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Defining and Measuring Diplomatic Influence

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Question

How are the different concepts related to "diplomatic influence" defined and measured/evaluated in the literature?

- *What are the definitions in the literature for: soft power; hard power; smart power; public diplomacy, new public diplomacy; diplomatic capacity; diplomatic influence; diplomatic leverage; and other related terms?*
- *Are there any summaries in the literature about the general categories of indicators used when measuring each of these terms?*
- *Are there any examples of actual evaluations used by other countries to measure/evaluate any of these terms? If so, what activities and indicators are used?*

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1. Summary

The vast majority of articles, books and evaluations consulted for this review begin with an acknowledgement of the difficulty of measuring soft power and diplomatic influence. It is often remarked in the literature that evaluations of diplomatic influence focus too much on output indicators of activities rather than evidence of actual influence (e.g. DFAT, 2004). This review found **no sources of straightforward indicators** for use in measuring diplomatic influence. The literature and evaluations found recommend the use of tailor-made evaluations to account for “differences in diplomatic settings, diplomatic activities and policy fields” (Kleistra Y. & Van Willigen N., 2014). They hinge on developing a theory of change alongside questions and evaluation criterion that are context specific. They rely on assessing **intermediate goals** as a ‘proxy’ for the immeasurable long-term influence, and **causal contributions** (contributed to a result) rather than causal attributions (caused a result) (Aarva & Zukale, 2012). It was also frequently mentioned that programme designers tend to design programmes to support diplomatic influence without specific and measurable objectives because influencing processes are by nature non-linear. In these cases, evaluations will be correspondingly unable to provide specific and measurable indicators of achievement.

Definitions: Concepts related to influence, power and diplomacy are imprecise and subjective, giving rise to large literatures defining, refining and naming. The main distinctions at the most basic level are:

- **Hard Power** is manifested through coercion (military, trade).
- **Soft Power** is manifested through attraction (culture, values).
- **Conventional Diplomacy** is exercised between official state diplomats.
- **Public Diplomacy** is exercised from official state sources to foreign publics.
- **New Public Diplomacy** is a more recent development which recognises the ability of other societal actors to have voice and agency in the wider international relations environment to create multi-way dialogues.
- **Diplomacy** generally describes the activities that convert “power assets” (institutions, values) into the “power to influence” other governments and publics in support of foreign policy goals.

Measurements: The overall objective of exercising soft power through diplomatic efforts is to support a country’s foreign policy goals. It is not only difficult for the evaluator to find ways of directly measuring how soft power or public diplomacy has achieved a foreign policy goal, but inadvisable:

“There are a few areas of foreign policy where there is a verifiable relationship between programmes and outcomes...The multiple factors — both objective and subjective — involved in achieving goals and influencing outcomes make any rigid application of a cause-and-effect rationale injudicious” (Pahlavi, 2007, p. 274).

Soft Power can be measured by indices that represent soft power assets rather than the conversion of those assets to actual influence. *Portland*, a public relations firm, produces an annual composite index ranking different countries. There are a wide variety of ways to evaluate the contribution of cultural activities to soft power, but they do not include indicators as such. Rather they tend towards participatory models of evaluation (e.g. Cultural Value Model).

The measurement of **Conventional Diplomacy** draws on the more general methods of measuring policy influence. This usually involves constructing a theory of change and then identifying the conditions which need to be met for change to occur. One paper recommends the inclusion of criterion specific to diplomacy (Kleistra and van Willigen, 2010). Otherwise output indicators such as attendance at meetings or inclusion of an issue on a meeting agenda are used.

In practice, **Public Diplomacy** activities are often measured by their outputs such as number of people who attend an event, or number of press clippings covering an event. Opinion polls are sometimes used to measure the effect on those attending. **New Public Diplomacy** was found to be an ideal in theory, but not widely practiced and so subject to the same measurement techniques as public diplomacy. **Digital Diplomacy** opens the possibility for evaluation metrics such as the number of likes, or the content of comments on social media posts.

Overall, the literature found during the course of this review was substantial and scattered across several different fields. Most dealt with conceptual definitions of the terms. Questions of measurement and evaluation were mostly related to public diplomacy which has received substantial attention over the past twenty years as it is considered a particularly difficult and nuanced task. The public availability of actual evaluations about diplomatic activities was low compared to development project evaluations, presumably due to the relative sensitivity of the former. Gender and diplomacy is a relatively new topic which is filling a gap that has existed for many years (Aggestam & Towns, 2019).

