Looking at the Man in the Mirror;
Understanding of Power and Influence in Public Diplomacy

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Public Diplomacy is at its core about influencing the actions and behaviour of other people, whether that is in the short, medium or long term.\(^1\) However, rather than exerting control over behaviour absolutely, public diplomacy is about influencing the likelihood of an audience adopting a behaviour, it is effectively about changing the odds of a certain outcome actually happening.

Some schools of thought and practise currently focus on using ‘influence’ to advocate a certain image or policy. Conversely, for others ‘influence’ is the ability to develop understanding, dialogue or relationships as a means to share power and develop collective action.\(^2\) This results in one of the key tensions in the practise of Public Diplomacy; the

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division between those that seek to exert ‘power over’ a target audience and those that intend to engage or empower a community. The divergence between the two positions is fundamentally a question of power and how that power is understood in relation to the ‘other’. Reflecting on this power relationship highlights; how and why those ‘others’ are selected, how priorities are identified, and ultimately how success is measured and articulated.

Practitioners and theorists who emphasize asserting identity, perceptions, perception change or understanding, must ask themselves the question; to what end are you spending public money? What behaviour do they seek to elicit from the audience? In effect, beyond the usual that it is nice to talk about oneself, why is telling others about yourself important?

Despite the preference amongst some practitioners for focusing on perceptions, it is the action or behaviour which the target audience takes that gives the perception impact on the international environment. Even if that behaviour is to acquiesce to certain policy goals, or at least not act to oppose that policy, success of the Public Diplomacy is rooted in behaviour rather than perception. This focus on action, however mutual, ultimately relates to the power to influence behaviour of a foreign public.

However, while all programmes seek to influence behaviour, there is a clear differentiation in emphasis between Public Diplomacy conceived as exerting ‘power over’ a target audience and that considered empowerment. Genuine, symmetrical exchange is the point at which the two approaches meet as participants are equally open to the influence of the other while seeking to exert influence. Exchange is the point where symmetrical relationship building can take place.

Three Layers of Public Diplomacy,’ The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science (March 2008), 616, pp. 10-30


The practise of Public Diplomacy to exert ‘power over’ an audience overlaps with definition produced by Philip Taylor’s of propaganda, though he notes without the associated debasement of the word. “The word ‘propaganda’ itself implies calculated intent on the part of one person or group of people to persuade others to think or behave in certain way”. Empowerment in contrast provides a community with the ability to act. The statement, often attributed to Nelson Mandella, “education is the most powerful weapon, which you can use to change the world” is not referring to systematic indoctrination but the possibility “through education that the daughter of a peasant can become a doctor” or “a child of farm workers can become the president”. As J.A.C. Brown argued, “education teaches people how to think, whereas propaganda teaches them what to think”.

To demonstrate the differentiation in emphasis, and subsequently the meaning of power within public diplomacy, the understanding of power within the discipline can be conceptualised in five areas. Much of current Public Diplomacy analysis focuses on the first aspect of power, the ability to articulate policy and the subsequent tension between message and actions. This is closely linked to the second meaning of power in PD; the way actions are articulated to the domestic constituency. Third, the nature of the power relationship with the target audience; whether that is symmetrical or asymmetrical in favour of the international actor or giving the participants greater ownership over the engagement. Building on the understanding of that relationship, fourth, is the understanding of PD and power in relation to the network; particularly understanding the type of network, an actors relationship with the networks, and the importance of certain positions in the network.

Finally, drawing on the previous meanings, the understanding of power relates to the meaning of success in public diplomacy. This highlights the assumptions upon which the identification of important people, key influencers, to be engaged and how success is

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measured. Specifically, power within Public Diplomacy must be understood beyond a
narrow masculine sense of ‘power over’ to embrace both empowerment as an act of public
diplomacy and the understandings that can come from gendered thought. As Jacqui True
wrote:

If the human world is exhaustively defined by such gendered constructions of
‘power-over’, as in realist accounts, feminists ask, how do children get reared,
collective movements mobilize and everyday life reproduced?

Approaching power in this way, the analysis begins with what the actor seeks to achieve and
whether that will be seen as consistent with their other actions. It then broadens to consider
whether it can be justified to the domestic constituency and what form the power relationship
with the foreign public should take. These practical issues provide the platform from which to
consider the wider issue of conceptualising the various roles practitioners play in a networked
world. In doing so this approach identifies the tensions in relation to the understanding of
power as practise increasingly focuses on measurement and valorising impact.

1) The classic power struggle; messages and actions

The consideration of tensions in Public Diplomacy can often focus on the articulation of
policy which is discussed in greater depth elsewhere in this volume. In this sense power
largely revolves around the ability to engage or dictate the agenda in view of previous or
contemporary acts. As recognised in 1937, “it is perfectly true…that good cultural
propaganda cannot remedy the damage done by a bad foreign policy”. Blunders in policy or
execution will inevitably undermine public diplomacy. However, Public Diplomacy is not
just influenced by foreign policy; it can also be undermined by a lack of commitment to
policies ‘at home’. As Geoff Miller has argued that, “National borders have become both less

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8 Jacqui True, ‘Feminism’ in Scott Burchill et al. (eds.), Theories of International Relations (Palgrave, 2005), pp. 225-226
9 Eden to Simon, 22 December 1937, T 161/807, S 35581/03/38/1, quoted in Taylor, The Projection of Britain, p. 168
immutable and more porous, and the ability and inclination to see over or behind them have grown‖.¹¹ This tension between Public Diplomacy and both foreign and domestic policy creates the potential for practise to be undermined by ‘local’ inconsistency.

