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Incorporating Research Design in Public Diplomacy: The Role of Listening to Foreign Publics

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Research design involves a set of decisions regarding what or who will be studied and the procedures in acquiring and analyzing information. In this article, we apply lessons from research design to public diplomacy, a field focused on engaging with foreign publics. Much prior scholarship sheds light on what PD is and its programs, but less attention has been given to the role of listening to understand what foreign publics think and believe. We propose three interrelated recommendations to improve the quality of implementing PD programs. First, before any program is implemented, we need to correctly identify a perceived issue that requires a program. Once we confirm *if* the issue exists, we also need to understand *why* it exists. Second, designing PD programs with clear goals increases the effectiveness of the program and the ability to confirm its success. This requires designing programs unique to each case. Third, public opinion data should be collected at several points—taking advantage of time—to confirm the effectiveness of programs. Our recommendations are particularly valuable for policy makers.

Keywords: public diplomacy, communication, listening, research design, public opinion

Establishing the effectiveness of public diplomacy (PD) programs is at the heart of public diplomacy studies and is a major goal of many countries' foreign policy. Without an effort to evaluate their success, policy planners cannot know whether PD programs accomplished their goals. Whichever PD program may be used and wherever the setting, their implementation always involves some form of engagement with a foreign public, and the aim is the same—to influence opinions toward issues or countries and overcome competing narratives (Faizullaev & Cornut, 2017; Malone, 1988). To do so involves the careful construction

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of programs based on the premise that the programs will be effective. Attempting to alter how a foreign public feels about an issue or country is not new—what is new is the actors involved.

Diplomacy, in its traditional practice, involves government-to-government relations, whereas public diplomacy involves government communication with foreign publics with the goal of informing, influencing, and engaging with those publics to accomplish national objectives. Both are part of a country's foreign policy but public diplomacy focuses on people-to-people relations (Snow, 2009), which, along with new instruments of communication engendered by advances in technology, has been termed the "new public diplomacy" (Cull, 2013; Gilboa, 2001; Gregory, 2011; Hayden, 2013; Howard & Parks, 2012; Park & Lim, 2014; Seib, 2016; Zhang, 2013). In each case, there is an emphasis on foreign publics and their opinions.

Implementing PD programs as part of foreign policy requires undertaking several steps, each critical in understanding and shaping foreign public opinion. To help policy planners undertake this process on firmer ground, this article advances three main arguments rooted in social science research design, each of which places special emphasis on listening. Broadly, research design refers to the procedures taken to accomplish a study, including who or what to study, how to collect information, and how to analyze data. Our focus is on listening, which involves the collection of information—through surveys, polls, interviews, and other methods—with the goal of understanding the nature of foreign public opinion. Our three interrelated arguments are as follows.

First, before any PD program is executed, policy planners should think carefully about how to identify a perceived issue that leads to the creation of that program. Doing so requires careful listening to understand two things: to confirm *if* the issue exists and to understand *why* the issue exists. This is critical because a nuanced understanding of the issue leads to appropriately designed programs and more effective foreign policy outcomes. Second, appropriately designing a PD program increases the chances of confirming if the program worked. This requires planning programs unique to each case of interest, as opposed to one-size-fits-all designs. Third, public opinion data can be collected through listening at several points during the PD program. Listening several times can help capture the effects of the program, justify expenditures, and allow for modifications. As such, long-term programs need to be understood not as a hindrance, but as an opportunity to increase their effectiveness.

Although the three recommendations involve some synthesis (of data, their collection, and their interpretation) and an emphasis on research design, our propositions do not suggest that we formalize every step of public diplomacy, an impossible task given the complexity of undertaking programs and cultivating relationships in the international sphere. Rather, PD programs might be designed in ways that increase the likelihood of accomplishing national objectives. In a report commissioned by the U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy, the contributors outlined several ways to improve American public diplomacy (Brown & Hensman, 2014). The report's recommendations were to (1) bridge American foreign policy goals with research design, (2) concentrate on key countries and participants and their context, and (3) distinguish short-term from long-term PD goals. Furthermore, Cull (2009b) advised that the ideal public diplomacy structure involve systematic listening, research, and analysis within each PD program to ensure lessons for policy making.

This article advances our ability to undertake the points outlined by the U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy and to heed Cull's call. A greater focus on the design of programs can help improve their effectiveness, increase our knowledge of participants' views, help us think more critically about goals, and more carefully consider the context in which PD programs are implemented. Equally important, and to justify expenditures, appropriate PD designs can help establish whether the programs were effective in altering foreign public opinion. Our three recommendations can only be accomplished by placing listening at the forefront of public diplomacy endeavors and by considering well-established lessons of research design. The rest of this article outlines our three propositions, one in each of the following sections. We then conclude and synthesize our recommendations for policy makers.

