



American Academy of Political and Social Science

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Source: *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 616, Public Diplomacy in a Changing World (Mar., 2008), pp. 274-290

Published by: [Sage Publications, Inc.](#) in association with the [American Academy of Political and Social Science](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25098004>

Accessed: 09/09/2014 00:23

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Public Diplomacy: Sunrise of an Academic Field

By
BRUCE GREGORY

Public diplomacy is a political instrument with analytical boundaries and distinguishing characteristics, but is it an academic field? It is used by states, associations of states, and nonstate actors to *understand* cultures, attitudes, and behavior; *build and manage* relationships; and *influence* opinions and actions to advance interests and values. This article examines scholarship with relevance, usually unintended, to the study of public diplomacy and a body of analytical and policy-related literature derived from the practice of public diplomacy. Ideas, wars, globalism, technologies, political pressures, and professional norms shaped the conduct of public diplomacy and the literature of scholars and practitioners during the hot and cold wars of the twentieth century. In the twenty-first century, thick globalism, network structures, and new technologies are transforming scholarship, governance, and state-based public diplomacy. An achievable consensus on an analytical framework and a substantial scholarly and practical literature hold promise for an emerging academic field.

Keywords: public diplomacy; academic field; scholars; practitioners

The proposition that public diplomacy is becoming an academic field often invites two responses. First, public diplomacy's meaning is evolving and contested; since there is no consensus on its analytical boundaries, it is difficult to describe the contours of an academic field that would be generally acceptable. Second, focus on public diplomacy's history as an instrument of statecraft and a literature

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NOTE: I am grateful to Paula Causey, Eric Gregory, Kristin Lord, Donna Oglesby, Walter Roberts, and Michael Schneider for their helpful comments on drafts of this article.

DOI: 10.1177/0002716207311723

dominated by the writings of practitioners and policy advocates begs the question, where is the academic research and where are the scholarly publications that would give meaning to a field of study?

Both responses have some merit. Spirited debates occur among analysts and practitioners as to whether public diplomacy is code for propaganda. Does it include cultural diplomacy? How does it differ from public affairs and public relations? Is strategic communication a more useful term in a multistakeholder, globalizing world? That scholars have had little to say directly about public diplomacy until recently is also true, although there is an ample record of scholarship in a variety of disciplines that bear on public diplomacy (Lord 2005).

This article examines scholarship that is relevant, usually unintentionally, to the study of public diplomacy and a body of analytical and policy-related literature derived from the practice of public diplomacy. It is not a summary or an evaluation of the abundance of material. It seeks rather to suggest a basis for greater collaboration between scholars and practitioners in developing a field of study. In doing so, it makes two assumptions: first, that ideas, war, globalism, technologies, political pressures, and professional norms have shaped academic and practical inquiry; and second, that the work of scholars and practitioners has progressed largely, but not entirely, on separate tracks. Recently, however, academics have been paying more attention to public diplomacy, and more practitioners are recognizing the value of scholarship. These developments hold promise for teaching, research, and professional practice in an emerging academic field.

Defining Public Diplomacy

The term *public diplomacy* was adopted by practitioners in the United States in the 1970s as an alternative to *propaganda*, which had negative connotations, and as an umbrella label for the U.S. government's international information, cultural relations, and broadcasting activities (Cull 2006; Roberts 2006, 1994). Thirty years later, the term is in widespread use throughout the world. Governments, large and small, are establishing public diplomacy organizations. Political leaders use it for many different purposes. Analysts energetically discuss what it means. Now, as in the past, interests and politics frame issues and priorities. American thinking on public diplomacy, which in the 1990s questioned its meaning in a globalizing post-cold war world, became largely an introspective examination of public diplomacy's relevance to terrorism and pervasive anti-Americanism in a post-9/11 world. Europeans and others focus on public diplomacy's uses in improving their economies, projecting identity, and achieving other policy goals. Those from other countries tempered their earlier enthusiasm for American discourse on public diplomacy as they observed the Iraq war and yawning gaps between what the United States says and does (Melissen 2005; de Gouveia 2006).

