

Exploring U.S. Public Diplomacy's Domestic Dimensions: Purviews, Publics, and Policies



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To the President, Congress, Secretary of State, and the American People:

The United States Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy (ACPD), permanently authorized pursuant to Public Law 117-81 [Sec.] 1604, hereby submits the following special report: Exploring U.S. Public Diplomacy's Domestic Dimensions: Purviews, Publics, and Policies.

The ACPD is a bipartisan panel created by Congress in 1948 to formulate, assess, and recommend policies and programs to carry out the Public Diplomacy (PD) functions vested in U.S. government entities, to include the Department of State. This special report examines the use of USG public diplomacy programs and resources to engage domestic audiences.

In October 2021 the U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy and the USC Center on Public Diplomacy convened a virtual workshop for 45 public diplomacy practitioners, scholars, policy experts, and journalists to explore the role that public diplomacy might play in advancing Americans' understanding of the domestic impact of U.S. global engagement.

The following report features essays by three thought leaders in public diplomacy that offer practitioner, historical, and social research perspectives on the domestic public diplomacy concept. The report also offers key takeaways about the scope and authorities of public diplomacy's domestic dimension, the identification of key domestic audiences, stakeholders, and potential partners, and the policy and resource implications of a focus on domestic public diplomacy.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Introduction

Vivian S. Walker, Executive Director, U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy

In an increasingly globalized world, international developments have local impacts. As National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan and other senior U.S. government officials have noted, "foreign policy is domestic policy and domestic policy is foreign policy," with a corresponding requirement for Americans to understand why and how U.S. foreign policy affects their day-to-day lives. Many Americans are generally aware of and interested in public and private sector engagement in the international arena, but far fewer make the connection between global actions and local consequences.

Although historically public diplomacy initiatives have focused on engaging foreign audiences in pursuit of policy objectives, interest has been growing in the use of USG public diplomacy programs and resources to engage domestic audiences. In October 2021 the U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy and the Center on Public Diplomacy at the University of Southern California convened a virtual workshop for 45 public diplomacy practitioners, scholars, policy experts, and journalists to explore the role that public diplomacy might play in advancing Americans' understanding of the domestic impact of U.S. global engagement.

Specifically, workshop participants were asked to 1) consider the scope and authorities of public diplomacy's domestic dimension; 2) identify key domestic audiences, stakeholders, and potential partners and the role each could play in advancing U.S. foreign policy interests; and 3) consider the policy and resource implications of a focus on domestic public diplomacy.

To establish a framework for the workshop discussions, three thought leaders in public diplomacy offered, respectively, practitioner, historical, and social research perspectives on the domestic public diplomacy concept. Jennifer Hall Godfrey, former U.S. Department of State Senior Official for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, made the case for enhancing listening as well as information sharing on the domestic front to increase public trust in foreign policy decision-making.

Nicholas J. Cull, Professor of Public Diplomacy, University of Southern California, argued that the time has come to rethink the division of the foreign and domestic operations of U.S. public diplomacy, especially given that public diplomacy looks outwards and inwards simultaneously.

Richard Wike, Director of Global Attitudes Research, Pew Research Center, noted that despite domestic support for basic aspects of international cooperation, the American public has reservations about engagement with foreign countries and multilateral organizations.

Following the opening presentations, workshop participants engaged in closed-door curated discussions of three aspects of public diplomacy's domestic dimensions: its purviews, publics, and policies. The "Purviews" workshop addressed the scope and authorities of public diplomacy's domestic dimension. Participants in the "Publics" workshop identified key domestic audiences, stakeholders, and potential partners and the roles each could play in advancing U.S. public diplomacy (and/or U.S. foreign policy) goals. In the "Policies" workshop, participants discussed preliminary policy and resource considerations, as well as capacity building.

With this workshop, it was our intent to establish an intellectual framework for informed inquiries into public diplomacy's domestic dimension for practitioners, policymakers, and scholars. This report, we hope, will serve as the basis for a sustained and productive dialogue on these issues.

SCENESETTER PRESENTATIONS

Engaging Americans through Public Diplomacy

Jennifer Hall Godfrey, U.S. Department of State Senior Official for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs

Engaging Americans through Public Diplomacy

Jennifer Hall Godfrey, U.S. Department of State Senior Official for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs

The Department of State's mission is straightforward: to lead America's foreign policy through diplomacy, advocacy, and assistance by advancing the interests of the American people, their safety, and economic prosperity. As nations and peoples have grown more interconnected through commerce, technology, and communications, decisions and activities by one nation impact many more.