Public Diplomacy and the Role of Listening

Public diplomacy has been broadly defined as the process by which international actors seek to accomplish foreign policy goals by engaging with foreign publics (Cull, 2003, 2009a).[2] In a widely influential taxonomy, Cull (2008) identified five components of public diplomacy: *listening*, *advocacy*, *cultural diplomacy*, *exchange diplomacy*, and *international broadcasting*. The last four involve coherent programs: advocacy involves international communications activity to promote a policy or idea among a foreign public; cultural diplomacy involves the sharing of cultural resources and achievements; exchange diplomacy involves sending individuals overseas and reciprocally accepting citizens from overseas for study and acculturation; and international broadcasting is the use of media to engage with foreign publics. Although each of these components can be undertaken separately, they can overlap as part of a concerted effort.

Additional conceptualizations of PD have certainly been proposed, many of which attempt to capture the evolving nature of the discipline. Yang, Klyueva, and Taylor (2012), for example, see image cultivation abroad as the main purpose of public diplomacy. The authors propose that states use PD to cultivate a certain image of their country—nation branding—using public relations strategies and tactics. Another conceptualization sees public diplomacy as relationship building (Zaharna, 2009; Zaharna & Uysal, 2015), in which policy makers use a relational public diplomacy approach to manage relationships. In this approach, relationship building must include foreign publics. Other authors have proposed that PD includes instruments that seek to make an impact on foreign publics (Manor, 2016), whereas others define it as storytelling (Pamment, 2014), and yet others see its major impact occurring through networking (Fisher, 2013).

Although a full review of PD conceptualizations is beyond the scope of this article, it is important to note that in each approach mentioned earlier, foreign publics are the focus. For example, in Yang et al. (2012), image cultivation requires that foreign publics learn about other nations. The importance of foreign publics is also present when the goal of PD is relationship building, storytelling, networking, or

[2]. The meaning of *public diplomacy* has evolved since it was first used in 1856. Its modern use was coined in 1956. In 1997, the United States State Department defined public diplomacy as activities that promotes the national interest of the United States through understanding, informing, and influencing foreign audiences. This distinguishes it from traditional diplomacy, which aims to cultivate only professional diplomats (see Cull, 2003, 2009a).

simply making an impact on individuals' perceptions. Although this is not an exhaustive list, it demonstrates the complexity of an evolving PD, all while maintaining a focus on foreign publics and having knowledge of their opinions. This is also the case with the new public diplomacy, which focuses on cultural diplomacy and engagements with everyday individuals, as opposed to the forceful propaganda messages prominent during the Cold War (Seib, 2009).

Although it is important to keep in mind that different conceptualizations exist, we begin with Cull's propositions because they offer an obvious starting point given the inclusion of listening as one of the components of PD. Furthermore, no matter which programs one begins with (advocacy, cultural diplomacy, exchange diplomacy, and international broadcasting), listening is a component present in each. Before PD programs can be implemented, there must be a strong understanding of how foreign publics feel and think. Our goal is not to compare nor criticize different conceptualizations; instead, we focus on the listening that takes place as part of all PD programs. Table 1 lists Cull's five types of PD as well as sample activities, the time frame of their duration, and the direction of the flow of information.

Table 1. Types of Public Diplomacy and Their Characteristics.

Types of Public Diplomacy	Sample Activities	Time Frame	Flow of Information
Listening	Targeted polling	Short and long term	Inward to analysts
Advocacy	Embassy press relations	Short term	Outward
Cultural Diplomacy	State-funded international art tour	Long term	Outward
Exchange Diplomacy	Two-way academic exchange	Very long term	Inward and outward
International Broadcasting	Foreign news broadcasting	Medium term	Outward

Source: Cull (2008).

Foreign public opinion may be gathered—the listening component—as part of the regular function of conventional diplomacy, intelligence work, and academic work (Cornut, 2015). This stage of PD involves listening rather than speaking to understand foreign public opinion. Although mass systematic assessment of foreign public opinion is a recent advancement in the social sciences, the attempts to know the mind of a neighbor's population have been a feature of intelligence reports as long as there have been spies (Cull, 2008), and recent work has proposed strategies to select the targets of public diplomacy (Pacher, 2018).