Interests, values, identities, memories, and geostrategic contexts shape how we think about public diplomacy. Current conflicts usually dominate perceptions, and public diplomacy certainly is relevant to ideas that are causes and consequences of war. But public diplomacy is also used by state and nonstate actors to understand, engage, and influence publics on a wide range of other issues relating to governance, economic growth, democracy, the distribution of goods and services, and a host of cross-border threats and opportunities.

Diversity in aims and concepts notwithstanding, public diplomacy can be viewed as a political instrument with analytical boundaries and distinguishing characteristics. It is a term that describes ways and means by which states, associations of states, and nonstate actors *understand* cultures, attitudes, and behavior; *build and manage* relationships; and *influence* opinions and actions to advance their interests and values. It is used by political actors to understand the consequences of policy choices, set public agendas, influence discourse in civil society, and build consent for strategies that require trade-offs among costs, risks, and benefits.

Public diplomacy is thus a communication instrument used in governance broadly defined. As such, it differs from education, journalism, advertising, public relations, branding, and other ways in which people communicate in societies. However, it imports methods and discourse norms from civil society and depends on thick relationships with civil society to succeed. Because it is open communication, dependent on the practical benefits of truth and credibility, public diplomacy requires structural arrangements that protect imported norms (e.g., decisions based on academic merit in educational exchanges and journalism values in international broadcasting) and firewalls that separate it from covert instruments and deception techniques also used by political actors. Public diplomacy operates through actions, relationships, images, and words in three time frames: 24/7 news streams, medium-range campaigns on high-value policies, and long-term engagement. This conceptual framework is meant to be suggestive, not definitive of what might constitute the analytical boundaries of an academic field.

From Wilson and Lenin to World War II

The 1920s are a useful starting point for the study of modern public diplomacy. The “great war” ended the nineteenth-century world order and generated narratives that shaped mid-twentieth-century geopolitics—Woodrow Wilson’s Fourteen Points and the League of Nations, Russia’s Bolshevik revolution, and Germany’s National Socialism. Through industrial-age communication technologies, political leaders used these “big ideas” to influence not just other governments but the attitudes and actions of their citizens. With the telegraph, shortwave radio, and undersea cables, governments could communicate with foreign ministries, but also directly with the people in other countries (Roberts 2006; Wasburn 1992; Nickles 2003). This was “a new departure,” as Walter Lippmann ([1922] 1997)

wrote. For the first time, “all the deciding elements of mankind could be brought to think about the same ideas, or at least the same names for ideas, simultaneously. Without cable, radio, telegraph and the daily press, the experiment of the Fourteen Points would have been impossible” (p. 133).

World War I also serves as a platform for the study of building and managing relationships through cultural diplomacy. The horrors of modern warfare and a deep desire to prevent future wars contributed to widespread interest in fostering global cultural relations through educational and scientific exchanges. In contrast with the European model of government information and cultural ministries, Americans relied initially on private philanthropic and educational organizations. The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, the Rockefeller and Guggenheim Foundations, and the Institute for International Education led the way. Aggressive cultural diplomacy by Germany, the Soviet Union, and Japan in the 1930s meant the United States could no longer rely entirely on civil society initiatives. Voluntarism succumbed to the need for government funds and greater coordination of effort (Ninkovich 1981, 1-34; Arndt 2005, 24-48). The United States adopted a hybrid cultural diplomacy model that combined (1) execution by universities and private agencies, which fought to preserve liberal norms of peer selection and academic integrity; (2) funding by Congress; and (3) a succession of U.S. agencies that struggled to manage the process.

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Fruitful areas of scholarship for understanding this foundational era of organized state-based public diplomacy include propaganda studies and the debate between Lippmann and John Dewey. The shelf on propaganda studies is enormous. One approach is to construct different ways of looking at propaganda (Brown 2006; Huebner 1968, 197-200). There are scholars who view propaganda as political advocacy with hostile or hidden intent (Smith 1989), the inevitable

result of technology (Ellul 1965), or the manipulative consequence of elite domination of state bureaucracies (Herman and Chomsky 1988). Others see propaganda as a neutral instrument that all political actors use to achieve ends (Bernays [1928] 2005; Lasswell [1936] 1958, 1980; Taylor 2003), leaving political and moral judgments to assessments of the ends themselves. Motive, source, intent, method, descriptive labels, historical context, and the perceptions and political views of observers shaped the typologies and normative judgments of early propaganda studies. All can be found in the study of public diplomacy today.

