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Searching for a Theory of Public Diplomacy

By
EYTAN GILBOA

This work presents and critically evaluates attempts to theorize and conceptualize public diplomacy within several disciplines, including international relations, strategic studies, diplomatic studies, public relations, and communication. It also examines research methods used to investigate public diplomacy, including models, paradigms, case studies, and comparative analysis. The work identifies promising directions as well as weaknesses and gaps in existing knowledge and methodology and outlines a new research agenda. The presented analysis and examples suggest that only a systematic multidisciplinary effort and close collaboration between researchers and practitioners can lead to a coherent theory of public diplomacy.

Keywords: the new public diplomacy; instruments of public diplomacy; models of public diplomacy; international public relations; national image and reputation; nation branding; soft power; media framing

Public diplomacy is a new field of practice and scholarship. It attracted attention in the previous century when diplomacy fell under the scrutiny of the media and public opinion. It became a more substantial area during the cold war, dominated by campaigns to garner support for the delicate balance of nuclear weapons and the ideological battle for the hearts and minds of people around the world. Public diplomacy of the cold war inspired many studies of the different tools the superpowers and other states used to achieve their international goals. A new phase in the development of public diplomacy

Eytan Gilboa (PhD, Harvard University) is a professor in and chair of the Communications Program and director of the Center for International Communication at Bar-Ilan University in Israel. He is also a senior research associate at the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies and a visiting professor of public diplomacy at the University of Southern California. He has written numerous works on international communication, public diplomacy, and media diplomacy. In 2001, he won the Best Article Award of the International Communication Association.

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started after the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks in New York and Washington by Islamic fundamentalists.

The new challenges and needs of public diplomacy in the post-cold war/post-9/11 era have been influenced by three interrelated revolutions in mass communication, politics, and international relations (Gilboa 2000, 2001). The revolution in communication technologies created two major innovations: the Internet and global news networks, such as CNN International, BBC World, Sky News, and Al-Jazeera, capable of broadcasting, often live, almost every significant development in world events to almost every place on the globe. The Internet and the global networks have become a central source of information about world affairs. The Internet provides states, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), communities, firms, and even individuals with ample opportunities to exchange ideas about world affairs. Revolutions in politics have transformed many societies from autocracy to democracy, generating growing mass participation in political processes. The revolution in international relations has transformed the goals and means of foreign policy. Favorable image and reputation around the world, achieved through attraction and persuasion, have become more important than territory, access, and raw materials, traditionally acquired through military and economic measures.

Existing research in public diplomacy suffers from several major weaknesses. Most studies are historical, and they mostly deal with the U.S. experiences during the cold war. Historical accounts of public diplomacy are significant, especially if they are analytical and not just anecdotal, but their contribution to the development of theory and methodology in public diplomacy has been limited. Limited, too, is research on public diplomacy programs and activities of countries other than the United States and of new international actors such as NGOs, civil society groups, and individuals. After the 9/11 attacks, Holbrooke (2001, B07) wrote, "Call it public diplomacy, or public affairs, or psychological warfare, or—if you really want to be blunt—propaganda." This statement may express the frustration of American politicians and officials, but it does not clarify the essence and uniqueness of public diplomacy. Indeed, many scholars and professionals have confused public diplomacy with propaganda, public relations (PR), international public relations (IPR), psychological warfare, and public affairs. Scholars and practitioners have often equated public diplomacy with "soft power" and measured results solely by public opinion polls and media coverage. It is obvious for almost any scholar or practitioner that public diplomacy today encompasses much more substance than these terms convey individually. Finally, since 9/11, many government and public agencies and organizations have published numerous reports, mostly repeating the same challenges, ideas, and principles. These reports have not sufficiently contributed to advance theory and methodology in public diplomacy.

This work critically examines attempts to advance theory and methodology in public diplomacy. This field is probably one of the most multidisciplinary areas in modern scholarship. Several disciplines have contributed useful theories and models to public diplomacy. The potential contributions of others have yet to be harnessed. The work begins with analysis of conceptual development and models of public diplomacy. It traces the evolution of definitions and approaches from

the cold war era to the present. Recently, public diplomacy had to undergo adjustments to the new landscape of international relations shaped by the end of the cold war; the information age; and the rise in extremism, terrorism, and nuclear proliferation. Several fields in the social sciences including international relations, communication studies, PR, and marketing have contributed more than other fields to theoretical and empirical knowledge of public diplomacy. The second section presents several examples of studies and methodologies and exposes problems and weaknesses. The third section explores paradigms, case studies, and comparative analysis and suggests a new framework for future research.

Concepts and Models

Conceptual development

Systematic research of any significant topic first requires a workable and widely accepted definition. Scholars and practitioners have employed a variety of confusing, incomplete, or problematic definitions of public diplomacy. Earlier definitions presented only general statements about goals. A typical statement would describe public diplomacy as “direct communication with foreign peoples, with the aim of affecting their thinking and, ultimately, that of their governments” (Malone 1985, 199). This definition does not say who controls this communication, probably due to the widely held notion in the 1980s that only governments use public diplomacy. The definition also suggests a two-step influence process: first, direct communication designed to create supportive public opinion in another state; and second, pressure by the informed public on its government to adopt friendly policies toward the country employing public diplomacy. Later definitions identified actors and content. Tuch (1990, 3) for example, defined public diplomacy as “a government’s process of communication with foreign publics in an attempt to bring about understanding for its nation’s ideas and ideals, its institutions and culture, as well as its national goals and policies.” Frederick (1993, 229) added information about specific content: “activities, directed abroad in the fields of information, education, and culture, whose objective is to influence a foreign government, by influencing its citizens.”