2. Definitions

‘Monstrous Imprecision’ of Key Terms

The definitions of “power”, “diplomacy” and their variants described below are all unsettled and open to debate. The word diplomacy has been described as “monstrously imprecise,” simultaneously signifying “content, character, method, manner and art” (Marshall, 1990, p. 7). Similarly, there is a large literature debating the meaning of the word power with some treating it as a resource or asset possessed by a state, some treating it as relational emphasising how it affects others, others treat it as the ability to set agendas (Baldwin, 2012). The imprecision of these words and how they are used are reflected in subsequent sections on measurement and evaluation. This review has simplified the terms below for practical purpose, choosing where possible definitions from highly cited key scholars.

Power

"the possession of capabilities or resources that can influence outcomes," AND "the ability to influence the behaviour of others to get the outcomes one wants" (Nye, 2004).

Power can be manifested through:

- **Coercion - Hard Power**
- **Attraction - Soft Power**
- **A mixture of coercion and attraction - Smart Power**

Hard Power

Hard power was first used by Nye (1990) to make a distinction with his concept of soft power. It is "the ability to use the carrots and sticks of **economic** and **military might** to make others follow your will" (Nye, 2003). "Carrots" can be inducements like the reduction of trade barriers, the offer of an alliance or the promise of military protection. "Sticks" are threats like military intervention, or economic sanctions. Other papers found during this review focus more on the "sticks" where hard power is said to be based on military intervention, **coercive diplomacy** and economic sanctions (Wilson, 2008), relying on tangible power resources such as armed forces or economic means (Gallarotti, 2011).

Soft Power

Nye defined soft power as **the ability to get what you want through attraction** rather than coercion or payment (2008). He identified three main resources for soft power: "The soft power of a country rests primarily on three **resources**: its culture (in places where it is attractive to others), its political values (when it lives up to them at home and abroad), and its foreign policies (when they are seen as legitimate and having moral authority in its conduct abroad)" (Nye, 2008).

These resources are in turn made up of a country's specific **assets** which can include institutions such as the British Council, values such as freedom of speech, foreign policies such as aid or environmental policy. Further examples of British assets are the English language, the monarchy, the BBC, the rule of law, and foreign aid (Beadle, 2014). Examples of India's soft power assets are Ayurveda and yoga (Singh et al, 2017). There is no definitive list of soft power assets, with different scholars and governments highlighting different potential assets at different times (Singh et al, 2017, p.7).

There is considerable conceptual fuzziness around all of the terms used to describe and explain soft power. Nye himself has written multiple books and countless articles on the topic, and there are hundreds of articles from other authors, explaining, changing and refining the concept. "Soft power assets" may be used interchangeably with "soft power resources", "soft power

capabilities”, “soft power influences”, to name just a few. Note also that cause and effect are not always clear. For example, a foreign policy can be described as both a soft power asset and as the goal for which soft power is activated to achieve. Similarly, in the large literature related to this term, soft power may refer to the resources that constitute it, and/or the resulting influence exercised.

Smart Power

Smart power can be defined as “the flexible and combined use of hard power (military force or economic sanctions) and soft power (diplomatic and cultural influence) to overcome a foreign policy challenge” (US State Dept, undated). It was developed by Nye to “counter the misperception that soft power alone can produce effective foreign policy” (Nye 2009, p.160). It is basically **a strategy that uses the hard and soft power** resources described above.

Diplomacy

“the conduct of international relations by negotiation rather than by force” (Berridge, 1995).

Diplomacy can be exercised:

- **Between official diplomats - conventional diplomacy**
- **From official sources to a larger foreign public - public diplomacy**
- **As a multi-way dialogue among many government and societal actors - new public diplomacy**

Conventional Diplomacy

This is “government-to-government diplomacy that goes through formal, traditional channels of communication to communicate with foreign governments (written documents, meetings, summits, diplomatic visits, etc). This type of diplomacy is conducted by diplomats of one nation with diplomats and other officials of another nation or international organization” (US State Dept, undated). There is a sense that it involves more emphasis on bi-lateral relations about economic and political issues (Rozenal & Buenrostro, 2015). Its definition is largely in response to the development of the concept of “public diplomacy.”

