# Cultural Diplomacy as a Vocation: Understanding Through Participatory Methods

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# Vocations

- When asked to participate I had to think of something useful to say.
- Max Weber often spoke of vocations. "Science as a vocation". "Politics as a vocation".
- I considered that Cultural Diplomacy entailed a disposition.
- Then I realized that I am no Weber and not in a position to offer advice. I am not a diplomat, Nor am I an artist. In other words, I realized that I lack direct experience of cultural diplomacy as it is conceptualized or practiced.
- But maybe that is significant in and of itself, since if cultural diplomacy is to be qualitatively different it must engage actors at various levels and encourage agency.
- So, I also considered that I am an ipso facto practioner.

# Rediscovery of 'soft power'

▸ Still, since cultural diplomacy is in ascendance enjoying a 'renaissance', we need to consider what it is essentially and what best practices there are.

▸ The rediscovery of 'soft power' is no coincidence, stemming as it does from the failure of 'hard power' following Iraq and Afghanistan.

▸ Habermas: US lost its formal moral and political authority.

▸

# Functions of Cultural Diplomacy

▸ First, let us note that there is some skepticism regarding cultural diplomacy. Let's begin with the concern for function.

▸ Brandon Woolf:

  ▸ Marketing tool for damaged American image?

  ▸ A tool for disseminating neoliberal ideology?

  ▸ A diplomatic tool of 'soft power'?

  ▸ A functional or transactional tool employed to realize particular policy objectives?

  ▸ Development of approaches to address and anticipate concerns?

▸ A new form of diplomacy?

  ▸ Mutuality and exchange

  ▸ Understanding, acceptance, and willingness to acknowledge difference.

▸ The jury is still out on the potential for cultural diplomacy.

▸

# Definitions

▸ So, what is Cultural Diplomacy (CD) and what is it for?

▸ Cultural Diplomacy as "exchange of ideas, information, and other aspects of culture among nations and their peoples in order to foster mutual understanding" (Cummings, 2003: 1).

▸ It is also the power to attract, to inform, to influence, to transform.

▸ So Cultural Diplomacy also serves national interests.

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# Relationship with Public Diplomacy

▶ One problem is the analytical conflation between Public Diplomacy (PD) and Cultural Diplomacy (CD)

▶ For institutional reasons PD and CD are linked.

▶ e.g. Report of the Advisory Committee on Cultural Diplomacy (US State Department)

▶ "Cultural Diplomacy: the Linchpin of Public Diplomacy" (2005).

▶ This relationship is due to Information and Educational Exchange Act of 1948.

▶ But it may also have to do with the need for legitimation strategies and the origins of diplomacy. It will be recalled that Great Power rivalries were contained within institutions. The Concert of Europe, for instance.

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# Primer on Diplomacy and Anarchy (via Habermas)

▸ According to Mitzen, Habermasian communicative action accounts for how an international public sphere was sustainable. International Society and Publicity helped overcome security dilemmas. That is, face to face multilateral conference diplomacy mitigated the structural dictates of anarchy.

▸ International Society entailed the Westphalian system (1648): a horizontal normative order. A sphere of non-violent communication.

▸ Additionally, institutions evolved, including international law, the balance of power, and diplomacy.

▸ This is also the historical sociology approach of the English School.

▸ What concerns us here in particular is diplomacy. Diplomacy was increasingly rationalized. Further rationalized through the expansion of publicity.

▸ Dissemination of ideas, including nascent European federalism.

▸ Public opinion

# Instability of communicative action

▸ The Concert of Europe

▸ Realists would predict war, but it was averted.

▸ Order and legitimation.

▸ Forum discussion generates a structure of public reason.

▸ But conventional diplomacy tends to be about instrumental reasoning.

▸ Rationalized, modern 'life worlds' give rise to 'strangers' who may resort to violence rather than seek consensus. Any consensus based on reason is unstable or tentative.

▸ The instability of communicative action (especially under conditions of anarchy where enforcement is difficult).

▸

# Power (of culture)

▸ Power and culture.

▸ Cultural Diplomacy relates to a longer term process (as opposed to transactional diplomacy).

▸ Cultural dimension of power. Transforming identities of actors and issues.

▸ Cultural industries: production of social meaning. (Hesmondhalgh).

▸ Cultural capital (Bourdier).

▸

# Nye's 'soft power'

- Joseph Nye:
- Carrots, Sticks, Attraction.
- This was later bifurcated or reduced to hard versus soft power. soft power: getting others to change their behaviors to your liking as a result of attraction.

- Nye, 3 sources of soft power:
  - culture
  - Values
  - policies

- Credibility and moral authority

# Cultural Diplomacy as Soft Power

▸ Nye (2004).