Scholars have updated the definition of public diplomacy according to major developments in international relations and communications. Signitzer and Coombs (1992) argued that PR and public diplomacy are very similar because they seek similar objectives and employ similar tools. They defined public diplomacy as “the way in which both government and private individuals and groups influence directly or indirectly those public attitudes and opinions which bear directly on another government’s foreign policy decisions” (p. 138). This innovative definition is important because it recognizes new actors and abolishes the distinction between public diplomacy and PR. It redefines the landscape of international relations by adding nonstate actors and reflecting the growing interdependence among all actors. Second, scholars distinguished between governments

and other actors, suggesting that governments conduct public diplomacy, while companies and firms pursue IPR. Signitzer and Coombs thought otherwise, and other PR experts followed them. Wilcox, Ault, and Agee (1992, 409-10) defined IPR as “the planned and organized effort of a company, institution or government to establish mutually beneficial relations with the policies of other nations.” Note the inclusion of “government” in this definition and the emphasis on “mutually beneficial relations.”

The terms “the new diplomacy,” “public diplomacy,” and “media diplomacy” became too vague and imprecise, and it was necessary to assign them more specific meanings. Rawnsley (1995) distinguished between public diplomacy and media diplomacy by audience: in the first, he suggested, policy makers use the media to address foreign publics; and in the second, they address government officials. Based on goals and means, Gilboa (1998, 2001, 2002) distinguished between *public diplomacy*, where state and nonstate actors use the media and other channels of communication to influence public opinion in foreign societies; *media diplomacy*, where officials use the media to investigate and promote mutual interests, negotiations, and conflict resolution; and *media-broker diplomacy*, where journalists temporarily assume the role of diplomats and serve as mediators in international negotiations.

At the beginning of this century, scholars and practitioners have begun to employ the term “new public diplomacy” (NPD). NPD represents an attempt to adjust public diplomacy to the conditions of the information age. Vickers (2004, 151) suggested that “NPD can be characterized as a blurring of traditional distinctions between international and domestic information activities, between public and traditional diplomacy, and between cultural diplomacy, marketing and news management.” This definition is somewhat confusing and limited because “blurring traditional distinctions” is not a good way to propose a scholarly definition. It is not clear why a central term like “public diplomacy” has to be renamed to indicate adjustments to the information age. In addition, Vickers’s attempt shows how difficult it is to capture the essence of public diplomacy in one sentence.

Potter (2002-2003), Melissen (2005), and Gilboa (2006) adopted a more effective approach by focusing on the effects of the revolutions in international relations and communications on public diplomacy. Potter cited the following changes: the increased importance of public opinion, the rise of more intrusive and global media, increased global transparency, and the rise of a global culture leading to a reflexive desire to protect cultural diversity. Melissen focused on the central place public diplomacy is now occupying in foreign policy, the rise of non-state actors, the difficulty of reconciling domestic and foreign information needs, and the two-way communication pattern of exchanging information between states. Gilboa offered an expanded list of characteristics including the interactivity between states and nonstate actors; utilization of “soft power,” two-way communication, strategic public diplomacy, media framing, information management, PR, nation branding, self-presentation, and e-image; domestication of foreign policy; and addressing both short- and long-term issues. Several of these areas have been better researched than others and therefore are discussed in the next sections.

Models

Models are needed to develop knowledge because they focus on the most significant variables and the relations between them. Occasionally, models of diplomacy and foreign policy include superficial references to public diplomacy, but very few scholars developed specific models of public diplomacy itself. Gilboa (2000, 2001) used five variables to distinguish among several models: major actors, initiators, goals, types of media, and means and techniques. This formula yielded three public diplomacy models: the *Basic Cold War* model, the *Nonstate Transnational* model, and the *Domestic PR* model.

Public diplomacy emerged during the initial years of the cold war. Due to the enormous destructive power of nuclear weapons, it became clear that information and persuasion campaigns would be the principal weapons the two superpowers would utilize in their global ideological and strategic struggle. Thus, in the first model, states used public diplomacy in antagonistic relationships to achieve long-term results in foreign societies. The assumption was that if public opinion in the target society is persuaded to accept a favorable image of the other side, it will exert pressure on its government to alter existing hostile attitudes and policies. The idea was to provide the public in the target society with more balanced information on one's own country to counter the domestic propaganda of the target society's government. During the cold war, both the United States and the Soviet Union primarily used international broadcasting to shape favorable public attitudes toward their respective rival ideologies.

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The emergence of new players in international affairs such as NGOs and considerable interdependence among all the actors required a revision of the cold war model. The Nonstate Transnational model is a theoretical concept designed to investigate public diplomacy activities of groups, NGOs, and individuals using public diplomacy across national boundaries. These actors usually exploit global news networks and media events to cultivate global support for their causes. This model, for example, helps to explain the campaigns, such as those for prodemocracy

in China, which aimed to force reforms on the Chinese government through external pressure.

In the Basic Cold War model, a government uses its own means of communication, such as radio stations, to conduct public diplomacy. But in the Domestic PR model, it hires PR firms and even lobbyists in the target country to achieve its aims. A government preferring this method believes it is much more effective than direct government-sponsored public diplomacy and that it may help to conceal the true forces and the funding sources behind the effort. The establishment of a local support group or a movement in the target country could also strengthen the legitimacy and authenticity of the campaign. A local PR firm is likely to know best how to achieve the desired goals in a given political and cultural context, how to identify the weaknesses in the positions of the government interested in the campaign, and how to effectively deal with them. This model also includes using scientific knowledge and methods of public opinion research known as "strategic public diplomacy" (Manheim 1994a). A famous case of this model occurred during the 1990 to 1991 Gulf conflict, when the Kuwaiti monarchs in exile hired the PR firm Hill and Knowlton to ensure sufficient support from the American public, Congress, and the U.S. media for an American-led war to remove Saddam Hussein from Kuwait (Manheim 1994b).