Other **related terms** found are: “standard diplomacy”, “traditional diplomacy”, “formal diplomacy”, “track I diplomacy”, “official diplomacy”, “direct diplomacy.”

Public Diplomacy

Public diplomacy is a “state-based instrument used by foreign ministries and other government agencies to engage and persuade foreign publics for the purpose of influencing their governments” (Gregory, 2011, p.353). It is highly related to the concept of soft power as it **describes the activities that convert soft power assets into the power to influence** other governments and publics to support foreign policy goals (Nye, 2009). Since it is essentially official communication aimed at foreign publics, Melissen (2005) recognises the overlap of public diplomacy with the concept of propaganda.

Cull (2008) identifies five core components of public diplomacy work (in Pamment, 2012, p.29-32):

- **Listening** – information gathering on the target foreign environment to direct a public diplomacy strategy. Methods include media monitoring and public opinion polls.
- **Advocacy** - promotion of policies, ideas or interests to a foreign public through Embassy press relations, lobbying and informational work.
- **Cultural diplomacy** - promotion of cultural resources and achievements overseas through tours, promotions and the activities of institutes for culture, art and language.
- **Exchange diplomacy** - visits between citizens of different nations including educational exchanges and hosting journalists.
- **International broadcasting** – radio and television to provide information for foreign publics, can be directly or indirectly related to a government’s public diplomacy objectives.

Public diplomacy can also be divided into: (1) “nation branding” activities where the government tries to improve its image and long-term perceptions amongst a foreign public, and (2) political advocacy activities to build foreign support for immediate policy objectives – such as to convince a foreign audience to support a military alliance to encourage foreign leaders to cooperate by reducing the threat of backlash at home (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2017).

Pamment (2012, p.71) provides a concise overview of how the British government has defined public diplomacy in recent years.

Other **related terms** found are: “people’s diplomacy”, “soft diplomacy”, “track II diplomacy”, “cultural diplomacy.”

New Public Diplomacy

Melissen (2005) defines new public diplomacy as (1) a shift in diplomatic practices motivated by new actors, (2) engagement with increasingly ‘interconnected’ foreign publics, and (3) moving away from one-way information flows towards dialogue and engagement. Pamment (2012, p.3) describes it as “dialogical, collaborative and inclusive. It represents a break from ‘broadcasting’ models and takes advantage of social media to establish **two-way engagement with the public.**”

The Washington-based think tank, the Council on Foreign Relations, recommended a new approach to public diplomacy that “involves listening, dialogue, debate and relationship-building and increases the amount and effectiveness of public-opinion research” (in Pamment, 2012, p.8).

Other **related terms** found are: “polylateral diplomacy”, “state-non-state diplomacy”.

Digital Diplomacy

Although the new public diplomacy implies the use of the internet in its two-way engagement with the public, “digital diplomacy” puts all its focus on the **social media and internet tools of engagement** as a way to achieve diplomatic objectives (Hanson, 2012). It can also refer to wider internet-related issues such as cybersecurity, privacy, and the effect of the internet on terrorism and trade (Westcott, 2008).

Some definitions highlight how political leaders and diplomats use social media tools (Olubukola, 2017), while others highlight the multi-directional communication:

“With the advent of social media and the rapid increase in mobile [technology] penetration...[diplomatic] engagement now increasingly takes place from people to government and from people to people. This direct link from citizens to government allows diplomats to convene and connect with non-traditional audiences, and in turn allows citizens to influence their governments in ways that were not possible ten years ago” (Ross, 2011).

Other **related terms** found are: “digiplomacy”, “cyber diplomacy”, “Internet diplomacy”, “online diplomacy” and “electronic diplomacy”, “e-diplomacy”, “diplomacy 2.0”, “21st Century Statecraft”.

Diplomatic Capacity

Freeman et al (2020, p.8) state that diplomatic capacity can be defined as “**the resources a country commits to diplomatic activities** and the vehicles a country uses to conduct them.”