A related area of scholarship with a continuing bearing on public diplomacy is rooted in Lippmann's writings on public opinion (Lippmann [1922] 1997), John Dewey's discourse-based challenge to Lippmann's elite-driven model of political communication (Dewey 1922, [1927] 1954), and their influence on media and communication studies. Modern technologies, Lippmann argued, create a complex external world that publics apprehend through stereotypes due to time constraints and cognitive limitations. How should leaders create political consent for their policies when publics are not omniscient or omnipresent? For Lippmann, the answer lay in communication strategies by trusted authorities who would use credible symbols to enlist interest, establish common ground between sender and receiver, and seek to influence opinions and actions. As the primary author of Wilson's Fourteen Points, a journalist, an advisor to presidents, and one of the twentieth century's leading public intellectuals, Lippmann bridged scholarship and practice. His writings influenced decades of media studies, public opinion research, and the important statistical work of Philip Converse and others on belief systems in mass publics (Holsti 1996; Noelle-Neumann 1984; Bennett 2006). Lippmann's thinking had a profound impact on public diplomacy as well, particularly his assessment of how public opinion is formed and his construction of influence models in political communication. That he is frequently assigned in courses on public diplomacy today is no accident.

Dewey admired Lippmann. He agreed with his views on the communications revolution and his psychological model of public opinion. He disagreed strongly, however, with Lippmann's "top down" model. For Dewey, truth and socially useful information occur in the give and take of debate. Dewey valued expertise, but he contended that the knowledge needed by any community—political or scientific—emerges from dialogue. Experts can be wrong. They can mislead for selfish reasons. Emotion and imagination can be more potent in shaping public opinion than information and reason. Consequently, dialogue matters in the public sphere, and the press has a vital role in fostering the give and take of ideas in the formation of public attitudes. Dewey's "bottom up" model privileges discourse and mutual understanding. His views were a major influence on the thinking of Jürgen Habermas and the communicative action theorists. Just as Lippmann shaped instrumental communication in public diplomacy, Dewey and the scholars and civil society activists who followed him influenced public diplomacy's engagement and discourse logic.

Publications by practitioners form a separate body of literature on this period. From an academic perspective, this literature contains strengths and limitations.

Practitioners have firsthand experience. Many have a nuanced understanding of events and organizational cultures that scholars often find difficult to match. At the same time, proximity can be a liability. The writings of some practitioners are essentially diaries of one individual's career. Others use their publications as vehicles to continue bureaucratic wars or for single-minded advocacy on behalf of the institutions they once served. But many provide perceptive analysis informed by experience and a degree of distance from the subject, and some are scholars whose careers include brief service in government agencies.

The U.S. government's international cultural, information, and broadcasting organizations were created in cycles linked to war or the threat of war—the Creel Committee in World War I; the State Department's Bureau of Cultural Affairs, the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs, the Office of War Information, and the Voice of America in World War II; and the U.S. Information Agency (USIA) and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) in the cold war. External threats were a common denominator. Domestic political pressures and contrasting views of American statecraft, however, led to different approaches in each organization's goals and vigorous debate on principles that should govern priorities and structural designs. Each organization imported methods and norms from civil society. Cultural diplomacy, rooted in the norms of America's educational, scientific, and arts communities, favored a privileged role for private institutions and, apart from a consistent desire for more public funding, a minimal role for government (McMurry and Lee 1947; Thomson and Laves 1963; Frankel 1966). International broadcasters imported journalism practices in their news gathering and reporting. Their early activities were shaped by concerns of commercial broadcasters who feared government competition. Ambivalent political leaders were responsive to domestic pressures, less concerned about journalism norms, and desirous of mounting a vigorous response to foreign broadcasts (Shulman 1990; Gregory 1970; Heil 2003, 32-57). Press and information agencies, influenced by America's advertising and public relations industries, contended with a traditional Foreign Service culture resistant to a role in media and public affairs (Thomson 1948; Barrett 1953; Lawson and Gregory 1970). These historical and normative differences created an American approach to public diplomacy characterized by uncertainties about government's role, multiple and ephemeral organizations, and tribal cultures with strong professional loyalties and resistance to collaboration.