The three models can explain significant variation in perceptions of public diplomacy activities. The Chinese government saw the prodemocracy demonstrations as American use of the Basic Cold War model: the use of international broadcasting to inspire public unrest in China. From the U.S. perspective, however, the prodemocracy campaign in China was an example of the Nonstate Transnational model: an opposition group in China using global communication to mobilize public opinion in the West to actively support their cause. Application of the models showed that the U.S. interpretation was the correct one. The Basic public diplomacy model has been primarily used against authoritarian regimes, while the other two, primarily the Domestic one, have been used in democratic societies. Today, the Basic model is being used against regimes such as those of Castro in Cuba, the military junta in Miramar, and the Ayatollahs in Iran. It seems that the Domestic PR model has become the most popular one. Each of the three models has significant implications for the government, the media, and public opinion. Systematic application of the models may help to further validate them and to generate insights on the conduct of public diplomacy in different settings.

Contributions from Social Sciences

International relations: Soft power

Communication, education, and persuasion have become major techniques of foreign relations at the expense of military force. Therefore, a grand strategy today requires integration and application of three fundamental components: force, diplomacy, and communication. Communication may even be a much

TABLE 1
HARD POWER VERSUS SOFT POWER

Type	Hard Power		Soft Power
	Military	Economic	
Behaviors	Coercion; deterrence	Inducement; coercion	Attraction; agenda-setting; co-optation
Resources	Force; threats	Sanctions; payments	Values; culture; policies; institutions
Government policies	Coercive diplomacy; war; alliance	Aid; bribes	Public diplomacy; bilateral and multilateral diplomacy

more decisive factor. Power is the ability to alter the behavior of others to get what you want. To achieve this outcome, an actor may employ two elements of hard power—coercion (sticks) and payments (carrots) and/or attraction (soft power). Soft power arises from the attractiveness of a nation's values, culture, and policies (Nye 2004). It causes people to act through cooperation rather than coercion. When policies and positions of states or nonstate actors have moral authority, or are seen as legitimate in the eyes of others, their soft power is increased. Actors such as the Vatican, NGOs, and global news organizations possess only soft power (Powers and Gilboa 2007). Nye (2004) and others (Bátora 2006, 54; Melissen 2005) have suggested that public diplomacy means yielding soft power. The differences between hard and soft power are described in Table 1 according to behaviors, resources, and government policies. Public diplomacy is presented as an official policy translating soft power resources into action.

Power is a central element in grand strategy theory, but only a few scholars have attempted to incorporate the interplay between hard and soft power into strategic studies. Arquilla and Ronfeldt (1999) invented the term “Noopolitik” to describe strategy adapted to the information age and contrasted it with the more traditional hard-power-driven “Realpolitik” approach. Noopolitik is foreign policy behavior that emphasizes the primacy of ideas, values, norms, laws, and ethics. Due to considerable differences in the availability of information technology around the world, the new strategy is more effective in the West and concerns some issues more than others. It upholds the importance of NGOs, especially those from civil society. Although Arquilla and Ronfeldt believed that Realpolitik and Noopolitik contradict each other, they allowed for skillful policy makers to alternate between the two, especially when dealing with a recalcitrant adversary who has been able to resist Realpolitik types of pressure. There was no need to invent yet another term, when “soft power” had been already available, and it is not yet sufficiently clear how “Noopolitik” can be translated into public diplomacy.

Mor (2006) narrowly equated public diplomacy with propaganda but defined it as a major component in strategic and tactical plans. He argued that due to the

media-saturated environment of international conflicts, the strategy space is compressed, and therefore public diplomacy must be given priority over tactics. Two minimal operational conditions should be met before this principle can be implemented: a coherent conception of political goals that is communicated all the way down to the tactical level and an organizational structure that centralizes, directs, and monitors ongoing public diplomacy.

Critics have argued that soft power is a confusing concept or that it suffers from many theoretical deficiencies. Several suggested that it is not a type of power at all because any resource, even military force, can be soft when applied, for example, to humanitarian aid (Noya 2005). The media and the public, often the main targets of soft power, perceive power as hard power and do not necessarily see a contradiction between the two. For states, soft power depends largely on hard power. Superpowers are attractive because they possess great military strength, economic power, and technological infrastructure. Soft power may be relevant to one society but exactly the opposite for another. American values, for example, may be appreciated in Australia and Canada but totally rejected in Iran or Saudi Arabia. Finally, even if soft power is a valid concept, it may still lead to repulsion rather than attraction, because soft power is power, and “artistic hegemony” or “cultural imperialism” of the kind the United States is alleged to practice in the world create resentment and even rage (Joffe 2006).

Nye (2004, 2006) and others have been aware of the weaknesses of the soft power concept and have developed a revised approach epitomized in the term “smart power” (Hamre 2007). Nye wrote that smart power means learning better how to combine or balance hard and soft power. Korb and Boorstin (2005, ii) argued that the concepts of hard power and soft power should be discarded and replaced by the term “integrated power,” because the two types are “partners” and not “alternatives.” For them, integrated power means leading and using alliances; developing new strategies and combining them with traditional strategies; and ending divisions between defense, homeland security, diplomacy, energy, and foreign aid. This formulation is highly confusing.

Smart power and integrated power are still far from being clear and operational concepts, and they have not resolved the theoretical weaknesses of the soft power idea. Soft power has become a popular currency in political and ideological debate among scholars, politicians, and diplomats. The meaning of “smart” in many formulations is not clear, and it has been loaded with different and sometimes misleading contents. Nossel (2004), for example, argued that “conservative policy makers” in the United States have adhered to hard power, while “progressive policy makers” were in favor of smart power, which she equated with “liberal internationalism.” Any analysis of soft or smart power is quickly evoking public diplomacy, but the conceptual and operational relationship between the two has not yet been sufficiently clarified.

Communication: The media and public opinion

Public diplomacy is based on a complex relationship between three major components: the government, the media, and public opinion (Soroka 2003).