The tension caused by local inconsistency was particularly evident during oral evidence given by Asialink to the Australian Senate hearings on Public Diplomacy.¹² However, Australia are not alone in facing the tension caused by inconsistency. The “‘interconnected’ realities of global relationships” creates advantages for those seeking to conduct PD¹³ but the ability to look behind the national boarder to see the realities which exist also exacerbates the tension created by the local inconsistencies.¹⁴

The Public Diplomacy associated with climate change, while it receives less attention from academic public diplomacy analysis, highlights many of the tensions over ‘local’ inconsistency. While arguments over the specifics of the science are important, much of the engagement with the population will not be an analysis of the detail but will deal in images presented to them by various advocacy campaigns. As such, ‘local’ inconsistency will create an area of tension for Public Diplomacy.¹⁵

This tension between message and action severely curtails the ability to exert ‘power-over’ an audience as it will be clear the behaviour promoted by the Public Diplomacy programme has not been adopted by actor promoting it. This ultimately influences the options available to practitioners as their actions at home limit their power to shape the agenda overseas. However, the relationship with their own actions is only the first tension; before they can act they must also consider their relationship with the domestic constituency and foreign publics.

¹¹ Geoff Miller, ‘Current and emerging challenges to the practice of Australian diplomacy,’ *Australian Journal of International Affairs* (2002), 56:2, pp. 197–206
¹² At the hearing Asialink questioned the commitment of New South Wales to public diplomacy spending. When challenged about this lack of commitment, the Senator from New South Wales conducting hearings into Public Diplomacy said “It is not my government,” demonstrating the inconsistency in commitment between local and senatorial representatives from the same state. See Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, *Nature and conduct of Australia’s diplomacy*, 15 March 2007
2) Power and the domestic audience

Many understandings of the discipline, in theory and practise, have a tendency to conflate the meaning of Soft Power and public diplomacy. This conflation does not acknowledge the broader understandings of public diplomacy; however, it does demonstrate the uneasy relationship between the understandings of power and public diplomacy, particularly when the message is being articulated for consumption by a domestic audience. Soft Power may sound dynamic to the domestic constituency, but it ultimately limits the power of Public Diplomacy practitioners to engage in the full range of possibilities.

Arguing that a country is using soft power has become increasingly popular in both political and practitioner discussion. Faced with a threat, “an unprecedented challenge from the dark side of globalization”, as Nye described it, the desire to create a dynamic narrative in response is understandable. The War against Terror, War on terror, and other articulations provide an appearance of a strong response. The response for Nye, is to draw a parallel with previous challenges; “Like the challenge of the cold war, this one cannot be met by military power alone. That is why it is so essential that Americans – and others – better understand and apply soft power.”

Following similar logic, UK Foreign Secretary, David Miliband in his first speech at Chatham House argued that “we need to think how we can deploy Britain’s assets — both the soft power of ideas and influence, and the harder power of our economic and military incentives and interventions”. Equally a 2005 report for the State Department argued “for an enduring commitment to soft power, to winning hearts and minds in the cultural arena”.

However, just as Joseph Nye argues for an application of soft power, he also notes, soft power “is an analytical term, not a political slogan” and as such has a specific meaning:

Soft power is the ability to get what you want by attracting and persuading others.

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to adopt your goals. It differs from hard power, the ability to use the carrots and sticks of economic and military might to make others follow your will.\textsuperscript{20}

In this expression of soft power, Nye demonstrates his understanding of influence as ‘power-over’; to make individuals to “adopt your goals”. The goals are created and then means are used to persuade others to enter into action in support of those goals.

Many practitioners who must publicly account for their budget do so by making dynamic claims of ‘power over’ the audience, which narrows Public Diplomacy to only a few possible approaches. This exposes the classic tension within Public Diplomacy theory and practise, the relationship between the language of dialogue, mutuality or two-way communication, and the development of many strategies and programmes which maintain a realist, state-based author-audience power relationship that demonstrates a very different approach to power.

Listening in the soft power context “requires understanding how they are hearing your messages, and fine-tuning it accordingly”.\textsuperscript{21} This significantly limits the field of public diplomacy, reducing ‘the two way street’ of dialogue and genuine exchange to one of message refinement.\textsuperscript{22} This is problematic, while being the target of soft power is likely to be preferable to influence down the barrel of a gun, “No one likes being used for target practice, whatever the munitions”, as Daryl Copeland wrote recently.\textsuperscript{23} As a result, “merely shooting messages rather than bullets will not do the trick”.\textsuperscript{24}

However, those who have to justify their budgets or actions to a domestic public have a pressing and immediate need for clear statements of action. This creates the need for a dynamic narrative for domestic consumption, through which to gain support for future actions. Such dynamic narratives focus on exerting ‘power-over’ the audience for a predefined goal, rarely leaving space for genuine dialogue and empowerment.