The Cold War

Although the strategies and politics of the cold war differed greatly, two underlying constructs in state-based public diplomacy continued essentially unchanged: the driving force of external threats and government organizations shaped by professional differences and domestic political pressures. Relevant scholarship in a variety of disciplines was accompanied by the literature of practitioners, which now included a growing number of government reports and congressional hearings.

Early efforts to develop the academic study of public diplomacy occurred through the research of a few scholars interested in public diplomacy and the teaching and writing of a handful of diplomats who held brief assignments in American universities (Roth 1984; Staar 1986; Tuch 1990).

Scholarship particularly relevant to public diplomacy during the cold war included public opinion research, cultural anthropology, social psychology, media and political communication studies, and Jürgen Habermas's theory of communicative action.

The use of opinion surveys in American politics and academic studies of public opinion in foreign policy, although these studies focused primarily on domestic opinion, led to the creation of small opinion research staffs in the Department of State and the USIA (Holsti 1996, 13-21; Kull and Destler 1999, 9-12; Hinkley 1992, 3-7). Congress has consistently supported foreign opinion research but with parsimonious funding. Many diplomats acknowledge its value, but few have used it consistently in planning public diplomacy strategies. More often, disturbing trends in foreign opinion are used to make the case for enhanced exchanges, broadcasting, and other activities. Scholars differed on the relationship between opinion and policy. Nevertheless, leading American pollsters, among them Hadley Cantril, George Gallup, Everett Carl Ladd, Arthur C. Nielsen, Eugene R. Wittkopf, and Daniel Yankelovich, took an interest in government approaches to understanding foreign public opinion, with Gallup and Nielsen serving as members of the U.S. Advisory Commission on Information, a predecessor to the U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy. For more than half a century, no issue has figured more prominently in annual commission reports than recommendations that foreign opinion and media research should inform the formulation and communication of policies.

Scholarship on cultural and psychological dimensions of international relations played a role similar to opinion research—relevant to but distant from—the practice of public diplomacy. Scholars studied psychological issues in conflict resolution and U.S.-Soviet competition (Kelman 1965; Klineberg 1964). They wrote systematically on psychological dimensions in theories of decision making and international relations (Janis 1982; Jervis 1976). And they assessed cultures and subcultures in nation-states and sought a “cultural definition of international relations” (Iriye 1997, 8-9, 131-76). Glen H. Fisher, with credentials as an academician and as a Foreign Service officer, wrote about the value of this theoretical literature and lamented the substantial gap between the abstract work of scholars and needs of practitioners. His writings, which include the first academic book with “public diplomacy” in the title (Cull 2006), sought to bridge the gap by making the case for the need for understanding mind-sets and cultures in the practice of international practitioners (Fisher 1972, 1988). Elected officials, corporations, and activist nongovernmental organizations have used opinion polling and cultural analysis for decades as a means to develop effective communication strategies. Although still at the margins of public diplomacy, attention to these and other means of understanding attitudes and cultures is increasing.

Media and communication studies, like the propaganda studies with which they overlapped, also had considerable relevance. Two Canadian scholars, Marshall McLuhan and Harold Innis, challenged both the academic world and forward-leaning practitioners. McLuhan's theories, including his concepts of "global village" and "the medium is the message," influenced a generation of scholars and entered popular culture in the 1960s. But according to James Carey (1989), it was Innis whose work "is the greatest achievement in communications on this continent." Changes in communication technology, Innis argued, changed cultures by altering the structure of interests, the character of symbols, and the nature of communities. Communities could be understood as arenas of space not place, connected by symbols, forms, and interests communicated over great distances (Carey 1989, 142, 160). A formidable group of communication scholars in the 1960s and 1970s—W. Phillips Davison, Elihu Katz, Paul Lazarsfeld, Harold Lasswell, Lucien Pye, Ithiel de Sola Pool, and Wilbur Schramm—provided insights into communication processes, the power of the mass media, and the limitations of both in changing attitudes (Davison 1965, 1974; Katz and Lazarsfeld 1955; Lasswell [1936] 1958, 1980; Pool 1963; Pye 1963; Schramm 1980). Their work on "the two step flow" theory of communications, attentive and passive publics, links between media and word of mouth communication, the impact of distance and cultural differences, and the role of the media in augmenting rather than changing attitudes influenced the planning, programs, and priorities of many USIA practitioners (Carter 1970; Dizard 2004; Fulton 1980; Crespi 1974).