Scholars have produced many useful studies of the relationships between the media and public opinion and between the media and government, but very little research has been done to connect all three. Since the 9/11 terrorist attacks and the global war against terrorism, organizations and pollsters, primarily American, have conducted numerous polls designed to assess attitudes toward the United States in the Muslim world and Europe and to identify the main reasons for anti-Americanism. The results and findings of these polls are relevant, but there has not been a serious research effort to study the actual and potential contributions of public opinion surveys to the planning and implementation of public diplomacy. It is not clear, for example, how reliable are the polls taken in nondemocratic societies, what exactly they measure, how to interpret the findings, and what concrete guidelines they may provide for public diplomacy programs. A recent report (Fouts 2006) revealed considerable gaps between officials, pollsters, and academic researchers. It recommended producing more longitudinal data, evidence about the degree and direction of opinion, utilization of data in the planning process, training of pollsters to understand public diplomacy needs, and training of officials to understand the limitations of polls.

Today there are many worldwide surveys on public opinion toward various countries, organizations, and international issues. The data are often used to construct indexes measuring and ranking countries on significant topics such as "corruption," "freedom of the press," "democracy," "environmental protection," "quality of life," "peacefulness," and "availability of communication and information technologies." The indexes provide valuable information about the image and reputation of states, but no research has been conducted on the relative weight of these indicators and the possible utilization of the findings in public diplomacy.

Media-government relations may stretch from a mere indexing of government internal opinions to controlling the policy-making process with a few additional modalities in between. The "indexing hypothesis" suggested that reporters index the slant of their coverage to reflect the range of opinions that exist within the government (Bennett 1990). If this hypothesis is valid, then the media serve primarily as a tool in the hands of policy makers. "Information management" refers to government's control of information and manipulation of the mass media. This control usually appears in wars and military operations, but when applied to public diplomacy, it would mean manipulation of the media to cultivate strong domestic opposition to external influence. The "CNN effect" stands at the other end of the spectrum. Commentators and scholars employed this concept to describe television coverage, primarily of horrific humanitarian disasters, that forces policy makers to take actions they otherwise would not have taken, such as military intervention (Gilboa 2005). The CNN effect means that the media determine the national interest and usurp policy making from elected and appointed officials.

The communication literature is rich in theories and models of media effects such as "agenda setting," "framing," and "priming," but public diplomacy scholars and practitioners rarely employ them, and very few studies have integrated media effects with public diplomacy concepts. "Agenda setting" suggests that issues receiving the most attention in the media will be perceived by the public as the

most important. "Framing" is media selection, exclusion of, and emphasis on certain issues and approaches to promote a particular definition, interpretation, moral evaluation, or a solution. "Priming" refers to criteria suggested by the media to assess the performance of leaders. Contrary to popular myth, the media represent only one actor in the framing process. Politicians, policy makers, elites, interest groups, and foreign leaders all try to win public acceptance of their framing.

Several studies have found clear correlations between media coverage and perceptions of foreign nations. One study found that states receiving the most attention in the U.S. media were perceived by the public to be more vital to the U.S. national interest (Wanta, Golan, and Lee 2004). Negative coverage resulted in negative opinions, although positive coverage did not produce positive opinions. Another study evaluated U.S. public diplomacy activities toward the Muslim world through analysis of news coverage on Al-Jazeera against other sources of anti-American views; the study included macro-level variables such as socioeconomic factors and individual-level variables such as demographics, television exposure, and general views of the West (Nisbet et al. 2004). The investigators found that in nine different Muslim countries, TV news viewing has influenced anti-American sentiments more than any other macro-level or individual-level variable.

While scholars have applied communication models and theories to issues of foreign policy and international relations, only a few researchers have applied them to public diplomacy.

While scholars have applied communication models and theories to issues of foreign policy and international relations, only a few researchers have applied them to public diplomacy. Entman's (2004) cascading activation model is the most promising approach to connect policy, media and public opinion. He suggests that several actors, including presidents and their chief foreign policy advisers, elites, and the media, are engaged in a battle to shape frames that reach the public through the media and greatly influence the formation of public opinion. His model explains how this "framing fighting" is conducted, who is likely to win it, and how. The model argues that some actors have more power than others to push frames down the road to the public and, therefore, could help identify when and how the media affect foreign policy making. The model deals with domestic

framing of foreign policy issues but can be easily extended to public diplomacy. The idea would be to employ ways to intervene in the framing battles in another society. In this context, public diplomacy means an attempt to influence elites and the media in a target state. The assumption is that what foreign elites and foreign media say about an issue in a particular country could be utilized by those subscribing to the same view in that country and, thus, become a weapon in the domestic debate about the right thing to do.

Public relations: Promoting image and reputation

In recent years, more and more scholars and practitioners have conducted research on public diplomacy using PR theories, models, and methodologies. Signitzer and Coombs (1992) even argued that public diplomacy and PR are very similar and called for conceptual convergence of the two and for utilization of PR theories in empirical research. Ham (2002, 268) asserted that “PD [public diplomacy] and PR-marketing are merging.” Wang (2006b) suggested that “managing national reputation” is a key concept in public diplomacy. Grunig (1993) argued that his classic PR models could be extended to public diplomacy. He classified his models according to two basic interrelated principles: direction—one-way communication versus two-way communication; and purpose—symmetrical versus asymmetrical. “One-way communication” refers to information dissemination from one side to another, while “two-way communication” means information exchange between sides. In asymmetrical relations, the PR goal is to change the opinion, policy, or behavior of another state; while in symmetrical relations, there is also willingness on the part of the state using PR to change its own policy or behavior. Grunig’s four models included *press agency*, *public information*, *two-way asymmetrical*, and *two-way symmetrical*.

Press agency describes PR programs designed to achieve favorable coverage in the media, often in a misleading way. Public information refers to information written by in-house writers acting as if they were journalists and disseminated through controlled media such as newsletters, brochures, and direct mail. The first two models exhibit one-way communication and asymmetrical relations. The third model, the two-way asymmetrical model, is based on strategic communication—the scientific measurement of attitudes and formulation of messages capable of persuading the public in the target state to behave according to the interests of the state using PR. The two-way symmetrical model is also based on research but allows for changes in the policy and behavior of both the state using PR and the target state.