Domestic pressure also leads to a focus on ‘representation’ and self-centred language rather

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\item[21] Nye, \textit{Soft Power}
\item[23] Daryl Copeland, ‘Military public diplomacy meets political counter-insurgency: Two sides of the same COIN?’ International Studies Association conference, 2008
\item[24] Copeland, ‘Military public diplomacy’
\end{enumerate}
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than genuine engagement in which the domestic constituency is expected to move its position. *The Future Embassy Report* produced by CSIS demonstrated the need within the domestic constituency for representation. The report argued “(t)he truest test of the value to our nation of the U.S. diplomatic presence abroad is whether the people we ask to represent us effectively promote American values and interests”.25 Considering the response to 9/11 Matt Armstrong highlighted “the struggle for minds and wills has returned to the open battleground over perceptions and support”.26 His argument that “we must stop telling foreign publics what we want our own people to hear” clearly exposes the tension created by pressure from the domestic constituency for ‘representation’.27

In the informational framework or monologue conception of communication, the domestic pressure to frame a particular message creates tension with the framing for the external audience.28 This tension escalates rapidly when considered in relational, dialogue or collaborative conceptions, cutting to a fundamental meaning of power in relation to the domestic audience. For genuine dialogue to occur there must be an element in which both sides are prepared to shift their position, yet public diplomacy practitioners rarely risk suggesting to their political masters that the domestic audience must shift their position or identity rather than just the foreign audience.

The tension between representation and building links is nothing new and was demonstrated in an article in the *Daily Express* from November 1944. It complained that Frank Wallace had been sent by the British Council to “advise the Spaniards on game preservation”. At issue was not the development of a closer relationship with General Franco, it was that “this kind of ‘projection’ of Britain was utterly misleading and most damaging … scrutiny of the British Council will lead inevitably to the conclusion that it is unfitted to the great task of presenting Britain to the world”.29 For the *Daily Express*, building relationships, or dialogue, was secondary to the projection of an image.

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27 Armstrong, ‘Operationalizing Public Diplomacy,’ p. 70
28 Zaharna, ‘Mapping out a Spectrum’; Cowan and Arsenault, ‘Moving from Monologue to Dialogue to Collaboration’
Similarly, in recent years the domestic articulation of Public Diplomacy is particularly assertive, in terms of “Finding America’s Voice” or looking at “influencing foreign publics -- not with arms, not even with arm-twisting, but with the softer power of ideas.”\footnote{Miliband, ‘New Diplomacy’: Finding America’s Voice: A Strategy for Reinvigorating U.S. Public Diplomacy, (Council on Foreign Relations, 2003); James Glassman speech, Council on Foreign Relations, 2 July 2008, ‘Public Diplomacy in the 21st Century’, http://www.america.gov/st/texttrans-english/2008/July/20080702123054xjsnommisis0.3188745.html} If this domestic pressure for representation is successful, it limits the power of Public Diplomacy to genuinely engage with populations overseas, or at the very least, to admit domestically the full extent of what is being attempted. As a result, practitioners rarely articulate the argument to the domestic constituency that “Public Diplomacy is not always about you” as Nick Cull succinctly described it.\footnote{Nick Cull, ‘Public Diplomacy: Seven lessons for its future from its past,’ Engagement: Public Diplomacy in a Globalised World (Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 2008), p. 16}

This relationship with the domestic audience has a major impact on the power to frame Public Diplomacy programmes. The desire to be represented abroad in a positive way forces the domestic consciousness into the framing of overseas initiatives rather than allowing Public Diplomacy to be seen as a means of achieving policy goals through influencing behaviour. This is not to deny the impact of country of origin effects, yet it demonstrates the tensions created by the necessity to negotiate a power relationship with the domestic constituency in framing a PD initiative.\footnote{K.I Al-Sulaiti and M.J Baker, ‘Country of origin effects: a literature review,’ Marketing Intelligence & Planning (1998), 16:3, pp. 150-199}

This tension with the domestic constituency can be seen in American practise. It is evident in what James Glassman termed the ‘war of ideas’ but stretches back into earlier responses to 9/11. As Nancy Snow described the approach;

The effort to share values ended up showing a harsh contrast between the daily life realities of Muslim people living in the United States and those living under much harsher regimes. Instead of a hoped for message that “our success is your success” it was “our success isn’t your success” and here are the images that prove it.\footnote{Nancy Snow, ‘Rethinking Public Diplomacy,’ in Snow and Philip Taylor (eds.), The Routledge Handbook of Public Diplomacy, p. 8}

This was due to the 'shared' approach being framed in asymmetric terms, influenced by the
domestic pressure for representation rather than genuine collective identification of values. This was exacerbated by the corrosive ‘with us or against us’ narrative which while popular within some domestic constituencies, limited the opportunity of individuals to engage if they were resistant to being subordinate to an American narrative.