U.S. foreign policy affects every American's life directly and indirectly. Recent polling suggests that the majority of Americans want the United States to engage in international affairs and acknowledge that international events affect their daily lives. Foreign policy impacts the flow of goods and services, our ability to create economic opportunities for American companies and workers, the integrity of the global information environment, our capacity to confront global adversaries and collective challenges, and our readiness to defend U.S. national security. As President Biden said, "There's no longer a bright line between foreign and domestic policy. Every action we take in our conduct abroad, we must take with American working families in mind."

The Department of State has a responsibility to explain our policies and activities to global audiences, including American audiences, and to promote a better understanding of the United States in other countries. The development and execution of our policies and programs is enhanced when we listen to feedback and ideas. The Department's Public Diplomacy professionals are trained and experienced to facilitate these critical and consequential conversations.

Since its inception in 1946, nearly 400,000 Fulbrighter have participated from over 160 countries. The program awards approximately 8,000 fellowships annually. Among the many impressive Fulbright alumni are: 89 16 40 76 U.S. Presidential Medal of Freedom Foundation Recipients

While we have traditionally viewed Public Diplomacy as limited to engaging foreign audiences abroad, the Department must also engage American citizens, businesses, and organizations in discussions at home about U.S. foreign policy activities and solicit their input into those efforts.

We remain mindful of decades-long legislative restrictions on sharing PD programs, resources, and materials with audiences in the United States and note that the Department's appropriated funds may not be used to influence public opinion in the United States. Even using the term "Public Diplomacy" to describe engaging domestic publics gives some of us pause. However, as the United States Information and Educational Exchange Act of 1948 (aka the Smith-Mundt Act) notes, the objectives of Public Diplomacy are both "to promote a better understanding of the United States in other countries, as well as to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries." Subsequent legislation—the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961 (aka the Fulbright-Hays Act)—was even more explicit in its mandate to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries by means of educational and cultural exchanges.

To facilitate mutual understanding, we have always engaged both foreign and domestic audiences. Thanks to the resources Congress has made available to implement exchanges, tens of thousands of Americans have studied abroad, and many more Americans have welcomed foreign students and scholars into their homes, their communities, their schools, and their research institutes. These efforts generate significant economic and social benefits for U.S. communities and foster relationships between the people of the United States and foreign visitors. In addition, the Department engages U.S. citizens every day through our various communications channels. The Spokesperson regularly briefs domestic media, and our Bureau of Global Public Affairs reaches millions of Americans each day through social media channels. The National Museum of American Diplomacy, utilizing non-Public Diplomacy funds, facilitates programs with students and educators across the country, helping to build the American public's understanding of the history and daily work of diplomacy.

Engaging domestic audiences is a core element of our work in purpose and practice. Nevertheless, it is important to consider an evolution in the objectives, scope, and strategies of our domestic engagement. The Biden-Harris Administration has spoken about its desire to craft and deliver a foreign policy that supports and sustains the American middle class. To be meaningful and effective, we must engage the American people to share the purpose, tools, and capabilities of diplomacy and to afford them the opportunity to share how our foreign policy efforts impact their lives and communities.

We need to think critically about the communities we engage, in the fullest sense of the word. We need not only to share information, but also to listen to and learn from the perspectives of Americans in all their diversity. What communities currently lack avenues to engage with the Department and how do we reach them? How can we meaningfully

converse on issues that matter to the middle class? Which institutions, organizations, and individuals are we targeting, and who are we missing?

These are all questions the State Department is well equipped to explore and answer. For years, we have invested in tools and practices that are helping us address these and similar questions in foreign contexts. We have learned much about how data analytics and technology can help us better understand audiences overseas and craft effective engagement. We are also aware of the limits of data and analytics, and of the continuing need for qualitative analysis that stems from direct engagement with individuals.

But even as we explore a broader scope of domestic engagement, we must be aware of and attentive to the concerns that led congressional leaders to set boundaries around the practice of Public Diplomacy in the first place. They did not want to see a federal agency propagandize the

We must show the same honesty and integrity as we engage the domestic public to build trust, just as we do overseas. It is only through trust that we can effectively communicate to the American people how foreign policy affects their lives and solicit meaningful input that can help us shape a foreign policy that is reflective of their needs and interests.

American public. Nor do we, as PD professionals, seek to propagandize audiences, whether foreign or domestic. For decades we have sought to engage honestly with foreign publics. We do not engage in manipulation, deceit, and disinformation. And we seek to hold others and countries accountable that do so. We acknowledge our shortcomings, recognize difficult challenges, and speak frankly about complex issues and hard choices. We bring together American and foreign citizens in educational and informational programs for open conversation in which they are free to disagree with and criticize government policies and activities.

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input that can help us shape a foreign policy that is reflective of their needs and interests. The Department's Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs professionals are already committed to those principles when we engage any public.