They go on to describe it as the “institutional infrastructure of diplomacy” which allows governments to leverage such resources as independent organizations, commercial activity or groups, security partnerships and financial influence, to shape their international environment (referencing Markey, 2009). This institutional infrastructure is made possible by budgetary commitments and activated by the cumulative traits associated not only with diplomacy but with other dimensions of power. Beyond a country’s embassies, consulates, liaison offices, and cultural initiatives abroad, diplomatic capacity is the ability to utilize international demand for a national currency, global cultural appeal, leadership in international organisations, and security ties such as military basing. They say it needs long-term investments in staffing, training, alliance management, and international organisation membership, to name just a few. It seems to have some overlap with the concept of soft power assets.

Other Terms Related to Diplomacy

This review found no examples in the literature of definitions of “diplomatic influence” or “diplomatic leverage.” However, there is a nuanced definition of the term “influencing” in Section 3 below from the evaluation on “Nordic Countries” (p.14 below).

There are very many types of diplomacy based on the specific diplomatic tools used, such as Panda Diplomacy, Sports Diplomacy, Culinary Diplomacy, Gunboat Diplomacy, and so forth.

3. Summaries of Indicators

Soft power, conventional diplomacy and public diplomacy are not useful concepts to summarise measurements of their activities and indicators because they are so broad. Soft power (and the public diplomacy practices that convert it into influence) covers too many diverse activities: for example, sporting events, arts shows, student exchanges, music exports, development aid. Different countries choose from a diverse range of potential activities at any time under the general rubric of soft power and public diplomacy. Similarly, the measurement of conventional diplomacy draws on a different literature about how to measure policy influence. This is also too broad a category to summarise activities or indicators since evaluations are context-specific, depending on the theory of change that has first been developed (Jones, 2011). What follows are summaries of some general approaches to evaluating these concepts.

Soft Power

Quantitative Techniques: There are several international indices of soft power, including the well-known *Portland Soft Power 30*. Recalling the definitions of power at the beginning of Section 2 above, this index measures soft power *resources* rather than the conversion of those resources to *actual influence*. If soft power can be measured on three dimensions: (1) soft power resources (2) public opinion changing and (3) political policy changes (Zhang and Wu, 2019), the *Portland Soft Power 30* index measures the first two. It uses other indexes (such as the Human Development Index), metrics (such as the number of overseas consulates, overseas development aid), and polls 12,500 people from 25 countries on their perceptions of the countries covered, asking questions such as favourability towards a country, and trust in a country’s approach to global affairs (Portland, 2019). It applies weighting and regression to arrive at a final score for each country.

Others study the impact of soft power on one type of outcome. For example, Rose (2016) looks at the effects of soft power on exports. He uses a BBC survey on perceptions of a country as a proxy for soft power and compares it against that country’s exports. This approach rests on the equation used to account for other influences on bilateral exports besides soft power.

Qualitative Techniques: At the other end of the measurement spectrum are participatory evaluation or narrative-type analyses, which have been used to assess the cultural elements of soft power in particular. One example is the Cultural Value Model (CVM) which shifts the frame

of analysis away from impact to value. It is a collaborative, multi-disciplinary methodology that takes into account the interests and perspectives of a range of people and stakeholders involved in cultural activities. It is an example of participatory action research which engages participants and partners actively in the entire process of project design, monitoring and evaluation through workshops (Bell et al, 2016).

Another example is Schneider (2009) who identifies the following general characteristics of the success of cultural activities:

- Two-way engagement, (collaboration, which can include performance, mentoring, teaching, information exchange or exchange of techniques/ perspectives);
- Contextualisation (local meaning, i.e. 'what works in Cairo may not work in Caracas');
- Enjoyment (not to be underestimated as an influential factor, the enjoyment of both participant and audience of a performance event – for example – should be taken into account);
- Flexibility, creativity and adaptability (necessities in a world of diminishing funds)

There are no indicators as such to measure the degree to which these criterion are achieved, but rather depend on discussions, observation and subsequent analysis by the evaluator.

Note that these approaches measure the *contribution of cultural activities to soft power* rather than the effect of soft power on a foreign policy objective. This again highlights the difficulties involved in evaluating such a conceptually fuzzy term.