Applications of the four models to foreign countries have shown that they overlap and may be inconsistent. Grunig (1997) reconstructed the models into a four-dimensional normative framework, including *direction* and *purpose*, which appeared in the original framework, along with two new dimensions: *channel* and *ethics*. “Channel” refers to the ways information is delivered: that is, interpersonal versus mediated. Ethical PR is determined by teleology-approaching actions in

relation to their ends or utility, disclosure of interests, and social responsibility—encompassing all members of society, not just the public directly involved. The revised approach developed into a normative theory, the Excellence Study, which suggested a program for empirical research on PR practices measured against the best ways governments and organizations should practice PR.

Scholars have not sufficiently applied Grunig's (1993) four models and the four reconstructed dimensions (Grunig 1997) to public diplomacy. Several used the two-dimensional framework, one-way versus two-way communication, and symmetrical versus asymmetrical relations. Bu (1999) and Maack (2001), for example, applied the framework respectively to educational and cultural public diplomacy programs. Leonard and Alakeson (2000) advocated the two-way, symmetrical, and ethical public diplomacy model.

Yun (2006) conducted the most ambitious theoretical work to date on the applicability of the Excellence Study to public diplomacy. He operationalized Grunig's (1993, 1997) framework into a six-factor measurement model and added five principles from the Excellence Study: *involvement* of PR in strategic management, *integration* of specialized PR functions, *internal* and *external symmetrical* communication, and departmental *knowledge*. He then applied the integrated model to the practices of 113 embassies in Washington, D.C. Although this study is limited to one area of public diplomacy and to embassies in one capital, it provides an interesting and useful venue for advanced research in public diplomacy based on PR theories and models.

Occasionally, actors use advertising as a public diplomacy instrument. Zhang and Benoit (2004) applied Benoit's Image Restoration Theory to the image restoration campaign Saudi Arabia conducted in the United States after the 9/11 terrorist attacks. The theory argues that states and organizations have five options to restore a tarnished image: *denial*, *evading responsibility*, *reducing offensiveness*, *corrective action*, and *mortification*. The authors examined texts posted on the Saudi Embassy in Washington and paid advertising as well as news coverage of Saudi Arabia in the American media. Denial, attacking accusers, and bolstering were found to be the most effective components in the Saudi image restoration effort. In 2003, the United States imitated an advertising campaign known as the Shared Value Initiative. The campaign portrayed the lives of Muslims in the United States and was designed to improve the U.S. image in Arab and Muslim countries. Kendrick and Fullerton (2004) evaluated this effort through a combination of classic wartime propaganda experiments and an advertising copy test used to evaluate regular television commercials. The views of international students studying in London toward the United States were tested before and after showing them the advertised spots. The study concluded that the campaign was successful.

Zhang (2006) conceptualized public diplomacy as a "symbolic interactionist process" in which states and organizations actively participate in constructing and negotiating meanings of symbols and performing actions based on meanings. Symbolic interaction includes the following components: *identity*—meaning attached to self by the self and others; *symbols*; *interactions*; and *power relations*. Zhang used media framing to examine competing public diplomacy aspects of the 2004 to 2005 Asian tsunami relief campaigns. Zhang and Cameron (2003)

examined the effects of a public diplomacy campaign China conducted in the United States over the course of nine months in 2000. They investigated coverage in major U.S. newspapers of various events including special interviews and cultural tours and ranked the topics receiving the most negative and positive attention and found much more negative coverage primarily attributed to domestic politics in China. Heavy reliance on media coverage as the sole source of data for the evaluation of public diplomacy strategies and programs is a serious deficiency in this and other studies. Grunig's (1993, 1997) and Yun's (2006) models are much more promising for future empirical research.

Branding: Selling nations and places

While nation branding or rebranding is not new, it seems that it is gaining more attention in recent years (Anholt 2002; Kotler and Gertner 2002; Olins 2002, 2005; Yan 2003). The *Journal of Brand Management* reflected this emerging interest by devoting a special issue to nation branding. A new journal, *Place Branding*, was established to explore branding, marketing, and public diplomacy. An Association for Place Branding and Public Diplomacy was also founded. Branding entails giving products and services an emotional dimension with which people can identify. A brand is best described as a consumer's idea about a product, and the "brand state" refers to what people around the world think and feel about a state (Ham 2001). This formulation may also apply to subnational actors (Wang 2006a) or nonstate actors, such as terrorist organizations, international organizations, NGOs, and individuals attempting to promote their causes. States are considered to be identified with certain salient characteristics. The United States, for example, is associated with self-expression and technology, Germany with engineering and quality products, Japan with miniaturization, Italy with style, France with chic, Britain with class, Sweden with design, the Catholic Church with the Crucifix, and the Arab world with Al-Jazeera.

Ham (2002, 252) argued that branding "implies a shift in political paradigms from the modern world of geopolitics and power to the postmodern world of images and influence." States failing to establish "relevant brand equity" will not be able to successfully compete economically and politically in the new world system. Without branding, they would not be able to attract investments, tourists, companies, and factories; expand exports; and reach higher standards of living. Examples of national branding campaigns include "Cool Britannia" designed by Prime Minister Tony Blair to promote the image of the UK as a hub for arts, fashion, media, and design; the new Belgian logo, .be; and the Estonian effort to replace the "post-Soviet" image with the more prestigious "pre-EU" image. Apart from states, every territorial entity seems to be interested in branding, including cities, regions, and unions such as the EU. Ham (2002), for example, examined branding of the city of Hull and the Øresund Region in Denmark.

Anholt developed indexes for nation and city branding, which are based on practice and intuition more than on theory. The Nation Brands Index (Anholt 2007) is the sum of the perceptions of a country and its people across six areas of national assets: *tourism, exports, culture and heritage, investment and immigration,*

people, and *governance*. Anholt used the index to periodically rank the branding status of thirty-five to thirty-eight nations, mostly from the developed world. Results are obtained through a wide poll of twenty-five thousand people around the world. He used a similar method to construct the City Brands Index (Anholt 2006). These projects are innovative and interesting, but it would have been useful to know more details about the polling and the validity of the specific measures used by Anholt, which would require extensive research.