To fully realize the United States government's international Public Diplomacy goals, we need to consider the interests and views of domestic audiences. Through two-way conversations that allow the Department to listen and adapt U.S. foreign policy to the needs of the American people, the U.S. Department of State can continue to build understanding and create relationships, at home and abroad, needed to address our most pressing foreign policy priorities.

SCENESETTER PRESENTATIONS

Public Diplomacy's Domestic Dimension: Some Historical Notes

Nicholas J. Cull, Professor of Public Diplomacy, University of Southern California

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The English poet Rudyard Kipling's Ballad of East and West is remembered for its famous opening line, "Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet," despite the rest of the verse showing how they can and do meet. The gulf between the foreign and domestic dimensions of public diplomacy is not dissimilar. The two are officially separated in nomenclature, organizational charts, and legislation and yet are plainly profoundly interconnected. Indeed, public diplomacy is always Janus-faced, looking outwards and inwards simultaneously. This essay will explore the historical precedent of the overlap and outline a brief agenda for action based on that experience.



In the beginning the public dimensions of U.S. diplomacy freely mixed messages intended to foreign and domestic audiences, as seen in the text of the Declaration of Independence, crafted to both rally the new republic and to justify its existence before what the text termed a "candid world." U.S. foreign policy communication unfolded similarly. The key pattern in its first century or so was not a division between foreign and domestic spheres but rather the habit of only thinking about issues of messaging at all in times of crisis. The communication structure built for World War One - the Committee on Public Information - had both foreign and domestic responsibilities, and during World War Two the State Department opted for a single Assistant Secretary of State to oversee public affairs at home and abroad.

The wartime experience, however, opened what became an enduring concern. The Associated Press took exception to the post-war existence of U.S. government funded news broadcasting over Voice of America on the grounds that it

would compete with their own paid services. Lobbying also drew attention to examples of political bias in the wartime VOA which skewed left. The end result of the furor was careful wording in the post-war legislation authorizing public diplomacy - the Smith-Mundt Act of 1947—making clear that it was for external audiences.

The post war years saw the proliferation of activity in the public diplomacy field. One element created with a domestic audience in mind was the President's Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy where it was plain that commissioners were expected not only to lend their expertise to the State Department and (from 1953) the United States Information Agency – but also to speak up for the information program in congressional hearings and domestic statements. Smith-Mundt was not initially read as an absolute ban on the domestic dissemination of USIA materials. The archives reveal that USIA films were regularly screened on domestic TV in the 1950s, giving American viewers insights into such issues as the crisis in Hungary and U.S. cultural relations with the wider world. A surge in partisanship in the Kennedy years led to the expectation/requirement that USIA films required specific acts of Congress to be released at home. Notable approved releases included Jacqueline Kennedy's Asia Journey (1962) and the obituary film John F. Kennedy: Years of Lightning, Day of Drums (1964).

In 1972 a revision to the Smith-Mundt Act placed explicit division between foreign and domestic activity. The limits on USIA and VOA now seriously limited their ability to explain their work to domestic audiences, including severe restrictions on the availability of archive materials. The Department of State and Department of Defense faced no such difficulties. It was also noteworthy that key programs with a public dimension such as the Kennedy-era Alliance for Progress also had a domestic publicity office. USIA receded from public view like an object lesson in the proverb "out of sight, out of mind."

In the 1980s, the Reagan administration saw a need to bring the U.S. public on board with some of its more controversial foreign policies towards Central America and established an Office of Public Diplomacy, first at the White House and then at the State Department, hoping to promote support for the Contra rebels. The initiative was widely criticized, and its use

of the term "public diplomacy" for an essentially propagandistic activity after twenty years of work to keep the term clear from such a taint, was especially regrettable.

In the post-Cold War years, the Clinton administration, acknowledging the enhanced significance of communication in the era of the internet, flirted with an integrated structure in an initiative proposed in National Security Decision Document 68 in 1998. Uproar in the press blocked the idea. It was, however, notable that when USIA merged into the Department of State in 1999, its overseeing official was Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy AND Public Affairs.

Evidence that the rigid division of foreign and domestic has outlived its usefulness may be readily gained

from a glance at other states. In China, public diplomacy is seen as a primarily domestic activity. In Russia, foreign policy is a major subject for domestic messaging as part of an emphasis on Russia as surrounded by hostile neighbors, especially to the West. Israel has sought to enroll its citizens in external communication or hasbara (explaining), even creating a reality show-style competition called *The Ambassador* (2004-5) to focus attention on the challenge of speaking to foreign audiences. Interest in national brands has also driven attention to domestic audiences in many places. The integrity of a brand rests on quality control and a viable national brand needs public buy-in. For countries like South Africa, the domestic promotion of the brand is the core activity of the responsible agency.