In practice, there is some evidence that soft power is usually not well enough conceived to be open to measurement. A study interviewing diplomats involved in soft power activities at the United Nations Office in Geneva found that “in almost all cases the **target audience** for Soft Power efforts is undefined or unidentifiable (Doeser & Nisbett, 2017). Similarly, there is **no consensus** on what Soft Power and Cultural Diplomacy are for and **what they actually seek to achieve**. Without a clearly identifiable objective (e.g. to secure a position on a particular UN committee), it seems impossible to even begin the exercise of gathering evidence to demonstrate a policy’s impact. None of the interviewees described tangible, clear or firm objectives during this project.”

Conventional diplomacy (official diplomats)

Kleistra and van Willigen (2010) outline two main approaches to evaluating national diplomatic interventions in multilateral decision-making diplomacy: (1) a performance-driven model, and (2) a process-driven model. They argue that the performance-driven model is unsuitable for diplomacy, and suggest their own innovation – the “process-driven model.” They describe performance-driven evaluation as relying on a logical framework matrix to identify the strategic elements of a project, programme, or policy, their causal relationships and indicators where the evaluator selects among a range of techniques (e.g. randomized experiment, large-scale survey, case studies, etc.) to answer the question(s) the study addresses.

Reasons why the performance-based model is not suitable for diplomatic activities are:

- Foreign policy objectives are long-term objectives by definition that are formulated in general terms and vague statements. The absence of specific, realistic and time-based objectives would make assessment of the effectiveness of foreign policy difficult if not impossible.
- Most foreign policy occurs in international decision-making arenas. Assessment of foreign policy on the basis of a performance-driven model of decision-making would ignore the dynamics of these multi-actor settings, because it would not take into account that policy objectives might change as the result of international negotiations.
- Many foreign policy objectives are not achieved or only partially achieved. Even though multilaterally achieved results for the most part do not match up to national ambitions, they have an influence on the lives of many persons just the same. For that very reason, it is as good as certain that any assessment of foreign policy on the basis of a 'value for money' perspective will do no justice to the effort in this field (Kleistra and van Willigen 2010, p.122).

Their own model focuses the evaluation on the question of whether a country's diplomats do the utmost to achieve their objectives, given the context in which they operate. They suggest four criterion:

- **Connectedness** - the degree to which interventions are in line with policy objectives as formulated in a country's foreign policy.
- **Responsiveness** - the degree to which interventions are conducive to the international decision-making process.
- **Timeliness** - the degree to which the intervention took place at an appropriate moment.
- **Scope** - the action radius and directness of the intervention in combination with the level of involvement) (p.128). Evaluators use their own judgement and analysis about the degree to which these criterion are met.

Kleistra and van Willigen (2010) frame their discussion within the context of the literature on "policy evaluation", suggesting that the degree to which a diplomat's influence achieves a foreign policy objective draws on the evaluation methods associated with this wider field.

Public diplomacy and its subsets ('new public' and 'digital')

There is a large literature on how to evaluate public and new public diplomacy activities since public diplomacy describes the implementation of the more abstract concept of soft power. Pamment (2013, p.58) provides a useful overview of four different approaches to evaluating public and new public diplomacy.

(1) **Outputs models:**

- Methods - Ad hoc, press clippings
- Theory of influence - Public diplomacy as outputs
- Anticipated results - Proof of labour/reach/volume

Influence on a foreign public is measured by techniques including column inches in newspaper clippings, airtime, polls, surveys, focus groups, in-depth interviews, media content analysis, headcounts at events, participant observation, and Internet tracking. The activities of staff involved in campaigns can also be measured. This approach measures campaign activities rather than outcomes and is called a “process evaluation.” Influence is presumed from the measurement of outputs in what Pamment calls “self-representation.”

(2) Outcome models:

- Methods - Logic models, Impact measurements
- Theory of influence - Soft power = hard effects
- Anticipated results - Proof organization is effective/efficient

The organisation undertaking the campaign first sets objectives that are achievable and measurable, assesses the activities and processes involved in the campaign (resources allocated, outputs produced, what participants learned following exposure to the campaign). The outcomes are then analysed to capture any identifiable changes to the policy environment or participant behaviour, and the results then reassessed to see if resources have been appropriately allocated. This type of evaluation evaluates the efficacy of the organisation in delivering upon its objectives rather than the overall experience of the target groups of public diplomacy.