Ham (2002) conducted an interesting experiment in linking branding to a major contemporary theoretical approach to international relations known as constructivism. This approach argues that norms, values, and identities are independent of power relations among states and are social constructs established by relevant actors. Debates about norms, values, and identities are mainly conducted in the media. Social construction of reality also links constructivism to communication theory, but advocates of constructivism have ignored relevant communication theories, while communication experts have ignored constructivism. Public diplomacy can effectively bridge constructivism, branding, and communication studies.

Public diplomacy and branding are similar in certain areas but very different in others. Similarities include image and symbols management, relationship building, and extensive use of the mass media. The differences include goals or outcomes—increased sales versus foreign policy, means, types of communication, management, language, and culture. Callahan (2006) correctly observed that PR, advertising, political campaigns, and movies are related to public diplomacy as much as baseball is related to cricket. Advertising and branding of products are specific and self-defining; movie-makers want to entertain, political strategies work in familiar domestic settings, and PR rarely goes beyond clichés. Public diplomacy, on the other hand, has to deal with complex and multifaceted issues, must provide appropriate context to foreign policy decisions, and cope with social and political impetus not easily understood abroad. In short, public diplomacy cannot be reduced to slogans and images. Another major controversial problem is the ability of branding to divert attention from an overwhelming and dominating crisis to more advantageous areas. Can the United States manage a successful branding campaign while fighting a controversial and unpopular war in Iraq? Or is it possible for Israel to initiate a major branding campaign with a focus on excellence in high-tech and outstanding contributions to medicine while fighting Palestinian violence? Scholars have yet to answer these questions and to study the significant similarities and differences between branding and public diplomacy.

Methodological Approaches

Paradigms

As yet, there have not been serious attempts to formulate a paradigm of public diplomacy. A few scholars have suggested paradigms for related areas including

world politics, world order, and foreign policy, but even these suffer from many theoretical and methodological weaknesses. Ammon (2001) claimed that paradigmatic changes both in communication and diplomacy produced a new paradigm of world politics, which he called "telediplomacy." He explained that the emergence and expansion of real-time global news coverage caused a shift in communication, while the "new diplomacy," mostly characterized by openness, caused a shift in foreign policy making. The convergence of the two shifts, telediplomacy, has displaced the existing diplomatic methods; and for the first time in human history, under certain conditions, it also drives policy and determines diplomatic outcomes. Telediplomacy is closely related to public diplomacy because it focuses on the power of international and domestic public opinion to force policies on leaders and policy makers. Ammon demonstrated his paradigm through several cases of military intervention in acute humanitarian crises. The paradigm specified conditions for telediplomacy to work, including a fast-breaking event, a leadership vacuum, media autonomy, and high visibility. The problem is that meeting all these conditions would be extremely difficult and would happen only in rare situations. A television-based, new paradigm of world politics cannot be founded on exceptional cases.

Gunaratne (2005) applied system theory and Eastern philosophy to place public diplomacy within the context of communication-based world order. His approach stems from political and economic effects of globalization on the world and the ensuing gap between the powers at the center of the international activity and the underdeveloped periphery. For him, the analysis of public diplomacy must begin with the world system as the basic unit for analysis and not with the nation-state as had previously been advocated. He cited Hachten and Scotton (2002, 104), who observed that not all actors have equal access to public diplomacy: states and societies on the periphery "are mostly on the receiving end of PD because most lack the communication capability to compete effectively on a global basis." This approach is interesting but also very complex and difficult to operationalize as a working paradigm.

Riordan (2004) argued that diplomacy in the twenty-first century will increasingly be public diplomacy, because the only way to effectively deal with contemporary global issues such as terrorism, environmental degradation, the spread of epidemic diseases, and financial instability would be through public diplomacy and close collaboration among governments, NGOs, and individuals. He called this approach "dialogue-based PD" because it requires collaboration among many partners operating within and outside civil society. Riordan suggested that if properly implemented, dialogue-based public diplomacy will create a new paradigm of foreign policy, because it will force the existing rigid and closed foreign policy establishment to open. This approach, however, is too narrow and only places the known instruments of public diplomacy at the center of the policy-making process. It is mainly oriented toward practice and not toward scholarship.

Paradigms in the Kuhnian meaning may be useful for the development of a scientific field, because they chart the tracks of normal science and scientific revolutions. A paradigm or a dominant theory creates the puzzle researchers fill with

data and findings. In theory, a paradigm of public diplomacy could be useful for the promotion of accumulative research. The few existing paradigmatic attempts are premature, however, and show that in this particular multidisciplinary case, the paradigmatic approach may not be the most effective way to organize the field.

Case studies and comparative analysis

Case studies and comparative analysis are very common methodologies in the social sciences and are very useful tools for knowledge creation and advancement. Case studies prepare the ground for generalizations needed to construct theories and models. Comparative analysis is essential because it demonstrates both similarities and differences among actors and programs. Case studies in public diplomacy may be classified into several categories, including *actors*, such as a particular state, international organization, or NGO; public diplomacy *instruments* such as international broadcasting or cultural diplomacy; *target states or regions* such as the Middle East; and *individual leaders* such as the Dalai Lama and Nelson Mandela. Case studies may belong to more than one category. For example, German international broadcasting may be classified in the *actor* category or the *instrument* category. Therefore, category selection should be done according to specific research goals and methodologies.

The following case studies reveal a multitude of approaches and methodologies. Leonard, Small, and Rose (2005) examined British public diplomacy in light of cultural divides in political, religious, and economic affairs occurring particularly after the war in Iraq. They called for a new strategy based on news management, strategic communication, relationship building, mutuality, independence, and trust. Potter (2002-2003) investigated Canada's public diplomacy via four relevant instruments: media relations, cultural and educational relations, international broadcasting, and branding. He also examined a particular project in Japan—Think Canada. Ociepka and Ryniejaska (2005) wrote a useful and unique case study exploring public diplomacy policy-making processes related to the campaign Poland launched in support of its diplomatic effort to join the EU. Zöllner (2006) produced an interesting and very useful study of a public diplomacy instrument—international broadcasting—employed by Germany in the Arab world. He applied the Signitzer and Coombs PR—public diplomacy convergence approach and Habermas's "theory of communicative action," to the stated goals of Deutsche Welle's broadcasting to the Arab world.