Despite the wisdom of attending to a domestic dimension, such a strategy has considerable risk. The special concern historically within the U.S. over the mixing of foreign and domestic engagement cannot lightly be set aside. Many experts have raised concerns over the recent merger at the Department of State of the externally focused bureau of International Information Programs (IIP) and the domestically directed bureau of Public Affairs into a single Global Public Affairs bureau. The core issue is not really one of domestic

The time has come to rethink the rigid division of the foreign and domestic operation of U.S. public diplomacy. The old firewall is out of step with the transnational nature of today's media and the transnational lives lived by so many people. We know that a word spoken in Kansas can be heard in Kandahar and vice versa.

propaganda. There is no shortage of channels by which American governments seek to influence their own population. The issue is that the overwhelming political relevance of the domestic audience will leach attention and budget away from international work, diverting resources like an everhungry cuckoo hatchling displacing a less assertive nestmate. More than this, it should be remembered that we live at a time of increasing hostility on the international stage when international adversaries have every incentive to exploit any development that can be displayed in a negative light. An appearance of Orwellian "thought control" in foreign policy would be a gift to any U.S. government detractors at home or abroad.

With this said, it is notable that some U.S. public diplomacy initiatives already enjoy a level of domestic support. Radio Marti has always benefited from its connection to the Cuban American community in Florida. It was born from their lobbying and has been maintained with an eye to their electoral influence. Fulbright has a constituency in U.S. academia, and the role of the State Department in maintaining the inflow of international students in general is a boon to many locations in the United States. At a time when many American cities are reinvigorating sister city and similar international links, there are opportunities for cities to become more significant partners in foreign policy. The challenge is not so much to find partners but to find ways to engage them that rise above the zero sum of U.S. partisan politics. The value of the educational exchange frame may be its appeal across the political spectrum and non-partisan nature of so many of the issues engaged.

Taken in sum, it is clear that the time has come to rethink the rigid division of the foreign and domestic operation of U.S. public diplomacy. The old firewall is out of step with the transnational nature of today's media and the transnational lives lived by so many people. We know that a word spoken in Kansas can be heard in Kandahar and vice versa. But plans to respond to this new reality need to be made carefully. It is important that missions and budgets are clearly defined and protected, lest the supremacy of the domestic drown out what is best for foreign audiences. It is also important that domestic assumptions of credibility are not automatically applied to foreign audiences. We know that similarity is a great engine of credibility. A public diplomacy created to appeal in part to a domestic audience runs the risk of being ill suited for foreign tastes.

With this all said, the issue of domestic against international priorities is only one of many issues facing U.S. public diplomacy as it advances into the third decade of the 21st

century. Its greatest need must always be for leadership from the highest level. The starkest difference between the international information bureaucracies of the U.S. and those of China and Russia is not in budget or a balance between foreign and domestic priorities but in leadership. It is only in the United States that the senior position in public diplomacy - that of Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs – has been vacant for 40% of the time since its inception. It is in issues of leadership that the process of rebuilding U.S. public diplomacy must begin.

SCENESETTER PRESENTATIONS

American Public Opinion and International Engagement

Richard Wike, Director of Global Attitudes Research, Pew Research Center



American Public Opinion and International Engagement

Richard Wike, Director of Global Attitudes Research, Pew Research Center

As it swept across borders only weeks after it first emerged, COVID-19 painfully illustrated the dark side of an interconnected world where problems are not easily contained within national or regional boundaries. Similarly, rising temperatures and increasingly common severe weather around the world demonstrate the truly global nature of the climate crisis. For many, the pandemic, climate change, and other global challenges highlight the need for greater cooperation among nations. Our studies at the Pew Research Center have found that, on balance, the American public tends to embrace the basic principles of international cooperation. Still, many have reservations about engaging with other countries, and they are distrustful of multilateral organizations. And like so many issues in American public opinion, there are sharp divisions along partisan lines on questions about international engagement.

Cooperation vs Competition

In part, differing views on this topic stem from differing perspectives about globalization. In 2019, we conducted **focus groups** among ordinary citizens in both the United States and the United Kingdom to explore attitudes toward globalization and its impact on societies. While these groups were diverse and stretched across both nations, their participants largely viewed globalization through one of two lenses: cooperation or competition.

Those who see the global arena as a battleground for competition believe that increased international connections have meant greater insecurity and threats to their country's ability to maintain power and influence. These participants were deeply skeptical of multilateral organizations, with some in the U.S. groups claiming that organizations like the UN and the G7 were avenues for "global government" or for other nations to assert power over the U.S. and "try to tell everybody what to do." Many also described international engagement with the language of grievance. Republican participants, in particular, highlighted ways in which America has been taken advantage of by other countries such as China.