We propose that instead of being conceptualized as a stand-alone program, listening should be a feature of all public diplomacy programs. Listening involves the collection of data through surveys, polls, focus groups, or other methods to understand how a foreign public feels about a topic or issue. Listening should be the first step before organizing any other programs. Moreover, after a program is implemented, listening should take place at least one more time to help establish the program's effectiveness—to understand how individuals feel before and after a PD program. This approach is demonstrated in Figure 1.

The figure demonstrates that after collecting information on foreign publics in *Listening 1*, the information is compiled to create *Data 1*. If an issue is identified in Data 1, a PD program is designed to fix that issue. After the program is implemented, a second round of listening should take place to help establish the effectiveness of the PD program. The following subsections expand on the components in Figure 1.

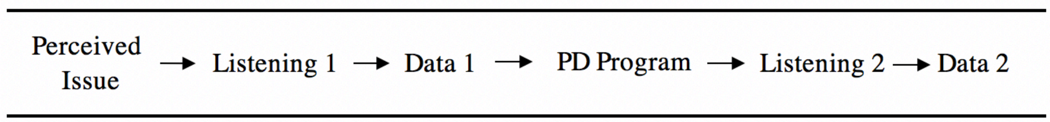

Figure 1. Research design for public diplomacy programs.

Listening 1: A Response to a Perceived Issue

Listening 1 does not appear out of thin air; it must be in response to some event or belief about a foreign public (a perceived issue, as shown in Figure 1). Policy planners must ask themselves, What first led them to begin Listening 1? At this point, policy planners need to do their best to collect data they believe reflect the opinions of a foreign public and the issue they perceive. To do so, there are no rules of engagement; Listening 1 is a tentative investigation to confirm a perceived problem. When this process is undertaken, Data 1 can reveal several insights: The perceived problem might be confirmed, other unexpected findings might be revealed, or nothing of concern might be found.

As organizational practice, policy planners should think about Listening 1 as a stand-alone challenge by setting aside any thoughts regarding the PD program to be implemented later. Instead of leaping immediately from a perceived issue to implementing a PD program, the perceived issue must first be confirmed so the appropriate program for the task can be implemented. Two goals need to be accomplished simultaneously during Listening 1: (1) try to confirm if the issue exists, and (2) try to identify why that issue exists. Adopting the appropriate program depends on the success of these two goals, discussed in the next two subsections.

Creating Data 1

Figure 2 provides a detailed look into the first half of Figure 1, from having a perceived issue to the collection of Data 1. The figure demonstrates three different ways to arrive at Data 1, which can result in two types of data: descriptive or causal. In descriptive data, some events are observed (such as protests, marches, and rallies) and used as evidence to infer that certain views are prevalent among a group of people. In this instance, Data 1 are the observation of public events (top, long arrow in Figure 2).

Descriptive evidence is an inference we make about how the world is (or was); it is the act of describing some aspect of the world. For example, you may notice that people you know abroad seem to disagree more with American foreign policy than they used to. Based on this observation, you might infer that foreign publics have more negative views of the U.S. than they used to. Conclusions, in this example, were based directly on observations; the observation creates Data 1.

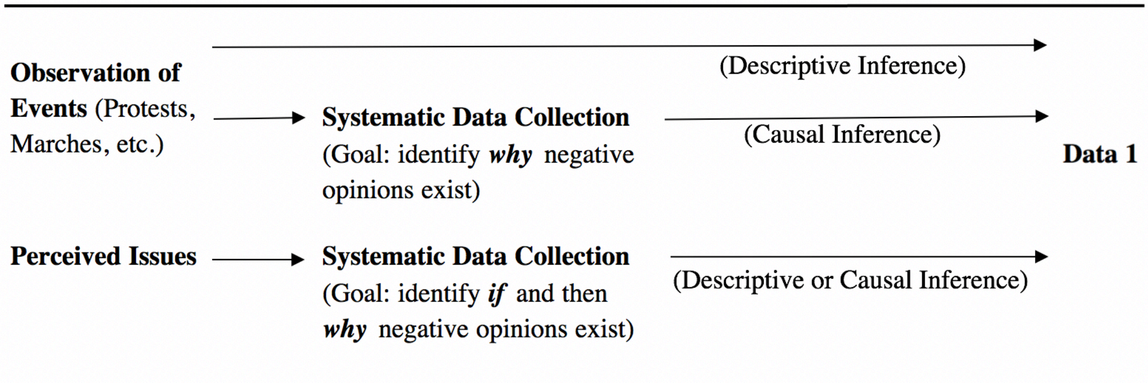

Figure 2. Creating Data 1: A detailed view.