Two studies examined Israel's public diplomacy. Gilboa (2006) applied his World Standing Index, designed to measure the standing of actors in the world across time, to assess Israeli public diplomacy. The index includes the following variables: public opinion trends; media framing; Web criticism and support; diplomatic relations; visits of leaders and joint statements; debates in parliaments; resolutions, debates, voting, and resolutions in international organizations; NGO reports; sanctions and boycotts; indictments and rulings of international courts; demonstrations; attacks on state symbols such as embassies; fast-food restaurants; and cultural centers. Mor (2006) applied grand strategy

concepts and used one case study in the Palestinian-Israeli War/Second Intifada. Although the two authors used different approaches and perspectives (macro vs. micro), they reached similar conclusions.

Canada has been a popular state for comparative analysis. Vickers (2004) compared the public diplomacy of Canada and Britain, while Henrikson (2005) and Bátorá (2006) compared the public diplomacy of Canada and Norway. Gouveia and Plumridge (2005) conducted a comparative survey of public diplomacy activities pursued by EU members. The context of the comparisons, the methodology, and the findings were different. Both Vickers and Bátorá applied the NPD's features to examine the policy-making process and the public diplomacy programs of their respective states. Vickers used two interrelated variables: attitudes toward civil society groups and perceptions of the target public. She concluded that while Britain only repackaged old public diplomacy techniques, Canada adopted an inclusive approach. The British government ignored new actors and viewed the target public as a passive recipient of diplomacy. The Canadian government engaged civil society groups and NGOs both in policy consultation and in activities at home and abroad and adopted the two-way communication model.

Henrikson (2005) and Bátorá (2006) selected Canada and Norway because they are smaller states, and consequently their international goals and agenda are different from the big power states. The main differences were in visibility and interests. The smaller states receive much less attention in the global media and have to adopt an attractive mission. Canada focused on human security and foreign aid while Norway emphasized peacemaking and international mediation. Bátorá employed two variables: inclusion versus exclusion (of domestic groups and NGOs) and fragmentation versus centralization in the policy-making process. He suggested that the Canadian model was inclusive and fragmented, while the Norwegian model was selective and centralized and resulted in what he called "value positioning." While the image and value platforms of Canada were *unidirectional*, reflecting the way Canadians perceive themselves and projecting these perceptions abroad, the equivalent Norwegian platforms were *multidirectional* and were designed to address audiences both at home and abroad. Bátorá thought that the multidirectional approach to public diplomacy could be more effective for small and medium states. It is interesting to note that while Vickers (2004) praised Canada's public diplomacy, Bátorá and Potter were more critical. Gouveia and Plumridge's (2005) work would have been much more useful had they used identical categories to examine the public diplomacy programs of the EU members.

Very few scholars have employed comparative analysis to examine specific public diplomacy areas or instruments, focusing instead predominantly on the management of cultural relations. Mitchell (1986) suggested government control as a determining variable and distinguished among three models: *full government control*, *autonomous agencies*, and *a mixed system*. He used this scheme to compare the systems of Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Wyszomirski, Burgess, and Peila (2003) employed five variables for their comparative analysis: *terminology and role*

approaches to cultural diplomacy, goals and priorities, administrative structure, program tools, and funding size. They compared the management of cultural relations among Australia, Austria, Canada, France, Japan, Netherlands, Singapore, Sweden, and the United Kingdom.

A framework for analysis

Theory construction requires meaningful and valid generalizations. Comparative analysis contributes more to generalization than single case studies because it avoids the danger of overemphasizing the unique features of each case. Case studies may provide many interesting insights on various aspects of public diplomacy, but their ability to generalize with accuracy is very limited. Effective comparative political analysis is useful only if scholars use the same variables. Leonard (2002) suggested several variables that could contribute to comparative analysis. He distinguished between three dimensions of public diplomacy: news management, strategic communication, and relationship building; three spheres: political/military, economic, and social/cultural; two types of public diplomacy: cooperation and competition; and five public diplomacy instruments: NGO diplomacy, Diaspora diplomacy, political party diplomacy, brand diplomacy, and business diplomacy. He has not, however, integrated the variables into one framework.

Comparative research on public diplomacy should follow what Alexander George (1979) called “structured focused comparison.” Structure in public diplomacy may be defined in terms of time range and focus in terms of public diplomacy’s instruments and government involvement (see Table 2).

Traditional public diplomacy was aimed at long-term results, but the information age required a major adjustment in the time framework. It would be useful to distinguish among three time dimensions: immediate, intermediate, and long. Each presents different purposes and means, different attitudes to the media and public opinion, a different degree of desirable association or ties with the government, and matching public diplomacy instruments. At the immediate level, the purpose is to react within hours or a few days to developing events, usually to minimize damage or exploit an opportunity through techniques of news management. Such immediate action is generally led by senior government officials. The most appropriate public diplomacy instruments for this stage would be advocacy, international broadcasting, and cyber public diplomacy. Officials can respond rapidly to an evolving event via controlled media: their own radio and TV stations and Internet sites.