However, those who see possibilities for cooperation in the international arena emphasized the interconnectivity of nations and people, and the need for all countries to take responsibility for tackling global problems. U.S. participants with this worldview stressed that America's interests are closely tied to the interests of other nations, and they emphasized that we will only be able to solve major challenges by cooperating with others. As one Houston respondent said, globalization involves "recognizing that we are all passengers on spaceship earth ... [and] share a common interest."

Focus groups in U.S. and UK expose divide between those who view globalization as zero-sum competition and those who see new possibilities for cooperation.

DIVIDE BETWEEN THOSE WHO SEE GLOBALIZATION DIFFERENTLY



COOPERATION

All countries should work together and take responsibility for international issues.

Our country cannot solve major world problems alone.

What happens in other countries affects our country; we are all interconnected.



COMPETITION

Our country should stand above others.

International organizations exert too much power.

Working with other countries minimizes our country's position in the world and allows others to take advantage of us.

Note: This graphical representation reflects the breadth of ideas shared by focus group participants, not the frequency with which these ideas came up.

Source: Focus groups conducted Aug. 19-Nov. 20, 2019. In U.S. and UK, Globalization Leaves Some Feeling "Left Behind" or "Swept Up" PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Sharp Partisan Divisions

The survey research we've conducted suggests most Americans see some value in cooperation - at least cooperating with allies. In a 2021 poll, 64% said the U.S. should take into account the interests of its allies even if it means making compromises with them; just 34% said the U.S. should follow its own national interests even when its allies strongly disagree. However, there were large partisan differences: while 80% of Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents believed the U.S. should take into account the interests of allies, just 47% of Republicans and Republican-leaning independents agreed.

In addition to party, people's views are shaped by where they get their news. Republicans who say their major sources of political news are only those with right-leaning audiences are more likely than other Republicans to think the U.S. should follow its own interests. Similarly, Democrats who only rely on sources with left-leaning audiences are especially likely to think the U.S. should consider the interests of allies.

An increasingly partisan media environment is one factor contributing to growing polarization in the U.S., although what makes American polarization truly "exceptional" in many ways is the country's relatively rigid, two-party electoral system, which collapses a wide range of legitimate social and political debates

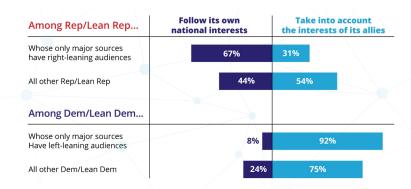
On balance, the American public tends to embrace the basic principles of international cooperation. Still, many have reservations about engaging with other countries and they are distrustful of multilateral organizations. And like so many issues in American public opinion, there are sharp divisions along partisan lines on questions about international engagement.

into a singular battle line. As social cleavages and the party system have changed in recent years, many societal tensions have become consolidated into two competing camps. The result is a growing partisan gap on a vast array of issues, including international engagement.

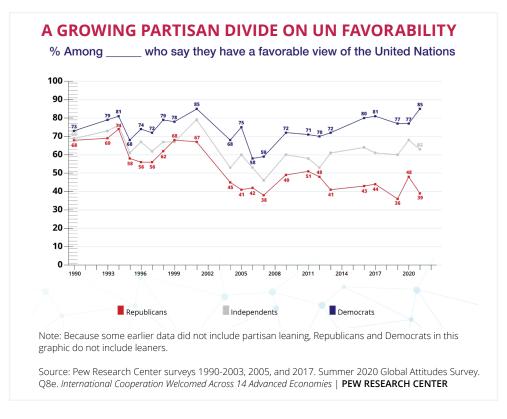
You can see this in attitudes toward the world's most prominent multilateral organization, the United Nations. When we first asked Americans whether they have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of the UN in 1990, roughly seven-in-ten Democrats, independents, and Republicans gave the organization a positive rating. By 2021, there was a 46-percentage point partisan gap, with Democrats more than twice as likely as Republicans to express a favorable view.

WITHIN EACH PARTY, AMERICANS' VIEWS ABOUT MULTILATERALISM VARY BY NEWS DIET

% of U.S. adults who think the U.S. should in foreign policy



Note: Respondents were asked which of eight outlets they use as major political news sources. The Fox News cable channel and talk radio shows such as Sean Hannity or Rush Limbaugh have audiences that lean Republican and conservative. CNN, MSNBC, NPR, New York Times, and Washington Post have audiences that lean Democratic and liberal. Sources whose audiences are more mixed include ABC, CBS, or NBC network television news. Grouping of outlet audiences and media diets are based on data from September 2020. | Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Feb. 1-7, 2021. | PEW RESEARCH CENTER



and improving health care. And majorities said the U.S. can learn a lot from countries about dealing with other major policy issues, such as addressing climate change, improving race relations, and the economy.

