban carefully controls ideology through censorship of the Confucius Institute. For instance, all Confucius Institute teachers must be Chinese citizens and are selected by Hanban. In addition, Hanban asks all Confucius Institutes to use the same textbooks and reject any other language books that they do not authorize for use.⁷

These behaviors raise many ethical concerns for students and scholars regarding China's influence over the Confucius Institute's programming, as all teachers



Confucius Institute is one instrument of China's cultural diplomacy to bolster Chinese soft power globally. Backed by significant government funding, China aims to have 1,000 Confucius institutes by 2020 and push this "Confucius revolution" onto the world. However, if the Chinese government continues to, as some say, interfere with free speech and conduct unethical public diplomacy, will this goal be actualized?

from the Confucius Institute must obey Chinese laws and rules and, as such, definitely deliver PRC's values to students. Teachers will not engage in many controversial subjects and sensitive topics such as the massacre in Tiananmen Square or China's human rights record.⁸ When students ask their teachers whether or not Taiwan is independent, it can be assumed they will be told, "Taiwan is part of China," with no hesitation. More and more people consider the Confucius Institute's attempted censorship as a "bullying approach to academic freedom."⁹ In its 2019 report on China, Human Rights Watch said that "Confucius Institutes are extensions of the Chinese government that censor certain topics and perspectives in course materials on political grounds, and use hiring practices that take political loyalty into consideration."¹⁰

As tensions between the United States and China have grown, the Confucius Institutes have come under increased scrutiny in various instances. A United States law passed in 2019 banned universities hosting Confucius Institutes from receiving funding for Chinese language studies from the Chinese Department of Defense led to more closures of Confucius Institutes.¹¹ Arizona State and San Diego State are the latest universities in the United States to choose to close their Confucius Institutes. Closures have similarly taken place in the United Kingdom, France, Sweden, and Denmark. Canada's New Brunswick province has also announced the removal of some Confucius programs from its public schools. In 2020, Sweden ended agreements with all Confucius Institutes in the country.¹²

Although the Confucius Institute is a language and culture promotion organization, it is also considered as an essential way for China to spread its reach and cultivate its soft power around the world. The Confucius Institute spreads propaganda and censorship under the guise of teaching and interferes with free speech on campuses and amongst students. The



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Progress occurs when
courageous, skillful leaders
seize the opportunity to change
things for the better.

- Harry Truman

ETHICS DURING A PANDEMIC

Dr.
Li
Wen



liang

A 19-year old Chinese student's drawing of Dr. Li Wenliang. Before he died from COVID-19, Dr. Li said, "A healthy society has more than one voice." Source: Public Diplomacy Magazine

Op-Ed | COVID-19 or Wuhan Virus? The Importance of Words

Anonymous

Ethical public messaging should not aim to be offensive. Neither should it be dismissive of a corrupt government.

I am writing this piece anonymously for two reasons. First, my American organization would never clear this, even if they had time to look at it. Second, the Chinese Government would find time to look at it and kick me out of their country. For this article a Chinese citizen would, at a minimum, be sent to jail.

Right now Americans are arguing about what to call this virus. People who want to pin blame on China call it "Wuhan Virus" or "Chinese Virus." Other people say that this is racist or xenophobic or just plain mean and we should call it "COVID-19 (Corona Virus Disease)."

Words matter. What should we call this virus?

There are two problems with calling this virus Wuhan Virus or Chinese Virus.

First, there are many Chinese and Wuhanese who are not to blame for this disaster. One courageous doctor in Wuhan tried to alert other doctors and was warned by authorities to desist. Sadly, Dr. Li died after contracting the virus, leaving his pregnant widow and an infant child. Dr. Li was one of many who tried, against great odds, to stop the virus early on. Since then, other Chinese have sacrificed to treat patients and bring the virus under control. We should not tarnish their image or memory by seeming to pin this on a whole people, nation or province.

Second, by identifying the disease only with Wuhan or China, we trigger the resentment of many Chinese people, causing them to rally around their flag, and by implication around their government. This is unfortunate,

because many Chinese want to honestly criticize their government's faulty response. They want to change the current system to prevent this kind of disaster from happening again. By seeming to criticize their whole country we undercut these critics and reformers.

For the good of China and the world, our words must honor the Chinese who sacrificed to fight this virus and support the Chinese who want to make needed changes.