Unlike descriptive data, causal data involve the systematic collection of information (through polls, mass surveys, etc.) instead of only observing events. Systematic data collection should occur after events are observed (protests, marches, rallies, etc.), demonstrated by the middle arrows in Figure 2. The data collected can reveal why the events observed occurred. If there is an attempt to answer why events occurred, the resulting Data 1 are causal rather than purely descriptive. Causal inferences are conclusions we make about why something happens. This is the importance of systematic data collection: to understand why certain foreign public opinions are held.

Figure 2 also depicts a third way of arriving to Data 1. Systematic data collection can be a consequence of a general perception of an issue without the manifestation of large social events (bottom two arrows in Figure 2). Governments may feel the need to collect information if they simply believe an issue exists. When this route is taken, systematic data gathering can accomplish two things: confirm if a perceived issue exists and—the more critical step—to identify why the issue exists. Accomplishing these two tasks is critical because they determine the type of PD program required to fix the issue identified.

At this time, an example is instructive. After the attacks of September 11, 2001, the U.S. State Department created the position of Special Representative to Muslim Communities. Its goal—to coordinate outreach to Muslims around the world—focused on Muslim countries and their views toward the U.S. As part of its outreach, an American center called @america opened in Jakarta, Indonesia, in December 2010. The center, which was created in response to the events of 9/11 and the subsequent war on terror, sought to win over young people and to improve public opinion toward the United States. This was an example of descriptive inference, as shown in Figure 1. The bottom part of Figure 1 demonstrates that conclusions can also be reached based on merely perceived issues. In the case of Indonesia, the U.S. State Department may have merely desired to understand Indonesian public opinion given their large Muslim population. Indeed, @america focused on increasing contact with individuals 15–30 years of age, who, it was believed, were most vulnerable to adopting radical ideologies.

Listening: Does the Issue Exist?

Collecting Data 1 requires careful construction of polls, surveys, or any other tools used to collect public opinion. Many academic books have been written on data-gathering techniques (see John, 2017; Morton & Williams, 2010; Mutz, 2011; Weisberg, 2005). Although we cannot summarize all their advice here, policy makers should be careful to ensure that their analysis does not fall into several traps.

First, perception does not always equal reality. In other words, just because one perceives an issue does not mean the issue exists. However, confirmatory data collection may assume that the issues exist in the first place. Consider the United Kingdom's decision to leave the European Union. According to Prime Minister David Cameron, his decision to hold a referendum in 2016 on whether the UK should remain in the European Union was necessary because the issue had been "poisoning British politics" (as cited in Holmes, 2017, para. 2). This was not quite right, however. Concern about Europe was certainly high—in March 2017, concern was at the highest level ever recorded (about 50%) by the monthly Economist/Ipsos-MORI survey of British public opinion ("Brexit: A Solution," 2017). However, public opinion before Cameron called the referendum shows that for most of the decade up to his announcement in 2016, the percentage of individuals citing Europe as a prominent issue was in the single digits ("Brexit: A Solution," 2017). In essence, the launch of a referendum to leave the European Union took something that was not a public priority and made it into one.

A related problem involves the manner in which individuals are queried. The most appropriate designs to collect public opinion try to identify why an issue exists. However, identifying why an issue exists assumes that the issue exists to begin with. This leads scholars to frame questions with this assumption in mind. Some pitfalls involve posing leading questions (encouraging a respondent to choose a particular response), ambiguous questions (in which concepts are not clearly defined), or double-barreled questions (a question that is really two questions). The existence of an issue, however, should not be assumed. Before understanding *why*, we need to ask *if*.

Relatedly, scholars would do well to consider how their own background and identity might affect their research. For example, researchers should be careful not to suggest any PD solution to an issue because this can affect the way respondents answer questions. Similarly, those conducting interviews should be careful not to influence the respondent's answers. One's identity and background, however, should not always be treated as bias; rather, it should be treated as a valuable component of research that can be a source of insights (Maxwell, 2012).

Many other challenges occur during the systematic data-gathering process, including response quality (the extent to which respondents provide complete and accurate information) and response rate (the proportion of respondents selected for participation who actually participate and whether they resemble the broader population). These issues, outside the scope of this article, have been meticulously treated by scholars of research design (for example, see Barakso, Sabet, & Schaffner, 2013, and Johnson, Reynolds, & Mycoff, 2015). In all cases, policy planners need to be aware of their influence in this process and the possible unintended effects of questioning individuals.