While this point has equal relevance to the discussion of power relationships with the target audience, its relevance here is the way such lines are designed in relation to the domestic rather than foreign audience. Such rhetoric may garner support for the initiative at home, but actions designed with the domestic audience can damage the delivery of the initiative abroad.

The necessity to negotiate any potential tensions with the domestic constituency leads many Public Diplomacy practitioners and analysts alike to either overlook, or deliberately underplay, the possibility identified by Nick Cull recently; “(s)ometimes the most credible voice in public diplomacy is not one’s own”.  

3) Power relationship with the foreign public.

Understanding the nature of the power relationship aids the differentiation of messaging or Soft Power from facilitative, niche, diplomacy and the collaborative or co-developer approach of the open source methodology. It demonstrates succinctly whether the actor is seeking to exert power over the foreign public or work collectively with them.

Nye’s recent explanation of exerting soft power presents a position based on producer and recipient; the message is fine-tuned, tested and honed as it is conceived of as projected onto an audience. The power relationship is one of a producer and a passive audience to whom Public Diplomacy is done in line with a predetermined agenda of an international actor.

The assumptions of this approach characterise it as neither mutual nor based on a reciprocal relationship. It excludes the development of common goals through dialogue, nor provides

34 Cull, ‘Public Diplomacy,’ p. 16
36 Nye, Soft Power, p. 111
support to empower others to realise their goals. It is neither compromise nor negotiation. It is a belief in one’s own perspective over another. It is an asymmetric power relationship in favour of the actor over the foreign public.  

Juxtaposed with the asymmetry of soft power is the facilitative approach of niche diplomacy where the benefit comes from helping others to achieve their goals.  

These facilitative approaches invert the asymmetry of the relationship between the international actor and the target of the initiative. This can be seen in initiatives run by Norway or Singapore and, while it was not articulated in these terms, the 1967 Malta initiative with regard to the seabed beyond national jurisdiction. These initiatives are focused predominantly on other nations. They realise national goals by engaging with other states to facilitate collective action.

Rather than exert power to drive people to a position, these initiatives influence by providing a mechanism that facilitates the creation of certain initiatives. As Alan Henrikson put it, “[i]f a country carries out measures for the international good, even what might be deemed the ‘global public good’, then it is seeking something that is ‘universalizable’, extending well beyond national self-interest”. Whether or not the goal is ‘universalizable’ is a question of scale, the vital part of niche diplomacy is that it can be presented as 'beyond national self-interest' subsuming the national into the collective effort. It is this which inverts the asymmetric power relationship from that evident from those pursing Soft Power. Soft power may be easier to articulate to the domestic constituency, but empowerment has greater potential to attract engagement from the foreign population as it relies not on honing attractive things for their consumption but in engaging through actions in which they are

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37 The Green Day Problem demonstrates the understanding of power. See Fisher and Bröckerhoff, Options for Influence, pp. 22-23

38 Henrikson, ‘Niche Diplomacy in the Public Arena’;

39 Henrikson, ‘Niche Diplomacy in the Public Arena’; Rana, ‘Singapore’s Diplomacy’;
Tommy Koh, ‘Size is not density’, in Arun Mahizhnan and Lee Tsao Yuan (eds), Singapore: Re-engineering Success, (Singapore Institute of Policy Studies, 1999);

40 Henrikson, ‘Niche Diplomacy in the Public Arena,’ p. 68.
Also see Inge Kaul et al. (eds), Providing Global Public Goods: Managing the Globalization (Oxford University Press, 2003)
already interested.

The tensions caused by the power relationship with the foreign publics can be seen through the analysis of recent US actions, and particularly the 'War of ideas' as outlined by James Glassman. The discussion of US military action in Iraq, by Matt Armstrong, has presented a credible argument about the role of information based Public Diplomacy. However, the tendency to give primacy to a particular nation within a collective effort highlights a potential tension in both the narrative and academic analysis. He argues “unless the people think the U.S. is winning, the insurgent narrative will continue to gain traction”. Yet did Thai, Italian, Bulgarian, British, and Spanish coalition members, along with the many thousands of Iraqis die so the US could win? It is the blurring of the national with collective ambitions, particularly within a domestic ‘American’ narrative that creates tension with foreign publics. If there is to be collective engagement, the narrative must also be collective; not merely an assertion of American power.

If people are to be ‘liberated’, the articulation of the Public Diplomacy must maintain the appropriate collective or empowering power relationship rather than focused on US pre-eminence. If action is to be collective, the aspirations of the foreign public must be central, not a by-product of US goals. Otherwise Public Diplomacy will seek 'power-over' the audience, an audience the US claims to seek to work with or liberate. Whilst this is perhaps an unfortunate turn of phrase in Armstrong’s piece, it is the clearly stated way in which, Assistant Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy, James Glassman understands of his role.