On the other hand, simply calling the coronavirus COVID-19 could erase the memory of the Chinese government's oversight, which is why the Chinese government insist we call this virus COVID-19. The WHO agreed to that designation because they did not want to get kicked out of China. Like it or not, we are stuck with COVID-19. This term will gain currency over time.

But we can re-brand and re-purpose this term. In the Chinese environment where the wrong words can land you in prison, people re-purpose words and give them a secret meaning all the time. It is the best that they can do. There is a wink, a nod and an understanding. Outside of China, we are free to fill an old word with new meaning, explain it when able and slyly wink when necessary.

Even if my proposed re-branding of COVID-19 never gains currency, it helps explain the problem and identify possible solutions. Let's use COVID-19 as an acronym and understand how and why this virus has become a worldwide disaster ("D").

For the good of China and the world, our words must honor the Chinese who sacrificed to fight this virus and support the Chinese who want to make needed changes.

"CO" stands for Communist, or the Communist Party of China. China is not a Communist country, and it does not even try to be. To most Chinese people,

the idea that their government is Communist is a joke (or just a wink). There is greater wealth inequality in China than in the United States. But the Party that controls the Government calls itself Communist for historical reasons and let's respect their self-designation.

"V" stands for Vertical. Putin described his re-centralization of power in Russia as the "Power Vertical." Imagine a vertical line with Putin, the Czar, an Emperor or a Chairman at the top. Information and requests flow up the vertical line. Power, permission and resources flow down the vertical line to underlings. In a Power Vertical, the person at the top is theoretically very powerful and effective.

All political leaders are tempted by the Power Vertical, even good ones. Our American Constitution recognizes this tendency. That is why we have a system of checks and balances in our government.

China (and Russia) for historical and cultural reasons has a stronger tendency to the Power Vertical. Some of the worst disasters in Chinese history are due to the Power Vertical, including the current virus disaster.

Why is the Power Vertical to blame for the current virus disaster? A Power Vertical has features that tend to allow small problems to become big problems, which is exactly what happened in Wuhan in November and December of 2019.

Imagine a fire in the engine room of a ship. In a Power Vertical, a crewman comes upon a small fire. He does not take initiative himself, but reports the fire to the Chief Engineer. The Chief Engineer calls the bridge to request directions from the Captain. The Captain is in the bathroom. When the Captain emerges, he sends directions back down the vertical. By now, the small fire is a large fire.

The first problem with a Power Vertical is that bad or unwelcome news is slow to travel up the vertical. The second problem is that unwelcome information must go through many reluctant layers. The third problem is that the vertical discourages initiative at lower levels. The fourth problem is that permission, power and resources flow downward slowly at first.

Once engaged on a problem, the Power Vertical can be very effective. But by the time the Power Vertical engages the small problem is a big one.

This is a perfect description of what happened in Wuhan. Local authorities at first covered up the bad news, then tried unsuccessfully to get the layers above them engaged. Finally, after the epidemic was out of control, they took the blame. This is another feature of

the Power Vertical. The person at the top of the Power Vertical is never to blame. If only he (it is always a "he") had known, he would have acted sooner. Of course, we know that the person at the top is to blame for creating or abetting a Power Vertical system that keeps him in the dark until it is too late. In China that leader is Xi Jinping. He is not blameless no matter what official Chinese media says.

"I" stands for Insulated. Insulation keeps out unwanted sounds and protects against unwanted changes (as in temperature). An insulated system does not allow for independent actors or voices outside the Power Vertical. There is no free media, no opposing political party, no independent religious, academic or economic interest that can criticize the Power Vertical.

Dr. Li, before his death, put his finger on the problem when he said, "A healthy society has more than one voice."

Think about that for a minute. In China there is just one voice. The Chinese government system is insulated. Picture that vertical line again. On the one hand, the Power Vertical inhibits unwelcome information from moving up the vertical line. On the other hand, the Power Vertical insulates itself from outside criticism or from information that challenges Party orthodoxy.

A couple nights ago I was watching CNN and an interview with Mike Chinoy. Mike led off with a routine acknowledgement that the Chinese government's initial response to the virus was slow. Just as he pivoted to praise the effective response when the central government finally engaged, my TV went black. The censors were a little slow, but they did what they always do. They insulated. They allowed only one voice. They heard criticism and blocked the channel.