Here again, there were large differences between Democrats and Republicans, with the former much more likely to think the U.S. can learn from other nations.

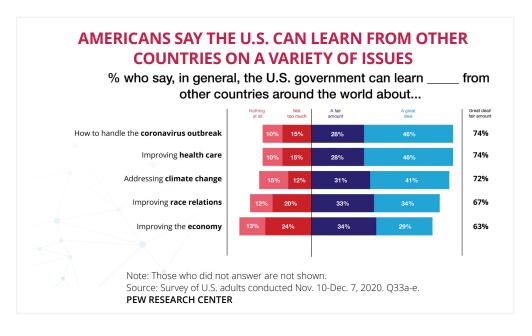
Young people were also consistently more likely to see the importance of learning from the rest of the world. For instance, 86% of 18- to 29-year-olds said the U.S. could learn a great deal or fair amount about improving health care, compared with 67% of those ages 50 and older.

Benefits of Engagement

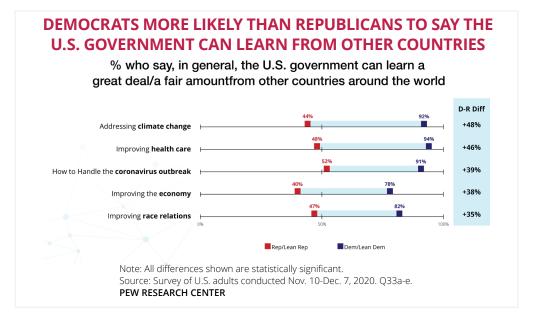
When asked about the specific benefits of engaging with other nations, once again Americans tend to see real value in working with others, although the magnitude of partisan divides is still striking. Solid majorities of Americans in a 2021 survey said the U.S. benefits a great deal or fair amount from being a member of NATO (71%), the UN (67%), and the World Health Organization (WHO) (65%); however, attitudes differ widely along partisan lines. For instance, 88% of Democrats said the U.S. benefits a great deal or fair amount from membership in the WHO, but just 38% of Republicans said the same.

A question we asked in the summer of 2020 highlights the degree to which many Americans think international engagement can help on a critical issue like the pandemic. Roughly six-in-ten (58%) said that if the U.S. had cooperated more with other countries, the number of coronavirus cases in the U.S. would have been lower. Majorities in most of the other 13 nations surveyed also thought their countries would have had fewer cases if they had cooperated more with others.

Most Americans also believe their country can improve how it deals with major challenges by **learning from other nations.** In a survey conducted in November and December of 2020 – in the depths of the pandemic – roughly three-quarters of Americans said the U.S. government could learn at least a fair amount from other countries about handling the coronavirus outbreak



However, even those who see value in international engagement sometimes lack confidence in the international community's ability to address major global problems. Climate change is an important example. In the spring of 2021, as the COP26 climate summit was approaching, 54% of Americans said they were not confident that the actions taken by the international community will significantly reduce the effects of global climate change. On this issue, the American public is very similar to other advanced economies – across 16 economically advanced nations, a median of 52% lacked confidence in the international community's ability to deal effectively with the climate crisis.



When it comes to climate and other issues, ordinary citizens in the U.S. and elsewhere tend to believe in the values and aspirations of international cooperation, but they are not sure global leaders and multilateral institutions will be able to meet

those aspirations and deliver on the major challenges facing their countries and world.

WORKSHOP DISCUSSION OUTCOMES

The Domestic Dimension of Public Diplomacy: Purviews

Vivian S. Walker Moderator

The Domestic Dimension of Public Diplomacy: Purviews

Vivian S. Walker, Executive Director, U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy

The "Purviews" working group explored the scope and authorities of public diplomacy's domestic dimension, with the intent of identifying the desired strategic outcomes of domestic PD engagement, establishing specific policy and issue sets, discussing risks and benefits, and thinking through implications for current or "traditional" public diplomacy practices.

The working group began by wrestling with the concept of domestic public diplomacy, attempting to come up with a workable definition. Several options emerged, beginning with

the concept of "deliberative public diplomacy," or domestic public diplomacy as a "representative, consultative and inclusive" process that specifically seeks out and represents domestic interests. As many years of low domestic support for foreign aid programs indicate, the "what's in it for us?" question must be convincingly answered.