James Glassman has argued that “war of ideas as we are leading it today” built on that of Karen Hughes, who sought to “isolate or marginalize violent extremists who threaten freedom and peace”. Whilst framed as a collective effort for common benefit, there is a clear invocation of leadership. The problem is not with that goal per se but with the blurring of the national and global interest amidst the assertion of leadership. If the strategy to which Glassman refers was to be based on partnership, this was undermined by the American perception of primacy confirmed by the repetition of Senator Joe Lieberman’s comment that James Glassman was “the supreme allied commander in the war of ideas”. Such an attitude, even in jest, is ill-suited to the development of partnership as it contains asymmetric

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41 Armstrong, ‘Operationalizing Public Diplomacy,’ p. 70
42 Glassman, Public Diplomacy in the 21st Century’
assumptions about the power relationship.

The tension such an asymmetrical power relationship creates can be shown within the specific example Glassman sights in his speech at CFR, specifically isolating those he terms 'violent extremists'. To do so he must work collectively, yet the narrative has an asymmetry, focusing on American leadership, values and action. Ultimately it is a projection of US terms despite the recognition in the speech, that the most “credible voices are Muslim voices”. The foreign publics are not given space to negotiate or engage in dialogue. They are effectively subordinate to the US approach whether they are potential allies or violent extremists. The tension this creates amongst formal allies stems from the desire to be recognised as partners rather than subordinates. For those with common goals of isolating violent extremists, but who do not wish to be subordinate to or explicitly aligned to the national interests of the United States this narrative is alienating. Many potential allies will not take too kindly to the idea that they ultimately work for America and in many contexts it will even be used against them by the very violent extremists the US also seeks to oppose; a classic PD own goal due to failure to manage power relationship with the foreign publics.

It is clear that the power relationship with the domestic constituency and foreign public can individually cause tensions for the practitioner to negotiate. When domestic and foreign tensions combine it can produce Public Diplomacy that has the opposite impact to that intended.

While harder to sell to a domestic audience, because of the less dynamic narrative, creating an asymmetric power relationship on the terms of the foreign public, rather than Public Diplomacy actor, can help reduce the potential tension with that public. For example, in the 1960s the British Council noted experience had “shown that the Council’s best work is done in close co-operation with the relevant authorities, especially the educational authorities, of other countries”. It became the “cardinal principle of the Council to aim at mutual benefit both to Britain and to the other country”. Equally, in 1947 the British Council Monthly Review noted;

The longer one is engaged in cultural relations work the clearer becomes the essentially

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43 Ibid.
44 Ibid.
reciprocal nature of the operation, and the clearer the wisdom of the maxim that each party should give the other what the other wants, rather than what the giver thinks is good for him.46

These older perspective has many parallels with today. The increasing contemporary emphasis on multilateral initiatives, identifying collective initiatives based on common interest, particularly through an Open Source approach, envisages a power relationship which is based on a peer-2-peer environment.47 Power, respect and authority have to be earned rather than asserted and an actor cannot merely assume it has a superior position over subordinates over which it seeks to exert power.48 Once this approach is adopted, alternative short term desires to appear powerful, for domestic consumption, will damage that approach and relationship with the foreign public. For example, a listening exercise will create resentment if it is used merely as an opportunity for policy promotion.49 Just as the relationship with the domestic audience influences the engagement with the foreign public, so the decision to adopt a collective, facilitative or empowering approach is likely to cause tension with the domestic constituency, as it is unlikely to be sufficiently representational.

To further analyse the meaning of power within contemporary Public Diplomacy the relationship must not be seen as merely a question of the actor, constituency and foreign public, but the relationship and role within a network of actors.

4) Power relationships in a network

Forming networks has become an increasing part of Public Diplomacy narratives and study in recent years.50 The growth of multilateral initiatives, including EUNIC, along with the rise of

47 Fisher, ‘Music for the Jilted Generation’
international issue focused NGO, and technology breaking down the barriers between foreign and domestic, has created a context comprised of numerous hubs engaging as part of a network. As such, the understanding of power relationships in a network; recognising different types of network, and understanding how operating within networks poses challenges to many of the assumptions about power and influence and particularly the importance of core and periphery. This can be shown both through the practical analysis of Glassman's recent speeches and consideration of the concepts on which engagement within a network would be based.

Despite his focus on American leadership, James Glassman explicitly referenced a networked engagement when he highlighted the work of Daniel Kimmage. Glassman argued “Web 2.0, with emphasis on social networking, holds the key to public diplomacy communications, at least for the start of the 21st century”. However, while both Glassman and Kimmage, in his article *Fight Terror with YouTube*, were focusing on online networks they had very different conceptions of the power relationship with the network members. Glassman, as discussed earlier, was focused on asserting a leadership position. Kimmage, by contrast, argued;

> The most damaging disruptions to the [Al Qaeda media] nexus, however, will come from millions of ordinary users in the communities that Al Qaeda aims for with its propaganda. We should do everything we can to *empower* them.

Leadership and empowerment require two fundamentally different relationships. The failure to recognise the different network types and resultant power relationships can lead to tensions in the conduct, and ultimately limit the effectiveness, of Public Diplomacy initiatives.

