

Are International Exchange and Mobility
Programmes Effective Tools of Symmetric
Public Diplomacy?

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Abstract

Governments often fund foreign nationals to live, work and study in their countries, creating specialist programmes tasked with promoting international mobility. In this thesis I establish that much of this funding is intended to serve a public diplomacy agenda, improving international relations to the benefit of the sponsor. Expectations about *how* offering funding to foreigners affects international relations have come to centre on what I label the ‘symmetric public diplomacy model’, which suggests that governments intend to influence other countries’ behaviour by influencing their citizens.

I tested this model using a combination of panel surveys and interviews with students who took part in these programmes. Although mobility programmes do bring many educational and personal benefits to participants, my results do not support the expectation that they endow most visiting foreigners with more helpful attitudes than they would have developed had they not taken part in the programmes. While other studies have come to different conclusions on this issue, the research design employed in this thesis is better-suited to the task than most others.

Mobility programmes may bring diplomatic benefits by other means. One possibility is that the act of creating, for example, scholarships for foreign nationals sends signals to foreign governments. The histories of major British scholarship programmes suggest that they were originally created to signal goodwill or distract attention from potentially-embarrassing policies. Despite this, administrators now present these programmes as tools of public diplomacy. The symmetric public diplomacy model has been applied to these programmes long after they were initially created, and I suggest that the model may have been adopted because it is useful for attracting funding to continue and expand mobility programmes.

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The largest group of contributors, anonymous masses who actually took the time to reply to the various surveys, are too often neglected. Without their willingness to give up their time no survey research would be possible. However, thanks should also be offered to the 'gatekeepers' who helped me to reach them. Lottie Bulman at the German Academic Exchange Service, Chris Armstrong at Leeds University, Mary Denyer and Natasha Bevan at the Marshall Fund, Chad Galts at Brown University and Patricia Rea at the University of Pennsylvania helped with the pilot. Dozens of Universities' International Officers and Departmental Secretaries in Reading and Leeds, as well as Anders Ahlstrand of the Swedish Programkontoret helped to distribute the main survey. While most of the interviewees must also remain anonymous, they know who they are.

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Part One: Exchanges, Mobility and Public

Diplomacy

Governments sponsor many programmes designed to encourage dialogue between their citizens and foreigners. The best-known are international education and student exchange programmes, which are often heavily subsidised by taxpayers.

These opening chapters locate dialogue-promoting programmes, including ‘educational’ exchanges, within the broad concept of public diplomacy. They clarify exactly which types of government-sponsored programme are the subjects of this thesis by defining a theoretically-meaningful category of ‘symmetric’ public diplomacy programmes. These programmes’ claims for public funding are based on a distinct set of arguments about how individual contact across national borders impacts on international politics. In Chapter Two I show that these claims have actually become dominant relatively recently, for reasons which probably have more to do with bureaucratic structures than firm evidence that exchanges actually do improve attitudes. They are based upon theoretical assumptions about the impact of personal mobility which have not been adequately tested. Whether or not these assumptions are accurate has broader significance for the fields of international relations and political science and links to a number of live debates within these fields. I conclude with an outline of my strategy for such an investigation, which will be executed in the rest of the thesis.

Chapter One: Conceptualising Exchanges within ‘Public Diplomacy’

1.1. Introduction

Proponents of international exchange and mobility programmes have, for many years, justified their claims to public subsidies by arguing that they contribute to improvements in international relations (McMurry 1972[1945]: e.g. 243). More recently, they have come to be presented as part of a wider strategy of “public diplomacy” (FCO 2005: 16, Fisher and Bröckerhoff 2008: 3-8, Fiske de Gouveia 2005: 28, Leonard and Alakeson 2000). This means that they bring diplomatic benefits to the governments which sponsor them, and they do so by influencing the beliefs and political behaviour of foreign publics so as to exert pressure on their governments. However, the evidence that the programmes impact on international relations is curiously weak. In the words of Stephen Bochner *et al*

“the sponsors of international education have repeatedly justified the huge cost of the enterprise by claiming that exchange programmes self-evidently contribute to mutual understanding and international peace ... the evidence all too often reveals a gap between promise and reality” (1977: 278).

The enduring mismatch between the *claims* made for these programmes as public diplomacy and the *evidence* that they are effective, which will be demonstrated in the following chapter (2.4), justifies a new investigation into whether they are effective as public diplomacy.

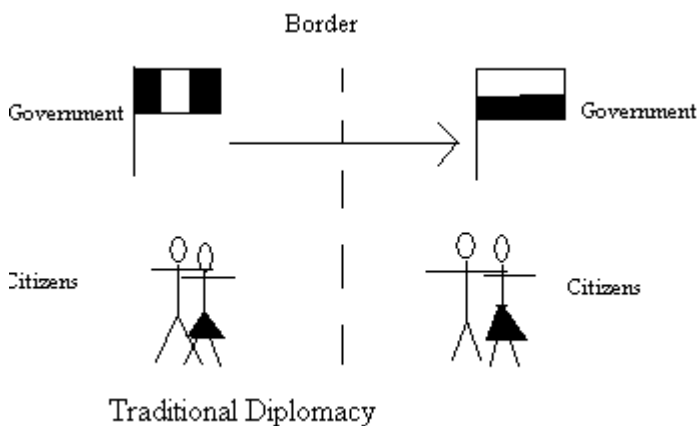
This thesis sets out to test claims that exchange and mobility programmes impact on international relations, to the ultimate benefit of their sponsors, against both historical evidence and a new corpus of empirical data. Put crudely, it asks whether exchanges ‘work’ as public diplomacy.

1.2.1 What is Public Diplomacy?

Public diplomacy is an umbrella term for attempts by states to change other states’ behaviour, without the use of physical or economic force, which fall outside the traditional model of diplomacy because they involve members of the public as well as government officials (Nye 2005). By definition, diplomacy (including public diplomacy)

is instigated by governmental officials (Melissen 2005): this is what differentiates it from simply “relations” between countries (Arndt 2005: 551) although the anomalous American term “citizen diplomacy” (as in, for example, the ‘Coalition for Citizen Diplomacy’ – 2008) can refer to private activity aimed at improving international relations. ‘Traditional’ diplomacy can be understood as simply dialogue between officials from the governments of two (or more) states acting in their professional capacities (Encarta 1999: first sense, Oxford English Dictionary 1989: first sense, second clause) and a standard definition is precisely “the practice of conducting relations between states *through official representatives*” (Plano and Olton 1982: 243, my emphasis). This traditional understanding of diplomacy is represented schematically in Figure 1.

Figure 1: An Abstract Model of Traditional Diplomacy

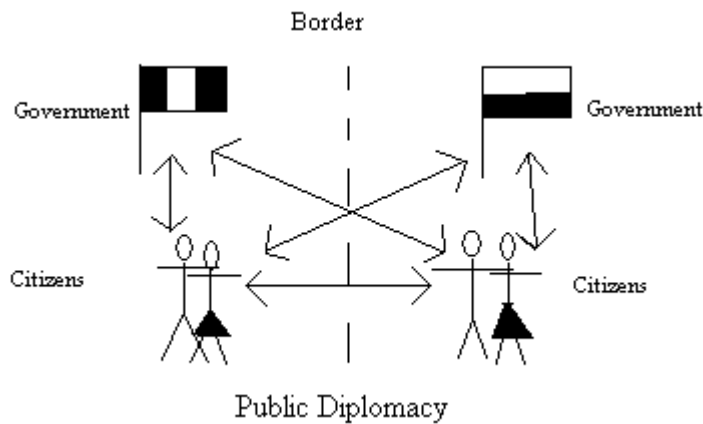


The fundamental argument offered by analysts of public diplomacy (e.g. FPC 2006, Fiske de Gouveia and Plumridge 2005: viii-ix, Leonard and Alakeson 2000, Leonard Stead and Smewing 2002, Malone 1988: 1-4, Manheim 1994, Roberts 2006, Tuch 1990, USIA Alumni Association 2002) is that this model excludes a great variety of interactions between countries in which private citizens in the countries involved, or officials acting in their private capacities¹, act as carriers of messages and feedback. As so often in political discourse, the literature includes both normative and positive claims. By overlooking the activities of private citizens, the traditional model is accused of oversimplifying reality, and thus of misleading analysts. In consequence, it stands

¹ The Fulbright Distinguished Visitors’ Programme recruits foreign countries’ governing elites and sponsors them to visit the United States, but they visit in their private capacities.

accused of misleading policymakers and actually distorting the foreign policy priorities of governments (e.g. Leonard, Small and Rose 2005). In fact, it is argued, international relations are influenced by private citizens and private lives which are relatively neglected due to a fascination with traditional, government-to-government diplomacy. The reality of international persuasion is much more complicated.

Figure 2: The Many Possibilities for Involving Populations in International Communication



“Public Diplomacy” is a term which is notoriously ill-defined (Fisher and Bröckerhoff 2008: Ch1, Ninkovich 1996: 31) and many competing and incompatible definitions are in use. In particular, I wish to make clear at this stage that I do not consider the public rhetoric of government officials to be “public diplomacy” (unlike, for example, McEvoy-Levy 2001). Public diplomacy is not simply an overview of all the possible impacts that private citizens can have on foreign governments and vice versa. For this much broader subject the wider term “cultural relations” is conventionally used (c.f. Mitchell 1986).

Figure Two suggests the enormous complexity of international cultural relations.

Although public diplomacy involves the public, as I define it here public diplomacy is an outcome of government activities, and its ultimate aim is to influence the behaviour of a foreign country or government.

1.2.2 Communication Programmes as Public Diplomacy

The focus of this thesis will fall on a set of formal programmes, with staff and budgets, tasked with public diplomacy. Confining the study to formal programmes has significant advantages because if public diplomacy is vaguely defined (as is sometimes the case) it runs the risk of becoming a survey of everything governments do which could conceivably affect perceptions of their countries abroad. This would be too ambitious an undertaking, and one which would risk theoretical incoherence. The costs of formal programmes are tangible, they are relatively easy to identify and delimit, and there is usually some policy literature associated with them which makes their intended function less ambiguous. A programme targeting publics which lists foreign policy objectives among its goals can be defined as a public diplomacy programme without too much detailed discourse analysis; identifying a speech or some domestic legislation as being primarily aimed at foreign audiences is a much more nuanced activity. Painstakingly classifying rhetoric according to the speaker's intended audience would necessarily be subjective and questionable, whereas the problem of identifying intentions, while not totally absent, is far less pronounced when dealing with formal programmes. Government programmes are constantly justifying themselves when they bid for funding, and when they succeed in using claims about influence over foreign audiences to justify funding this strongly suggests that they are public diplomacy programmes. This process of justification makes the formal programmes interesting, as it represents a degree of self-consciousness among the policymakers responsible for them. If the programmes are affecting participants' political behaviour then they are self-evidently interesting from a political point of view. But if programmes do not affect behaviour this suggests equally interesting dynamics in the policymaking processes surrounding them: what pressures have compelled the programmes' associated bureaucracies to base their self-justifications on objectively unsound foundations by associating themselves with theories of public diplomacy? By contrast, if informal activities which might hypothetically influence foreign opinion were shown not to have such influence then they would cease to be interesting.

One illustrative example of what I mean by a formal public diplomacy programme is the United States' Peace Corps, an agency of the federal government which sends American volunteers abroad to work on development projects. Although there may be an altruistic component to this, the Peace Corps mission statement emphasises the role of the volunteers in spreading goodwill towards, or at least understanding of, their country (*"Helping promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of the peoples served"* – Peace Corps 2006). The U.S. government is transmitting a message about itself to foreign citizens which, presumably, will then reach their governments (Henderson 1973: 317). Similarly, the Japanese state-sponsored broadcaster NHK World *"aims to promote international understanding by offering objective descriptions of ... Japan"* (NHK 2005). Its broadcasts are received by individual foreign citizens, but this statement betrays an assumption that through them foreign governments will ultimately be influenced. I would therefore classify NHK World as a public diplomacy programme.

The above definition of public diplomacy encapsulates a vast number of programmes ranging from television news providers to language teaching to art exhibitions. Rather than attempting to spread my attention and finite resources thinly across the range of public diplomacy programmes, I intend to subdivide them and focus on one category. I label the programmes which fall into this category 'symmetric' public diplomacy programmes.

1.3.1 The Concept of Symmetry

Different schemes have been proposed for subdividing public diplomacy. Many of these divide programmes according to the intent of the sponsor. Some of the older distinctions between public and cultural diplomacy, for example, rest on whether the sponsor intends to promote government policies abroad or to share "cultural" ideas, although as always the definition of "culture" is somewhat fuzzy. A relatively simple, intuitive and easily operationalisable distinction that can be made among public diplomacy programmes is based on their actual activities. The design of the programme is easily observable and there are a limited number of distinct designs on which a communication programme can be modelled. One fundamental division is between programmes which transmit a pre-defined message or recorded information and those which bring people into direct

personal contact, facilitating dialogue. There is limited scope for overlap between these two categories (Grunig and Hunt 1984: 21-5, 37-43). The distinction between the two is important, because they rest on different assumptions about how foreign publics are influenced.

In practical terms, programmes with defined messages usually rely on some form of mass communication technology. Examples include international broadcasters, such as the BBC World Service and Voice of America, paid for by the Foreign Office and State Department respectively. Other examples would include sending favoured textbooks to schools in foreign countries (a technique popular with the Japanese – Mitchell 1986: 136-7) and placing favourable material in the foreign press through manipulation or bribery (e.g. Vaughan 2005: 21-26). The advance of mass communication technology is profoundly important for these programmes. They rest on an assumption that projecting a message to foreign publics will lead some of them to accept that message.

Programmes which promote dialogue, on the other hand, rest on an assumption that interpersonal contact and relatively unguided communication between private citizens of different countries will change attitudes. The best-known tend to rest on more old-fashioned² methods of promoting communication, physically transporting people into close proximity to facilitate face-to-face contact³. Language teaching programmes, such as those of the Goethe Institute and Alliance Francaise, bring foreigners into direct contact and encourage human nature to take its course. Other programmes encourage physical movement of people between countries. These international mobility programmes include exchange programmes, in which foreign citizens take the place of nationals for short periods. Governments can support these by paying transport costs, or offering grants to cover tuition and subsistence for exchangees. “Exchange programme” is the term which is probably most familiar to most readers⁴. These programmes absorb

² For a historical perspective see Arndt 2001: Ch1.

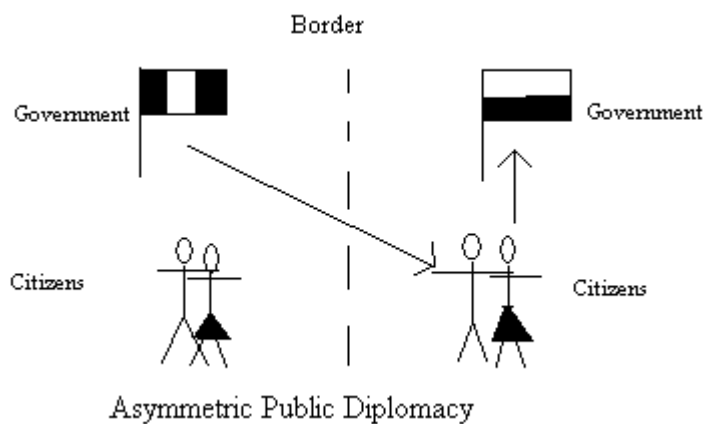
³ It is possible for governments to encourage dialogue between their citizens and foreigners without bringing them into direct face-to-face contact. Encouraging ‘pen-pal’ arrangements among schoolchildren (Paige 2002), and more recently sponsoring online forums for intercultural discussion (a good example is the Dialogue section of Qantara.de, a German programme which runs a website aimed at “the Islamic World”), are also examples of public diplomacy promoting dialogue.

⁴ Strictly speaking many of these are not actually “exchange” programmes as the funding often creates extra places for foreign students, soldiers, teachers or police officers rather than swapping them with locals on a one-for-one basis. The distinction is not a fundamental one for my purposes, as both involve the use of government funds to promote interaction with foreigners.

by far the greater share of the resources devoted to the artificial promotion of dialogue between private citizens, and of the attention paid by the literature. They will be the focus of this thesis, although the assumptions surrounding them are also important to other symmetric public diplomacy programmes.

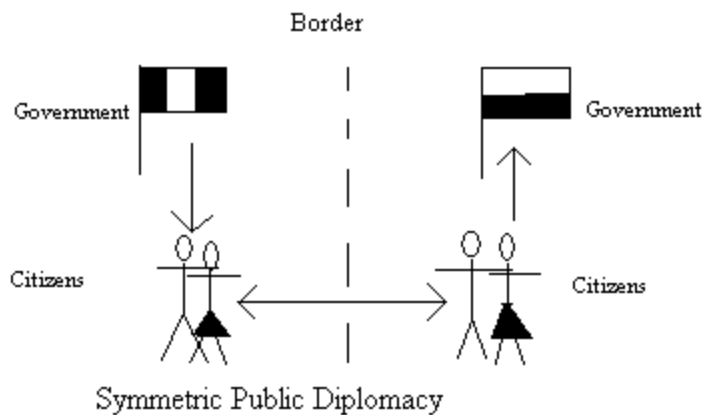
All the public diplomacy programmes described above are designed to facilitate communication, and an established model for classifying communication programmes, stemming from the public relations industry, rests on the degree of symmetry in that communication (Grunig and Hunt 1986: 37-43). The potential applicability of the “symmetric”/“asymmetric” terminology to public diplomacy has also been noted by Grunig’s own student Seong-Hun Yun (2005)⁵. Symmetry refers to the amount of control each of the parties has over the content of communication. When a programme relies on broadcasting the broadcaster has complete control over the content of the communication and the audience can choose only whether or not to pay attention. In a dialogue both parties can question each others’ assumptions and play a part in forming the ‘message’. This division has the advantage of being fairly obvious in the design of the programme, and most programmes do fall fairly clearly into one category or the other.

Figure 3: An Abstract Model of Asymmetric Public Diplomacy



⁵ Yun (2005: 27-34) actually applies a more complex model, including the direction of communication (“one-way”/“two-way”), whether the communication is interpersonal or conducted through a media channel, and the ethical quality of the interaction. In the context of exchange and mobility programmes the governmental sponsor cannot control the ethics or direction of communication and all are interpersonal by definition, so it seems appropriate to employ a simpler model.