Independent voices are visited by the police. They sign documents promising to desist and to not destroy social harmony. If they persist, other things happen to them. People learn to be quiet. Even the NBA figures it out.

"D" stands for Disaster. That's what we have. President Trump said, "The world is paying a very big price for what they did." He is right of course. A "VID" is a "Vertically Insulated Disaster." If you look at the other VIDs in history, you will see that most impacted their own people.

This one happens to affect the whole world. "Q-VID 1839-60" was the disaster of the Opium Wars. The Qing Emperor could not learn the truth about Qing defeats at the hands of the British. Every lost battle was presented as a victory. The Power Vertical and the lack of independent sources meant that the Emperor was in

the dark and ineffective. Q-VID 1839-60 demonstrates that pre-Communist China could experience a VID.

"COVID 58-62" was the disaster of Mao's Great Leap Forward. The people at the bottom reported false agricultural surpluses up the Power Vertical because that is what Mao wanted to hear. By the time COVID 58-62 was over, between 18 and 45 million Chinese lay dead of starvation. Mao never apologized and his visage appears on all paper money to this day. Of course, if only Mao had known, fewer Chinese may have perished.

Another outstanding VID in history is "R-VID 41." That's when Stalin would not believe reports that Hitler was preparing to attack the Soviet Union. The Power Vertical did its job and filtered out information unwanted by Stalin. The few messages that made it up the vertical were dis-believed, and some messengers were shot dead. There were no outside voices. The Soviet Union was unnecessarily surprised by Operation Barbarossa, the massive Nazi assault. About 27 million perished in that war, mainly because of R-VID 41.

"R-VID 86" was Chernobyl. All the vertically insulated aspects of the Soviet Union worked to keep the disaster quiet until Swedish sensors thousands of miles away picked up increased radiation levels.

The self-defeating nature of most VIDs and the fact that most victims are subjects of their own vertically insulated governments means that those citizens have strong reasons to make changes. They have the most to lose.

Vertically insulated systems don't just produce big disasters that make it into history books (although COVID 58-62 is still not well covered in Chinese history books). These systems enable corruption, fraud, industrial accidents and all sorts of bad practices. These banal and daily costs are borne by the hapless and suffering citizenry over decades. Mao probably set China back 30 years with his various economic stupidities, even apart from COVID 58-62.

Now that our world is more globalized, a "COVID" as I've defined it can kill more than just Chinese citizens. It can become a worldwide pandemic.

What VIDs will be next? Will we see a "COVID-25," another pandemic? Will there be a "COVID-29" when the People's Liberation Army (PLA) Navy engages with the U.S. Navy? History teaches that vertically insulated governments, while they do some things well (like building railroads), fail spectacularly when speed, creativity and initiative are needed.

The Chinese Communist Vertically Insulated Disaster of 2019 (COVID-19) is a disaster for the whole world. We are locking down, hardening borders, taking casualties. The government responsible for this disaster wants us to move on. They want the world to think there is nothing to see here - after all, they can build hospitals from scratch in two weeks.

But we know what really happened. And we know why. If the vertically insulated nature of the present Chinese Communist regime does not change, something like COVID-19 may happen again.

On March 19, the authorities issued a solemn apology to Dr. Li's family and punished the two police officers who told him to stop spreading rumors. When they build his monument in Tiananmen Square, we can only hope that they will write below his name in bold Chinese characters, "A healthy society has more than one voice."

Words matter.

Op-Ed | Ethics of Public Diplomacy Under the Epidemic Situation

Xinyi Yang

How China and the US's public diplomacy influence Chinese international students' daily lives in the U.S.

The COVID-19 virus has spread around the world. How to deal with panic and crisis in this period of pandemic has become a crucial question for governments. As an overseas Chinese student, I would like to discuss this question from both the American and Chinese sides.

Understandably, COVID-19 negatively impacts people's daily lives and health. Globally, more than 2.85 million people have been diagnosed and 200,000 people have died.¹ The regular operations of society have also been disturbed: a growing number of countries are ordering

their residents to stay at home; tourism, hospitality, and manufacturing have yet to return to normal operations;² most domestic and international flights have been cancelled. Globally, revenue losses for 2020 are already estimated to be between \$63 billion and \$113 billion.³ As the first country to experience the COVID-19 outbreak, the Chinese government has handled that responsibility with humanity, providing free COVID-19 tests and treatment to every person with a legal identity living in China without concern for that person's nationality.⁴ By treating foreigners living in China as equals and helping to make them feel safe,⁵ China's actions have gained the praise of many.