If the perceived issue is identified in Data 1 and there is a preliminary understanding of why it exists, the next step is to design a PD program than can best alleviate the issue. For example, the four PD programs summarized in Table 1 vary in time frame, direction of information, and scope. Once a program is selected, we need to think about the relationship between Data 1 and Data 2, even before implementing the program. This preoccupation stems from the necessity to eventually compare Data 1 and Data 2 to understand the effects of the program. To accomplish this, several challenges need to be hurdled, as discussed in the following section.

Did the Public Diplomacy Program Accomplish Its Goals?

The goal of PD programs is to alter how foreign publics feel toward another country or issue. This means involving foreign publics in programs or providing them information that it is believed will alter their beliefs. More important, we need to be able to establish whether the PD program was effective—how this should be done is our second main contribution. To establish the effectiveness of programs, several research designs are available, each already well established in social science research. Given that PD takes place among publics, two designs are instructive to consider here. To avoid confusion with names, we refer to these as Design A and Design B, depicted in Figure 3.

In both designs, the goal is to select a group of people, provide them with information (or be part of a PD program), and attempt to understand how their opinions shifted after participating in the program or after giving them information. These two designs serve as only examples to organize certain PD programs, in particular those that involve widespread communication. Other types of programs that are smaller in scope may require alternative, more simple designs, and yet others may be a result of the strategic importance of the target audience and their relative power (Pacher, 2018).

While Designs A and B are ideal designs, it is important to acknowledge that public diplomacy programs are vulnerable to domestic and international developments and unexpected events. Real-life idiosyncrasies make their ideal implementation difficult, but we should nonetheless aim to emulate the two designs as closely as possible. Doing so increases the chances that the PD programs will be effective and that policy planners can identify a change in public opinion.

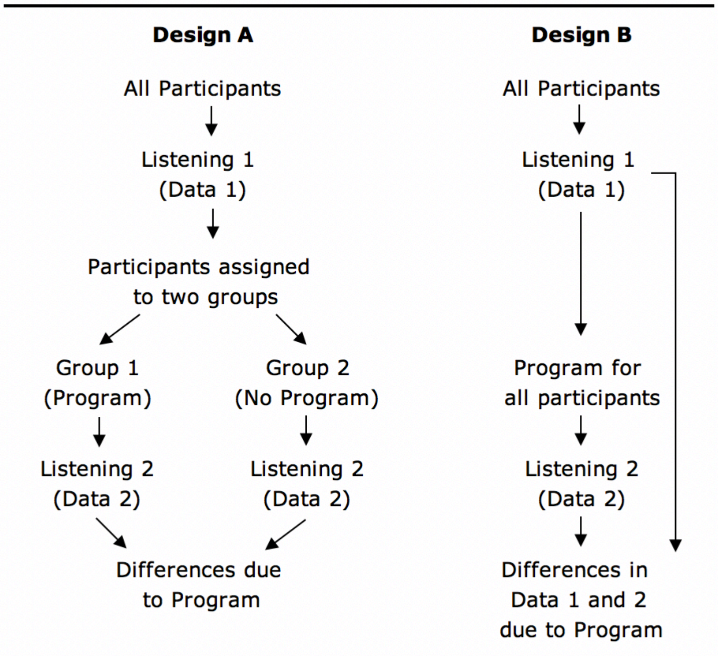

Figure 3. PD programs Design A and Design B.

Using the Two Designs

The main purpose of the designs in Design A and B is to establish whether a PD program changed people's opinions. Several components of the designs are important. In both designs, policy planners need to take a critical step before collecting Data 1. During the tentative investigation to confirm a perceived issue, policy planners need to establish who (what group) is to be part of Listening 1. Here, the challenge is that it is impossible to incorporate everyone of interest in a program. Ideally, participants should be selected from a population of interest and should be chosen randomly; this is to ensure that they reflect the larger population (Mutz, 2011). In other cases, policy planners may have a specific group in mind (a city, region, or any other group of individuals) whose incorporation in invaluable (Pacher, 2018).

Once individuals are selected, Listening 1 can take place. In Listening 1, all individuals are queried about their opinions, and this creates Data 1. At this point, the two designs diverge, creating two options. In Design A, all participants (everyone who participated in Data 1) are divided into two groups. Group 1 becomes part of the PD program, whereas Group 2 does not. After the program concludes, both groups are again queried about their opinions to create Data 2. Concluding whether the PD program changed public opinion is accomplished by comparing differences in opinions between Group 1 and Group 2. The expectation is that Group 1 will experience a shift in public opinion, but Group 2 will not. If this is the case, it is evidence for the effectiveness of the program.