Figure 4: An Abstract Model of Symmetric Public Diplomacy



This dichotomy is not perfect, as in this age of focus groups broadcasters will often try to maximise audience share by reacting to feedback on whether the message is or is not palatable and slightly altering their messages accordingly. However, the nature of this feedback is qualitatively different from the feedback of a dialogue. Symmetric feedback shapes a message as it is being produced, whereas asymmetric feedback merely reacts to it after the event. Furthermore, broadcasters of information can choose to ignore feedback, albeit at the risk of alienating part of the audience. The costs of doing so will depend on how desperate the broadcaster is to reach the target audience: asymmetries of power can always interact with asymmetries of communication. But in a symmetric, interpersonal interaction refusal to acknowledge and react to alternative views would quickly lead to a ridiculous non-conversation in which little meaningful communication was really taking place.

The framework may seem to leave a few programmes in ambiguous positions. It is not instantly obvious whether sponsoring lectures and exhibitions (of art and other cultural artefacts) should count as symmetric or asymmetric public diplomacy. The putative message is transmitted by unidirectional means, and in that sense these are asymmetric programmes. However, discussing these activities with the officials responsible for organising them (e.g. British Council Interview One) revealed that they generally see lectures and exhibitions primarily as excuses for networking, and justify them as public diplomacy programmes on the basis that politically salient messages are transferred in the

social interaction which surrounds them. In other words, an exhibition of Chinese antiquities is not public diplomacy because appreciation for their artistic merit will influence attitudes towards China, but because the international conversations which take place in the gallery may. Although some scope for discussion of individual cases remains, I therefore consider programmes of lectures and exhibitions to be symmetric.

Like all public diplomacy programmes, symmetric public diplomacy programmes are by definition intended to benefit the sponsoring country in the long term. The belief that they can do so, however, rests entirely on the assumption that contact and communication between citizens of different countries can bring such benefits.

1.3.2 Implicit Awareness of Symmetry Among Practitioners

The distinction made here between symmetric and asymmetric programmes is relatively new in the public diplomacy context, but not without precedent in social science (e.g. Grunig and Hunt 1984: Ch2). It also approximates to a well-recognised bureaucratic division within the public diplomacy ‘industry’ between “cultural” and “information” programmes. Several scholars (e.g. Arndt 2005, Ninkovich 1996) have highlighted the historical bureaucratic disputes between proponents of symmetric and asymmetric methods in the history of American public diplomacy, indicating that a bureaucratic division is commonly acknowledged. The linguistic dichotomy can be found in the official title of the 1948 Informational and Educational Exchange Act (the Smith-Mundt Act), which laid the foundations for American public diplomacy, and persists to the present day. During the Cold War the officials responsible for broadcasting programmes were highly successful in defining themselves as part of national security apparatus (in attaining “securitisation”, in a recent neologism – CASE 2006) leading them to dominate the American public diplomacy effort to the chagrin of their counterparts on the “cultural” side. However, the correspondence is only approximate and introducing the more theoretically-sophisticated concept of symmetry has significant advantages. Although the “culture” and “information” labels are more established, they are not entirely satisfactory because they are not exhaustive – many programmes which have come to be considered “public diplomacy” are neither strictly informational nor cultural/educational, terms which carry normative connotations. It is not obvious whether

a programme such as the Peace Corps, for example, which mixes opportunities for discourse about cultural issues with advertising the superiority of its (American) sponsors' technical development, would fit – although the opportunities for dialogue which it offers mean it should definitely be counted as a symmetric programme in the alternative typology. The “culture” and “information” labels are somewhat atheoretical, the programmes subsumed within them apparently defined by politics rather than consideration of the fundamental dimensions of public diplomacy. They are therefore unsatisfactory for my purpose here, identifying the place of exchange programmes within the broader theoretical concept of public diplomacy.

The symmetric/asymmetric dichotomy has significant implications for how the officials responsible for it approach their task. Certain messages and strategies appear better suited to either symmetric or asymmetric engagement. Although the definition focuses on the clear differences in design between symmetric and asymmetric programmes, which are easy to identify when selecting cases, these design differences are associated with significant differences in objectives. While asymmetric programmes tend to focus on the justification of short-term policies and often consciously spread political messages, symmetric programmes can only promote more general ideas because government agents necessarily have much less control over the message (Ninkovich 1996). Symmetric programmes are bureaucracies and are administered by government employees, but those employees are not involved in the communication between private citizens (for example an exchange student and a local classmate) and have little influence on the message which is communicated once they have selected participants. Ultimately the message is shaped not by government agents who are well-informed about the policy agenda but by participants who are relatively ignorant. Participants may well be blissfully unaware of their sponsor's policies and of their status as carriers of political messages (although, as I will demonstrate in the next chapter, their sponsors definitely view them as political tools). Because participants are not briefed on the politics of their situation the message they transmit is necessarily rather vague: “Americans are friendly” rather than, as an international broadcaster might suggest, “your country could benefit from a treaty with the United States”.

Symmetry has profound strategic and tactical implications for the officials responsible for organising public diplomacy, but the implications for the makers of ‘high policy’ (Wallace 1975: 11-14) are even more significant. Symmetric programmes are commonly assumed to represent gestures of trust, and quickly break down without an open international environment. When governments are suspicious of each others’ intentions they may also try to block broadcasts to each others’ citizens, but broadcasters will often try to circumvent such blockades – in fact increased broadcasting is often a response to the cutting of other channels of communication. Broadcasts to Eastern Europe during the Cold War, and the continued transmission of Radio Marti to Cuba, are good examples (Jowett and O’Donnell 1992: 109-12). Governments have much more control over personnel within their territory, and so the continuation of symmetric programmes is closely related to the tone of international relations (Henderson 1973).

1.3.3 The Yin and Yang of Public Diplomacy

In combination, these strategic distinctions - and the widespread awareness of them among practitioners - reveal a significant rift between two groups of public diplomacy programmes. These two groups, like a yin and yang of public diplomacy, illustrate the ambiguous nature of the broader whole through their differences. The asymmetric, “information” (Ninkovich 1996) programmes are designed to “sell” a particular viewpoint, often quite aggressively, and the sponsor controls the content of communication. Audiences have no opportunity to engage in dialogue with a newsreader, for example. These programmes tend to emphasise the justification of specific, ephemeral policy decisions and their success is to be judged over a relatively short time horizon. Symmetric, “cultural” programmes are expected to work very differently, almost in opposition. They reduce distance between individuals, creating opportunities for two-sided dialogue over which neither party has complete control and each has the freedom to probe and question. Regardless of the pretext (pursuit of education, shared interest in art or whatever it may be) bringing people into direct contact introduces an element of anarchy which cannot be fully controlled by either side, and which may penetrate the uncomfortable territory of underlying values; there is thus the potential to bring about profound, long-term changes of outlook (Arndt 2005). Governments indulge in both with

the aim of bringing about desired (but ill-defined) political outcomes, but their supposed mechanisms are fundamentally different.

1.4 Delimiting the Project

While this project addresses a core question about symmetric public diplomacy, there are necessarily limits to the empirical material gathered for it. These imply that it would not be safe to generalise from its findings to every possible situation in which such programmes might be employed. There are two broad scenarios in particular in which there are compelling theoretical reasons to believe the findings will not generalise at all. The programmes studied here operate between open, ‘Western’ societies, and the interactions between closed, non-Western societies may differ greatly.

1.4.1 Open Societies

The vast majority of participants in symmetric public diplomacy programmes such as exchanges interact between open societies in which relatively objective information about the other society would be freely available even if the participants had not been artificially brought into contact. Even in open societies there are always costs in time and effort in finding out about the objective realities of life abroad, but very rarely do programmes place citizens of closed societies in countries about which they have only previously been able to access official propaganda.

The research reported here refers to symmetric public diplomacy conducted between *open* societies. There is scope for a very plausible hypothesis that the relative openness of the societies involved profoundly impacts whether and how symmetric public diplomacy can be effective. It seems to be generally accepted that propaganda campaigns (and indeed asymmetric public diplomacy generally) are most effective when they are able to exclude alternative views through censorship and other restrictions on information (Jowett and O’Donnell 1992: 154). This is partly because distortions of the truth cannot be contradicted, but also because propaganda, and indeed some asymmetric public diplomacy, generally rests on simplifications of reality. The creation of national ‘brands’, which have become central concerns in national public diplomacy establishments (e.g. FCO 2006, Leonard and Alakeson 2000) – for example promoting an image of Britain as a polite and respectful society – is on some level the promotion of stereotypes. Successful

strategies in the world of advertising have tended to emphasise the repetition of simple, consistent messages which necessarily simplify reality. Successful propagandists have taken this logic to extremes.

Symmetric public diplomacy, while it shares a broadly-defined objective with asymmetric forms, may also under some circumstances be in an antagonistic relationship with it. To continue the yin and yang metaphor, the symmetric and asymmetric are not only constitutive of a greater whole but also have the potential to neutralise each others' impact. While there are powerful incentives on broadcasters of pre-determined positions to generalise a consistent message, direct contact allegedly tends to complicate and nuance views. Exchanges may well have effects on citizens of societies in which information about the outside world is controlled, which they do not on open societies, simply because in closed societies stereotypes can become more pervasive. Symmetric public diplomacy, by bringing people into direct personal contact, tends to complicate stereotypes by displaying exceptions – rude British students, for example – and real individuals are never consistent with foreigners' stereotypes of their countries on every dimension. Whether exchanges impact on politics under the circumstances of a closed society, as an antidote to extreme propaganda and concomitant censorship, is therefore a different question from whether they work in broadly open societies within which individuals could, with sufficient motivation, obtain balanced factual information about foreign countries. Dichotomising societies into 'closed' and 'open' may be a serious simplification, as there may be many facets of 'openness' and there is likely to be a spectrum of openness between the extremes. The absence of officially-endorsed stereotyping on some level is rare and so this is a question of degree rather than kind. Nonetheless, it is important to distinguish between them.

Yale Richmond's (2003) history of Cold War exchanges between the USA and USSR seems to offer some support for a hypothesis that exchanges have a profound impact on individuals in closed societies. The Soviet Union was a largely closed society within which anti-American propaganda was readily deployed for much of the Cold War. Most Soviet citizens, even elite individuals who were eventually allowed to go abroad, lacked other means of obtaining factual information about life in the West, and in many cases exchangees were therefore surprised to discover vast gulfs between the reality of the

United States and the land of greed and exploitation portrayed by Soviet propaganda. Richmond's is a study of only one case and tends to draw heavily on noteworthy successes (a point discussed further in Chapter 2, 2.4). Further evidence would be needed to support a general theory that the exchanges have a magnified impact in closed societies. Nonetheless, it is possible that exchanges with closed societies may have a major impact simply because they reveal information which was previously hidden.

The results of this research need to be interpreted bearing this qualification in mind. There may be a gap in the existing literature for a study applying similar methods to explore interactions between the citizens of societies which are exposed to relatively intense propaganda and censorship, but this project does not attempt to fill it. Closed societies by definition make it difficult to study their citizens, placing the question beyond the resources available for this study; it is no coincidence that studies of the political impact on Soviet exchangees have been retrospective and historical. At present there is inadequate data for a systematic comparison of symmetric public diplomacy's impact in open societies and situations of intense propaganda and concomitant censorship, and this study necessarily replicates the focus of the existing literature on exchanges between open societies.

1.4.2 The 'West'

Conclusions drawn from my analysis may only apply for open societies, but it is also sensible to highlight the fact that my empirical investigation focuses on programmes which promote movement between a relatively narrow group of countries. These include members of the European Union, the United States, and the wealthy members of the (formerly British) Commonwealth. These countries fall within the political and economic 'West'. They are relatively developed liberal democracies which generally have important cultural similarities. It would be conceivable that mobility between such countries may have a different impact from movement between countries which have more different cultural, political and economic characteristics. Greater degrees of cultural difference might challenge exchangees' more fundamental values and preconceptions to a far greater degree than movement between cultures which are in many respects relatively close.

For this reason, it may not be safe to generalise from my findings to such programmes which bring citizens of more culturally-distant countries into contact. However, it is worth recognising that huge resources are devoted to programmes which promote mobility primarily between Western countries. The impact of these remains important.

1.5 The Significance of the Subject

Despite these empirical limits of the thesis, it deals with vitally important questions. There is an extremely powerful case to be made that public diplomacy in general, and its symmetric programmes in particular, are of theoretical interest. The claims made by their proponents imply that these programmes play a significant role in socialising participants into different attitudes and potentially even identities. One of the paradoxes of symmetric public diplomacy is that it depends for its definitional coherence on the concept of a border between the local and the foreign, but it allegedly operates by encouraging the concept of foreignness, the insider/outsider dichotomy imposed by a national (state-derived) identity, to break down. In many ways this is a frustrating aspect of studying international exchanges at the level of individual participants, as subjects tend to rebel against the categories assigned to them by the design of the programme. Immigrant “German” students funded to study abroad by the DAAD may actually define themselves as Turks, for example. The sociological impact of this interface between nations and cultures, whatever those terms mean to those involved, is profoundly interesting. Since the concept of nationality is fundamental to the politics of the international, the interface is also of interest in both political science and international relations.

These programmes are also theoretically important because they are often presented as archetypes of “soft power” (Nye 2005) in action. “Soft power”, *“getting others to want what you want ... associated with intangible power resources such as culture, ideology, and institutions”* (Nye 1990: 31-2), has become a fashionable phrase in the literature, but as a concept it is often criticised for an ambiguous definition. Public diplomacy programmes can be seen as concrete exemplars of soft power in its original, “narrow” sense (Kurlantzick 2006) – power which is independent of military and economic forces, resting primarily on the intellectual and emotional. Many years before coining the term “soft power”, Nye himself was exposed to a politically-inspired mobility programme, the

Rhodes Scholarship⁶ (Academy for Cultural Diplomacy 2009, Rhodes House 2009). Studying these programmes offers the possibility of testing ‘narrow’ soft power’s reality and usefulness.

As well as exploring a theoretically interesting phenomenon, however, this thesis addresses significant practical questions by beginning to evaluate the effectiveness of symmetric public diplomacy programmes in terms of their political objectives. In the absence of good analysis, there is a risk of scarce resources being misdirected to programmes which are not achieving their intended goals. If these programmes are ineffective, perhaps continued support should be reconsidered. If they are less effective at changing political attitudes than at producing other beneficial outcomes, perhaps the programmes should be redesigned, for example by placing less emphasis on potential political benefits when selecting grantees. On the other hand, since 2001 political problems related to intercultural friction have received enormous attention. Symmetric public diplomacy explicitly targets such problems. If it is quietly resolving fundamental differences then public diplomacy surely deserves informed champions.

1.6 The Thesis in Outline

This thesis, then, aims to explore whether symmetric public diplomacy programmes are effective in promoting political change. In the next chapter I will demonstrate that practitioners are making claims that they may influence international relations, which are essential to understanding the genealogy of the term “public diplomacy”, and that these claims have not been subjected to adequate scrutiny. I will sketch accounts of how a few exchange programmes with political objectives were created. Surprisingly, these suggest that the symmetric public diplomacy model has repeatedly been applied retrospectively to programmes which were actually created for other reasons, for reasons which probably have little to do with objective evidence that they actually bring political benefits. I will then examine the state of the academic literature on “cultural diplomacy” and exchanges and the conceptual issues surrounding it. This examination demonstrates the need for a new study of exchange programmes combining quantitative and qualitative methods.

⁶ While potentially an interesting case of an influential exchange scheme, Rhodes Scholarships are funded by Cecil Rhodes’ personal legacy and are not part of a government programme, so they fall outside the scope of this study.

The subsequent chapters actually set out to test whether or not symmetric public diplomacy programmes can impact on international relations. The third and fourth chapters deal with political change on the microscopic level of individual participants in symmetric public diplomacy programmes. Essentially these chapters report the results of one small pilot survey and a second, larger-scale survey of student participants in government-subsidised exchange programmes. A battery of questions was developed to gauge those exchangeees' political behaviour and attitudes as well as their understanding of foreign countries. The students were asked to complete the questionnaire before and after the exchange. Crucially, a control group of non-exchange students was asked the same questions simultaneously before and after the exchange students' time abroad. Where significant differences in how the two groups' responses changed over the course of the exchange were detected, they were interpreted as evidence of the exchanges' political impact on the individuals involved. These are far from the first surveys of exchange students (see e.g. Bochner *et al* 1977, Golay 2006, Lazenby-Taylor 2004, Selltiz and Cook 1962), but they differ from existing studies in important respects. Firstly, unlike many existing surveys of this population it is large and systematic enough for statistical analysis of the results to be convincing. Secondly, it is unusual in focusing on political behaviour rather than patterns of social activity, contentment with the experience or participants' perceptions of their own national identities. Most importantly, it is unusual in having both a control group and a time-series design, allowing confidence that the impact of the exchange has been isolated from other possible influences.

Exchangees are not homogenous. An important lesson from the existing literature is that exchangees' experiences while they are abroad, rather than the simple fact of being in a foreign country, are likely to shape their attitudes (Sell 1983). Treating them as a homogenous group may mask systematic changes in the attitudes of some subgroups which are not shared by others. The fifth chapter of this thesis will build on the results of the larger panel study by considering students' experiences in more detail. Firstly, it repeats the analysis from the larger panel study but divides the exchange students into subgroups who reported having different experiences while abroad. For example, following from social-psychological literature on the subject it divides the exchangees into those who befriended host nationals and those who had more insular social lives.

Secondly, this chapter reports the findings from a programme of semi-structured interviews with some of the panellists. These interviews allowed exchangees to describe their experiences unconstrained by the necessarily-rigid structure of a survey, providing qualitative depth to the findings. In addition, the interviews indicated the terms in which respondents felt comfortable describing their experiences, and exposed questions to which they had trouble relating. Problems with individual questionnaire items in a new context are not always obvious from survey results or feedback, so these findings should be useful when designing future research on this subject.