As of November 2019, there were nearly 370,000 Chinese international students in the U.S. (Statista, 2019) Source: Author's image, with permission.



However, recent incidents have changed the conversation surrounding the Chinese government and the COVID-19 crisis.

On March 1, 2020, Redfield, Director of U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) stated that some influenza deaths in the U.S. had been identified as cases of COVID-19.⁶ Then, on March 12, the Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian posted several comments stating that the COVID-19 had been brought to Wuhan by U.S. troops⁷ while asking the U.S. government for an explanation on his official Twitter account.⁸ Zhao's comments sparked a war of words between China and the U.S.. Zhao asserted that his claims were based on exchanges from a March 11th CDC conference; however, the claims are currently unfounded.

From a personal perspective, Zhao's actions has unconsciously impacted the situation of Chinese students overseas. The U.S. government and media have viewed Zhao's comments as Chinese propaganda and an unethical public diplomacy method. To respond to Zhao's claim, Donald Trump has named COVID-19 the "Chinese Virus," which of course caused discontent among Chinese people as well.⁹ The conflict between China and the U.S. has put Chinese students overseas in an awkward situation and has led to their discrimination by some Westerners; additionally, various Chinese restaurants in San Francisco have suffered violent attacks and movie posters advertising the new feature film *Hua Mulan* have been smeared with malicious insults to China. These incidents have made Chinese students feel unsafe and discriminated against in the U.S.. On the other side of the globe, Zhao's comments have also caused trouble for his country. As an official spokesman for the Chinese government, his decision to post unverified information has not only decreased the credibility of the Chinese government but also the Chinese Foreign Ministry.

In a sensitive time like now, every piece of information can influence people's attitudes towards a nation. Whether Zhao's comments and Trump's calling COVID-19 the "Chinese virus" are their personal opinions or the opinions of their governments, it is disinformation that is unethical in diplomatic affairs. Even if these actions were perceived as conflict resolution methods produced by each government to persuade their civilians to pay more attention to another country's problems, the content of the messaging would, and has, impeded the rational relationship between China and the U.S. and has caused more harm than good. Hence, the public leaders of a nation should be as objective as possible when providing their opinions and be held to a higher standard for the words they say, being mindful that every word they utter could directly impact many lives or even a single life – as it has mine.



Xinyi Yang

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COVID-19 & Chinese Public Diplomacy: Soft Power, Sharp Power and Ethics

Niedja Santos

In late February 2020, The World Health Organization (WHO) stated that “China had rolled out perhaps the most ambitious, agile and aggressive disease containment effort in history,”¹ emphasizing that the rigorous measures adopted by China in the struggle with COVID-19 provided “vital lessons for the global response.”² As a matter of fact, while combating the novel virus, China has also been conducting public diplomacy. Beyond soft power, however, the COVID-19 crisis has required strong measures nestled in sharp power, as well. In this scenario, since sharp power raises ethical issues, how do the Chinese movements and responses towards the new disease relate to ethics?

China is widely recognized for its culture, especially its gastronomy, artwork, literature, medicine, the list goes on and on.³ Surely, this opens the door for public diplomacy. The country has been investing largely in the Confucius Institute worldwide, focusing on education as well as people-to-people and knowledge exchange. Referring to Chinese efforts to enhance the country’s global identity, Wang states that “nowhere else has the idea of ‘soft power’ been as widely discussed, embraced, and appropriated as in China.”⁴

On the other hand, the supposed autocratic control over its soft power public diplomacy apparatus by the Communist Party of China (CPC) is considered a weakness of the country’s foreign policy.⁵ Namely, it is said that the central control over information disclosed by the country’s international broadcaster CCTV (China Central Television) in the United Kingdom results in colored news that affects the audience.⁶ As Joseph Nye notes, soft power is not always used for good aims.⁷ I argue this is proof that Chinese public diplomacy is actually a combination of soft and sharp power tools.⁸