This form of domestic public diplomacy features a focus on domestic, non-state input into foreign policy analysis and decision making. The legitimacy of this feedback process is dependent on public perceptions of effectiveness. Even as "deliberative" public diplomacy implies the prioritization of national public interest, the process itself involves the erasure of borders between domestic and international engagement, a nod to the fluid nature of the global information space.

Another way to think about deliberative public diplomacy is as a form of "people's" or participatory diplomacy. This conceptualization of domestic public diplomacy privileges the facilitation of increased domestic engagement in the foreign policy development process through the consolidation of individual opinions and outlooks on national security and economic priorities. Participatory diplomacy also requires the development of popular platforms for collaboration in diplomatic processes. Education will be a key component

provides an effective means to promote "geopolitical literacy" by enabling domestic audiences to understand how global events can have local impacts.

of this enterprise, which otherwise risks becoming yet another "elitist enterprise" in the foreign policy arena.

The working group offered a range of desired strategic outcomes for domestic public diplomacy engagement. Participants agreed that a clear, nuanced understanding of domestic interests and perceptions must be built into outreach and influence activities in order to assure their strategic value. They emphasized the need to make listening to diverse domestic publics a strategic priority and to embed inclusiveness into the listening process to avoid polarization and/

or marginalization. Avoiding perceptual dissonance will strengthen the institutional legitimacy of domestic public diplomacy operations.

Working group members also raised the need to consistently highlight the localized impact of foreign policy initiatives so that domestic publics understand how their individual and community interests, personal and commercial, are linked to national strategic priorities. At the same time, participants acknowledged that an exclusive focus on geostrategic competition for influence in the global media space is counter-productive. Understanding the importance of cooperative and collaborative behaviors through the identification of shared values and interests is also essential to strategic outcomes. On a related note, participants reiterated the strategic importance of countering disinformation about domestic interest, values, and policies, and recognized that keeping the public informed about national security and economic priorities is essential.

In thinking about specific policies and issues appropriate for domestic public diplomacy engagement, working group members stressed the need to identify issues that link domestic and foreign public interests such as climate change, migration mobility, and the promotion of inclusiveness

and diversity. Participants agreed that youth audiences could serve as the principal drivers of the effort to establish mutuality of interests, particularly with respect to social and environmental issues. In addition to a focus on issues reflecting broad global interests, participants noted the need to include city and regional concerns such as the promotion of trade and investment and the management of immigration and migration issues.

Working group participants acknowledged several risks associated with domestic public diplomacy engagement. First, a hyper partisan political environment—and the consequent politicization of the national foreign policy agenda—may derail domestic outreach efforts. An associated risk is insufficient information sharing about outcomes of foreign policy engagements—the failures as well as successes. Transparency is critical to credibility. Finally, participants noted that in the absence of adequate data sharing and contextualization, policy advocacy may cross over into the realm of propaganda, with consequences for the perceived legitimacy of outreach efforts.

On the other hand, participants observed that domestic public diplomacy provides an effective means to promote "geopolitical literacy" by enabling domestic audiences to understand how global events produce local impacts. In addition, domestic public diplomacy outreach efforts can be used to provide data driven evidence of the domestic benefits of global engagements. Ultimately, domestic public diplomacy can reinforce connections between citizens of different countries by working toward a global community of shared interests. Working group members concurred that existing city and state level diplomacy initiatives have much to offer in this regard.

Finally, participants teased out several implications for "traditional" external public diplomacy engagements. They emphasized that domestic public diplomacy programming should build on existing USG PD programs/initiatives (domestic and international) and networks (practitioner/stakeholder/alumni) to avoid the dilution and duplication of effort. Funding, personnel, training, and other resources necessary to implement domestic public diplomacy programs should not come at the expense of existing initiatives. As a prelude to the identification of new domestic public diplomacy initiatives, it will be necessary to have a full review of existing PD programming at home and abroad in order to identify gaps, shortfalls, or new areas for development.

WORKSHOP DISCUSSION OUTCOMES

The Domestic Dimension of Public Diplomacy: Publics

Kathy R. Fitzpatrick Moderator

The Domestic Dimension of Public Diplomacy: Publics

Kathy R. Fitzpatrick, Director, The Zimmerman School at the University of South Florida

The "Publics" working group defined strategic domestic publics as those who have the ability to influence U.S. public diplomacy and foreign policy outcomes and those with whom U.S. public diplomacy might partner to advance public diplomacy goals. Specific goals and objectives that could be addressed through diplomatic outreach to domestic publics include enhancing mutual understanding among foreign and domestic publics; increasing knowledge and understanding among domestic publics of U.S. global engagement and its importance to national security and American prosperity; building a domestic constituency that supports U.S. public diplomacy; and expanding the pool of resources for achieving public diplomacy goals.



publics.