The intermediate level allows much more time for proactive planning and implementation of policies. It is based on techniques of strategic communication and conducted by a combination of governmental and nongovernmental agencies during periods lasting between a few weeks and a few months. IPR, corporate diplomacy, and Diaspora public diplomacy are the most suitable instruments for this stage. The long-term range is the closest to traditional public diplomacy. It is designed to produce supportive attitudes among publics around the world. Such initiatives require years of efforts to build mutual trust and favorable

TABLE 2
A FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS

Range	Immediate	Intermediate	Long
Time	Hours/days	Weeks/months	Years
Purpose	Reactive	Proactive	Relationship
Media/public opinion	News management	Strategic communication	Building favorable conditions
Government	Closely linked	Partially linked	Remotely linked
Public diplomacy (PD) instrument	Advocacy; international broadcasting; cyber PD	International public relations; corporate diplomacy; Diaspora PD	Cultural diplomacy; exchanges; branding

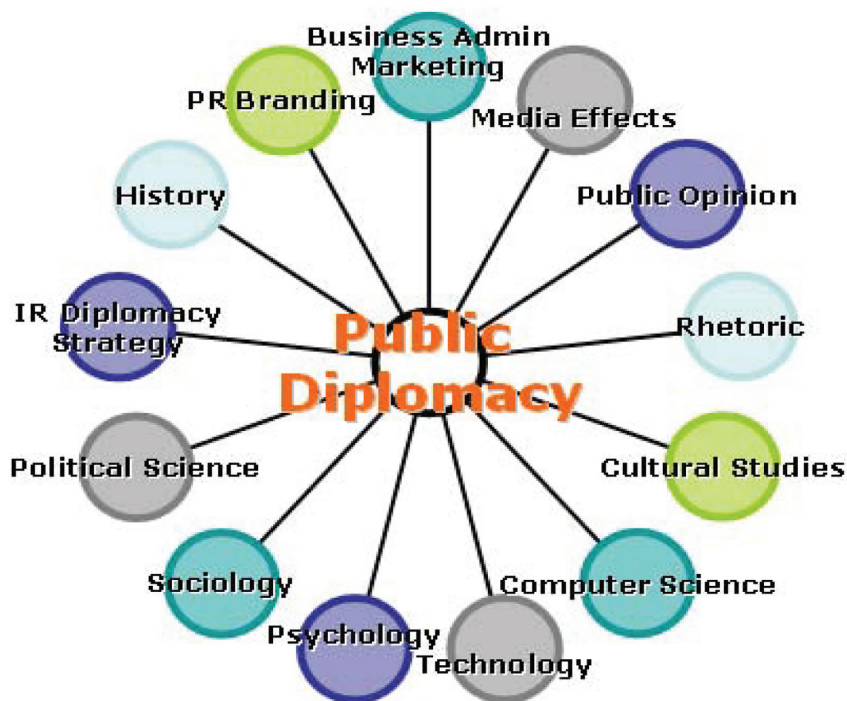
conditions for friendly relations with states and nonstate actors. NGOs are the most effective bodies to carry out the long-term tasks. The most appropriate public diplomacy instruments for this stage would be cultural diplomacy, international exchanges, and branding.

Conclusion

Despite the growing significance of public diplomacy in contemporary international relations, scholars have not yet pursued or even sufficiently promoted systematic theoretical research in this field. They have developed models and tools for analysis in several relevant disciplines but have not proposed a comprehensive and integrated framework. Substantial gaps exist at several levels and areas. Experts and practitioners in public diplomacy have often ignored relevant knowledge in communication and PR; while communication and PR scholars and practitioners have often ignored the relevant literature in international relations, diplomatic studies, and strategic studies. Both groups have ignored the potential contributions of other social and behavioral disciplines. A new research agenda is clearly needed to close the wide gaps.

Available knowledge on public diplomacy instruments also reveals substantial gaps. International broadcasting and cultural diplomacy have received much more attention than international exchanges and nation branding; and NGOs, corporate, cyber, and Diaspora public diplomacy and use of international law have been relatively ignored. A new research agenda requires prioritizing, with three specific areas given special attention: the Internet, NGOs, and evaluation. Almost all actors maintain Web sites to present their history, policies, values, culture, science, and

FIGURE 1
MULTIDISCIPLINARY CONTRIBUTIONS TO PUBLIC DIPLOMACY



NOTE: PR = public relations; IR = international relations.

other achievements. By using the Internet for self-promotion, actors pursue cyber-public diplomacy, and the cumulative effect forms competing e-images. Virtual worlds provide additional opportunities. Scholars have produced only a handful of studies on this critical subfield (Rawnsley 2005; Shaheed 2004; Weimann 2006). At the same time, almost every study of public diplomacy mentions NGOs, but very few studies examine how they work, whether they adopt a political agenda, and how they affect policies of other actors (Steinberg 2006). Finally, systematic evaluation of public diplomacy programs and activities is essential for both theoretical and practical reasons, to bolster the relatively limited research that has been conducted to produce reliable and effective measurement techniques (Johnson 2006).

Some progress can be found in the areas examined in this work. Several promising models and theories such as Gilboa's public diplomacy models, Entman's cascading activation model, Grunig's PR models, and Benoit's image restoration theory should be further developed, refined, and applied to public diplomacy issues. In recent years, PR scholars have produced many interesting studies of different public diplomacy subjects, and hopefully this trend will continue. Application of

the constructivism approach to public diplomacy may produce many fresh insights. Researchers have to develop sophisticated frameworks for case study analysis and comparative analysis. The framework suggested in Table 2 could provide a good starting point.

A scholarly field is established when several minimal requirements are met. It must be clearly distinguished from other fields; it should define several subfields sharing theories, models, and methodologies; and it must win both internal and external recognition. A major breakthrough could be achieved if public diplomacy research was expanded to other disciplines. Figure 1 shows that many disciplines can contribute to the scientific development of public diplomacy. The challenge is to develop a unifying and integrating paradigm for the center of the figure. This requires a substantial multidisciplinary effort and extensive collaboration between scholars and practitioners. Several vehicles could be used to achieve this goal including annual public diplomacy conferences, joint multinational research projects, annual and periodical publications, research centers, graduate programs, and short-term training institutes. Progress in public diplomacy research is highly needed because of the central place it is now occupying in foreign policy and diplomacy. Public diplomacy research cannot be sufficiently accumulated without theory design and implementation, and the best way to promote theory is to initiate a new scientific program dedicated to this effort.

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