Some international relations experts define sharp power as a kind of soft power,⁹ others as a form of hard power,¹⁰ or even smart power.¹¹ When the term was coined, however, in 2017 by Walker and Ludwig, they defined it as neither soft nor hard. They describe sharp power as the one that “pierces, penetrates, or perforates the political and information environments in the target countries.”¹² It could be distinguished from public diplomacy as there are different means for the implementation of sharp power.¹³ Despite this, it has been studied by public diplomacy scholars.¹⁴

The USC Center on Public Diplomacy defines public diplomacy as the “public, interactive dimension of diplomacy which is not only global in nature, but also involves a multitude of actors and networks...[a] key mechanism through which nations foster mutual trust and productive relationships and has become crucial to building a secure global environment.”¹⁵

In this context, sharp power is an ideal model of public diplomacy for some governments to gain attraction and influence (features of soft power). This pattern has been noted by some to exemplify attitudes adopted by China as the nation positions itself in geopolitics and in the international system.¹⁶ From another perspective, eastern authors claim such assertions are unsupported western narratives.¹⁷ To this point, Mr. Wang Guoqing, the spokesperson of the 13th National Committee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), has argued, “Accusing China of using ‘sharp power’ by some western people is full of hype and bias [...] western countries demonstrate their ‘soft power’ or ‘smart power,’ while claiming the same demonstration from China is ‘sharp power.’”¹⁸

Sharp power is hostile to freedom of expression and thinking, open debate, independence of thought and individual liberty.¹⁹ It has been revealed that sharp power does this by enabling actions like opinion manipulation, opaque policy-making, voice suppression,²⁰ visa and grant rejection, diaspora spying,²¹ restriction on access to markets,²² foreign election interference, censorship, fake news, caviar diplomacy and control via artificial intelligence capacities.²³ Usually, through sharp power, those actions can be applied to the media, academia, and political elites. Beyond achieving the immediate aims of an authoritarian state, these intimidation tactics may even lead to self-censorship among academics, citizens, and opinion leaders.²⁴

Consequently, sharp power is criticized and frequently considered unethical. Mark Amstutz, a scholar of ethics in foreign relations, writes, "Ethics involves choosing or doing what is right and good and refraining from choosing or doing what is bad or evil. From an ethical perspective, the good is realized by application of appropriate moral norms to private and public affairs."²⁵ However, the international system is a complex²⁶ and fragmented environment, where each state has its own set of values.²⁷ As a result, ethical standards may not be easy to infer as Amstutz's black and white definition.

In spite of the criticism, sharp power can be an important, necessary, and sometimes ethical tactic in given situations. We could say that this is the case amidst the pandemic crisis imposed by COVID-19. The Chinese response gives some clues as to how sharp and soft power can ethically complement each other in public diplomacy.

The world began to hear about the novel coronavirus in the first days of 2020. On 31 December 2019, Wuhan health authorities reported the first cases of pneumonia of unknown etiology to the Chinese WHO Office. 44 cases were identified by January 3, 2020. The new type of coronavirus was isolated by Chinese experts on January 7. Next, WHO was informed of the causal agent associated with exposures in a seafood market in Wuhan on January 12 - just one day after China reported its first death connected to the virus. The first cases in other nations, including Thailand, Japan, Korea and the United States became known between January 13 and 20.²⁸ At that point, on January 13, WHO declared a global health emergency. The pandemic was declared on March 11. Unfortunately, by April 30 there were 3.1 million confirmed cases and more than 217,000 deaths around the globe.²⁹ The aggressive and incredibly contagious coronavirus has been realized as one of the biggest threats to health ever posed to humankind.³⁰

China was the first to face this huge challenge. Despite being accused of taking harmful authoritarian measures

early in the outbreak.³¹ The country formed a three pronged strategy to combat the threat focused on: (1) health and research, (2) social regulations, and (3) public management and health surveillance.

From the health and research perspective, the country was focused on actions such as:³²

- defining of protocols for diagnosis and treatment;
- protection for front-line health care workers;
- identification of the new coronavirus' genome sequences

From a public diplomacy perspective, those measures have had domestic and international results for China who, for instance, shared information collected on COVID-19 with WHO and other countries. When domestic actions are passed on internationally for the benefit of other nations, it is not only knowledge exchange at work (clearly a facet of public diplomacy), but also an element of compassion and global goodwill. These will all ultimately play into China's soft power.