A primary limitation of Design A is that it is difficult to neatly organize two separate groups outside a lab setting. Rather, policy planners might want to expose an entire country (or region, city, municipality, etc.) to the PD program. When this is the case, Design B can help establish the effectiveness of the PD program without using different groups. In this design, data are collected from participants before and after they all participate in a PD program (see Figure 3). Researchers listen to individuals before and after participating in a program (which creates Data 1 and Data 2). To understand how the program changed an individual's view of some issue or topic, Data 1 and Data 2 are compared.

In the example of @america introduced earlier, the focus of the U.S. State Department was on men aged 15–30 years, who, it was believed, were most vulnerable to adopting radical ideologies. As such, the center offers a wide range of services, including cultural programs, English lessons, student counseling, guest lectures, cultural performances, and discussions about American society. During its first six months, 44,000 different visitors attended one or more of its 270 programs or received information about the United States on-site or through various technology platforms. Government officials have praised the center, where 70% of visitors are 15–30 years of age, as an effective center of communication (Onishi, 2011; Rugh, 2014).

The field of public relations (PR) has developed models with stages resembling the components outlined in our two designs in Figure 3. Although our goal is not to expand on PR, there is some overlap with our PD recommendations advanced here. Two prominent and early PR models are RACE (research, action, communication, and evaluation) and ROSIE (research, objectives, strategies, implementation, and evaluation), and PR models have expanded to include many others.[3] In PR models, like in our PD research designs outlined earlier, there is some acknowledgment of an issue, the implementation of some solution, and some final evaluation to identify whether objectives were met. Terminology and the number of steps vary by PR models, but the general goal is the same: to remedy an identified issue.

Designs A and B share the same goal, but they place a greater focus on listening, both before and after a PD program is implemented. Our first contribution—outlined in the previous section—is to listen to understand if, why, and where the issue exists. This involves intensely grasping the nature of the issues before adopting any PD programs as solutions. Informed by research design, we proposed that issues not be taken for granted and that their nature can only be understood once significant efforts are placed on the listening aspect of public diplomacy. Cutlip and Center's (1952) introduction of the 7 Cs of communication (completeness, conciseness, consideration, concreteness, courtesy, clearness, and correctness) begins to address our concerns with a focus on listening.[4] However, our focus and major contributions also go beyond listening by attempting to establish the effects of the PD program.

[3] Early discussions of these models appear in *Effective Public Relations* by Scott M. Cutlip and Allen H. Center, first published in 1952, and *The Nature of Public Relations* by John E. Marston, published in 1963. Other models have subsequently been developed and today include STARE (scan, track, analyze, respond, and evaluate), ACE (assessment, communication, and evaluation), and PACE (planning, action, communication, and evaluation), among others. In marketing, a prominent model is SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats), in which the goal is to transform weaknesses into strengths and threats into opportunities to provide better services.

[4] In subsequent books and articles, the version of the 7 Cs might vary.

Indeed, our second major contribution—outlined in this section—is to design a PD program that maximally increases the likelihood that the program will address the identified issues and that policy makers will be able to identify the effects of the program. Both designs outlined here accomplish just this. Doing so requires careful understanding of the target population both before and after the program and, we argue, the ability to compare and make conclusions about individuals before and after being exposed to a PD program. As in our first recommendation, listening takes center stage, but we provide some nuances, the most important being the ability to compare the opinions of individuals before and after the program. The strength of Design A is its requirement that the individuals be split into two groups, one of which partakes in the PD program. Only by adding this condition we can increase the likelihood of identifying the effects of the PD program through comparing the opinions of individuals who partook in the PD program and those who did not.

Implementing Public Diplomacy Programs

Designs A and B are ideal designs; often, their implementation might be obstructed for a host of issues. Although policy planners should do their best to emulate those designs, the complexities of the world might require altered designs. Figure 4 depicts a combination of Design A and B. It outlines all the essential parts of a PD program design and how we can use it to evaluate PD programs. This design is the best possible scenario to accomplish the goals of PD. This design—here referred to as Design C—is particularly useful if the PD program is of large scale. Certainly, other designs can be created given other goals.

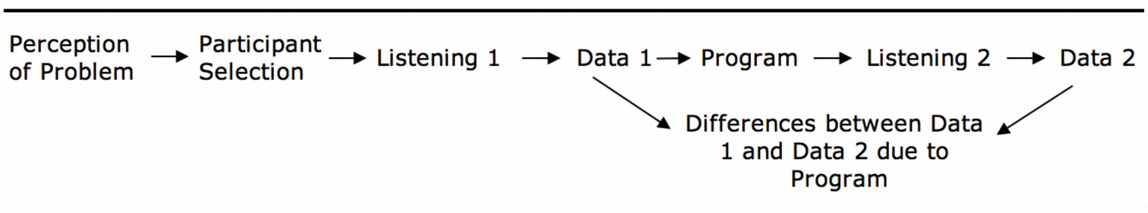

Figure 4. PD Program Design C.