Leadership of a network is recognised in many forms, Brian Hocking has identified a hierarchical conception in which; “the foreign ministry and the national diplomatic system over which it presides act as gatekeepers, monitoring interactions between domestic and international policy environments and funnelling information between them”. It equally could envisaged as a centralised network. Contrasted by Paul Baran, with decentralised and distributed systems, the centralised network has “the hierarchical structure of a set of stars

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52 Ibid. (emphasis added).

connected in the form of a larger star”.54 John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt later highlighted this centralised system as

The hub, star, or wheel network, as in a franchise or a cartel where a set of actors are tied to a central (but not hierarchical) node or actor, and must go through that node to communicated and coordinate with each other.55

While emphasis differs slightly the classic 'hub and spoke' image is recognisable as in most descriptions of the centralised network.

Whether funnelling information in the hierarchical conception, or providing a channel through which other nodes can link and coordinate, as RS Zaharna argues;

the hub effectively controls the exchange of information. It provides the central leadership and develops governing structures to plan and coordinate work, recruit and manage members, solicit funds, and channel resources.56

Whatever the role US representatives may seek to project to a domestic audience, a centralised hub role is not the one which Kimmage envisaged when suggesting empowerment.

In the contemporary context Public Diplomacy practitioners must recognise, not just the centralised but the dispersed peer-2-peer environment to which Kimmage referred.57

Numerous populations around the world face common challenges. This argues for a collective approach, the conceptualisation of dispersed networks and the adoption of an open source approach to Public Diplomacy. The power of a genuinely dispersed networked approach is that each actor is independent, each engages on the basis of being a peer, and each makes his/her own arguments. The power of this approach is fundamentally undermined if one group claims that they are leading all the other groups. While it is useful to claim that everyone works for you, there are times when “they” can only work toward the same goals if you can subsume the national into the collective, rather than branding the collective as, in this example, ‘American’.

54 Paul Baran, ‘Introduction to Distributed Communications Networks,’ On Distributed Communication (RAND, 1964), p. 1
55 John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt, Networks and Netwars, (RAND, 2001), p. 7
56 Zaharna, ‘The soft power differential’
The misrepresenting the role of an international actor in a network creates a tension within public diplomacy practise. The need to accurately recognise the type of network goes beyond centralised and dispersed, to include for example long chains, but the importance of recognition remains the same. The actor must adopt behaviour appropriate to the type of network in which they operate. RS Zaharna along with David Ronfeldt and John Arquilla have discussed options of using networks and networked communications which further demonstrate the practical benefits from effectively negotiating these tensions and power relationships.58

Public Diplomacy practitioners are increasingly emphasising collaboration, multilateral initiatives, a networked model of engagement or even an open source methodology.59 This has the potential to break down the hierarchical producer and recipient relationship, and creates a means for collective action.60 Communication “is not all about warfare, about winning ‘hearts and minds’ for the sake of achieving military victory. It is, as Karl Deutsch long ago emphasized, the method of community”.61 While it can at times be useful to conceptualise the network as one with the Public Diplomacy actor in the centre, there are times when the power relationship is somewhat different. The misunderstanding of this relationship can create significant tensions within the practise of public diplomacy.

In addition to the understanding of networked communication, the practical insights borne by network analysis has much to offer which is yet to be fully embraced by the practitioner community. In particular it provides an insight into the understanding of power as it relates to positions in a network and Public Diplomacy, by challenging the traditional understandings of the importance of the centre, or core, and periphery of a network.

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60 Fisher, ‘Music for the Jilted Generation’
The classic understanding of central and periphery tends to equate greater power or importance to the centre. Were one issue to be described as central and the other peripheral, the comparative importance intended would be clearly conveyed. However, this is not necessarily the case in a network; both core and periphery have vital roles. The importance, as Thomas Valente emphasised, of marginals, those at the periphery, is that they “act as bridges in diffusion”. Indeed “as many studies … have shown, it is not opinion leaders who are early adopters, but instead marginals or individuals who are bridges to other networks who first adopt an innovation”. As a result, the periphery is “where inflows and outflows of knowledge and innovations occur”. This gives the periphery huge importance and influence. Those that are in these positions, as RS Zaharna has highlighted, have become known as boundary spanners. “Boundary spanners are well-positioned to be innovators, since they have access to ideas and information flowing in other clusters. They are in a position to combine different ideas and knowledge, found in various places.” This, as RS Zaharna argued, creates the “ability to break through cultural walls, in an era of heightened cultural identity” which “gives network communication the edge over mass communication”. The potential to adopt or facilitate this boundary spanner function largely requires a peripheral position, yet authority and success are traditionally articulated in relation to a centralised position. The tension between the power to control and the power to influence is fundamental to the understanding of Public Diplomacy.

This tension between in the understanding of power between core and periphery is important in conceptualising not just the position of the actor, but the communities the organisation seeks to engage. Specifically this tension relates to the work on the diffusion of innovation through networks. The speed of diffusion through the network depends on the position of the

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65 Zaharna, ‘The soft power differential’
66 Zaharna, ‘The soft power differential’
individual in the network that first adopts it, be that technology, understanding or policy. Early adopters are more likely to be at the periphery of a network, yet faster diffusion speed depends on core members adopting the technology or policy.