(3) Perception models:

- Methods - Surveys, Attitudes, Favourability
- Theory of influence - Reputation management
- Anticipated results - Proof of influence over ideas & values

Opinion polls, questionnaires, before-and-after surveys, focus groups and qualitative interviews collect data on the attitudes and opinions of foreign citizens in order to understand whether policies or campaigns change how people think. The goal is not to evaluate concrete social change or an organisation’s capacity to deliver results, but rather to evaluate the knowledge and values that are believed to motivate change. This model produces data that can help highlight the values, norms and stereotypes believed to motivate or hinder desired outcomes. The theory of influence is aimed at affecting perceptions, reputations, attitudes, ideas and beliefs, rather than the distribution of material resources.

(4) Network models:

- Methods - Hubs & Multipliers, Forming alliances
- Theory of influence - Relationship management
- Anticipated results - Proof of attention to relationships & other perspectives

Traditional diplomacy involves the careful cultivation of relationships in foreign countries, including networking strategies for incorporating likeminded people into policy networks or influencing prominent individuals in civil society. Public diplomacy strategies seek to identify “key influencers,” - individuals who, usually on the basis of a leadership position in their respective social sphere, act as “hubs” with access to a large number of “nodes” in a network. A network model of evaluation focuses on these relationships, either through perceptions (surveys), assessing linkages and exchanges, or the extent to which relationships are managed.

Pahlavi (2007, p.256) thinks that public diplomacy programmes should be evaluated according to three criteria: (1) the pursuit of measurable objectives (2) the ability to estimate appropriately the effects of programmes in terms of audience size and opinion, and (3) the ability to estimate the concrete effects of these programmes in terms of foreign policy objectives. Noting that outputs are regularly confused with outcomes in evaluations, he suggests that outcomes be divided into short, medium and long term (See Pahlavi, 2007, p.257).

New Public and Digital Diplomacy:

Pamment (2012) finds that new public diplomacy (a more dialogical interaction) is widely conceptualised and written about, but only in terms of what should be done in a changing environment. In practice, all that has changed is that the same data that was published through traditional channels are now reproduced using social media channels. Clarke (2015) has a similar finding. Pamment therefore does not distinguish between evaluation approaches for public diplomacy and new public diplomacy.

However, there has been more recent exploratory research focusing entirely on the techniques of **digital diplomacy** which leverages the relative ease of gathering metrics from online interactions on social media. Park et al (2019) present an evaluation approach for digital diplomacy which uses social network analysis to record “comment networks” and interaction patterns among the publics on the Facebook pages of public diplomacy organisations from Japan and Korea, such as the ministries of culture, foreign affairs, and education. The authors also apply topic modelling to detect public opinion and sentiment.

4. Examples of Evaluations

Soft Power

UK, evaluation titled: ***Soft Power Today: Measuring the Influences and Effects***

Soft power is a vague concept with very generalised objectives and does not lend itself to evaluation (Thomas, 2018). This review only found one country evaluation which attempted to evaluate this concept as a whole. This was commissioned by the British Council for the UK, and used statistical regression to identify the variables that are independently related to soft power impacts. Soft power impacts were measured by international student numbers, tourism and foreign direct investment (FDI) in the UK (Singh & MacDonald, 2017). It effectively measures the benefits that accrue to the host country through its exercise of soft power rather than any influence on a specific foreign policy objective.

Germany, evaluation titled: ***Culture Works. Using Evaluation to Shape Sustainable Foreign Relations.***

Although it does not reference “soft power,” one document from Germany’s cultural institute, the *Goethe Institut*, groups together six evaluations of individual projects “in order to be able to record the impact of cultural work in foreign policy” (Goethe-Institut, 2016). It describes the methods used for the evaluation of each project, three are summarised below in Table 1 as examples.

The long-term impact of cultural work is described as: “strengthening international cultural collaboration, contributing to trusting relationships between Germany and our host countries by imparting an image of contemporary Germany, and playing our part in the long-term development of pluralistic societies via collaboration as partners, in particular with civil society actors from the cultural and educational sectors in the host countries” (p.13). The evaluations are designed to evidence how the values of a pluralistic and democratic society are **actually put into practice** through the cultural activities sponsored by the *Goethe Institut*. Questions which guide the evaluations are:

- To what extent do we really do justice to our aspirations in respect of dialogue as partners, high quality and innovation?
- Do we actually manage to arouse people's interest in art and culture and encourage a free exchange of opinions about them?
- Does the networking of relevant actors really contribute to the generation of new concepts, activities and new structures, independent from the *Goethe Institut*?
- To what extent does the communication of an image of contemporary Germany contribute to trusting relationships between Germany and the host countries?
- Are we succeeding in promoting cultural exchange and intercultural dialogue in a globalised world?