Secondly, although the country's social regulation measures have been admittedly effective, some have also been called 'brutal'³³ given their authoritarian nature. As a result, the examples below can be categorized as sharp power:

- compulsory isolation and mandatory 'stay-at-home' orders;
- shutting down of cities, suppression of gatherings and prohibition of travel;
- use of drones and 5G technologies to patrol and trace population and masking in streets

Thirdly, in public management and health surveillance, China adopted actions, like the ones listed below, which likely required sharp power behind the scenes:

- coordinated allocation of medical supplies among cities and provinces;
- construction of huge hospitals in few days;
- maintaining the prices and stability of commodities

When referring to the coronavirus outbreak, Wang stated that the "prevailing mandate of public diplomacy is to deliver [a] clear, consistent explanation of policies and intentions to the wider international community, with the goal of inspiring trust and confidence."³⁴ In this regard, China has been recognized by WHO due to its role "in

protecting the global community and creating a stronger first line of defense against international spread."³⁵ It could be said that China's global performance in response to the COVID-19 pandemic has been suited to the challenge. As a matter of fact, measures adopted by China were replicated worldwide,³⁶ as a signal of successful performance.

On the other hand, there are growing accusations against China over the country's lack of transparency and even its responsibility in the spread of the novel coronavirus.³⁷ In this evolving international context, China soon engaged in 'mask diplomacy' launched by Japan,³⁸ by taking advantage of the geopolitical game through 'politics of generosity.'³⁹

Most, if not all, academic works and articles on sharp power do not condone the objectionable practice. However, the COVID-19 pandemic shows sharp power has been useful in the face of the coronavirus. Other countries worldwide have adopted equal or similar measures with approval from their citizenries. So, as it occurs that soft power can be used to serve unfavorable aims,⁴⁰ it would seem sharp power can be used to acceptable ends. Humankind has witnessed China's orchestration of soft and the sharp power efforts with mastery in the fight against COVID-19. Though only time will tell if sharp power can one day be considered an ethical means to favorable ends in the international landscape in any significant way.



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Attribution, Reputation, and COVID-19: An Interview With Nick Cull

Joshua Morris

I am joined by one of the most prolific contributors to the field of public diplomacy, Nicholas Cull. Dr. Cull is the founding director of the USC Master's of Public Diplomacy program and part of the team recognized by the Department of State with the Benjamin Franklin Award in 2004. He served as the president of the International Association for Media and History. He has provided advice and training in public diplomacy to a number of foreign ministries and cultural agencies around the world including those of the U.S., U.K., Canada, Mexico, Switzerland, and the Netherlands. He has published many books, the most recent of which is *Public Diplomacy: Foundations for Global Engagement in the Digital Age* (Polity, 2019).

Joshua Morris: I am excited for our discussion today. I want to start by speaking about something you have touched on before, the dangers of attribution in public diplomacy. For those reading this, attribution refers to "attribution theory," a subject mostly studied in social psychology that suggests that as we try to understand the actions and decisions of those around us, our biases and human error often lead us misattribute the causes. Why is it important to understand attribution in public diplomacy?

Nick Cull: As a historian I am inherently 'late to the party' of attribution theory, but I agree that public diplomacy has a lot to learn from the field. It is particularly important to recognize the limits on our own ability to accurately understand the behavior of others. One related phenomenon I saw in the early stages of the Global War on Terror was an assumption that certain

cultures were so different as to be beyond empathy: 'not understanding the value of human life' for example. My own experience has been that the Golden Rule is a safe default assumption and that if you would hate it if a foreigner dropped a bomb on a family wedding, an Afghan probably would too.

JM: Well put. I could not agree more. Of course, practicing the Golden Rule is easier said than done. A recent example might be how we have been quick to dole out criticism for responses to COVID-19 yet seemingly done little to empathize with those decisions, both at a local and global level. We have discussed how misattribution and bias can harm public diplomacy, but I know from your classes that public diplomacy may also provide a solution as it fosters mutual understanding during such times. Can you speak to this?