The writings of Jürgen Habermas, one of the foremost thinkers of the past half century, generated yet another large body of academic literature with consequences for understanding public diplomacy. Beginning with his landmark book on the public sphere in 1962, Habermas's "ideal speech" model of normatively based communicative action transformed thinking about the media and civil society (Habermas [1962] 1989, [1992] 1998; Calhoun 1992; White 1995). His theories raise central questions about deliberative and instrumental discourse in governance and the formation of political will. For practitioners, his thinking is relevant to priorities given to comprehension of cultures and attitudes, cross-cultural dialogue, people-to-people exchanges, and finding common ground in strategic communication. Scholars and practitioners have much to learn from Habermas in examining twenty-first-century information environments and connections between deliberative and nondeliberative values in politics and public diplomacy (Dahlgren 2001; Gregory forthcoming).

Literature on cold war public diplomacy by practitioners falls generally into two categories: (1) organizational studies of the USIA and alternative institutional models and (2) histories of contested relations between the United States and the Soviet Union in cultural diplomacy and international broadcasting.

Numerous studies of the USIA by former practitioners focused on its evolving missions, functions, structure, overseas activities, relations with the private sector, and bureaucratic struggles in Washington (Dizard 2004; Tuch 1990; Malone 1988; Green 1988; Henderson 1969; Sorenson 1968). Scholarly studies of the USIA's role can be expected with time and access to archival records (Cull forthcoming).

As in the past, the context for both included America's aversion to "propaganda" ministries, cycles of budget cuts and proposed reorganizations, and conflicts among public diplomacy's tribal cultures. Debates usually turned on whether to keep the USIA as an independent agency with responsibility for (1) information and cultural activities conducted by the USIA's posts abroad (with the latter managed by the Department of State until 1977), (2) Washington-based information and press activities, (3) international broadcasting by the Voice of America, and (4) infrequently exercised advisory responsibilities to the president, National Security Council, and secretary of state. Proposed institutional alternatives usually were some variant on keeping press and information activities in the USIA, creating an independent broadcasting organization, and putting the cultural programs in a separate government or quasi-government organization such as the Smithsonian Institution or the Library of Congress. Debates on reorganization and the scale of America's commitment to public diplomacy played out in congressional budget hearings and in unusually comprehensive oversight hearings led by Rep. Dante B. Fascell (D-FL); annual reports of the U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy and its predecessor commissions on information and international educational and cultural affairs; reports of ad hoc advisory panels, including a panel led by former CBS President Frank Stanton in 1975; and the writings of a few practitioners on temporary assignments at American universities (U.S. Congress 1977; U.S. Advisory Commission on Information 1977; Panel on International Information, Education, and Cultural Relations 1975; Roth 1984).

A second category of literature on the practice of cold war public diplomacy focuses on the struggle of ideas between the United States and the Soviet Union. Some studies focused on the Voice of America and the cultural activities of the USIA and the Department of State (Heil 2003; Arndt 2005; Richmond 2003). Others dealt with surrogate broadcasting by RFE/RL and the numerous information and cultural activities of the Congress of Cultural Freedom—both funded covertly for two decades by the Central Intelligence Agency (Nelson 1997; Dizard 2004, 139-44). With the opening of archival sources in the United States and Russia, scholars are adding considerably to the practical literature (Caute 2003; Pells 1997, 64-82).

Globalism, Networks, and Governance

Despite great differences between the hot and cold wars of the twentieth century, the underlying factors that shaped the study and practice of public diplomacy were similar. States dominated international relations. Nonstate actors were few in number. "Big ideas" were secular struggles between authoritarian and democratic worldviews. Media and communication systems used analog technologies. Hierarchies were the principal structures of societies and politics. National armies fought on battlefields with industrial-age weapons.