Semi-structured interviews are also used as the main research method for the sixth chapter, which considers the longer-term impact of exchanges. Only quite small proportions of most populations actually participate in symmetric public diplomacy, and showing a net change in the attitudes of participants would not of itself provide evidence that these changes in attitude affect political outcomes. In order for the programmes to influence the macroscopic world of international relations, which is characterised by interactions between states and large organisations rather than solely between private citizens, any microscopic impact on participants must be “multiplied” (Council of the EU, 2004: L30/12) or have a “trickle-down effect” (Mitchell 1986: 160) to influence these more complex entities. A common assumption made about international education programmes in particular is that participants, who tend to be young and very capable, often go on to positions of influence themselves long after they have passed through the programme. In many cases they are selected on the basis of their potential to do so. They are then allegedly influenced in their use of that power by their formative experience, multiplying the impact. Multiplication cannot be detected only by studying students who have gone abroad in the past year. Instead, the sixth chapter of this thesis tests whether it is realistic to expect multiplication to occur through interviews with individuals who received scholarships to go abroad many years ago and who are now in influential positions, to judge whether they have been influenced in line with the agenda of the programme sponsors.

The last chapter combines the evidence presented in the third, fourth, fifth and sixth chapters, the empirical heart of the thesis. I argue that, while none of the quantitative and qualitative research strategies employed in the thesis can support generalisable

conclusions about the broader impact of international mobility without the others, combining the statistical analysis with interview evidence provides a stronger foundation. This final chapter will return to the fundamental questions raised in this introduction, reaching a judgment on how far the claims made by proponents of public diplomacy are supported by the evidence made available. This leads to a consideration of whether we should reconsider our theoretical understandings of how mobility programmes might function as symmetric public diplomacy.

Chapter Two: Expectations

“[The United States’] most important tool of public diplomacy in the last 50 years has been the exchange programme” – Karen Hughes, Under-Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy (Luce 2007)

2.1 Introduction

So far I have established that the use of exchange⁷ and mobility *programmes*, as distinct from simply international mobility, can be located within a concept of symmetric public diplomacy. I have claimed that this is an important reason why governments often support them and that this establishes a clear link to government policy or else to the policies of some transnational organisation. This chapter supports the central assertion made in my introduction, that exchanges and mobility programmes are often intended to influence international relations. I display a selection of the documentary evidence that the officials responsible for these programmes often consider the pursuit of political influence to be among their main objectives. However, I also recognise that the process of making public policy is complex and that documentary evidence does not necessarily tell the whole story about why programmes are created. I therefore examine the histories of some British government scholarship programmes which are seen as public diplomacy programmes. These historical vignettes include example of programmes whose objectives were initially seen rather differently but which have drifted towards public diplomacy over time, and which may not, therefore, have been based on a developed theory of how they might influence international relations.

Given that these programmes are now intended to yield public diplomacy benefits, even though they may not have been initially designed to do so, I then question why we should believe that they actually do. I will review previous studies which have attempted to demonstrate that mobility programmes really do impact on the political socialisation of individuals who participate in them and, ultimately, on international relations. Based on

⁷ Or “pseudo-exchange”, as they rarely operate by swapping personnel on a one-for-one basis

my criticism of these studies I will justify the basic features of a research design which will be employed in the empirical part of the thesis.

2.2.1 The Objectives of Exchanges

There are hundreds of separate exchange and student mobility programmes operating throughout the world today, supported by a complicated mix of government and private/charitable resources. Clearly there is a great deal of diversity among them. Even among those funded by governments, we cannot assume that all exist primarily to serve political ends as presented in the symmetric public diplomacy model. However, this section illustrates a widespread belief that many do.

Publicly-funded programmes operate within the constraints of that funding: governments have limited resources, and there are almost always an array of other uses to which resources could be put. Demands on governments' resources are essentially infinite, but the supply is finite. Given unlimited resources governments could provide every citizen with ideal security by having a police officer standing guard over every house, ideal healthcare by having a team of medical experts waiting around the clock to provide instant treatment if a citizen became ill, or provide all citizens with free one-to-one tuition in any subject they desired. In reality, however, governments will always fall short of such ideals because their resources are limited. Governments therefore need to prioritise some commitments over others, trading off security against healthcare and education to reach a tolerable compromise (Hogwood and Gunn 1984). If governments were simply to adhere rigidly to the "rational" model of policymaking set out (and critiqued) by Herbert Simon (1957) then we would expect them to gather as much evidence as possible on the costs and benefits of spending on particular activities, then assign resources to those activities with the most favourable ratio of benefits to costs. If this were the case then we could assume that spending on symmetric public diplomacy programmes is due to a developed body of evidence that they bring political benefits. Unfortunately, such a model quickly breaks down once we consider the perspectives of the vast numbers of groups and individual officials who actually make up a government (e.g. Kingdon 1984).

For officials responsible for given policy areas, limited resources lead to a situation where they need to compete against other policy areas, both to support programmes for

which they are responsible and to create new ones. For example, an official in a security department who is responsible for ensuring crime prevention needs to ensure police are paid, and in order to do so needs to ensure that the government does not devote all its resources to hiring new doctors or teachers. If the official believes that it would be desirable to obtain new resources for security protection, for example by providing police with motor vehicles, that official will need to make a case that money should be spent on those vehicles rather than, say, more teachers. To do so, officials must claim that spending on their area brings benefits (in this example, reduced crime). Identifying benefits from spending is important because it leads to a claim on spending.

It seems reasonable to assume that officials as a general rule want more resources to be devoted to programmes in their policy area. There are many reasons to believe this tends to be the case. Expansion of activity in this area may bring them personal career benefits. They probably believe their area to be particularly important if they have chosen to work in it, and even if they do not believe this at the beginning they may develop such a belief over time as they have a psychological need to feel their work is important and worthwhile. The important consequence is we can assume officials are more likely than not to want more resources for their area, and therefore to want to come up with the best arguments possible that what they do has benefits. Identifying benefits is important to the bureaucratic success of public programmes, in the sense of those programmes obtaining sufficient resources to survive. Therefore, officials should be expected to advertise the benefits of their activities, especially if they know these benefits are in high demand at the centre. They may even be incentivised to claim benefits for their programme which they know are sought by the disbursers of funds when their programmes are not optimally designed to generate such benefits (Hogwood and Peters 1983: 142-8).

For exchange programmes, the public diplomacy model offers one possible benefit they could claim: obtaining political influence. It is not the only benefit they might claim. For example, they might claim to benefit the education system by attracting talented students who enhance institutions' prestige and improve the quality of education for others, or else to provide economic benefits, or else to enhance the education and skills of the individuals involved (see e.g. Adia 1998: Ch5; Mitchell 1986: 12-21, Schoch and Baumgartner 2005, Vickers and Bekhradnia 2007: 19-21; IIE 2007, Lincoln Commission

2007: 8-10 c.f. Messer and Wolter 2005). However, political influence does seem to be considered a major benefit (Mitchell 1986: 226-7). This is revealed firstly by the fact that programme administrators say that they have political objectives, which should be seen partly as a bid for resources to the custodians of public finances, and secondly by the fact that that their actions reflect this.

2.2.2 Administrators' Claims

Exchanges are frequently justified to governments in terms of “soft power”, the ability to manipulate others, in this case other countries, by the attraction of culture and values rather than economic incentives or threats of force. Exchanges are central to many of Nye’s examples of how soft power can be obtained (Nye 2005), and many former exchange administrators have made clear links in post-retirement publications. Arndt (2005: 394, 537) is one obvious example.

Programmes frequently present themselves to policymakers as serving political ends. This is often obliquely mentioned in their public mission statements. The German Academic Exchange Service, for example, describes its mission as enabling

“young academic elites from around the world to become leaders in the fields of science, culture, economics and politics – as well as friends and partners of Germany” (DAAD 2005, my emphasis).

Such allusions to encouraging international co-operation in public materials are fairly common, but typically vague on why this deserves government funding. More explicit statements tend to be made in communications between the programme organisers and their governments, which are less likely to be read by the general public (e.g. House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee 2006). These indicate the aim of securing political influence. Following on from such discourse within government, small industries have been developing in recent years, particularly in London and Washington, which provide consultancy on how exchange programmes can be used to gain political leverage in dealings with foreign countries. Their publications (e.g. Fisher and Bröckerhoff 2008, Leonard and Alakeson 2000, Leonerd, Stead and Smewing 2002), clearly targeting policymakers, envisage exchanges as nurturing positive views of the sponsoring country among influential foreign citizens.

The programme which is possibly the most explicit about its pursuit of political objectives is Fulbright. Describing a mobility programme targeting young people from Post-Soviet states, the Polish⁸ Fulbright Commission states that its

“main aim is to become part of the process of creating in these countries a new intellectual, political and economic elite – open to Western values, and willing and able to work for democracy, market economy and civil society”
(Fulbright Poland 2007).

The main Fulbright administration is barely more circumspect about the political nature of its aims. The classic mission statement, that the programme is designed to "increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries..." fits very neatly into the symmetric public diplomacy model. It does not require a dramatic leap of imagination to link this to the pursuit of political influence.

While US programmes are perhaps the most overt, such claims are associated with schemes in a wide range of countries. To take only two examples, examinations of both Canadian and Japanese programmes have shown that they present themselves to government as bringing public diplomacy benefits. In bemoaning the limited resources which Canada devotes to such programmes, Potter (2002) establishes their claims to pursue public diplomacy. McConnell (2000) shows that the Japan English Teaching programme, which pays English speaking graduates to teach in Japanese schools, also managed to secure funding partly on grounds that it could improve Japan's diplomatic relations through those graduates' future influence. A raft of British government-sponsored scholarships and exchange programmes also claim to claim to be bringing public diplomacy benefits (FCO 1985, House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee 2006), and these will be presented in section 2.3 of this chapter which looks at the spread of the public diplomacy agenda in Britain in some detail.

⁸ The particular programme being described is slightly different from the typical Fulbright grant, in that it is intended to bring citizens of former Soviet countries to Poland where they will be taught the lessons of Poland's post-Communist transformation by American academics.

2.2.3 Administrative behaviour

Administrative behaviour further supports the idea that a public diplomacy benefit is seen to derive from these programmes. Exchange programmes' priorities also frequently appear to track foreign policy priorities. Many – for example the Chevening Scholarships (FCO 2005: 8) – are very open about their focus on strategically important countries. The need to respond to the Foreign Office's "short to medium term" strategy of international relations was behind the creation of Chevening Fellowships, supplementing the Scholarship allocation, in 2006 (House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee 2006: 41). Since 2001 attention has been increasingly turned to exchanges with the 'Islamic World' (Dolan 2002); the British Council, for example, is redistributing large swathes of its resources from Europe to Muslim-majority countries (BBC 2007). As well as changing their geographical focus, exchange officials also tailor their claims about what the programmes achieve to the foreign policy priorities of governments. As literature on how exchanges might be used to fight terrorism has blossomed (Lennon 2003) exchanges have increasingly emphasised links between the 'West' and majority-Muslim countries, although such links still account for only a tiny minority of the world's international exchanges. Ross (2003: 259) provides a particularly open statement of this link when he writes that "cultural programs [including exchanges] are ... a frank mobilization in the service of national security of what Joseph Nye referred to as "soft power"."

Selection Criteria for Participants

The selection criteria applied by officials responsible for the programmes when selecting participants are generally consistent with their pursuing political influence. Exchange programmes aiming to recruit large numbers of students, such as Erasmus, often delegate selection to administrators in universities as interviewing thousands of applicants themselves would be completely impractical, but officials responsible for the more capital-intensive programmes are able to closely scrutinise the selection process. Where they themselves select participants the selection criteria are often driven by public diplomacy considerations.

Again, the Fulbright Programme provides a particularly clear illustration of how this works. The programme is divided into several divisions, of which the Fulbright Scholarships are probably the best-known. Although these do require an

strong undergraduate academic record the selection criteria also include “evidence of leadership and initiative” (US-UK Fulbright Commission 2003), characteristics likely to identify those who will go on to be influential in the future. The desire to see ex-Fulbrighters take on leadership positions in their home countries may explain why the Commission insists they spend two years in their home countries before they are eligible to return to the United States for a significant period. The Fulbright scheme is also notable for its offshoot, the International Visitor Leadership Programme. This is one of the most overtly politicised programmes in existence, with the recruitment of future elites the core selection criterion. The Programme has no application process as such: instead American diplomats track down individuals they expect to reach high office and invite them on prestigious, all-expenses-paid visits to the United States. Their judgements of potential have proved astonishingly accurate: the State Department boasts that over 200 past and present heads of states or governments are alumni (State 2007b). Gordon Brown, Tony Blair and Margaret Thatcher took part early in their careers (1984, 1986 and 1967 respectively), long before they were considered future party leaders (NCIV 2006, Scott-Smith 2003).

These criteria seem to be designed to include as many future leaders as possible in the programmes’ pool of alumni. *If* the exchange experience leads to improved attitudes toward a host country, which tends to be assumed, then this should maximise the numbers of influential foreigners with positive views of the sponsoring country.

It is interesting to note, however, that even if recruiting students likely to go on to positions of power proves not to be in the objective interests of the sponsoring country or its government it can prove very helpful for the programmes themselves – and thus might be a sustainable strategy even if it does not improve international relations. The alumni of these programmes naturally tend to be supportive of their continuation, and can be a powerful constituency for exchanges. Fulbright alumni have lobbied successfully against threats to the programme’s budget on more than one occasion (Ninkovitch 1996: 32-3); their alumni network maintains a system of alerts on its website which inform alumni of opportunities to lobby Congress for increased funding of exchanges (Fulbright Association 2007).

2.3 The Historical Development of Symmetric Public Diplomacy in Britain

Rhetorical and policy evidence that exchange programmes see themselves in a public diplomacy role at present does not necessarily show that public diplomacy has been the main impetus behind their development. This evidence does suggest that public diplomacy is considered to be an important objective at present. However, the formation of public policy is a complex process, in which proponents of different policies manoeuvre to secure resources for their favoured programmes. The literature on public policymaking reveals that this process leads to a convoluted relationship between ends and means. As noted, it would not be unheard-of for officials to decide that their programmes are desirable and then set out in search of problems for those programmes to 'solve' (Kingdon 1984, Peters and Hogwood 1985, Stone 2000). There are powerful incentives on the organisers of exchanges to present exchanges as the solution to whatever policy problem is considered most pressing. For example, there was a noticeable 'securitisation' of US exchange programmes after 2001, when reducing terrorism came to be seen as a key policy objective (e.g. Lincoln Commission 2007: 6-7, Lennon 2003). It is at least possible that the declared objective of public diplomacy is also a result of such objective drift. Assuming that objectives are determined by problems in the simple, linear fashion that a 'rational' account (Simon 1957) might suggest is not safe. In order to know with any degree of confidence how public diplomacy has come to be defined as a central objective, it is necessary to study programmes' historical development.

Studying the history of a programme is labour-intensive, and there is no obvious way to sample from the programmes which currently exist in a systematic manner. Instead, I have chosen to focus on a small number of programmes funded by the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

My investigations were based on a combination of secondary analyses, archival evidence and interviews. With the exception of Perraton's 2009 analysis of the Commonwealth Scholarships, little directly-relevant secondary literature on these programmes was available. Therefore, I also tracked down and interviewed officials responsible for the creation of the scholarship programmes. Archival material which was freely available has been traced. Interviews were preferred to documentary evidence

because the questions being addressed relate specifically to both the policymaking processes and the intentions behind the programmes – if the account relied solely on archival material there would be a danger that the archives did not contain any references to such considerations. Since the creations of many of these programmes were relatively low-profile government activities, there was a concern that there might never have been a very significant paper trail at a high enough level to be archived, and that lower-level officials records might have been destroyed⁹. The odds of obtaining interviews were best for relatively recently-created programmes, and the Entente Cordiale programme was included partly to fill the need for at least one vignette which could be based on interviews.

The four case studies are British programmes on which little history of the policy-making processes involved was publicly available when this project began¹⁰. While a study focussed on four programmes cannot include every scenario which can impact on a programme in its formative years, the personnel involved generally had some experience, or at least second-hand knowledge, of other programmes besides the one about which they were primarily interviewed and they were encouraged to consider how far they thought it reflected broader trends. The programmes chosen also differ quite significantly, encompassing a range of different trajectories for potential exchanges through at least the British civil and diplomatic service and British Council policymaking process. British programmes were selected to maximise continuity with the several British schemes considered in the pilot study (Ch3), with the relative ease of access to British officials a bonus. Further research would be needed to know for certain whether these dynamics are typical of other countries, although since the number of countries who are significant sponsors of diplomacy-oriented scholarships for foreign nationals is actually quite small (Potter 2002) this one case does account for a significant share of activity in itself. The schemes' histories suggest an interesting pattern in the development of the public diplomacy agenda.

⁹ This worry in fact proved to be justified (EC5).

¹⁰ Perraton's (2009) major study was written simultaneously.

2.3.1 Marshall Scholarships

The Marshall Scholarship Scheme brings American postgraduate students to study in the UK by providing funds to cover their tuition and a relatively generous grant for living costs. It is funded by a grant from the Foreign Office and administered by the London office of the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU). The Scheme is unusual in having been established by an Act of Parliament in 1953 as an apparently spontaneous gesture of gratitude for Marshall Aid (Marshall Foundation 2009). The scheme's establishment in legislation may explain its resilience when other government scholarships have been consolidated under Chevening. The Trust's website gives a brief account of its 'official' history.

“The principal architect of the scheme was Roger Makins (Lord Sherfield) who, as Deputy Under Secretary in the Foreign Office supervising the American Department, arranged for the bill to be drafted and passed through Parliament. Soon after the bill passed he was transferred to Washington as Ambassador where he was able to organize the scheme in the United States.