The modelling run by Thomas Valente and Rebecca Davis, highlighted the significant difference in adoption speeds between scenarios where the early adopters were central parts of the network and those where the early adopters were on the periphery. They concluded “if the first adopters are those individuals who are on the margins … the rate of diffusion is slowest”. As a result, “when diffusion starts with these individuals, the innovation must percolate through the network before it reaches opinion leaders who are in the position to set the agenda for change”.

This argument is supported by Barbara Wejnert;

The predictive power of an individual actor’s status on adoption of an innovation varies positively with the prominence of the actor’s position in a network.

While other factors including “structural equivalence of individual and collective actors” also influence diffusion, the targeting of well connected individuals may appear to be the way to rapidly spread information through a network. However, this assertion creates a problem for Public Diplomacy. As noted earlier “it is not opinion leaders who are early adopters, but instead marginals … who first adopt an innovation”. Therefore, the tension exists between targeting those most likely to allow rapid diffusion, due to their connections, and those most likely to adopt the innovation due to their marginal position.

A centralised narrative would focus on the actors with more connections, yet if they are unlikely to adopt the innovation, the quantity of connections through which to disseminate that innovation becomes virtually irrelevant. Focusing on the periphery finds those most

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68 Valente, ‘The Diffusion Network Game.’
70 Valente and Davis, ‘Accelerating the Diffusion of Innovations Using Opinion Leaders,’ pp. 62-64
71 Valente and Davis, ‘Accelerating the Diffusion of Innovations Using Opinion Leaders,’ p. 62
72 Ibid.
74 Valente and Davis, ‘Accelerating the Diffusion of Innovations Using Opinion Leaders,’ p. 62
likely to adopt innovation, but when they do, diffusion through out the network will be a slower process. Each Public Diplomacy actor must negotiate this tension, though many currently only focus on the core of well connected individuals who has a traditionally important role, such as politician or journalist. In some instances these may be the people to focus on, in others circumstances however, likelihood of adoption will trump ability to facilitate diffusion if the core is resistant to the innovation.

The articulation of the role adopted by the PD organisation is equally influenced by this understanding of power. Many currently focus on centralised networks through which to project messages, placing themselves at the core. However, in many instances an alternative understanding would be to act as 'boundary spanner’ through which innovation can diffuse from one network to another. The first option provides a means to exert power over an audience, the second empowers a network.

Conceptualisation of power and influence, therefore, depends on the identification of different positions in the network, and the relative importance placed on those positions for a particular innovation, understanding or policy. In doing so, the understanding of success toward which the international actor works becomes increasingly important.

5) Success – Who to target and what is success?

The four preceding considerations of power within Public Diplomacy all focus on the tension between different ways of thinking about influence. Linking these tensions together is a key issue which is at the heart of James Glassman’s misinterpretation of the concept proposed by Daniel Kimmage. While Glassman talked of leadership, Kimmage talked of empowerment, the key issues at stake were who is important and what is success?

Empowerment, while receiving limited attention in Public Diplomacy, has received significant coverage in development activities and from groups working to close the inequality gap between men and women, such as the Fawcett Society. The marginalisation

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75 Vinter and Knox, ‘Measuring the impact of Public Diplomacy’
76 See, for example, Bridget Byrne, Gender, Conflict and Development, Volume I, Overview, Netherlands Special Programme on WID, Ministry of Foreign Affairs;
Bridget Byrne et al. Gender, Conflict and Development, Volume II, Case studies: Cambodia; Rwanda; Kosovo; Algeria; Somalia; Guatemala and Eritrea, December 1995 (revised July 1996);
of empowerment highlights a wider issue; feminist and gendered thought have received very little attention in both Public Diplomacy writing and practise.\textsuperscript{77} This is troubling because, “gender analysis of international relations can no longer be considered new. In both history and political science, scholars of women or gender and foreign relations have carved out what are now robust sub-fields” yet there is much work to be done before gender in Public Diplomacy, both in theory and practise, becomes one of those sub-fields.\textsuperscript{78}

Ann Tickner argued “theoretical divides evidence socially constructed gender differences. Understanding them as such may be a useful entry point for overcoming silences and miscommunications, thus beginning more constructive dialogues”.\textsuperscript{79} This is an important point for understanding Public Diplomacy in theory and practise. Just as Tickner recognised in her commentary on Hans Morgenthau “the need for control has been an important motivating force for modern realism” so the tension between exerting ‘power over’ and empowerment is evident in Public Diplomacy.\textsuperscript{80}

The identification of a target audience is an important part of understanding power within the practise of Public Diplomacy. Two particular tensions have to be negotiated, first, on what assumptions does a public diplomacy organisation consider individuals to be important within their society? Second, what is success; are resistant individuals to be broken down or potential supporters empowered?