Then the world changed. It is customary to say states still matter. Indeed they do. But states are not what they used to be. Much more governance occurs above, below, and around the state (Scholte forthcoming; Keohane and Nye 2000). Thick globalism, nonstate actors, a diverse mix of secular and religious “big ideas,” political and social networks, digital technologies, and a new paradigm of warfare fought within civilian populations by state and nonstate contestants with global reach have transformed the old world order. Satisfaction of human needs and wants is provided more and more by associations of states, substate entities, and private institutions. Public diplomacy occurs in a world with many new actors in which attention, not information, is the scarce resource (Nye 2002, 2004). Network societies challenge organizational hierarchies (Castells 1996). The consequences for public diplomacy are on a scale comparable to the profound changes that ushered in the state-based model of public diplomacy nearly a century earlier in the aftermath of World War I.

Public diplomacy occurs in a world with many new actors in which attention, not information, is the scarce resource.

Academic studies of public opinion polling (and new tools such as social network analysis and Internet mining), cultural anthropology, social psychology, and communicative action theory remain relevant to the new world of public diplomacy. To these can be added recent scholarship on identity theory and constructivism, media framing and political communication, governance and power, and diplomacy.

Samuel Huntington's view that civilizations would be the primary source of conflict and identity in the post-cold war world (Huntington 1996) gained traction with many who agreed that culture and religion would replace economic interests and secular ideologies as the defining context in which states interact. His theory drew opposition from those who saw many conflicts occurring within civilizations and questioned a thesis at odds with a world in which people have multiple identities shaped by reasoned choice, nationality, location, class, occupation, social status, language, gender, politics, and other criteria (Sen 2006). Constructivist scholarship—innovative and influential in international studies with its emphasis on ideas, culture, norms, identity, and shared beliefs—provides insights into the strategies of political actors and the strengths and limitations of their public diplomacy (Lord 2005; Katzenstein 1996).

A new generation of media and political communication scholars is examining a radically changed media environment and ways in which government and civil

society actors are using communication strategies (Iyengar and Kinder 1987; Bennett and Entman 2001; Bennett 2007). Concepts of media framing include indexing models (news frames linked to elite disagreements), hegemony models (government news strategies that limit public deliberation), and event-driven news. Political scientist Robert Entman (2004, 4-22) has taken framing theory to a new level with his "cascade activation" model, in which he explores contests over public framing of ideas and how frames are supported, opposed, and changed by leaders, elites, the media, and publics. Research on political communication offers new views on the strategies of transnational civil society activists (Keck and Sikkink 1998; Tarrow 2005; Bob 2005). Terrorism and the Iraq war are driving twenty-first-century research on relationships between governments, the media, and publics (Norris, Kern, and Just 2003; Bennett, Lawrence, and Livingston 2007). Among many issues these studies raise for public diplomacy: Should more attention be given to framing analysis? What methods used by transnational activists hold promise for governments? How should political leaders develop strategies that are successful with domestic and global audiences?

Research on governance and power (Held and McGrew 2002; Keohane and Nye 2000) raises critical issues for public diplomacy as well. What are the implications for state-based models of public diplomacy when governance occurs increasingly through global and regional associations, substate intergovernmental connections, "countries within countries" (i.e., Quebec and Kurdistan), and the actions of nonstate actors in civil society (Scholte forthcoming)? Joseph S. Nye's concepts of hard and soft power (directly and inversely related and recently subsumed under his label "smart power") continue to challenge research. How should we assess soft power in the narrow sense in which it is wielded by governments and in the broader sense in which it is gained and lost by societies through their culture, values, and practices? If fewer issues can be solved by military power because information technologies are changing "the very nature of states, sovereignty and control," what are the consequences for public diplomacy when political actors "will have to pay more attention to the politics of credibility" and "share a stage newly empowered with non-governmental actors and individuals" (Nye 2002, 76; 2004)?

These and other considerations are driving research on the nature and future of diplomacy (Hocking 2005; Henrikson 2006). Scholars are finding significant differences in representation, communication, recognition, and negotiation—diplomacy's "constitutive dimensions" (Jonsson 2006). When social space is no longer wholly mapped in terms of territorial places, distances, and borders, diplomacy includes connections between a variety of agents other than Foreign Service officers and foreign ministries (Scholte 2000). Diplomacy expands to include relationships between state and nonstate actors, many with nonterritorial identities constructed from class, race, religion, culture, dreams, and memories. Technologies are transforming diplomatic communication. Transparency, speed, volume, and sharply declining transport costs generate greater diversity and competition from third parties including the media. Paper and written

messages matter less; electronically mediated images and sounds, body language, and backdrops matter more (Scholte forthcoming; K. M. Lord 2006, 45-56, 115-132). Formerly gatekeepers with considerable control over information and bargaining relationships, diplomats are becoming “boundary spanners” with less control but dealing with more issues and rapidly changing circumstances (Hocking 2005).