This section expands on the components of the research design depicted in Figure 4. To establish that the differences in Data 1 and Data 2 were due to a particular program requires that Design C be implemented fully and completely. Social scientists widely describe this as internal validity: Did the PD program cause a change in the beliefs of foreign publics? Programs in controlled settings—like focus group settings that have a high degree of regulation by the researcher—can establish internal validity to a greater extent than programs outside the lab (Barakso et al., 2013; Johnson et al., 2020; Morton & Williams, 2010). In practice, a host of unforeseen events can affect the effectiveness of PD programs. Whenever field research and programs are undertaken, policy planners need to know, understand, and explain subtle nuances that might affect the effects of the PD program. Policy planners cannot control for all extraneous events, but they need to consider how those might influence the components of Design C.

Establishing internal validity also needs to account for the unpredictable behavior among individuals involved PD programs. One potential issue is that some individuals meant to participate in a program may not actually participate, and others might fail to provide the necessary data for researchers to establish the effects of the programs (John, 2017). In both, there is a lack of valuable data. For example, the goal of American PD is to improve perceptions toward the U.S. and Americans. To do so, programs such as American Spaces have been created to alter foreign perceptions. However, the effects of American Spaces only occur if individuals visit and interact in those spaces and if practitioners can acquire data on individuals' beliefs. The U.S. might intend to expose individuals to PD programs, but the exposure might not take place.

A second type of program validity established in research design is external validity. This refers to the extent to which the effects of PD programs would be equally effective among individuals across times and in different settings (Barakso et al., 2013; Johnson et al., 2020). Our recommendation is that sui generis programs be created for different people in different places. This is necessary because programs implemented in one country cannot be assumed to affect people in another country the same way. For this reason, we should not assume that a PD program successful in the past will perform equally well in the future or that success in one country means success in another country.

Long-Term Public Diplomacy Programs

The three designs for public diplomacy programs outlined above require taking advantage of a long-term horizon. Our discussion based on those figures proposes that listening should take place at least during two points (Listening 1 and Listening 2). With two points of data separated by time, it is possible to compare changes in public opinion that help establish the effects of specific programs. However, maintaining long-term PD programs and securing their funds is challenging. Indeed, transforming opinions and beliefs can take years and significant amounts of resources. Precisely because the effects of public diplomacy register slowly over time, there should be a stronger effort to measure the way publics feel at several points in time. Several listening stages may capture the slow but continual change in public opinion, and the listening stages can reveal the steady success of particular programs.

Long-term programs, while challenging, should be understood as an opportunity to evaluate and update those programs throughout their lifetime. After all, PD programs are primarily motivated by generating long-term effects among the target population. Even if scholars and practitioners listen to foreign publics to evaluate the short-term effectiveness of PD efforts, the understanding of their success would remain incomplete without longitudinal data measuring the duration of effects over time (Gaines, Kuklinski & Quirk, 2007). While this places additional demands on the researcher or policy planner, it also produces an opportunity to improve the collective understanding of the performances of PD programs.

Furthermore, capturing public opinion at several points can help establish the ineffectiveness of specific programs. Alternatively, when this is not the case, programs can be modified, which can save time and resources. The listening stages should be understood not only as instances of data collection, but also as points where policy planners can alter the program in light of new information. In long-term PD programs, policy planners should also be cautious as to how domestic developments in the target country may necessitate the alteration of PD programs. In other words, because public diplomacy programs may take years, those being targeted may no longer need it, or their views might shift in unpredictable ways.

This is a main challenge of long-term PD programs: that programs created for specific issues may become increasingly ineffective as social conditions change in the country of interest. For example, as democracy arrived in Chile in the early 1990s, many would have argued that the U.S. needed to improve its image among Chileans, who saw the U.S. partly responsible for its previous military rule because the U.S. government provided support for it. However, Chileans today may have a completely different take on the U.S. given Chile's success and the time since its nondemocratic rule. As such, we might expect Chilean opinions toward the U.S. to change with time given internal developments. By listening periodically and understanding Chilean foreign public opinion, policy planners can evaluate their programs and alter their message. While part of the solution is a sustained commitment to public diplomacy through engagement (Gregory, 2011), listening at several points during a PD program can also help save resources and allocate them more appropriately by considering how the passage of time affects the need for public diplomacy.