The idea behind the Marshall Scholarships was to build on the Rhodes Scholarships established by a private bequest a half-century earlier. The Rhodes scheme was acknowledged to be an outstanding success, but it was restricted to one British university and, in 1953-54, to one carefully defined category of male candidate. The Marshall, in Roger Makins's view, would extend the Rhodes Scholarship idea and apply it, without distinction of gender and with a wider age range, to any university in the United Kingdom.” (Marshall 2009a)

While this account is accurate, it conceals a good deal of complexity. The Marshall Scholarships' history actually stems from a file of correspondence between senior civil servants in the Foreign Office America Unit, including Makins, JNO Curle and to a lesser extent MS Russell and KM Anderson (FCOAU 1952). Comparing this correspondence with the modern Trust's behaviour reveals a more complicated story with regard to the big questions of why the scheme was created and what functions it was intended to serve in the Transatlantic relationship. The Marshall Scheme in fact serves as a reminder that stated objectives can be much more flexible than actual activities which, often for reasons of bureaucratic inertia (Hogwood and Peters 1983: 14-18), can be very resistant to

change. In the Marshall case, the Trust is actually established by Act of Parliament, a powerful obstacle to disestablishment. However, its declared objectives seem to have drifted towards changing participants' attitudes and behaviour toward the UK since its inception – indicating that the “public diplomacy” slogan can have significant power within bureaucracies.

2.3.1.1 Foundation

There has been a longstanding tension between the two objectives of signalling goodwill and influencing attitudes in the Marshall Trust's objectives which goes back to the very beginning of the story. This tension is not simply a semantic matter, because the activities which are most effective in one are not necessarily optimal for the other: for example, a programme intended to serve symbolic functions might have very different criteria for choosing grantees from one which aimed to exert political influence through its alumni. The Trust was conceived at a time when there had already been discussion of means to recognise American support for Britain since the Second World War, especially Marshall Aid, which had come to focus on the possibility of gifting an original copy of the Magna Carta to the United States. While speculation on the possibility had recurred periodically, interest seems to have been reawakened in the early 1950s by Sir Evelyn Wrench, who raised the possibility of giving a copy of the Magna Carta publicly in a letter to the Times (FCOAU 1952/1). Wrench was a particularly notable figure in the US-UK relationship at the time due to his famous support for Anglo-American relations after the First World War – he arranged the creation of the English-Speaking Union, a large multinational charity based in London, in the hope of sustaining trans-Atlantic solidarity which could be (and was) called upon in the event of another war. The ESU had gone on to provide support to the government's campaign to bring the USA into the Second World War and to lend key personnel to the wartime Ministry of Information (Cull 1995: 7, 23-6, 29). His intervention therefore attracted some attention within the Foreign Office, and senior civil servant Sir Roger Makins began to take soundings from his colleagues on a suitable gesture of gratitude which Britain could make for Marshall Aid.

While the Magna Carta could have been a powerful symbol of the two countries' allegedly shared liberal traditions, and a copy loaned to the Americans during the War for security had in fact proved a popular attraction (FCOAU 1952/1), obtaining a copy

proved impossible. Only four copies of the most desirable Magna Carta, the famous 1215 Runnymede issue, have survived, of which two had to be kept in the UK according to legacy conditions while two were owned by Cathedrals unwilling to part with them due to government pressure. The more recent, less desirable issues could have been seen as inferior gifts¹¹. This seems to have left something of a diplomatic and public relations problem for the Foreign Office. Correspondence in the files (for example, a letter from the Minister of Labour to the Foreign Secretary – FCOAU 1952/20) suggests that influential people in the British government believed the provision of a suitable gift in recognition of Marshall Aid, ideally to be made to seem like a spontaneous gesture of goodwill, was seen as almost compulsory by the American side. The fact that the first-choice gift unfortunately could not be released put the civil servants involved in an awkward position. There followed a search for alternatives which could be implemented within a relatively short period of time. There was a feeling that the ‘gift’ should be made once the UK was no longer obviously dependent on Marshall Aid, but given the country’s financial situation in the early 1950s there was a fear that Britain might require American aid again in the near future. The gesture needed to come before the government was forced to seek further aid in order to build up goodwill on the American side and to avoid being seen as manipulative (FCOAU 1952/2, FCOAU 1952/8).

Scholarships were seen as a viable alternative gesture because they were expected to appeal to American public opinion. The Rhodes Scholarships, created by Cecil Rhodes’ vast legacy to Oxford University, were clearly a model from the outset¹². Even at that time former Rhodes Scholars were known to have had a notable impact on American public opinion and the original plan seems to have been to choose people “of Rhodes Scholar type” who would take second undergraduate degrees before returning home

¹¹ One of the less-desirable copies of the Magna Carta was eventually moved to Washington in the 1980s thanks to the significant financial inducements of private billionaire Ross Perot; it became a successful attraction at the National Archives (Reynolds 2007)

¹² The original plan was to concentrate all the Scholarships at Cambridge University on the grounds that Oxbridge would naturally make a greater impression than other universities and because Oxford already had Rhodes there was a danger of Marshall Scholarships being seen as second-best. A large chunk of the filing is taken up with disagreements over whether other universities should be included before it was decided to leave choice of institution open. Ironically, a large plurality of awards are now held at Oxford (Marshall Interview Two).

where they might act as a “leaven” for public opinion¹³ (FCOAU 1952/17). Importantly, however, the files provide strong evidence that the symbolism of the gesture was seen as the most important consequence of their creation in terms of the UK national interest. In the very early stages of the process, a wonderful example of what Kingdon (1984: Ch6) memorably labels the “primordial soup” of policy ideas, many suggestions were floated around Whitehall. These included using the gesture of reciprocity as a cover for more clearly propagandistic aims. Proposals included sending select British students to the United States and funding visits by American schoolteachers to the UK in the hope of influencing future generations, a proposal clearly compatible with the symmetric public diplomacy model. These ideas had to be squashed by Anderson, Curle and Russell on the grounds that they were distractions from the task in hand:

“It must be remembered that the object of this exercise is to make a suitable gesture of gratitude for Marshall Aid, any long-term advantage to this country arising from the gesture being incidental [...] The suggestion that the scheme should concentrate on U.S. teachers coming to this country [for example] would, I think, run the danger of making the scheme so obviously propagandistic and limited as to distract from its value as an expression of gratitude” (Curle in FCOAU 1952/14)

In the case of the teacher exchange programme it was also pointed out that the ESU was already doing this on quite a large scale without the government getting involved (Anderson in FCOAU 1952/14).

It is true that it was not unnoticed that, in JNO Curle’s words, scholarships for Americans had “the added advantage of indoctrinating young Americans with the British way of life” (FCOAU 1952/3). However, there are other good grounds for believing that this was actually considered to be of secondary importance. One of these is that the scheme was established by the most high-profile means possible, an Act of Parliament establishing an autonomous Marshall Trust which was to have significant parts of its terms of reference laid down in statute, and therefore publicly visible. It is of course not unusual for public diplomacy exchanges to be administered by autonomous bodies, but

¹³ The first reference of this term on file is actually a handwritten correction in which “leaven” replaces the original typing of “lever” (FCOAU 1952/17). It is difficult to be certain of whether the original typing was simply a clerical error, and this could greatly change the meaning of the whole passage. However, subsequent correspondence adopts the term “leaven” which seems to have become accepted. Incidentally, the scheme has since become dominated by research postgraduates instead.

there is usually some indirect mechanism for the government to keep control. The British Council is autonomous but does receive a block grant from the government which is to some extent influenced by the Council's ability to demonstrate effectiveness in changing opinions, hence the emphasis on evaluations which are submitted to the Foreign Office (British Council Interview Two). While the Marshall Trust was eventually funded in a similar way (and hence needs to rely on an annual appropriation) this was not the intention of its creators. In fact, it was hoped that the Trust could be sustained by a public endowment in which the government would deposit enough money for a perpetual exchange of a certain number of Scholars and would then have no more involvement. Such a plan would have made it very difficult for diplomats to use the Scholarships for the public diplomacy priorities of the day (for example, by targeting certain kinds of Scholar) unless the Trust's objectives were changed by statute. This would involve widely publicising a change in objectives as a result of parliamentary debate which, given the fear of being seen as "propagandistic", could be highly embarrassing. The use of an annual appropriation won out over an endowment in the end not because this logic was followed and the possibility of discreetly influencing the Scholarships' direction was valued but because the economic uncertainty of the time led to worries about any one-off endowment being exposed to a significant inflation risk (FCOAU 1952/9, FCOAU 1952/10). Had this not been a factor it seems that the Scholarships would have been administered without any need to consider political objectives or account to the Foreign Office. It does seem that the Marshall Scholarships were created by a consensus of people who either had not thought through the long-term consequences of their actions or else genuinely did not see targeted attempts to influence American public opinion through Marshall alumni as the priority.

2.3.1.2 Marshall Scholarships Today

This history is not necessarily what might be expected from the scheme's modern objectives. Despite these origins the Marshall Scholarships are now very much considered part of the UK's public diplomacy effort. Private interviews with people involved in the scheme have led to spontaneous uses of the term. One official involved in administering the scheme even made an explicit statement that while people within the ACU tended to believe that the Scholarships had originally been created as a gesture of

thanks, public diplomacy considerations had since taken over (Marshall Interview Two). A recent graduate of the scheme remembers the “public diplomacy” objective being made explicit in pre-departure briefings and that Scholars were made aware of expectations that they would function as miniature ambassadors, that “the whole purpose of [the] programme is to bolster UK/US ties” (Marshall Interview One). Professional diplomats are directly involved in the final selection process, conducted by the British Council at the British Embassy and Consulates around the United States. Each final interview panel contains a Consul. The Trust’s official website includes in its mission statement “To motivate scholars to act as ambassadors from America to the UK and vice versa throughout their lives thus strengthening British American understanding” (Marshall 2009b).

The ACU’s evaluation of the scheme shows a desire to demonstrate a link between the scheme and the strength of the “special relationship” between Britain and the United States (Kubler 2008: 12-13). The ACU has commissioned a large survey of Marshall alumni, presumably designed partly to impress sponsors, parts of which were privately shared with the author. The survey is clearly designed to demonstrate the impact of the Scholarships on alumni beliefs and behaviour to the benefit of the United Kingdom.

The Foreign Office’s own internal communications also reveal a distinct shift, indicating that the change is not generated purely by the Marshall Foundation. The 1985 Foreign and Commonwealth Office Internal Review of British Government and British Council Funded Award Schemes (FCO 1985) included it in category (iii) of funded award schemes (scholarships):

“(iii) Schemes which are intended to help Britain win friends and influence people abroad. Most of these schemes aim to attract people taking a leading part in the future in their field of study and in their own countries generally, or who seem likely to do so” (FCO 1985 section 3.1)

At the time this category also included the FCO Scholarships and Award Scheme, discussed below in 2.3.2, Commonwealth Scholarships, British Council Fellowships (now defunct) and the UK contribution to the Fulbright programme. The authors went on to express their hopes that category (i), scholarships aimed at providing developing countries with needed skills, and (ii), the Overseas Research Students Awards Scheme

designed to offset the damage to UK research capacity when overseas student fees were imposed, would also help to win friends and influence although this was not their primary purpose (FCO 1985: 3.2), implying that for category (iii) this was the main objective. The Marshall Scholarships' objective was described in this document (which, while hardly top secret, was obviously not intended for public consumption) as

“To further United States/United Kingdom relations by the provision of prestigious awards to enable American scholars to study at British universities” (FCO 1985: 1.9)

A brief appraisal (1985: 1.9.7) noted that

“The standard of scholars is exceptionally high and, as their careers progress, they frequently occupy positions in American life of importance and influence [...] The Scheme is thus rewarding in both academic and *political* senses” (my emphasis).

It is clear from this material that the Marshall Scholarships were and are now expected to justify their claims for funding through demonstrating impact of the kind expected of other symmetric public diplomacy programmes.

This analysis shows a noticeable drift in the policy objectives of the Scholarship scheme. While in the early stages the symbolic impact of their very existence as a gesture of goodwill was seen as sufficient to justify funding, today they are expected to show their efficiency as tools of public diplomacy, sustaining beneficial relationships with the United States. The change is a somewhat nuanced one and it would probably be impossible to trace anyone who could identify a pivotal moment at which it occurred, even if they were still alive.

The case also shows that it is not safe to assume that programmes which now claim to concern themselves with the pursuit of public diplomacy were necessarily created for this purpose or have followed logical historical trajectories from identification of a problem to providing solutions to it. One of the consequences of objective shift could be that programmes which claim to be pursuing public diplomacy are actually poorly designed for it, having been created to serve some other function and continuing to behave similarly after their ostensible objectives have changed. Programmes need to be studied individually and their objectives traced through their histories in order to understand what they are actually designed to do and how realistic it is to expect this to occur. It is not

necessarily safe to assume that because a programme claims to be pursuing public diplomacy through changing perceptions it is ineffective simply because no change in perceptions can be observed; in fact, it may be that the programme is very effective at achieving something, perhaps something very useful, but not necessarily the objective its supporters have found it is most useful to associate with in the current political climate to maximise resources. The symbolic power of the existence of such scholarships as Marshall may in itself be influential in signalling the goodwill of the UK government toward the section of the American population which is likely to be aware of their existence. The interesting consequence is that multiple objectives may pull the schemes in multiple directions; the grantees who are likely to make the most diplomatic impact (for example, future politicians) may not be the same as those who will diffuse the symbol most widely (perhaps future academics). Since the objective of this thesis is to evaluate the impact of symmetric public diplomacy programmes, which has traditionally been done by measuring attitude change among participants (see 2.4), it is only fair to consider how far this is the ‘real’, or at least the sole, objective of programmes which claim to be funding international education as a means of improving international relations.

2.3.2 The Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan

The Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan (CSFP) provides financial support for nationals of one Commonwealth country who wish to pursue university-level education in another. From the outset, the CSFP has been supported largely by the British contribution: Britain has always funded more awards under the Plan than any other country, usually far more. In 2006, for example, which was admittedly the peak in Britain’s numerical contribution, the country funded 1172 out of 1560 Scholars and Fellows¹⁴ (Perraton 2009: 195). Thus, while the CSFP is strictly speaking a multilateral award programme, British support for the Plan has been of vital importance. The British Government’s motives for sponsoring CSFP grants are interesting. In this section I will

¹⁴ This figure does exaggerate British dominance because other contributors tended to support full-year awards, while Britain inflated its numbers with shorter-term or even distance-learning courses. However, this does not affect the broader point that Britain has been the Plan’s biggest donor, with Canada a distant second.

demonstrate that public diplomacy considerations have contributed to this support, just as they have appeared in discussions of British provision of the Marshall Scholarships. Another point of similarity is that public diplomacy is not the only explanation offered by interested parties, and expectations that the Plan would bring diplomatic benefits have increased in importance relatively recently.

As well as providing an interesting historical example of how assumptions about diplomatic impact have contributed to British sponsorship of scholarships, the CSFP has further importance for this thesis. CSFP alumni inform an important part of the empirical research. Chapter Six relies heavily on the testimony of former Commonwealth Scholars about the impact their grant had on them over the long term. CSFP alumni were selected as exemplars because the Commission overseeing the Plan has made an unusually careful effort to catalogue the subsequent careers of alumni. Understanding the Plan's history is important background to this testimony.

Given that the CSFP has this added importance to my argument, it might seem surprising that this section contains relatively little archival or interview investigation of the Plan's history. The reason for this lack of new empirical investigation is simply that Hillary Perraton's (2009) comprehensive investigation of the Plan's history was being written at the same time as this thesis. His investigation employs both archival and interview evidence from the Plan's foundation in 1960 until 2009, using a very similar strategy to the research design I chose to explore the histories of the Marshall, Chevening and Entente Cordiale schemes. At nearly 200 pages this goes into far more detail than any of the vignettes in this section conceivably could. Attempting to replicate his work did not seem to be a sensible research strategy. Accordingly, this account draws more heavily on Perraton's than on primary sources, although some have been consulted for verification.

Commonwealth Scholarships and Fellowships are mainly postgraduate awards¹⁵ made to enable citizens of one Commonwealth country to study in another. From the point of view of the British government (reflected by other developed Commonwealth countries) the scheme has had two main aims – firstly, to provide development aid in the form of

¹⁵ There are a few exceptions made for citizens of small and/or developing Commonwealth countries unable to provide them with suitable undergraduate opportunities.

access to skills and training to the developing Commonwealth countries, and secondly, to strengthen relations with the developed Commonwealth. Until recently this division was neatly illustrated by a division of British government funding flowing to the CSFP Secretariat: one chunk of funding came from the Department for International Development (DfID) and was aimed at students from developing Commonwealth countries, while the rest came from the Foreign Office to maintain a quota of students from the wealthier Commonwealth members (Marshall Interview Two). It is the Foreign Office contribution which is of interest here, because when this thesis was being written it was justified not on the basis that developed Commonwealth countries like Canada and Australia needed British help, but instead on the basis that bringing their citizens to the UK brought diplomatic benefits to Britain (Kirkland 2003: ix). The Foreign Office was going through a period in which it was providing scholarships to developed Commonwealth countries on the basis that this brought diplomatic benefits. Again, this was not simply a continuation of the Plan's initial objectives.

2.3.2.1 Foundation

The Plan was agreed in the late 1950s at successive meetings of Commonwealth Trade and Education Ministers in Montreal and Oxford and the first class of Scholars left home in 1960. While some details of the Plan's inception are hazy¹⁶, Perraton (2009: 5-7) is clear that the political impetus came from Canada¹⁷. A new Canadian administration brought a bundle of policy ideas of which British delegates were sceptical, and the CSFP was considered "safer and cheaper than [the Canadians'] grander plans" (Perraton 2009: 6). From the outset, British support owed more to circumstances than a strategic calculation of national diplomatic interest; much as the creation of the Marshall Scholarships distracted from failure to provide a Magna Carta, contributing to a relatively cheap scholarship scheme balanced British refusal to consider the potentially expensive

¹⁶ As Perraton (2009: 8) puts it, "at least four Canadian academics [lay] claim to its paternity". While the details are complex, there are two interesting links with the Marshall story. As with Marshall, existing international scholarships may well have been models, as the academics most likely to have generated the original idea had received such scholarships as students. Another fascinating link was that a key player in the British delegation which agreed the CSFP was senior diplomat Sir Roger Makins, aka Lord Sherfield (see 2.3.1.1) (Perraton 2009: 6 n4).