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Scholarship on public diplomacy is reflecting these changes. Scholars are struggling with analytical implications and with the term itself. Some have turned to studies of communication strategies used by the United States and other countries, adding new phrases to the lexicon such as “strategic public diplomacy” and “strategic communication” (Manheim 1994; C. Lord 2006). Others have suggested there is a “new public diplomacy” with the implicit assumption that the distinction between “diplomacy” and “public diplomacy” will endure (Melissen 2006). Still others seem to assume this distinction no longer has meaning as “the age old ‘club model’ of diplomacy gives way to a less hierarchical ‘network model’” due to globalism and the erosion of traditional principles of national sovereignty (Heine 2006). The extent to which diplomacy is now public diplomacy is contested. Most would agree, however, that diplomatic practice has not kept pace with change and that analysis of the “new diplomacy” and “strategic communication” is a task worth pursuing by scholars and practitioners.

Practitioners, for the most part, have dealt with the new order in two ways: restoration and transformation. Those practitioners who favor restoration focused with regret on the consequences of merging the USIA into the U.S. Department of State in 1999 and urged reforms that would benefit the tribal cultures in which they are comfortable. Public diplomacy is what Foreign Service officers, cultural diplomats, and international broadcasters had done well in the

past, often very well. Current challenges, defined for the most part in terms of anti-Americanism and “a formidable public diplomacy crisis in Arab and Muslim nations,” could be dealt with best by revitalizing and modifying “many public diplomacy mechanisms that proved effective in the past” (Rugh 2004, 156). The attacks of 9/11 and opinion surveys showing unprecedented decline in foreign attitudes toward U.S. policies prompted more than thirty studies by private organizations, government advisory bodies, and congressional committees (Epstein and Mages 2005). These reports reflected a consensus that public diplomacy was broken and needed to be fixed. For the most part, however, they deplored existing problems, called in general terms for new strategies, and focused primarily on changes in government agencies and programs.

The conversations of a second group of practitioners emphasized transformation. As early as 1991, Canada’s ambassador to the United States wrote that diplomacy “is to a large extent public diplomacy and requires different skills, techniques, and attitudes than those found in traditional diplomacy” (Gotlieb 1991, vii). In the following years, practitioners and think tank analysts examined trends in “virtual diplomacy” and “net diplomacy” and called for “reinventing diplomacy in the information age” (Fulton 1998; Ronfeldt and Arquilla 2000; Leonard 2002). Studies by the Defense Science Board, the Council on Foreign Relations, and the General Accountability Office concluded that public diplomacy requires new thinking, new tools, and adaptation by government hierarchies to network capabilities and stronger, more imaginative relationships with civil society (Gregory, forthcoming). Contributing to this transformation, the number of practitioners teaching public diplomacy and related courses in U.S. universities has grown considerably, strengthening a trend that began with the creation of the Edward R. Murrow Center of Public Diplomacy at Tufts University in the 1960s. Prompted by student interest, media coverage, and increased attention to public diplomacy worldwide, more universities now offer courses in public diplomacy, and several have created or are planning to create degree programs.

Conclusion

It is possible and desirable to treat public diplomacy as an emerging academic field based on three considerations: an achievable consensus on an analytical framework; a substantial body of relevant scholarship and practical literature; and benefits for learning, shared knowledge, and professional practice.

Going forward, questions abound. Is it possible to create a field that is multidisciplinary and relevant to the public sphere while maintaining the academic standards of the separate disciplines on which it is based? Will mutually advantageous collaboration occur among departmental and university rivals competing for faculty and students? Will scholars engage in research, develop case studies, and build courses in ways that advance learning and address the needs of

practitioners? Will practitioners provide data useful to scholars and take advantage of relevant scholarship? In a field linked to highly contentious political issues, will scholars and practitioners use their knowledge to enrich learning and public debate? If we achieve positive answers to these and other questions, the rewards can be significant for the academic study and practice of public diplomacy.

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