NC: I see public diplomacy as an especially important field right now. The road beyond COVID-19 will require international cooperation, not just to address the medical crisis but to rebuild the international economy. As I argue in the final chapter of my 2019 book, effective partnership needs such public diplomacy related skills as effective listening, including an understanding of our own limits as listeners. We will need advocacy of a shared vision, and management of tensions within the relationships. I also think that exchange and cultural diplomacy need to be part of the process of building partnerships. This has been part of successful partnerships in the past such as the Franco-German post-war partnership.

JM: You mention public diplomacy's role in generating international cooperation to rebuild the economy in the aftermath of this crisis. Of course, it helps stimulate foreign investment and facilitates intranational collaborations to rebuild the economy, but we are always fighting for these economic boons. Why is now different? Why would we need to emphasize international collaboration and reputation now of all times?

NC: As you know, I am interested in reputation as a dimension of international relations. The best-known countries have been understood to enjoy soft power as a result of their prominence. Portland Communications tracks the top thirty. But as I see it now, all countries need to be concerned about their reputation not just as an optional extra but as an element in their security. I call this 'reputational security.' The behavior of countries during the COVID-19 pandemic will enhance the reputational security of some international actors. I think South Korea will be seen as responding well and that the virus will be added to a growing tally of South Korean success in fields as diverse as engineering, food and entertainment.

Taiwan will come out of the crisis with its reputation enhanced because of its effective public health response. Remember that most countries don't recognize Taiwan as a country anymore. Some of the Nordics seem to be impressing people – Iceland and Finland – also New Zealand seems to be adding its virus response to narratives of positive responses to adversity like their mass shooting last year. There is a chance of reputational damage to some actors. Netherlands has chosen to break ranks with other European countries in its virus response and if that response fails it may lose ground. Of course, the behavior of the United States is open to tremendous scrutiny and particular 'America First' decisions like attempting to obtain exclusive access to vaccines will be resented internationally.

JM: Of course, the Soft Power Thirty will be a good measure of how Coronavirus affects reputational security, but what other sources do you rely on as a gauge?

NC: My go-to source on the relative prestige of nations is Simon Anholt's index. If this year follows the usual pattern, he will conduct polling in the early summer. We will see results in October. His big finding from a decade and a half of polling is that reputations are surprisingly stable, but he has always conceded that a really big crisis could change this. Maybe this is that really big crisis.

JM: I reason that one of the key purposes of reputational security is that it serves as a bulwark

against incendiary and malicious information efforts. Do you have any thoughts about how reputational security has been protecting countries now as conspiracies fly regarding COVID-19, namely the targets of those conspiracies, the U.S. and China?

NC: One of the emerging stories from the virus is the issue of truth in media. This is not just a question of western governments pushing back on the Russian government-sponsored media claptrap about the virus being a US bio weapon. US public diplomacy is directing attention to the flaws in the official Chinese virus statistics; under-counting deaths and ignoring a-symptomatic cases. That story will run and run. We also see the on-going story of the duties of platforms to take down fakes. The attacks on 5G infrastructure in the UK are prompting overdue action.

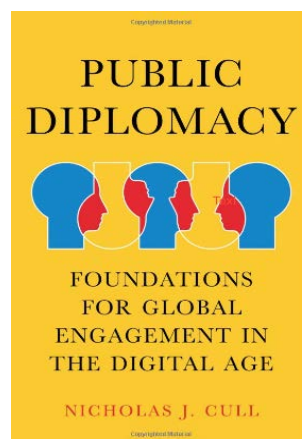
JM: Well Dr. Cull I cannot thank you enough for your time and your valuable insights. Do you have any final thoughts?

NC: The bottom line in this crisis is that the behavior of individuals is now in play. Social media platforms enable us to look in on the resilience and cohesion of some and the chaos and recrimination of others. It is a time for all of us to do what we can to be our best selves whether or not the world is watching.

For more information on the Soft Power Thirty, please visit: softpower30.com.

For more on Simon Anholt's Ipsos Nation Brands Index (NBI), please visit: <https://www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/anholt-ipsos-nation-brands-index.pdf>

*Dr. Cull's recent book, **Public Diplomacy: Foundations for Global Engagement in the Digital Age**, is available online and can be purchased on Amazon at: bit.ly/pdffoundations.*





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Editor-in-Chief, 2020-21

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WEEKS, David

Title: Doing the Right Thing: Aristotle for Aspiring Diplomats

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Subversive & Malicious Information

ISSUE 24 FALL/WINTER 2020-21

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