¹⁷ Canadian leader John Diefenbaker appears to have been motivated by the symbolic value of joint Commonwealth ventures in general, and scholarships were only one suggestion among many (Perraton 2009:5-6)

Commonwealth Development Bank proposed by Canadian delegates. British support for the scheme was not initially sparked by a calculation of the long-term consequences for British national interest, but by a desire to project a desirable image. From the outset, the FCO committed itself to provide at least half of the funding for the Plan out of concern to save face (Perraton 2009: 36).

Perraton demonstrates that Britain's disproportionate contribution to the CSFP was made primarily because the Plan's existence was seen to have symbolic value. The CSFP was seen as a symbol of bonds between Commonwealth countries. His evidence comes largely from his analysis of documentation from the early days of the Plan and interviews with surviving observers (Perraton 2009: Ch2). The Commonwealth was perceived to have much greater political and economic importance in the 1950s than it does now (Perraton 2009: 81-3). Showing that the Commonwealth was bound together was an important political and diplomatic objective, tied to British prestige. In the context of the Cold War it was seen as one bulwark against Communism¹⁸ (Perraton 2009: 36). There also seems to have been some concern to signal Britain's continued interest in the Commonwealth despite the country's engagement with precursors of the European Union (Perraton 2009: 35). The creation of the CSFP served all of these ends. It was a joint endeavour to which diplomats could point if the relevance of the organisation were questioned. The potential for CSFP alumni themselves to mobilise public opinion was discussed rarely if ever.

For the universities, of course, promoting Commonwealth cohesion combined with pursuit of their own (educational) interests. Universities were key beneficiaries of the Plan, and their representatives were closely tied into its organisation from the beginning (Perraton 2009: Ch1). Unsurprisingly, universities supported the Plan largely for educational reasons, as a means of bringing money and talent into British higher education, and from their point of view this may have been more significant than any benefits to Commonwealth relations. However, at the outset most academics couched

¹⁸ During the Cold War, the CSFP, like many other international scholarship programmes (see Saunders 2000) were seen as part of a competition for the allegiance of undeveloped countries which otherwise would send young elites to the USSR for education (Perraton 2009: 27). This seems not to have been such a significant concern with respect to the developed Commonwealth whose nationals were funded by the Foreign Office – the chances of, say, New Zealand being drawn into the USSR's orbit were obviously much lower than the risk to some of the less-developed Commonwealth states (Calvocoressi 1997: x)

their support in terms of Commonwealth unity (Perraton 2009: 37). Even if this were a cloak for self-interest from their point of view, the fact that they chose this argument indicates that they believed diplomats would be most responsive to this line of argument, reinforcing the case that the CSFP was seen as a means to this end within the FCO.

2.3.2.2 Shifting Objectives

While all of these arguments were present throughout the lifetime of the programme, Perraton's account makes clear that there was a significant shift in emphasis from promoting Commonwealth links towards member states' pursuit of their own perceived national interests. This has certainly been the case in Britain, but has also occurred in the other developed Commonwealth countries (Perraton 2009: 26-7, 61). By the end of the 20th Century contributions to the Plan for developed countries were being justified by claims that this won Britain influential friends.

A study commissioned to trace CSFP alumni (Commonwealth Secretariat 1989) demonstrated the Secretariat's interest in how influential alumni had become. As well as gathering general information about their careers it very explicitly sought alumni who had been politically active in their home countries, regardless of whether this was part-time or voluntary. Alumni who had gone into politics could be used to demonstrate that scholarship money was securing political influence – even though the tracer study never attempted to discover whether their attitudes had been affected by studying in the UK. By the early 1990s diplomats were explicitly setting the goals of British awards as making “future leaders, decision makers and opinion formers” into “influential friends overseas” by giving positive impressions of the UK (quoted in Perraton 2009: 71). Although they retained elements of Commonwealth-unity rhetoric to avoid the diplomatic consequences of being seen to reject the Commonwealth, the civil servants funding the CSFP came to see its role as influencing influential foreigners (Perraton 2009: Ch5, 184). The CSFP secretariat was certainly aware of the political motives behind this component of its funding, as the Secretary implicitly acknowledged in his introduction to a catalogue of prominent alumni:

“Governments offer scholarships for a variety of reasons. Typically, however, they represent a balance between enlightened self-interest and a genuine desire to help others. One motive might be to ‘win friends’ in other

parts of the world, who, if favourably impressed, *will in turn influence policy or public opinion towards their former hosts in later life*. Another might be to provide key skills to the next generation of leaders and practitioners, particularly in developing countries, as part of strategies to improve living standards there.” (Kirkland *et al* 2003: ix; my italics)

This encapsulates the roles expected of Commonwealth Scholarships and Fellowships by 2003. The Plan had bifurcated into a stream directed to the developing Commonwealth and providing aid, while developed-Commonwealth awards were seen as tools for influence. While their symbolic value may initially have been more important, by this point they were being expected to bring influence through the changed attitudes of alumni. These expectations echo the symmetric public diplomacy model.

There are parallels between the development of arguments surrounding the British CSFP contributions for developed countries and Marshall Scholarships. In both cases, interest in creating scholarships seems to have been sparked by potentially embarrassing circumstances which were outside Foreign Office control, the unavailability of a Magna Carta and the Canadian delegation’s over-ambitious plans for the Commonwealth conference. Both were set up largely to signal goodwill. The behaviour of officials involved shows that the symbolism of creating the awards was of foremost importance, outweighing any changes in outlook expected among the grantees themselves. By the turn of the (21st) Century, however, programme administrators were staking claims to funding on the basis that they were shaping soon-to-be-influential grantees’ attitudes to Britain.

While this account was being written the Foreign and Commonwealth Office decided to terminate its contribution to the Plan, with some attendant controversy (BBC 2008, Perraton 2009: 78-9). FCO-funded awards were to focus on the Chevening Programme and Marshall Scholarships. As the Marshall Programme is a statutory creation it would be very difficult to terminate without considerable debate, and given that Marshall is symbolically tied to Britain’s ‘special’ relationship the diplomatic costs of termination could be substantial. It is one exception to a general push by the Foreign Office to

consolidate its portfolio of scholarships into Chevening¹⁹, and no such exception was made for the developed-country CSFP. Chevening has become particularly focussed on future leaders who are likely to yield diplomatic benefits, as discussed in 2.3.2.

2.3.3 Chevening Scholarships

The Chevening Scholarships were celebrating their 25th anniversary as this thesis was being completed. The Chevening Programme had become the largest scholarship programme funded by the British government. However, it is actually a continuation of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Scholarships and Awards Scheme (FCOSAS) which had existed since the 1980s and was renamed in 1994 by Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd (Chevening 2002).

Little knowledge of how the FCOSAS was created survives among current administrators (Chevening Interview One 2:00) but there does seem to be an assumption that it was created for public diplomacy ends. Speculating on the early history of the Chevening Programme, one British Council administrator was confident that

“it would have been set up with the same principles that it has now which [are] to try and attract the future leaders from other countries [...] for a period of study in the UK, to get a good impression of the UK and to become a friend and possibly a partner to the UK in future years”
(Chevening Interview One 3:55)

As with the Marshall Scholarships, this assumption warrants some investigation.

2.3.3.1 Foundation

As the Chevening Scholarships were exactly 25 years old when this thesis was being written, key associated documents were still closed under the 30-year rule at time of writing. On the other hand, a quarter of a century was enough time for all the key players to have left their posts and for many to have become difficult to trace. This vignette was probably the most difficult in terms of sourcing material because of a combination of this closure with the advancing age of most key participants and lack of existing historical

¹⁹ A much smaller set of ‘Commonwealth Scholarships’ aimed at the developed Commonwealth has been resurrected, but they differ radically from their namesakes. These scholarships are funded by the Department responsible for higher education and the universities themselves and have educational rather than diplomatic objectives.

studies. However, a few key interviewees did cast some light on the scheme's development.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office Scholarships and Awards Scheme dispensed its first grants in 1984, and must be seen in the context of the early 1980s. This was a time of severe budgetary constraint. The Thatcher Government took a strict approach to public spending, and one of the money-saving measures introduced early in the Government's term was to greatly increase the fees charged to students who came from outside the EU to study in Britain. Previous governments had in effect subsidised tuition by paying universities for part of the cost of educating non-EU students, keeping the costs to those students down. Removing this subsidy meant that universities were able to set their own fees for foreign students, and this, unsurprisingly, greatly increased the cost of pursuing a degree in the UK. Equally unsurprisingly, the reduction in support led to discontent both within the British higher education system and abroad (Perraton 2009: 60-1, Williams 1981).

Of the few witnesses to the Scheme's early days who could be traced for this project, the best-placed²⁰ was adamant that the FCOSAS was created in response to this increase in fees (Chevening Interview Two). This was "absolutely" the primary cause and "it wouldn't have happened apart from that" (6:20). His explanation was that the decision to remove the subsidy had effectively been made by the Department of Education and Science and the Treasury, without the Foreign Office being seriously consulted (6.55). The decision led to some ill-feeling in foreign governments whose students were accustomed to relatively inexpensive education in British universities. The creation of a scholarship scheme, albeit one which would support far fewer students than the hidden subsidy, was seen as something ministers and ambassadors could point to when confronted with such complaints (10:10, 11:00). The FCO attempted to create such a scheme repeatedly in the early 1980s (after fees had been increased) but was unable to secure funding from the Treasury until the spending restrictions were eased due to

²⁰ This interviewee was in a key position on the Cultural Relations side of the Foreign Office, which ultimately provided the funding for the Scheme, and was identified both in private correspondence with a former civil servant who was not directly involved and by another interviewee from the British Council (Chevening Interviewee Three) as a key decision-maker.

economic recovery (7:40, 24:20). Had the FCO been able to fund them, awards would have been offered almost as soon as fees were increased rather than in 1984.

Once funding was available a major issue was whether the FCO or the British Council would control the awards. Both of these bodies dispense funds allocated to the FCO by the Treasury, but the British Council enjoys some level of independence. There was a feeling within the Council that it would use the scholarship money to pursue more long-term influence than the Foreign Office might (Chevening Interview Three 5:00); the Foreign Office seem to have been under the impression that the British Council wanted to use the additional funding to augment a programme of British Council Scholarships which existed at the time (Chevening Interview Two 8:20). The Foreign Office chose to resist this, and did so successfully. However, this was not born of a desire to control which candidates received awards, which in practice was a question which the Foreign Office would often delegate and on which there was no fixed Foreign Office policy, besides that the most promising academics should receive awards (Chevening Interview Two 12:50). The reason for the Foreign Office concern to retain control was rather that Foreign Office ministers had been “taking the flak” for the increase in fees and were therefore keen that an Award Scheme designed to mitigate the diplomatic consequences of this should have Foreign Office branding on it (Chevening Interview Two 8:20).

Given this, my best-placed interviewee was clear that the main impetus had been a desire to smoothe conventional diplomacy, and any impact on the grantees themselves was incidental:

“Q: So from your point of view it was primarily about intergovernmental relations rather than the impact on the students themselves?

A: Oh, absolutely.” (Chevening Interview Two 12:00)

By contrast, the modern aim of giving future leaders a good impression of the UK relies entirely upon an impact on grantees, in keeping with the symmetric public diplomacy model.

2.3.3.2 Chevening Today

From the relatively small number of awards offered in 1984, the Chevening scholarships have developed into a major operation. While there was a high-profile shift of emphasis toward targeted developing countries in the course of this project (BBC 2008a),

Chevening still recruits students from a wide range of countries to study in the UK. Apart from the far less selective Erasmus programme, Chevening is probably the largest scholarship programme funded by the British government, with around 1500-2000 grantees in the country at any time and 35,000 alumni (Chevening Interview One 8:50).

Despite its history, the Chevening Programme today is heavily tilted toward the symmetric public diplomacy model. In many respects it is the closest British equivalent to the Fulbright Programme, administered by the British Council and overseen by the Public Diplomacy unit of the Foreign Office (FCO 2005: 8). Open advertising admits that the awards explicitly target “future leaders and opinion-formers”, one aim being to establish a “network of professional overseas contacts on issues of strategic importance to the UK”. The most important part of the first stage of the application process is completion of three very short essays under the headings “personal statement”, “your plans for the future” and, revealingly, “are you a potential leader?” (FCO 2002).

Chevening awards are also closely tied to diplomats. Foreign Office influence has been retained since a struggle between the British Council and FCO in the early days of the scheme over which organisation would control the Awards (Chevening Interview Two 6:00, Three 8:20). The British Council administers most aspects of the scheme, but the final selection board is made up of representatives from both the British Council and the Embassy (FCO 2002). When announcing cuts to the scheme in 2008, the Foreign Secretary took great care to stress that the foreign policy impact of this decision would be limited by more careful targetting of the awards based on grantees’ potential influence in the future. The FCO would

“select more carefully to ensure our scholars really are potential future leaders, with our heads of mission having personal responsibility for ensuring their posts are getting this right.” (Miliband 2008)²¹

This emphasis on recruiting future leaders and direct ties to professional diplomats, trained in the pursuit of influence, combines with its declared foreign policy objectives to indicate that the Chevening programme is today seen as a tool of symmetric public diplomacy.

²¹ How responsibility could be assigned if the benefits might not be seen within those officials’ careers remained unclear.

The early history of Chevening does require some further investigation to corroborate the testimony that it was originally created to reduce “flak” (Chevening Interview Two 8:20) experienced by the Foreign Office. However, the pattern of a pseudo-exchange programme being created as a sign of goodwill to avoid diplomatic embarrassment, and then gradually evolving to be seen as a tool for symmetric public diplomacy over time, is very similar to the stories of the Marshall Scholarships and the CSFP. The account is both the most plausible and is consistent with the emerging finding about how this model has spread within the UK Foreign Office.

2.3.4 Entente Cordiale Scholarships

The Entente Cordiale Scholarship scheme is included here as a case study due to its relatively recent creation, meaning that most of the individuals involved in its creation are still alive and available for interview. It also appeared at the outset that this scheme had a particularly close relationship to diplomatic objectives, having clearly originated in a specific Embassy, and would therefore be closely scrutinised as a public diplomacy project – although this subsequently turned out not to be entirely true. The scheme is a very small one, what two interviewees independently termed a “bijou”,²² programme, and given the limited data on how these programmes are established (most of the studies which do exist focus on major schemes, such as Fulbright and Erasmus) it seemed reasonable to investigate the history of a small programme in case the dynamics proved to be very different for a small programme likely to receive less budgetary scrutiny. In fact, the Entente Cordiale scholarships proved to be somewhat exceptional in making almost no *direct* claim for public funds at all.

Entente Cordiale Scholarships are awarded to postgraduate students crossing the Channel between Britain and France – British nationals wishing to take postgraduate courses at French universities and French graduates wishing to continue studying in the UK. The grants are raised from private and corporate contributions, but the programme can legitimately be considered a public diplomacy venture because the British side (the

²² “Bijou” is a French term meaning a jewel, which used as an adjective can also mean, as in this case, “small and elegant, luxurious (applied esp to houses)” (Oxford English Dictionary 1989) or “something small, delicate and exquisitely wrought” (Random House Dictionary 1966: sense 2).

selection and support of British grantees in France) is administered by officials at the French Embassy in London and the French side (dealing with French grantees in the UK) by the British Council in Paris. There are officials formally tasked with administering both, although this is not their exclusive function.

2.3.4 A 'bijou' programme

The programme was officially launched by British Prime Minister John Major and French President Jacques Chirac at a Franco-British summit commemorating the 90th anniversary of the original Entente between Britain and France at the beginning of the 20th Century, and the first scholars were exchanged in the 1995/6 academic year. (Ambassade de France 2007, Entente Interviews One [EC1], Four [EC4]). The history of the Entente Cordiale Scholarships, and the policymaking process which made them a reality, begins some time earlier. My informants were unanimous in suggesting that the 'first mover' in the creation of the programme was Sir Christopher Mallaby (EC1, EC2, EC3, EC4, EC5), British Ambassador to France between 1993 and 1996. Mallaby not only raised the idea of a bilateral (pseudo-)exchange between Britain and France at a time when the pan-European Erasmus scheme was well-established, but also came up with the novel idea of fundraising from the private sector.

Further investigation revealed that interviewees' emphasis on Mallaby's personal input was not exaggerated. As Ambassador at the time he enjoyed significant personal authority, so there was little opposition within the Embassy (EC1). More importantly, he was able to raise funds through his personal contacts, reputation and influential friends. His voluntary input continued as a trustee until 2008, and he was responsible for raising a huge slice of the scheme's income in the form of voluntary donations made to the scheme by corporations and philanthropists.

Private fundraising was considered due to the difficulties of obtaining, and more importantly sustaining, government funding for postgraduate exchanges. Mallaby originally hoped to substitute for government support by raising private endowments. Raising endowment funds proved impossible (EC4), and both he and subsequent administrators have had to resort to raising funds year-by-year from a combination of individual philanthropists and corporate sponsors in Britain and France - which, incidentally, has increased the indirect costs to the British and French governments as

staff time has to be devoted to fundraising and dealing with sponsors every year (EC3). Private finance of educational schemes raised many eyebrows at the time, particularly in France where education had traditionally been almost exclusively the remit of the state (EC3, EC4). Despite annual fluctuations it has been possible to raise enough money to provide for a reasonable number of scholars from private sources. The Entente Cordiale Scholarships Trust, which actually receives funds and pays scholarships, is run as a private charity, although senior public officials in Britain and France are trustees, so the funds are not gathered through the Embassies' bank accounts. Much of the actual administration and pastoral care for scholarship recipients is done by the British Council and CROUS (an agency looking after the pastoral needs of students in France), agencies which are unlikely to turn away funding for supporting international students as this objective fits very well with their general principles.

The Entente Cordiale scheme can thus be seen as an expression of one notable individual's wishes to a far greater degree than would normally be the case for a government programme. Mallaby's objectives for the scheme appear inseparable from the original aims of the Entente Cordiale.

Mallaby's personal background was mentioned by everyone I interviewed on where the impetus behind the scheme had come from - both those who remember the early days of the scheme (EC1, EC4) and contemporary administrators (EC2, EC5), suggesting it has become conventional wisdom among those involved with the programme. His most personal link to France dates back to his years as an undergraduate at Cambridge University, many decades before being posted to the British Embassy in Paris. He not only spent time at the Sorbonne on a language placement as part of a French and German degree (he described himself as having been "excited" by the experience, and gives the impression that in his case it certainly led to positive feelings) but also met the future Mrs Mallaby, a French student learning English at one of the Cambridge language schools. It seems reasonable that relations between the two countries should have been an ever-present concern from then on, especially when he became responsible for aspects of that relationship at diplomatic level.