The first question of assumptions relates to the understanding of importance and influence which different socially constructed roles can exert within a society. The choice by an international actor to focus on for example, employment status or public role over roles considered family or private may reflect certain gendered assumptions. Similarly, emphasis

\textsuperscript{77} Donna Pankhurst, Women, gender and peace building (University of Bradford, Department of Peace, 2000)  Fawcett Society is the UK’s leading campaign for equality between women and men. They trace their roots back to 1866, when Millicent Garrett Fawcett began her lifetime’s work leading the peaceful campaign for women’s votes.

\textsuperscript{78} No attempt is made here to construct a fully formed gendered perspective of public diplomacy in theory and practise. The issue is to understand meanings of power which create points of tension in the field, one of which is presented by feminist understandings of international relations


\textsuperscript{79} J. Ann Tickner, ‘You Just Don't Understand: Troubled Engagements between Feminists and IR Theorists,’ International Studies Quarterly (1997), 41:4

on formal and rather than informal roles are also reveal important gendered assumptions.\textsuperscript{81} Much of this work builds on the “powerful feminist critique of ideas of rationality as they have developed in Western Culture” and poses questions about the assumptions upon which Public Diplomacy practitioners identify the target audience or ‘key influencers’.\textsuperscript{82} In addition, gendered understandings of security challenge assumptions about the key issues of a foreign public, a perspective further demonstrated, for example, by African Feminist thought.\textsuperscript{83} A far reaching analysis on the specific impact of applying “gendered lenses” to Public Diplomacy in theory and practise is long overdue.\textsuperscript{84} Each of these elements profoundly influences the identification of a potential audience or community which must be considered as creating a potential tension within Public diplomacy.

In addition to the assumptions and tensions involved in identifying key individuals within a foreign public, the measurement of impact is another area of practise in which the tensions in Public Diplomacy are played out.\textsuperscript{85} This leads directly to the question of success. The ability to show whether Public diplomacy has impact requires a clear measurement system. Furthermore, the identification of positions within a network requires an ability to measure that network and engage in the appropriate way with the members of it. While useful these systems may contain conscious or unconscious assumptions about power influence and success, which unless articulated cannot be understood alongside the data the measurement system produces.

Each of the above understandings of power, along with the consideration of gendered thought, force actors engaged in Public Diplomacy to consider what success means. The question of success must not be applied just to the international actor, but an understanding of what success means to all those involved, collaborators, partners, or the target audience. The

\textsuperscript{82} Carol Cohn, ‘Sex and Death in the Rational World of Defense Intellectuals,’ \textit{Signs} (Summer 1987), 12:4, pp. 687-718
\textsuperscript{83} See, for example, Cynthia Enloe, \textit{Maneuvers; The international politics of militarising women’s lives} (University of California Press, 2000); Gwendolyn Mikell, \textit{African Feminism: The Politics of Survival in Sub-Saharan Africa} (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997)
\textsuperscript{84} V. Spike Peterson and Anne Sisson Runyan, \textit{Global Gender Issues}, (Westview, 1999)
failure to understand these different meanings of success will negatively impact on the ability to conduct and measure Public Diplomacy.

The comparison by Ann Tickner of the writing by men and women about power highlights Nancy Hartsock’s argument that “power as domination has always been associated with masculinity” while by contrast “when women write about power they stress energy, capacity and potential”. This engages with David McClelland’s portrayal of “female power … as shared rather than assertive.” Juxtaposed with the current debates and tensions within the Public Diplomacy, the common language highlights the potential which gendered analysis has for the understanding of power in both articulating success and identifying the tensions within the discipline.

Conclusion
In Public Diplomacy, the actor must weigh a perceived need for control and a centralised understanding of influence against the case for engagement and empowerment. Partnerships are becoming an increasing part of public diplomacy practise. How much the partnerships are on the terms defined by the Public Diplomacy organisation or genuinely associative in their approach, focusing on shared power and goals will demonstrate the understandings of power upon which they are developed. How success is articulated to the domestic constituency and foreign public, and in relation to previous actions by the organisation, provides a key point at which the power within public diplomacy must be considered.

An emphasis only on control, a centralised understanding of a network, and exerting ‘power-over’ ultimately narrows the field of possibilities. These may be effective in certain situations. However at other times, alternative understandings of power within the five areas discussed, will yield different possibilities, create the potential for novel perspectives and the development of new means for exerting influence through Public Diplomacy. Power must be a key consideration in the development of future public diplomacy strategy as the navigation

87 Zaharna, ‘Mapping out a Spectrum of Public Diplomacy Initiatives’
of the understanding of power, by the actor, audience and domestic constituency, will be fundamental to ongoing innovation of the discipline.

Ultimately the approach will begin with the question, what does the organisation want to achieve; an assertive approach which exerts ‘power over’ a target audience to influence their behaviour as the organisation wants, or a collective approach that empowers those better positioned within communities and networks, to achieve the goals they identify, where they overlap with those of the PD organisation. Is Public Diplomacy purely a tool to support the extension of an organisation’s power or a means to engage and participate in the development of a genuinely shared future?