In the @america example mentioned earlier, policy makers should begin to take polls or conduct surveys of individuals before and after they partake in the activities of the center to understand how their views are shaped by participation in certain programs. It would also be necessary, given our suggestions, to collect data from those who have not participated in @america programs. In all, steps should be taken so that public diplomacy efforts in Jakarta begin to emulate the designs outlined in Figure 3, even if they cannot be implemented in their ideal form. The advantages of continuously listening to foreign publics have been reflected among public officials, including Margaret D. Tutwiler, Under Secretary for Public Affairs; speaking before the House Committee on Government Reform Subcommittee on National Security, she expressed that "we must ensure that our public diplomacy resources are used as effectively as possible. We must prioritize and ask ourselves, 'Is the activity I am doing getting the job done?' We must listen to our field force."[5]

This suggestion to focus on listening may reflect the move from a monologue- to a dialogue-based public diplomacy. For example, in 1997, the United States Information Agency formally placed *dialogue* (two-way or multidirectional communication) at the center of its activities (Cowan & Arsenault, 2008). By focusing on dialogue, a two-way exchange of information is created in which countries can learn from one another (Snow, 2009). Effective public diplomacy involves telling a story and listening to others' stories as well, as our argument emphasizes. Although public diplomacy may not fully become a dialogue among the peoples of different nations, the suggestions by Snow (2009) and Cowan and Arsenault (2008) do seek to place listening and understanding foreign public opinion at the forefront of public diplomacy, with a commitment to continued understanding for foreign publics.

To summarize this section, shifts in public opinion do not occur suddenly. Many issues in social science are not those that involve a quick cause-and-effect dynamic (Pierson, 2004). Long-term PD

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[5] The testimony was delivered on February 10, 2004. The transcription can be found at https://2001-2009.state.gov/r/us/2004/29251.htm.

programs, especially those that involve long-term mass communication, may be successful over an extended period, which may be due to cumulative effects. Scholars and policy planners of public diplomacy should not limit time horizons and instead should take advantage of long-term PD programs. By taking advantage of the listening stages and their data, policy planners, can cancel, update, or continue specific programs to accomplish their goals.

Contributions and Discussion

Research design involves a set of decisions regarding what or who will be studied and the procedures in acquiring and analyzing data. In this paper, we apply lessons from research design to the field of public diplomacy, a field focused on engaging with foreign publics. This article suggests that regardless of the PD program, the activity of listening should occupy a prominent position to allow for an understanding of the opinions of foreign publics. The contributions of this article can benefit both policy planners and academics. In summary, we have advanced three main points.

First, before any PD program is implemented, we need to correctly identify a perceived issue that requires a PD program. Once we confirm if the issue exists, we also need to understand why it exists. Second, designing programs with goals in mind increases the effectiveness of the program and the ability to confirm whether the program worked. This requires designing programs unique to each case of interest, as opposed to one-fits-all solution designs. Here, we have discussed PD designs for large-scale communication programs. The main preoccupation is to be able to positively conclude that the changes among foreign publics are due to the program implemented. Third, public opinion data should be collected at several stages—thus, taking advantage of time—to confirm the effectiveness of PD programs, especially if the program is long term. As we argue, the collection of public opinion data is critical in understanding the original issue, designing PD programs, and confirming the effectiveness of the program.

Since the early writing of public diplomacy, an explicit goal of PD has been to change (or maintain) the attitudes of publics in foreign cultures (Deibel & Roberts, 1976). However, PD does not always influence its foreign publics directly. Beyond large programs, PD often cultivates individuals within the target audience who are themselves influential in their community (Cull, 2009a). In these instances, alternative research designs can be formulated to understand the effects of this type of PD program, and target audiences can be selected on the importance of their characteristics (Pacher, 2018).

Looking forward, scholarship on PD increasingly reflects shifts in international practices and relations, such as the increasing diversity of international actors, advancements in technology that allow for real-time communication, the slow blurring of formerly rigid domestic and international spheres, the adoption of terminology from marketing and network communication theory, and a departure from the actor-to-people communication to people-to-people contact (Cull, 2009a; Seib, 2009). Policy planners should also take advantage of the diversity of information collected about foreign publics, not only in the fields of public diplomacy but also those in political science and international relations. New technologies continue to emerge, increasing the complexity of public diplomacy in contemporary international relations, but also bringing new ways to listen to foreign publics and generate new insights into PD. To make sense of both contemporary PD and new initiatives in a changing international environment, it is critical that scholars pay closer attention to the listening aspect of public diplomacy.

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