The 1980s were a period of some unease in Franco-British relations (Wright 2000: 333-6), and doubtless a frustrating time for already-convinced advocates of a close bilateral

relationship. In his position as British Ambassador Mallaby experimented with many other schemes to improve Franco-British relations at an informal level (for example, an abortive attempt to produce joint television series – EC4) of which the Entente Cordiale scholarships have proved the most enduring. Coming into being toward the end of his time in Paris, and near his retirement from government service, the scheme seems to have been partly the result of a desire to leave a “legacy” (EC4, EC5) with the potential to improve a relationship about which he personally felt strongly (Mallaby 2004: 265-7). This manifested in a frustration with (in his view) unwarranted suspicions between the two countries at elite level

“...differences and misunderstandings have persisted. You find them in conversations about the other country on both sides of the channel, and sometimes in parliamentary debates or in arguments between the two governments” (Mallaby 2004: 265)

The Entente Cordiale Scholarships were seen as antidotes to this in two respects. The creation of the Scholarships was well-publicised and linked to a “benign” anniversary to signal that the Franco-British relationship was “on a firm foundation and on the up” (EC1 7:15).

“It’s the kind of thing that governments do to ensure that there is attention [...] in the right quarters to the underlying strength of a relationship which might otherwise be taken for granted” (EC1 7:30)

In addition, an ongoing influence was expected because grantees, who were selected on the basis that they were likely to become future elites, would enhance their knowledge of another country through personal exposure:

“What I’m really thinking about is a [future] British Cabinet meeting where a minister knows the other country really well, or the editorial board of the FT on a Monday morning – or the Economist – and somebody there knows the other country really well. That’s my [...] perfect picture for the future” (EC4).

This emphasis on increased knowledge, and its political consequences, differs subtly from both the original and contemporary aims of the other three programmes. It is clearly a change in grantees, and in that respect compatible with the public diplomacy model.

This model of exchange impact was established within the Foreign Office by the mid 1990s. However, the other programmes emphasised the development of positive attitudes rather than increased knowledge. By contrast there was an aversion to the attitude change model for the Entente Cordiale, reflected in a hostile reception given to my hypothesis that the scheme was intended to influence scholars' subsequent political attitudes. One witness closely involved in the scheme's creation explicitly rejected this as a goal of the scheme:

“If you imagine saying to yourself 1) is this a person who sees the world through the perspective of the centre-left in France 2) is this a person who's likely to be susceptible to removing their position through a year in Britain, I just feel uncomfortable with the whole idea because I'm getting into participating in French democracy” (EC4)

However, this objection did not mean that alumni were not expected to impact on Franco-British relations as a result of their experiences: there was even a hope that they might influence government policy. The same interviewee was very clear on this:

“I won't claim that there is a particular decision of the British government that would have gone another way if the scheme hadn't existed. It's too soon for that. The time may come when there's somebody [for example] on the editorial staff of the Financial Times or, in France, Le Monde, whose series on an aspect of Britain has really caught – made waves in the other country. It will be that – things like that will happen. But I think it's too early to claim it.” (EC4)

The difference is more subtle, in that increased understanding, rather than a more positive attitude, was expected to bring about the change²³. The focus on increasing exchangees' understanding appears to have been retained, and is echoed by more recent administrators (EC3, EC5):

“We wouldn't expect for example a French civil servant to explicitly push you know British interests, I mean that's not what their job is about. But we'd

²³ One interviewee who was included as an eye-witness to the programme's early history took a different view on the diplomatic potential of scholarships in general, claiming that “if you spend a year in a country then you probably fall in love with it and you will never forget it” (EC1). This interviewee had moved away from France after witnessing the Scholarships' creation in the mid-1990s, and was speaking partly from experience of administering Chevening Scholarships (EC1 12:20)

expect them to be sympathetic to those interests and we'd expect them to have perhaps a deeper understanding of them [...] why they're saying what they're saying even if you don't agree with what they're saying [...] I think it is just really more having an understanding. It's not a kind of propaganda exercise that we're, you know [laughs] trying to convert them to the other side" (EC5)

This model of how the Entente Cordiale Scholarships affect international relations differs from the expectations surrounding the Marshall, Commonwealth and Chevening programmes, which have emphasised the production of alumni who have positive views of the UK. The distinction is relatively subtle but significant, and it is interesting to consider why the Entente Cordiale's objectives differ from the others'.

The Entente Cordiale scheme differs in two important respects. It is funded very differently and it has subtly different objectives. It seems likely that these differences are related, which may suggest why an attitude-change version of the symmetric public diplomacy model has become widespread.

The Entente Cordiale's unconventional funding stream seems to make it unlikely that the programme would be eliminated directly by an order from the British Treasury or French Finance Ministry. The costs to the governments are opportunity costs of lost staff time which will not appear as budget items. While for obvious reasons figures are not available which would allow an exact comparison, these costs must work out to be many orders of magnitude smaller than the costs of disbursing government grants to the students who are now supported by the Entente scheme every year.

Many policy ideas are subjected to significant compromises on their path to implementation because multiple interests need to be appeased in order to create a 'coalition' with enough power to implement them as policies (Hogwood and Gunn 1984: 50-1, 206; Hogwood and Peters 1983: 78-80, 227-9). If the Entente Cordiale Scholarships had been funded in cash then other government agencies, particularly the Treasury and Finance Ministry, would have sought assurance that the money was being spent wisely. Using private funds circumvented much of the need for negotiations with other government agencies, and consequently there was less need to construct a coalition of

officials in favour of the scheme than might have been the case had it been consuming significant public resources. While private sponsors might have their own agendas, they would presumably be less interested in the details of implementation than full-time officials²⁴.

Because the Entente Cordiale Scholarships do not have to bid for public funds in order to survive, but are able to bring in money from outside the finite resources of the Foreign Office, they have retained a subtly different objective based on the personal views of their creator. They aim to increase understanding of France or the UK among their alumni, rather than necessarily to send them home with more positive views. This distinction between aiming to alter attitudes and aiming to increase understanding is explored further in Part Two of the thesis, when I assess the impact of studying abroad on exchangees' attitudes and (self-rated) understanding of host countries. However, the difference in objectives between the Entente Cordiale and Marshall, Commonwealth and Chevening Scholarships is also evidence that claims that exchange programmes improve attitudes are perpetuated by pressure to justify use of public money.

2.3.5 Patterns of Objectives

In combination, these vignettes suggest a pattern of drift towards public diplomacy over time. In each of the first three cases, scholarship schemes seem to have been created primarily as a signal of goodwill and to evade potentially embarrassing diplomatic situations such as the unavailability of a Magna Carta, unwelcome Canadian suggestions for Commonwealth projects, and increases in overseas student fees by other government departments which did not consult the Foreign Office. They have drifted towards a version of the symmetric public diplomacy model over time. The fourth and most recent case, of the Entente Cordiale Scholarships, is different. This scheme is unusual in that instead of bidding for public funding its founder raised money from the private sector. As the scheme did not appear as a budget line, its survival depended on private fundraising rather than official support. The objectives of the three schemes supported directly by the FCO have converged around a symmetric public diplomacy model even though they were created, and designed, for different purposes. The Entente Cordiale has not. This pattern

²⁴ Nothing arose in interviews which suggested that sponsors dictated significant conditions.

suggests that objectives shifted because it was easier for schemes to secure funding if they were presented as means of influencing foreigners. Put crudely, the convergence suggests that the idea that funding scholarships is a means of ‘winning influential friends’ was easy to ‘sell’ within government.

A crucial distinction which needs to be made here is between *creating* a programme and *operating* it. With all four of the programme different rationales were provided for creation and operation. Winning over grantees would be a benefit of *operating* the programme. For every year that the programme runs at a given level of resources there would seem to be a similar added chance of impressing an exchangee who will go on to bring diplomatic benefits. Doubling the number of grantees would double the odds of including someone who will go on to be, for example, an influential diplomat in the future²⁵. By contrast, many of the arguments which surrounded the creation of the programmes applied specifically to *creation*. If the aim of a scholarship programme is to signal goodwill then it clearly does so in the first year in which it operates. The sponsoring government is very publicly engaged with it, and it is likely to attract publicity. Once the programme has been running for several years the positive signaling effect of running it for another year is less obvious. Once the issue and the personnel who set up the scheme have moved on and management has been passed to a new generation of officials, there is no longer a clear link to the will of political leaders, who have simply inherited a scheme, and publicity is likely to become harder to attract. The signaling function of long-established programmes, inherited along with all the many other policy inheritances which new officials acquire, may not be clear.

Even if the diplomatic benefits which flow from some programmes are no longer clear, this does not mean that there would not be significant costs to terminating those programmes. Actively ending exchanges might well be interpreted as negative diplomatic signals. It would also carry the costs which Hogwood and Peters (1983: 14-8) identify in terminating any government programme. Influential beneficiaries and supporters, which these schemes are designed to recruit, as well as staff who have invested their careers in the programme, may be hostile to change. However, even if inertia is an important reason

²⁵ The relationship would probably not be completely linear as the most promising grantees would be recruited first.

for continued support of a programme, it would seem reasonable for administrators to keep suggesting benefits from their activities. This does not require any speculation that officials responsible for the programmes made conscious decisions to change their arguments. The natural personnel changes as previous administrators retire or are redeployed will affect the balance of arguments about why a programme is doing what it does. New generations of administrators have to rationalise their activities for themselves, and will not necessarily follow the rationalisations offered by their predecessors. However, in order to bid for resources to maintain their programmes administrators must claim that doing so brings some benefit²⁶. If they cannot, we would not expect the programmes to survive and expand when they have to compete for a share of limited government budgets with other activities. Thus there is always a need for administrators to tell a story about the benefits a programme brings. For international scholarships and exchange programmes these stories seem to have converged on the model of public diplomacy considered in this thesis.

From the point of view of administrators who inherit responsibility for such programmes, explaining their careers as historical hangovers would presumably be rather unsatisfactory. Firstly, it seems reasonable that they may have a psychological need to feel their work has a purpose. Secondly, there are career incentives for them to seek to expand the resources channeled to their programme, which usually involves making a case that the programme is delivering benefits in the present and will do in the future. Thirdly, they may find themselves in the role because they are personally convinced that exchanges are a good thing. Believing that exchange programmes are good, and wanting to see them expand, is likely to lead someone to become an administrator of an exchange programme. All bar one of the British officials I interviewed for my accounts of the Chevening and Entente Cordiale Schemes had previously been exchangees or received scholarships to go abroad and (unsurprisingly given their subsequent careers) seem to have been enthusiastic about the experience.

Administrators are likely to encounter difficulty in making a case for expansion of their programmes on the basis that setting them up sent useful signals. The best they

²⁶ It would be possible to justify their continued existence on the basis that terminating the programmes would carry heavy costs, but this would only justify stagnating support and not expansion.

could hope for would be stagnating support. To make a case for expansion, they would need to argue that the marginal benefit of adding another grantee to the programme outweighed the marginal financial cost of supporting them. In other words, if supporting an extra student were to cost £10000, they would need to argue that this generated more than £10000-worth of benefit to the sponsor. It would be difficult to do this on the basis of signaling good intentions. With signaling, the greatest benefit would come from setting up an exchange. The benefit in goodwill of funding the first hundred exchangeees would be significant, whereas the marginal benefit of adding a second hundred would be much less.

If exchange programmes are presented in terms of impact on grantees, the marginal benefits are much clearer. If there is an impact, doubling the number of exchangeees would (almost) double the diplomatic benefits. This offers a viable case for expansion.

For the programmes which relied on public funding, a case which suggested marginal benefits developed from a symmetric public diplomacy model resting on the assumption that coming to the UK led grantees to develop pro-British attitudes. For the Entente Cordiale, the mechanism by which the Scholarships were seen to bring marginal benefits rested on increasing their knowledge. The Entente Cordiale's survival did not depend on convincing other officials that scholarships were a worthwhile use of money. Accordingly, administrators were under less pressure to choose a case which was likely to impress other officials in a position to authorise funding. The fact that the others did suggests that they were pushed towards the symmetric public diplomacy model because it made them more likely to attract funding.

I have presented a strong circumstantial case that the spread of symmetric public diplomacy as a justification for funding exchange programmes stems from such dynamics. This fits with key observations. The justifications offered for spending money on international scholarships have changed over time. The change has been from justifications which would not show a marginal benefit from adding another grant to one which would. It is reasonable to assume that programme administrators will favour the addition of extra grants, and the expansion of their programmes, for the reasons I have suggested. This should lead them to favour justifications which show a marginal benefit.

The justifications chosen by all three of the programmes which had to compete for government funds are all essentially the same, whereas the officials responsible for the one programme which did not depend on public money have chosen a different model. This suggests that public funding was easier to access for programmes which claimed to be pursuing symmetric public diplomacy than other objectives.

Because of the generational succession which takes place within bureaucracies²⁷, explanations for the increased appeal of the public diplomacy model over such a long timeframe must remain slightly speculative. No one interviewee is likely to be able to capture the development of the public diplomacy agenda over time. The mechanism I have suggested does not rest on conscious choices made by individuals, and so it would be difficult to prove definitively that this is the explanation for increased appeals to public diplomacy.

The fact that this pattern of objective drift can be observed in the British Foreign Office does not necessarily mean that it is widespread in other foreign ministries. Investigations into other countries' exchange schemes would be needed to show that the symmetric public diplomacy model is being attached retrospectively to existing programmes. This would be a labour-intensive and open-ended exercise going beyond the scope of this project²⁸. However, finding such a dynamic in one country is significant, and not only because it suggests the possibility that it is a widespread pattern elsewhere. It illustrates a broader point that these programmes exist within complex bureaucracies, in which resources can be allocated to programmes independently of evidence that they are actually capable of achieving the desired objectives. The symmetric public diplomacy model could be attached to exchange programmes even if it does not adequately describe reality. The model could have become widespread *even if the assumptions underpinning it are incorrect* because it is a useful tool for securing funding.

We need to seek empirical evidence to find out if the assumptions are correct.

²⁷ Here I mean "bureaucracy" in the sense of a large, complex group of officials, rather than in the pejorative sense.

²⁸ The history of the EU Erasmus programme (section 4.2) does reveal another complex relationship between public diplomacy and other objectives.

2.4 The State of the Evidence

Although the objectives of scholarship programmes may have drifted to public diplomacy in the relatively recent past, these programmes are now being defined as public diplomacy tools. There is clearly an intention on the part of many of those who support these programmes that the resources should be used to promote some kind of political change. The question of whether they actually do so is therefore an important one.

The question of whether these programmes have a political impact begs the further question of what kind of impact might be expected. Abrams and Hatch (1960) make an important distinction between programmes which are intended to encourage participants to develop an internationalist outlook and those which aim to change their attitude towards specific countries, and thus improve relations between specific target countries. As internationalist outlooks and improved relations between specific countries may interrelate it would be foolish to present these as totally dichotomous, and it seems that a mixture of these motives has influenced mobility programmes since at least the early 20th Century, and probably much earlier (Arndt 2005). Some of the earliest government-sponsored programmes prioritised the promotion of bilateral relations (for example, those funded through the Chinese Boxer Indemnity funds) while for some the primary objective was to promote internationalism throughout periods of severe international tension (for example, the American Field Service - 2007). While both of these motives are still present, however, there does seem to be some truth in Flack's (1976) suggestion that the emphasis has shifted in line with the climate in international relations. In the immediate aftermath of the World Wars, schemes tended to be set up with the stated goal of helping people realise their common humanity through exchanges. With the onset of the Cold War, he asserts, international mobility tended to emphasise convincing foreigners of a particular sponsor's goodwill or the superiority of its social system, particularly when the major powers accounted for much of the finance. This account seems plausible (it has echoes in Aspden 2004) and, as I argued in the previous chapter, the tendency for governments to perceive these programmes in nationalistic and sometimes competitive terms appears to have survived the collapse of the USSR. While cultural diplomats mourned the retrenchment of American efforts in particular in the early 1990s, they

tended to frame their objections in terms of sacrificing potential influence for the United States rather than missing an opportunity to promote a new world order (e.g. Arndt 2005: Ch24). The very term “public diplomacy”, as commonly applied to these programmes, implies that they are being used to promote some conception of a national interest, rather than to undermine participants’ sense of needing to belong to a nation at all.

Many evaluations of these programmes’ political impact, especially during the mid-20th Century, have addressed the question of whether participants develop international consciousness (Sell 1983) and this question attracts continued research to this day (e.g. Golay 2006). Given the emphasis on securing national interests by policymakers, the question of whether or not exchange participants’ attitudes toward the foreign country involved are changed is crucially important when evaluating exchange programmes’ utility in foreign policy. My analysis tends to focus on this aspect, which is relatively neglected. On the other hand, I recognise that internationalist sentiment may be related and do consider what lessons can be drawn from studies addressing internationalism.

Regardless of which type of political changes sponsors desire it is not self-evident that international contact necessarily brings it about. The political rationale for exchange is tied to the “contact hypothesis”, that bringing people from different backgrounds together diminishes tensions and increases mutual appreciation (Allport 1958). Discussion of this hypothesis in the psychological literature long ago moved toward a more sophisticated understanding that contact could only have these effects under certain conditions (Amir 1969). It is not clear that exchanges provide these. Gudykunst (1979), for example, asserts that meaningful change only begins to occur after two years’ exposure to another culture; very few programmes maintain foreign visitors for even two years. The impact of international contact varies depending on perceptions of relative status, and Morris (1960) notes that the exchangees do not necessarily feel adequately respected.

This section will critique the existing literature on the question of whether former exchange participants become more favourably disposed, in attitude and behaviour, to countries in which they spent time. It will firstly subdivide the claims that participants are influenced into their logical components in order to establish a set of criteria which an “ideal” study of the subject (Teichler and Maiworm 1997: 24) should possess. I then

argue that the major academic and policy-oriented studies on this question are imperfect, indicating a need for further study.