The answers to these questions do not rely on indicators, but on discussions, observation, interviews, some output data, and ultimately the analysis of the evaluator.

Table 1: Summary of Evaluation Methods used for Three cultural projects at the Goethe Institute

Project	Type of evaluation	Methods used	Example of “effectiveness”
Cultural Innovators Network (CIN)	Actor-network theory	Online survey; workshop; qualitative guided interviews with members and staff of Goethe Institute; participatory observation	91% of the members agreed with the statement that the CIN makes the open exchange of opinions and ideas possible.
Networking and partner structure of the Goethe-Institut in the Netherlands	Network analysis	Qualitative guided expert interviews with staff of partner institutions; guided interviews with staff of the Netherlands Goethe-Institut; participatory observation at events on location; document analysis (including event archive, data from the project planning system; press clippings, self-presentation via programme, newsletter, website, etc.)	The network comprises the actors who are relevant in the scene; The cooperation partners emphasise the ability of the Goethe-Institut to penetrate the local culture scene.
Urban Places, Public Spaces series of talks	Situation analysis	Participatory observations at the events, social media analysis; survey of participants; qualitative guided interviews with discussion participants / moderators; focus group discussions with Goethe-Institut staff and project partners;	Several follow-up activities were generated.

Source: Author’s own, data taken from Goethe Institut, 2016

Conventional Diplomacy

Finland, evaluation titled: *Evaluation of Finnish Development Policy Influencing Activities in Multilateral Organisations*.

The purpose of this evaluation is to “assess the relevance and effectiveness of different types of multilateral influencing activities implemented by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland” (Palenberg et al, 2020, p.21).

It uses a “theory-based approach which allows for systematic analysis of weak and multi-causal relationships between influencing activities, effects, and further changes in Multilaterals.” It relies on the analysis of **causal contributions** rather than **attribution analysis**. It draws evidence from interviews and desk reviews of “influencing literature” from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

The evaluation draws up a theory of change with four levels (p.36):

- Level 1: How influence originates in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- Level 2: How influence reaches Multilaterals.
- Level 3: How influence contributes to effects in Multilaterals.
- Level 4: Outcomes and impacts related to influence.

For each level there are a range of assumed factors and conditions that must be met to move towards the final outcomes and effects. It is these assumed factors and conditions that are being evaluated through interviews and desk research. There are no “indicators” as such.

Nordic Countries, evaluation titled: ***Influencing the World Bank’s and African Development Bank’s Gender Policies, 2006–2011.***

This evaluation discussed how the Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden), influenced the policies, decision-making and work in the World Bank and the African Development Bank from 2006 to 2011 (Aarva & Zukale, 2012, p.17).

Its evaluation methodology is to:

- (1) Define “influencing” as a demonstrated capacity to (1) Shape ideas about policy (2) Initiate policy or programme proposals (3) Substantially change or veto others’ proposals or affect implementation policy.
- (2) Disaggregate between: **positional/ formal influencing** (e.g. use of financial or human resources, agenda setting power, high position in hierarchy, dominance in specific area) and **reputational/informal influencing** (high level of activity, political unity/coordination, expertise, alliance building/cooperation, communication skills, legitimate tactics, reliability, coherence, organisational strength and/or strategic convergence).
- (3) **Define levels to influence** as: (1) high level decision making: Board of Governors and Executive Boards, and other high level meetings (2) negotiations on resources: such as replenishment discussions, Trust Funds and Nordic Staff in the Banks, and (3) influencing other actors: IFIs’ Management/departments, constituencies and others.

The “measurement of influence” was based on “descriptive analysis” of documents and interview transcripts. There are no “indicators” as such.

In a section on evaluation limitations, it states: “it was not possible to make any conclusions about the specific, measurable Nordic influence into the two Banks’ policies, strategies and actions. This is because the influence may also “flow” from Banks to the Nordics, and from other countries and constituencies to the Nordic Constituencies, and the study material and design did not allow to demarcate or measure the direction of the influence (i.e. from Nordics to the Bank or vice versa). Neither was it possible to assess what is the share or strength of influence by the Nordic countries compared to other actors, because this study did not analyze other countries or constituencies’ policies and procedures (p.27).”