▸ Cultural Diplomacy is a prime example of "soft power"

▸ Cultural Diplomacy and 'soft power'.

▸ Persuade through culture, values, and ideas as opposed to 'hard power, which conquers, coerces through military might".

▸

# Implications of Cultural Diplomacy

- CD legitimizing foreign policy in conjunction with global culture norm.

- Meanwhile, Reflectivist theories challenged Rationalism
- Mutual understanding prevents violence
- multilateral diplomacy

- CD also has economic implications. UNCTAD Creative Economy Report (2010)

# Trends away and towards CD

- But after the Cold War, with the advent of the Internet and globalization, the legitimacy of cultural diplomacy gradually seemed to dissolve (Solter, 2008).

- This is ironic, insofar as it is conventional diplomacy that is bankrupt...

- In Germany the trend away from cultural diplomacy was reversed by FM Steinmeier in 2007.   Rediscovery of soft power in other countries as well (such as US).

# Culture and Lifestyle and new diplomacy

▸ Solter's case in point:

▸ Simon Jenkins: culture and lifestyle are the diplomacy of the 21st century.

▸ Putin closed down British Council in 2007.

▸ Putin's officials clearly know where power lies.

▸ Conventional diplomacy is bankrupt.

▸

# A more effective diplomacy

- Alternative forms of diplomacy.
- New diplomats:
  - musicians, artists, curators, visiting professor,   correspondent, exchange students,  interns, celebrities.
  - Also, semi - detached agencies such as British Council or Goethe Institute.
- Relative autonomy and credibility
- The power of signature events in symbolic politics
- Hearts and minds.

# Vocations redux

‣ The quality of Cultural Diplomacy

‣ According to Woolf the Institute for Cultural Diplomacy (ICD) exhibits a functional or instrumentalist approach.

‣ He is much more impressed with the European Institute for Progressive Cultural Policies (EI PCP).

  ‣ A network as opposed to a forum.

  ‣ The aim of critiquing and forging new 'tools' of culturaldiplomacy.Interdisciplinary tools, not merely functional.

‣

# The potential of soft power

- What lies at the heart of soft power (Solter):
  - ① The power to change individual biographies
  - ② Symbolic politics create big impact beyond the individual.
  - ③ Cultural foreign policy as a soft power is effective
  - ④ Noone gets hurt.

# Design and Strategies

▶  Challenges for cultural diplomacy (contextual).

▶ For instance, Goethe Intitut Toronto operates not as a sponsor or a funding agency, but rather as partners, co-presenters and programers, trend-spotters and trend-setters,   Co-curation.

▶ Themes,
  - ▶ ① Cultures in motion (inclusion).
  - ▶ ②  Digital transformation of the public sphere (e-democracy)
  - ▶ ③ environment

▶

# Tips from Goethe Institut's experience

- **3 secrets of success**
  - ① The Art of being local worldwide
    - Understand shared concerns of your target.
    - Create something relevant
  - ② connect the known with the unknown
  - ③ "embedded programming"'Ongoing dialogue with successful partners.
    - Joint signature events.

# What I've been doing in the context of Cyprus

▸ The purpose of the initiative is to contribute towards a sustainable settlement of the Cyprus Problem through objective research and respectful dialogue between all relevant stakeholders, in a way that complements the peace efforts on the island.

▸ The 'Cyprus 2015' initiative, which commenced in May 2009, is being implemented by the Joint Programme Unit for United Nations / Interpeace Initiatives (JPU) and is being supported by the UNDP-Action for Cooperation and Trust (ACT) programme in Cyprus.

▸ www.cyprus2015.org

▸ Establishing first island-wide think tank....

▸ Center for Sustainable Peace and Democratic Development

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# Tools and Methods

- Public Opinion Polls and Focus Groups

- Reconciliation Index
  - In development in conjunction with UNDP
  - Early warning system/barometer

- Participatory  Polling
  - Consultations with Track 1 and relevant stakeholders (bridging the 'vertical gap')

- Reports, policy briefs, documentaries

# Participation

## Participatory Polling

▸ Shared and designed with all parties; managing divisive issues seeking consensual mechanisms

▸ e.g. "Ahead of the January 2012 meeting at Greentree, Cyprus 2015, a civil society group and partner in United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Action for Cooperation and Trust in Cyprus (UNDP-ACT), shared a targeted policy brief with the two negotiating teams, which informed them about the state of public opinion onthe issues under discussion and suggested ways forward in the peace process, including ensuring greater public ownership. The United Nations continues to encourage civil society engagement in the process." (Para. 14, S/2012/149, 12 March 2012)