2.4.1 Analysing Claims About Exchange Impact

Where exchanges are supported for political reasons they represent governments' attempts to alter individuals' political development by applying a direct stimulus which might not otherwise occur. In a sense, they are natural 'experiments'. For an experimental stimulus to be judged effective, firstly a *ceteris paribus* change must occur between the beginning and end of the experiment²⁹, and secondly the change must result from the stimulus (here, exchange participation) and would not have occurred without it. Exchange participants are self-selecting and tend to be relatively cosmopolitan before the exchange (Murphy-Lejeune 2002) and so simply discovering that they have unusual characteristics afterwards would hardly be surprising (Demetry and Vaz 2002). Furthermore, it seems plausible that the experience of higher education may influence political development regardless of whether it occurs in a students' home country or abroad (Carlson and Widaman 1988: 3, Jacobsen 2001); where exchangees are not students, it is still difficult to rule out the possibility that their backgrounds might include potent socialising influences (see e.g. Jennings and Markus 1977). Showing that exchangees change during their visits is poor evidence that exchanges are peculiarly potent if similar changes would have occurred had they simply continued their pre-exchange lifestyles.

The cases made to governments for continued funding (e.g. House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee 2006) further assume that some changes which take place may ultimately benefit those governments. This implies a third criterion for effectiveness, that the changes which take place should be behavioural. Behavioural changes, unlike purely attitudinal changes, have the potential to be politically salient. If participants change their attitudes or perspectives as a result of the exchange this may be academically interesting, but it is difficult to see how governments could derive the promised benefits from purely psychological changes. Changes in behaviour, such as voting patterns, could indirectly benefit foreign governments. Such changes could occur among participants or among others to whom they communicate a changed perspective,

²⁹ *Ceteris paribus* meaning "if all other factors were constant". In a multivariate world the absence of observable change could represent *ceteris paribus* change, if without that stimulus other forces would have led to change.

but behavioural changes would need to occur somewhere and it seems implausible that they could occur purely among third parties and not among participants. There has been a dearth of evidence about the effects of exchanges on political behaviour, with Dekker, Oostindie and Hester's literature review reporting only one study showing an effect on "international political behaviour or intentions", which suggested that increasing Dutch schoolchildren's contact with other Europeans also increased their willingness to vote in European Parliament elections (1993: 241). Seeking evidence of attitude change alone, and simply assuming that this will be translated into changed behaviour, is dubious.

A fourth criterion for a satisfactory study of the political impact of exchange emerges from the psychological literature on the contact hypothesis. This is a degree of statistical representativeness which, I would argue, can only be obtained from a *large sample* of participants. This is not a statement that large-*n* research is superior in general, but that it is indispensable in research on this phenomenon. There is a general consensus that, even if the contact hypothesis is valid, only some participants will experience positive changes (Amir 1969) and some will inevitably react negatively. The outcome of contact on an individual level depends on the social context, made up of an array of factors which have never been exhaustively identified, and which would be so subjective as to be almost impossible to measure. These include, for example, the relative social status and self-esteem of the individuals being brought into contact. The contact hypothesis only predicts a statistical relationship between exposure to stimulus and changed outcome, so it can only be tested on a statistical level.

This stands up to historical scrutiny with respect to the outcomes of foreign study (Mitchell 1986: Ch15). The literature is populated by anecdotes of historical figures, for example F.W. DeKlerk (Dizard 2004: 206-7), who acquired pro-Western views while visiting Western countries, but there are also many examples of former students, notably Ho Chi Minh, developing hostility to the countries which educated them. A positive outcome for the government involved could only be a net increase in desirable attitudes and behaviours, and "net" implies that the impact can only be evaluated statistically from a large representative sample. In addition, it must be possible for the research to support both negative and positive conclusions. Proving a negative is logically problematic, but applying statistical techniques to large samples can give some indication of the

probability that there really is no meaningful effect. While qualitative analyses can provide in-depth knowledge of selected cases and potentially offer new insights which go beyond the researcher's expectations, they are less well-suited to informing judgments about whether or not exchanges can change net attitudes and behaviour.

These criteria imply that an "ideal" design can be generated based on a large longitudinal survey comparing a group of participants to an initially-similar control group of non-participating students (Teichler and Maiworm 1997: 24) on both attitudinal and behavioural measures. On this particular question I follow Carlson and Widaman (1988: 2-3) in the belief that studies need to involve large numbers of participants and compare them to appropriate control groups.

2.4.2 Existing studies

Few studies with these characteristics have been conducted on exchange students. Although many studies have been conducted which touch on the impact of the exchange experience (Bochner *et al* 1977, Eide 1972, Golay 2006: 12-3, Ch2, Sell 1983) and a fair proportion make some reference to hypothesised political impacts, I will show that much of the existing empirical literature is unsatisfactory for evaluating the theory.

The most obvious reason for some authors' lack of engagement is that many simply do not intend to address this aspect of exchange. Klineberg (1981) presents a typology of changes that student exchange programmes have been claimed to bring about. As well as changes in individuals involved, he identifies possible impacts on the universities and other institutions, in the countries which host students³⁰ or allow theirs to go abroad, and finally on international relations, the level at which the changes are hardest to observe.

Exchanges are known to have impacts on individuals which are not obviously related to international relations *per se*. Exchanges are interesting to sociologists, anthropologists and psychologists because of their impact on individuals' interpersonal skills (e.g. Wilson 1993) and social development (e.g. Murphy-Lejeune 2002), not international relations. Such changes might be beneficial, but any link to a public diplomacy agenda is tenuous.

A smaller literature which addresses the impact of exchanges on educational institutions also tends to avoid questions of political influence. Much discussion of

³⁰ While significant, enduring impact on host communities might be significant for public diplomacy, Flack (1976) points out that, with a few exceptions, research tends not to show such impact.

exchange policy at local level (e.g. ESN 2007) aims to improve the satisfaction of exchangees as an end in itself and does not discuss it as a means to influence. Making schools, universities and other public bodies more receptive to outsiders may be laudable, but it is not a public diplomacy objective in itself. That said, I will return to the question of how such considerations affect exchangees' experiences in Chapter 5, on the basis that they may have influenced political change among particular categories of exchangees.

Political claims about exchanges are only significant in one strand of the exchange literature, which deals with national-level policy and in some cases the policies of transnational actors. This is characterised by discussion of the ultimate ends which governments sponsoring exchanges seek, particularly improved international relations. This literature can be further subdivided into methodological strands. I define these as historical, anecdotal, interview and survey-based.

2.4.2.1 Historical studies

Narrative historical studies of exchange programmes make up a significant proportion of this politically-oriented literature. Often the memoirs of officials involved in the programmes, 'historical' accounts (e.g. Arndt 2005, Dizard 2004, Espinoza 1976, Fairbank 1976, Ninkovich 1981) become relevant when they make claims about the influence gained by exchange programmes. Many argue that their specific programmes were effective (or else that they were rendered ineffective only by inadequate support) and conclude by advocating increased resources for exchange. Their evidence for a nomothetic claim that exchanges *in general* produce desired net effects is questionable. Post-hoc analyses tend to bias their choice of examples of former students toward the noteworthy, usually success stories. Not only do they tend to neglect cases in which programmes produced equivocal results (Henderson *et al* 1973 being an exception) but historical studies are unsuited for demonstrating change in large populations which were neglected by scholarship of the time. Only a few individuals will have left primary evidence of their pre-exchange positions, and they are unlikely to be representative.

Historical accounts may focus on atypical programmes as well as atypical individuals. Since the end of the Cold War there has been particular emphasis within such accounts on the role of exchanges in bringing down regimes hostile to Western powers, most notably the Soviet Union. Yale Richmond's fascinating (2003) history of exchanges with

the USSR is an archetype of such triumphal accounts³¹. Its reliance on testimony from an unsystematic sample of former exchangees, gathered many years after the event, may be a cause for some scepticism³². Richmond's approach illustrates the temptation to focus on 'notable' former exchangees, who may well be more likely to have developed strongly pro- or anti-host sentiments (and may also have been selected to go abroad) precisely because they already had atypical characteristics. It is not necessarily true that these atypical cases ultimately had more impact on subsequent international relations than the large numbers of less-distinguished alumni. Furthermore, the focus on exchanges with the Soviet Union as a case has been dictated by a belief that this is a particularly clear example of exchanges achieving a particular policy goal. Focussing on this one example would risk introducing a case selection bias into the literature.

Historical analysis does have many uses, particularly when considering the macro-level impact of such activities on societies as a whole. Ultimately, however, the issue of representativeness prevents it from providing the basis for answering the individual-level question of whether the net effect of exchanges on students' political views is positive or negative from the point of view of the sponsoring country or transnational institution.

2.4.2.2 Anecdotal evidence

The issue of representativeness is also a critical flaw in a second broad category of accounts, the 'anecdotal'. These include testimonials collected from contemporary programme alumni (e.g. Arndt and Rubin 1993, Dudden and Dynes 1987, NCIV 2000, Nye 2004 para11). Alumni are choosing to participate after their exchange experience, and as a result are unlikely to be representative. Those with positive experiences are both more likely to be asked to testify and more likely to be willing. Since we already know that some participants change in a positive direction, and others in a negative direction, their testimony is not helpful in evaluating net effect. Anecdotal evidence allows exchangees' experiences during the exchange to strongly influence their likelihood of being included in the research. In technical terms, such studies are selecting cases based on the dependent variable: 'success stories' are more likely to be included.

³¹ Richmond has written more on the use of exchanges as a weapon against the Soviet Union: *U.S.-Soviet Cultural Exchanges, 1958-1986: Who Wins?* is the most combatively titled.

³² Richmond does however make a good case for his broader argument, that Soviet citizens visiting the United States (the book's implicit focus) were influenced at some level. These claims fall outside the bounds of this analysis because the Soviet Union was a largely closed society – see 1.3.5.

2.4.2.3 Semi- and Unstructured Interviews

Interview-based research is distinguished from the merely anecdotal by the researcher's attempts to select participants systematically (Bochner 1973 and Kharlamova 2005 are good examples of semi-structured interview studies). This can minimise systematic error (bias) but there are limits on the samples who can be traced and interviewed, allowing significant random error. Again, this is a problem when considering a probable net effect. While hundreds of positive and negative responses have been obtained in total, different studies are difficult to compare because depth interviews are subjective processes, led by interviewers' questions, and by their very nature different semi- and unstructured interviews take different courses³³. Interviews alone therefore cannot satisfactorily address the question of the net effect on groups of exchanges.

While interview studies are ill-suited to establishing net political impact, they have many other benefits for the exploration of exchange programmes. Interviews with exchangees are used extensively in this thesis. Good-quality interview-based studies (e.g. Murphy-Lejeune 2002, Useem and Useem 1967) can provide very useful qualitative evidence and have generated some very influential hypotheses, particularly on the question of how exchangees' personal backgrounds and experience influence the development of their views while abroad. Their findings inform important elements of my analysis, particularly in Chapter 5.

One of the most important hypotheses generated by interview research is the 'U-curve' hypothesis. While first identified by DuBois in 1953 (Klineberg 1981: 125) this has been greatly elaborated by in-depth interviews with former international students (see Useem and Useem 1967). The original U-curve hypothesis was that students' attitudes to a host country tend to change in a predictable pattern: initial euphoria at the new environment is overtaken by disillusionment at the practical problems they encounter, but attitudes then become more positive again as the students start to feel at home in their new environment. It is at this point, in most cases, when they are returned to their home country. The U-curve has been revisited several times (Murphy-Lejeune 2002) and refined into a W-curve, in which students experience a second, less dramatic, U when they return to their home countries. The realisation that attitudes to the host may alter

³³ Large programmes of structured interviews are essentially surveys.

dramatically around the time of re-entry has an important role to play in informing research design – attempting to measure attitudes at the point of re-entry may simply pick up U-curve-related swings which are not likely to endure. I will return to this theme in Part Two, because the possibility of a U- (or W-) curve influenced the timing of much of my empirical research.

Nonetheless, the central question of whether we can expect net changes in the views of groups of exchangeees requires a level of comparability which, unfortunately, semi-structured and unstructured interviews alone cannot provide.

2.4.2.4 Survey Research

Given the importance of representativeness survey research appears to be the most logical response to this question, and is possibly the only method which can generate sufficient numbers of cases to meet my criteria. Surveys by their nature limit the responses subjects can offer, and in so doing sacrifice some of the richness of response interviewees can offer. The reward for this sacrifice is that respondents' answers can be compared, and they can then be aggregated into datasets suitable for statistical manipulation.

Survey research is thus an essential part of any mixed-method study. It has frequently been applied to exchange students, particularly in the 1950s to 70s. However, much existing survey research is unsatisfactory, usually because it rests on surveys which are conducted at only one point in time rather than being repeated in a 'panel' design. Many surveys only question returned exchangeees about their politics. As they are attempting to demonstrate change they are then forced to ask whether, *in retrospect*, exchangeees feel their opinions or behaviour changed (Ayabe 1977, Bochner 1973, Teichler and Maiworm 1997). This approach dominates the U.S. State Department's evaluations of the exchanges it sponsors, which are publicised more widely than the evaluations most other governments make of their programmes (State Department 2006). State Department evaluation studies have consistently shown that alumni report benefits from the programmes in terms of their knowledge of and attitude towards the United States and formation of meaningful links with Americans, as well as the acquisition of professionally-relevant knowledge. Given the format of the evaluation, however, there is reason to believe that respondents may be largely telling the evaluators what they expect to hear. Questions are often phrased in terms of whether any change has occurred, rather

than whether such change is significant or is likely to be enduring. They do not encourage respondents to report negative change.

Teichler and Maiworm's (1997) study of Erasmus students is the product of a large, detailed evaluation study of this programme conducted for the European Commission. It is also one of the relatively few major studies which has attempted to gauge the political impact of the Erasmus programme, or indeed any programme based outside the United States. The evaluation is geared toward the needs of administrators and the impact of Erasmus on students' careers, a notable concern of the mid-1990s, and political development is not central to the report. Nonetheless, the evaluators did ask participants to evaluate their knowledge and opinion of the host country before and after the exchange. Unfortunately this was done retrospectively after the exchange, rather than by asking them to complete surveys before and after the experience.

Teichler and Maiworm asked respondents to rate their knowledge of eight aspects of the host, and approval or disapproval of ten aspects, on five-point scales. This study found obvious increases in knowledge during the exchange on all areas: host "political system and institutions", "foreign policy in general", "system of higher education", "cultural life", "dominant social issues", "economic system", "social system" and "customs, tradition, religion" (1997: 129-30). Given the format of the question this is perhaps unsurprising, as it is difficult to imagine many students claiming they became less knowledgeable while living in the country. The results for attitudes are rather more surprising. On average, opinions on hosts' "higher education", "foreign policy", social structure" and "governmental domestic policies" did not change at all and "environmental policies" and "treatment of recently arrived immigrants" only shifted by a tenth of one point. The more significant, but still small, shifts were on less obviously political questions. Opinions of "urban life" improved by two-tenths of a point, "cultural life" and "customs and traditions" by three-tenths (p130-1). The overall impression is hardly of dramatic changes in opinion; the average change for all headings was an improvement of a tenth of a point which was not considered statistically significant (p130).

As well as employing a retrospective design, this study also lacks a non-participant control group. The sample of exchangees included over 3000 students (p18) who came

from and studied in 11 countries of the EU at that time³⁴. This may make the lack of a control group appear a less serious problem, as we might expect that there would only be a major change in exchangees' attitudes to their host country, while awareness of and opinions about the other European countries would not have been affected.

Unfortunately, this may not be a safe assumption. There is considerable evidence that foreign students tend to cluster together in campus communities (see Chapter 5) and come into contact with other foreign students from countries other than the host. This may mean that awareness of third countries increases as a result of studying abroad, and therefore attempting to draw conclusions by comparing awareness of, and attitudes to, the host country with awareness of, and attitudes to, other European countries (on the assumption that these will not change) is likely to produce misleading conclusions. The Teichler and Maiworm study also illustrates the problem of timing. The questionnaires were distributed to students "a few weeks or months after the study period". As the refinements of the U-curve (or W-curve) hypothesis reported earlier (2.4.2.3) suggest that students' attitudes are likely to fluctuate erratically immediately after the experience, distributing surveys so soon afterwards may produce results which do not represent the longer-term settling of students' attitudes.

More recent research on how Erasmus participation relates to political views has been conducted by the autonomous Erasmus Student Network of current and former Erasmus students (ESN). Over the past few years the Erasmus Student Network has been conducting a series of surveys of former Erasmus students. The 2007 edition aimed to evaluate whether Erasmus students show different attitudes to Europe from students who did not take part in Erasmus (ESN Interview, ESN 2007). ESN's questionnaire includes several items on European politics and integration, some of which overlap with my own. For example, it included questions on students' willingness to fight for their country, whether they thought of themselves as European or nationals of their home country, level of interest in politics and placement on a left-right spectrum (ESN 2007: 22, 25-9). However, the methodology is very different – ESN only conducts cross-sectional analyses of the views of returned Erasmus students and compares these with the broader

³⁴ The last study began in 1990/1 when there were 12 EU member states and Luxembourg was not included as it had no universities.

population to demonstrate difference (ESN Interview). While this does highlight that Erasmus students differ from others in desirable ways, it is impossible to know how far this is due to self-selection and how far to change as a result of the Erasmus experience – whereas designs which ask respondents whether, in retrospect, they are aware of having changed at least *attempt* to distinguish the two.

There is however reason to doubt the methodological reliability of retrospective designs (Bochner 1981: 18). Lamare's (1975) review of educational socialisation studies draws a distinction between those based on asking students whether in retrospect they felt a given experience had influenced them and studies which attempted to measure attitudes before and after. The former are shown to be much more likely to indicate that experiences are influential than 'before and after' designs; students are quite likely to label an experience as influential even when panel studies suggest it is not. The fact that this pattern is fairly consistent, with the Teichler and Maiworm study one significant exception, suggests that either retrospective studies overestimate the salience of education in forming attitudes (a type 1 error) or else panel studies do not detect such attitude changes (a type 2 error) or some combination of the two.