Public Diplomacy

Because the category of “public diplomacy” covers so many different potential programmes and activities, the only country evaluations of “public diplomacy” found during the course of this review assessed the effectiveness of multiple projects grouped together over a number of years to check that a country’s broad public diplomacy strategy was moving in the right direction.

Netherlands, evaluation titled: ***IOB Evaluation no. 413, Policy Review Public Diplomacy 2010-2014.***

An evaluation of the Dutch Foreign Ministry’s public diplomacy activities over 4 years had the overall question: To what extent does [the Foreign Ministry’s] strategy, in combination with the players, instruments and activities it finances in the field of public diplomacy, contribute to a positive perception of the Netherlands and promote Dutch policy aims abroad?

In order to answer this question, the evaluation team drew up an assessment framework based on the principles of the Ministry’s diplomatic policies (from interviews and desk research) and potential factors that influence the effectiveness of policy derived from literature on public diplomacy. Countries were selected for case studies of where overseas missions undertake public diplomacy activities and visited. A survey was undertaken of the staff working in political affairs, press and communications, and cultural affairs in the focus countries. During the visits, IOB also studied the selection of policy instruments, their internal coherence and relevance to the local situation, and the linking of PD efforts to operational policy objectives. To evaluate public diplomacy activities at the central level (The Hague) and operational level (the missions), an assessment framework was drawn up which contains lists of questions. Table 2 below gives some examples of the questions for illustration, the full framework can be found on p.30-32. It is designed to measure how “efficiently, cohesively and strategically public diplomacy has been implemented” (p.29). These questions were answered through interviews, desk research and the analysis of the evaluators, with no indicators beyond output indicators related to number of meetings or budget.

Table 2: IOB’s Assessment Framework.

Assessment Questions (Foreign Ministry)	
Contextual Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What evidence is there of the involvement of non-state actors in developing and carrying out Dutch policy? • Are these actors taken sufficiently into account in policy formulation and implementation?
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent does policy focus on the various approaches and objectives that public diplomacy can serve? • What evidence is there that the public diplomacy tool is aligned with foreign policy?
Organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent is public diplomacy deployment a joint effort by all policy actors? • Is there enough support from central management? • Do the missions receive enough support to carry out the assignments they are tasked with?
Assessment Questions (Overseas Missions)	
Organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent is the policy focus a joint effort by mission staff? • Does the mission have sufficient capacity to implement the strategy?
Actors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent is public diplomacy based on an analysis of the target groups and balance of forces? • To what extent do missions work with influentials, VIPs and figures who serve as magnets?

Source: IOB (2016, p. 30-32). Reproduced with permission.

USA, evaluation tools: *The Public Diplomacy Impact Project*, *The Mission Activity Tracker*, *Public Diplomacy Model for the Assessment of Performance*.

These evaluations represent a different approach to measuring the success of aggregate public diplomacy projects and programmes. They are described on the state department website (US Dept. State), in methodology papers (Matwiczak, 2010), and in the secondary literature (Pamment, 2013), but this review did not find access to the actual evaluations or databases of activity.

The Public Diplomacy Impact Project is a series of opinion surveys and focus groups comparing the views of people who have participated in various public diplomacy activities put on by overseas missions with the views of equivalent non-participants in the same location.

The Mission Activity Tracker is a web-based database for recording and monitoring public diplomacy activities in overseas missions. According to Pamment (2013), it records start and end dates, themes, the audiences reached, channels used, the frequency of follow-up events and tie-ins to broader programmes or goals. It effectively measures project outputs rather than outcomes/ impact.

The Public Diplomacy Model for the Assessment of Performance is a quantifiable evaluation framework which measures success against three core outcomes of all public diplomacy programs—increasing understanding of the U.S., favourability towards the U.S., and strengthening America's global influence—in five thematic areas: culture, foreign policy, security, economic policy, and climate change (environmental policy). The researchers divide the target audience for public diplomacy programs into three segments: foreign government officials, elite, and general (mass) and include weighting and risk assessment as variables in producing measurable results (Banks, 2011).

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