There are good methodological grounds for believing that panel studies offer more reliable evidence. Firstly, respondents' recall of their own opinions in the past may be poor. Expecting them to remember such complex information as the details of their own opinions may be unreasonable, particularly since attitude formation can result from the accumulation of subtle, unremarkable experiences. Secondly, when the issue is presented to respondents in association with the exchange their more general feelings about the exchange may interfere with their judgment. Retrospective studies cannot avoid this association because they are necessarily asking about change during a period in which the exchange almost certainly dominated respondents' lives. Thirdly, respondents have a well-known psychological, possibly subconscious, tendency to present themselves as more intelligent and informed than they really are because they perceive these qualities as socially desirable (Converse 1964, De Vaus 2002: 108, 130). How this affects results is likely to vary according to the types of questions posed. Where the questions are about basic values, social desirability editing might lead them to over-emphasise the consistency of their values over time. Moreover, it is possible that respondents might

wish to be seen as aware of and sensitive to their surroundings, and exaggerate attitude changes that would be expected of an intelligent visitor. With panel studies it is far less likely that they would be able to do so without some conscious effort as this would involve remembering the answers given to questions at the beginning of the exchange, generally at least an academic year earlier.

These problems are acknowledged by some authors of retrospective studies. Carlson and Widaman (1988) distributed questionnaires to 1250 students and received responses from almost two-thirds. As predicted, the study abroad students showed an increase in interest in other cultures, concern with international politics, and cosmopolitanism which was not matched by the control group. While reporting the positive results they expected, however, they remarked that there was potential for respondents to have inaccurately recalled their original views and to have presented responses they considered desirable, which seems particularly plausible given the phrasing of some of their questions³⁵ (1988: 5). It therefore seems probable that retrospective designs are prone to type 1 errors, suggesting that panel studies are superior for this purpose.

2.4.2.5 Panel Surveys

A reasonable number of panel studies have been conducted on exchange students. Even within this group however, there is a degree of diversity and many studies have notable imperfections. Most of these fall into three categories: the studies are too small to support confident generalisations, they do not include control groups, or they do not exclude potential competing variables.

Small-n

Salter and Teger (1975) studied American students visiting Europe for nine weeks. They compared thirty-five of these students with thirty-eight who stayed in the United States. Of the thirty-five, thirteen went on placements in France and Italy which involved them in construction work alongside local people, while twenty-two travelled around Europe, including France and Italy, as tourists. The latter two groups also spent a short time at a conference in Austria. The groups who went abroad completed similar questionnaires once before departure, once on the return flight, and again nine weeks after their return. The students who stayed in the US were only tested once, which would have rendered

³⁵ The authors simply listed this as a limitation of their study.

them useless as a control had some secular shift occurred during the experiment (although that seems unlikely over only eighteen weeks). Both groups of students who went abroad were initially comparable to the controls and developed more positive attitudes toward Austria, which still endured nine weeks after their return. However, the changes in attitude toward France and Italy differed: while the tourist group showed significant increases in favourable sentiment, the work group's views tended to become more negative, albeit less significantly. Both changes endured nine weeks after their return. The authors associate this with the work group's dissatisfaction with hard work and difficult living conditions, and present this as evidence of a 'generalisation of affect'. This is perhaps premature, as the work group sample was so small as to make generalisation difficult and I suspect a possibility that the association may have been a survey artefact, with the fact that the questions were asked together encouraging the students to associate their answers when their attitudes were not in reality closely linked to conditions. In other words, Salter and Teger may be reporting a response set. Nonetheless the results suggest an interesting hypothesis, which is hard to establish more solidly because the results are drawn from only thirteen students in the work group.

Competing Variables

With several studies which claim to have detected significant changes in attitudes among students going abroad there are other circumstances which could plausibly have affected students' attitudes besides simply studying in a foreign country. One common scenario (e.g. Carlson and Widaman 1988, Golay 2006, the group visiting Italy in Marion 1974, 1980) is that the sample contains American undergraduates who have gone to 'study centres' established by American institutions in European cities. As Golay notes (2006: 56), these can be protective environments which isolate participants to an extent from the host culture. However, they may also bring them into contact with other Americans who have particularly internationalist outlooks. As these centres often provide significant elements of their own curricula separately from those provided to students at the home institution, it is possible that the orientation of such curricula may independently influence the students' attitudes. It seems plausible that faculty who choose to work at overseas study centres have particularly internationalist outlooks, which may influence their teaching and in turn their students. It is therefore not safe to assume that results for

students studying in such environments are the result purely of intercultural contact which can be provided only by immersing students in a foreign culture, or to combine the results from these students with those of students who studied alongside the host nationality.

As well as programmes which isolate their students from the host society, there are some whose objective is to expose students' attitudes to particular organisations operating within a country rather than its broader culture. Hensley and Sell (1979) conducted a panel study of 52 American students attending a 5-month programme in Switzerland which focussed on UN agencies based in the country, using 17 who stayed in the United States as a control group. Unfortunately the probing of the two groups was not simultaneous, although the 17 were enrolled in a class on international organisations between the questionnaires. The results showed that the experience had insignificant impact on the students' "world-mindedness", as defined by an established battery of questions. Not only that, but the attitude of the control group who remained in the United States towards the United Nations improved noticeably while the treatment group who actually went to Switzerland showed little obvious change. The authors note that this may have been due to the course taken by the control groups being given by a particularly enthusiastic lecturer (a competing variable) and also that a group of 17 students is too small to provide a reliable control group for the tests they used.

Uncontrolled

Several interesting panel studies lack an appropriate control group, which means that it is difficult to assess a claim that exchange students would not have experienced the same changes had they continued to study in their home countries. A control group needs to be recruited and allowed to mature over the course of an experiment along with the exchangees. A few attempts have been made to simulate control groups without actually including students who stayed at home. King and Ruiz-Gelices (2003) for example have used a group of pre-exchange students as surrogates for younger versions of post-exchange alumni, and drawn inferences by making comparisons between students about to depart on exchanges in the early 2000s and alumni who actually did go abroad many years earlier. While ingenious, and potentially useful for some purposes, this technique has obvious weaknesses in addressing the question of political change given the myriad

of uncontrolled cohort differences between the generations. It appears that the use of non-equivalent³⁶ but contemporary control groups is unavoidable in this case.

Marion (1974, 1980) is an uncontrolled panel study which is particularly interesting because it goes a step further than most. His sample of ninety students taking part in the University of Colorado's study abroad programme showed little net change, but Marion then attempted to disaggregate the students into those who proved resistant and susceptible to change. The results of this are explored further in 5.1, because they suggest that even if there is no support for a net change in attitudes as a result of exchanges the programmes might still be made politically influential by targeting particular kinds of students. However, his study is less convincing as an assessment of the net effect on his sample's attitudes. Although in this case there was little impact on the groups' views, without a control group he cannot prove there would not have been some change simply stayed at home.

Emmanuel Sigalas' (2008) study of how participating in the European Union's Erasmus programme impacted on students' self-identification as Europeans is, to the best of my knowledge, the only existing study on this subject with a convincing controlled panel design. As such it represents a significant advance on previous literature. This study questioned three subgroups of students (Erasmus students visiting the UK, British Erasmus students going abroad, and British students remaining in the UK) on how far they considered themselves to be European. Sigalas included measures of self-identification as a European citizen, pride in Europe, attachment to Europe, trust in other Europeans, closeness to Europeans, whether the respondent believed the current level of European integration was appropriate, and feelings of having "things in common with other Europeans". The students were asked identical questions at the start and end of the academic year in which the Erasmus students went abroad. He found no evidence that any group became more supportive of further European integration, and Erasmus students who came to the UK actually became less proud of being European. The British students who went abroad did show greater attachment to Europe, contentment with British

³⁶ Due to ethical constraints researchers cannot force some students who would otherwise go abroad to remain in the home country as controls, although this might be methodologically more satisfactory.

membership of the EU and more positive attitudes to other Europeans, but confusingly some of these changes were echoed by the control group for no obvious reason (Sigalas 2008: 188-90)³⁷. Unfortunately, Sigalas had to distribute many of the first-wave questionnaires when Erasmus students had already arrived in the host country in September or October. By this time they might already have had important socialising experiences and would almost certainly have spent part of their summer educating themselves about circumstances in the host country, which might well have influenced their pretest responses. Many of the second-wave questionnaires were completed immediately when the students returned (Sigalas 2008: 140-2). Students' attitudes are believed to be particularly likely to fluctuate erratically immediately after returning from abroad (Klineberg 1981: 125, Useem and Useem 1967), so distributing surveys so soon afterwards may produce results which do not represent the longer-term settling of students' attitudes. The questionnaire was also very obviously focused on Europe, possibly making respondents who had just returned from abroad aware of which responses would be expected.

Of all the previous studies of exchangees' political development, Sigalas' comes closest to meeting my criteria for an "ideal" study (set out in 2.4.1) of whether exchange participants' political views are altered by the experience. While a superior investigation, this study is not perfect and there is scope for some improvement. Moreover, it focusses on a very narrow set of attitudinal changes. There is a need for a large longitudinal survey which not only examines a broader set of political attitudes, but also considers the possibility that exchangees' (politically-salient) behaviour may be influenced. There is therefore a need for a new study of the consequences of participating in mobility programmes and exchanges. In order to address the question satisfactorily it needs to subject a reasonably large sample of participants and controls to pre- and post-testing, measuring broader political attitudes and behaviours as well as attitudes toward the host country.

³⁷ It is difficult to know if some of these were familywise errors. Each statistical test conducted has a fixed probability of generating a type I error, or suggesting there is a significant relationship when in reality there is not. Setting $p=.05$ as the significance threshold, for example, means there is a one-in-twenty chance of a type I error for every test. If the analyst then runs more than twenty tests the odds are that at least one significant result will be incorrectly detected. Reporting this result would be a familywise error.

2.5 The Need for Investigation

This chapter has shown the need for a new empirical investigation of exchange programmes' effectiveness in public diplomacy. It has demonstrated that there is a widespread assumption that these bring diplomatic benefits by changed exchangees' future behaviour, but it has also suggested that the spread of this assumption has been disengaged from objective evidence. Within the British Foreign Office mobility programmes are being presented as tools of public diplomacy despite being created for different purposes, apparently because officials believe programmes seen as furthering public diplomacy by changing foreign citizens' attitudes are more likely to receive support. It is very possible that such dynamics are repeated within other foreign ministries.

Unfortunately, the academic literature is also a disappointing source of evidence. With one or two exceptions, studies which aim to gauge the political and diplomatic impact of exchange programmes are poorly designed for the task. This has led to an inconclusive, and often contradictory, body of findings on the question.

This situation demands a rigorous new empirical study of mobility programmes' public diplomacy impact. Part Two reports on my study of the subject between 2006 and 2009.

addresses on the survey start date, and the addresses were destroyed soon after for confidentiality reasons. While Linköping was chosen largely due to practical constraints, it seemed likely to be reasonably representative of Swedish universities. Linköping is a selective but not elite institution, situated in a medium-sized city roughly in the centre of the more populous southern part of Sweden, and there is no reason to believe that the political atmosphere is particularly extreme.

4.4 Implementation

Implementation in 2007/8 was a significantly smoother process than in 2006/7, largely because of the experience gained earlier and the use of well-tested bespoke software. For the first round, invitations to complete the questionnaires were distributed to the gatekeepers for all British and Swedish students and the French Erasmus students and, judging from the timing of responses, seem to have been passed on quickly. French controls were contacted directly by Studiqq.fr messages. For the second round, in 2008, students were contacted directly using the e-mail addresses they had provided in 2007. In this case, because of the strong desire to maximise response rate, multiple reminders were sent out and several strategies were attempted to minimise the risk of their being treated as spam. They also included a promise to enter all respondents into a prize draw for the sum of £100, €125 or SEK1200 as appropriate. The first set of invitations was sent out on the 2nd and 3rd of October³⁸ and was individually addressed to each of the several hundred potential respondents, with their e-mail addresses included as the addressee in the text (“Dear anonymous@reading.ac.uk,”). The survey title was used in the subject line.

To minimise attrition, respondents who did not complete the questionnaire within a few days of this e-mail were sent a series of reminders. For each of the reminder e-mails, a sentence was added at the end giving the reminder e-mail’s number out of five (e.g. “This is the second reminder of five”) in order to emphasise that they would continue to receive reminder e-mails until they completed the survey. Each was designed slightly differently

³⁸ Despite the original aim of sending all invitations on the same day, it proved to be physically impossible to send so many individual e-mails in such a limited time. There was also a technical constraint, in that the University’s computers automatically blocked accounts sending very large numbers of e-mails within a 24-hour period since they were assumed to be distributing spam e-mails.

to maximise the chances of respondents paying attention rather than assuming it was spam (unsolicited e-mail).

The second message, marked 'reminder' in the subject line, was sent on the 9th and 10th of October. From the 20th of October to the 5th of November respondents who had still not completed the survey were sent a second reminder which had their e-mail address as the subject line along with the survey title, a change which was intended to make the message stand out and prevent it being treated as spam. A third reminder was sent out from the 12th to the 24th using their e-mail addresses alone as the subject. From the 27th to the 28th a fourth message using the survey title as subject was sent as a mass e-mail to the lists (which was considerably less labour-intensive but increased the risk of being treated as spam) informing recipients that the survey would be closing soon. Finally, on the 29th and 30th a mass e-mail was sent out with "'Politics and Beliefs' is closing at 11pm on Sunday!" as the subject line, to try to encourage last-minute completion.

4.4.1 Timing

Given that the existing literature had detected a period of extreme attitude fluctuation (the 'W-curve' – see 2.4.2.3) immediately after students return to their home countries, it seemed advisable to wait until they had been back in their home countries for some time before inviting them to complete the second questionnaire. To the best of my knowledge there was no evidence on whether similar fluctuations occurred prior to departure as a result of, for example, research on what local customs to expect, but it seemed sensible to work on the assumption that there might be and avoid surveying immediately prior to departure. Accordingly invitations to complete the two questionnaires were actually distributed at the end of the 2006/7 and beginning of the 2008/9 academic years. The start and end dates were the 8th of May and the 8th of July 2007 for the first questionnaire and the 1st of October and 30th of November for the second. The one exception was distribution of the first questionnaire to British students studying in Spain, who were included during data collection in the hope of increasing the number of responses. The open data for them was the 23rd of May and the close date, the 24th of July, was later to compensate for this. "Thank you" notes, which would also have served as reminders, were sent out on the 20th of June 2007.

Data collection in both the 2007 and 2008 rounds extended for exactly two months, with submissions accepted between the 8th of May and 8th of July 2007 and the 1st of October and 30th of November 2008. Collecting responses over a relatively long period did raise the possibility that some event might have occurred during the two month window which affected respondents' attitudes. I begin section 4.5, which describes a series of tests which I ran on the data for quality control, by verifying that the results were not likely to have been distorted by such an event.

The student has requested that this electronic version of the thesis does not include the main body of the work - i.e. the chapters and conclusion. The other sections of the thesis are available as a research resource.

References

Interviews

British Council Interview One: An official responsible for organising a range of British Council activities, including scholarship programmes, during a long career;

British Council Interview Two: An official responsible for evaluating British Council performance of its quasi-diplomatic objectives;

Chevening Interview One: A British Council official administering the Chevening Programme;

Chevening Interview Two: A diplomat responsible for creating the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Scholarships and Awards Scheme (FCOSAS);

Chevening Interview Three: A very senior British Council in the early 1980s who was involved in the Council's reaction to the creation of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Scholarships and Awards Scheme (FCOSAS);

Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan (CSFP) Interview One – An Australian politician who received a Commonwealth Scholarship to the UK in the 1970s;

Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan (CSFP) Interview Two – A civil servant in a small British dependency who received a Commonwealth Scholarship to study in the UK in the late 1970s;

Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan (CSFP) Interview Three – A senior Australian academic who received a Commonwealth Scholarship to study in London in the early 1970s;

Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan (CSFP) Interview Four – An Australian policy advisor and journalist who received a Commonwealth Scholarship to study in the UK in the mid-1960s;

Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan (CSFP) Interview Five – A Canadian diplomat who received a Commonwealth Scholarship to study in the UK in the 1980s;

Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan (CSFP) Interview Six – A Canadian civil servant who received a Commonwealth Scholarship to study in the UK in the 1990s;

DAAD Interview One – A student who received a DAAD grant to study in the UK in the 2006-7 academic year;

DAAD Interview Two – A student who received a DAAD grant to study in the Republic of Ireland during the 2006-7 academic year;

Entente Cordiale Interview One [EC1]: A diplomat who was working at the British Embassy in Paris when the Entente Cordiale Scheme was being established;

Entente Cordiale Interview Two: [EC2]: A French administrator with responsibility for the Entente Cordiale Scholarships;

Entente Cordiale Interview Three: [EC3]: A source with past experience of managing exchange schemes sponsored by the French government, including the Entente Cordiale Scheme;

Entente Cordiale Interview Four: [EC4]: A senior British official responsible for creating the Entente Cordiale Scholarships;

Entente Cordiale Interview Five: [EC5]: A British Council Official responsible for administering the Entente Cordiale Scheme;

Erasmus Interview One – A lecturer at a British university who received an Erasmus grant to study in Germany in the 1990s while an undergraduate at a Benelux university;

ESN Interview – An interview with a student in a position of responsibility in the European Student Network, a voluntary organisation lobbying on behalf of Erasmus student interests in Brussels;

Marshall Interview One – A student who received a Marshall Scholarship to study in the UK in the 2006-7 academic year;

Marshall Interview Two – An administrator responsible for organising the Marshall Programme during the 2006-7 academic year;

Postpanel Interview One – an English female student who spent an undergraduate Erasmus year at Sciences-Po, Paris;

Postpanel Interview Two – a female Northern Irish Erasmus student who spent an Erasmus year as an undergraduate in Dijon;

Postpanel Interview Three – an English female student who spent an undergraduate year in Nice;

Postpanel Interview Four – a female Scottish student who spent an Erasmus year as an undergraduate in Grenoble;

Postpanel Interview Five – a female German undergraduate at a British university who spent an Erasmus year in Lyons;

Postpanel Interview Six – a male Scottish undergraduate who spent an Erasmus year as an undergraduate in Nice;

Postpanel Interview Seven – a female English undergraduate who spent a year working in a research laboratory in Lyons.

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