Department of State retirees in the United States were identified as potential partners who would be eager to engage in domestic outreach in support of U.S. public diplomacy goals. In efforts to reach domestic publics, the working group suggested that the State Department work with private sector partners already working with the U.S. government (e.g., corporations and citizens networks) to leverage existing networks and resources, including State Department offices, the Office of Foreign Missions, Diplomats in Residence, Consular Corps, National Council for International Visitors, Global Ties U.S., and city international affairs offices. Participants also identified American teachers who have worked abroad and American

universities as potential partners for domestic outreach and engagement.

The working group identified a number of roles that domestic publics and partners might play in advancing U.S. public diplomacy goals. For example, they could serve as domestic advocates for U.S. global engagement. They could help to facilitate U.S. public diplomacy efforts with resources, networks, platforms, expertise, and tools. They could serve as influencers who shape the opinions of others, such as relatives in home countries, community leaders, and media. And, finally, they could form a domestic constituency to help secure resources for U.S. public diplomacy from Congress.

Specific activities suggested by the working group for engaging domestic publics included organizing cultural events; providing platforms for advocacy to under-represented groups; plugging into existing domestic outreach networks, projects, and initiatives; creating a diplomacy reserve corps that includes experts across civil society and former government officials who can discuss transnational issues (e.g., cyber, natural disasters, climate change); and creating opportunities for information sharing in local communities through, for example, the media and local universities.

Diasporas in the United States and abroad (e.g., ethnic, religious, national) were identified as one of the most important domestic publics. Local opinion leaders in positions to connect foreign policy to local communities also were considered important publics. Although the working group viewed domestic outreach to interested and engaged publics involved in government and political activities (e.g., mayors, foreign diplomats, community leaders) as most important in advancing public diplomacy goals, they said it also will be important to engage uninterested/unengaged publics to increase knowledge and understanding of the local impacts of U.S. global engagement. Youth audiences and emerging leaders (e.g., college standouts) were cited as key domestic publics for enhancing mutual understanding with foreign publics and for building a domestic constituency for public diplomacy over time. The need to engage members of Congress and other lawmakers in positions to support the advancement of public diplomacy goals with additional resources also was noted.

In terms of domestic messaging, the working group recommended a focus on U.S. values (e.g., democracy) and societal issues (e.g., racial justice) rather than policy advocacy. Members of the group suggested that in aligning foreign policy goals with domestic priorities, engagement should focus on shared concerns (e.g., climate change) and emphasize problem solving by demonstrating how U.S. foreign policy leads to solutions to local problems that citizens and communities care about. In other words, show why U.S. global engagement matters at home by linking U.S. global engagement to local

benefits. The working group cited the importance of honesty and transparency in messaging (e.g., "warts and all") and engagement with domestic publics in both urban and rural areas. Finally, it was noted that the State Department must be a competitor to disinformation and misinformation about U.S. foreign policy by providing an alternative source of information and messaging on matters related to U.S. global engagement.

WORKSHOP DISCUSSION OUTCOMES

The Domestic Dimension of Public Diplomacy: Policies

Jay Wang Moderator

The Domestic Dimension of Public Diplomacy: Policies

Jay Wang, Director, Center on Public Diplomacy, USC Annenberg

The "Policies" working group addressed policy and resource questions concerning the domestic dimension of public diplomacy. The discussion covered the key legal, organizational, operational, and financial policy challenges associated with a focus on domestic PD. The working group also explored ideas and opportunities for building public diplomacy at the municipal and regional level.

Before establishing a new office or set of offices to facilitate the domestic dimension of PD, it would be useful to explore the use of existing platforms.

The misrepresentation and misunderstanding of the Smith-Mundt Act emerged as a major *legislative challenge* facing the exploration of domestic public diplomacy initiatives. PD practitioners must conduct their due diligence by carefully reviewing the letter of the law to determine what the Act does and does not allow. The political context under which such discussions take place plays a key role in how they may be interpreted. A divisive political context has made it harder to reopen this policy debate, as negative media coverage incentivizes partisan divides, with opposition labeling any reforms of the Smith-Mundt Act as promoting manipulative propaganda campaigns. There is a clear need to reframe the narrative about the Smith-Mundt Act, deepen Congressional understanding of the issues, and investigate other legislative tools to promote domestic public diplomacy.

Organizational challenges to domestic public diplomacy are centered in prevailing concerns about how the PD apparatus is deployed within the State Department and the general resistance to anything that was historically linked with propaganda at home. There is also fear of the partisan nature of policy advocacy—hence the hesitancy on the part of public diplomacy officers to be bringing such communication back home. While the Department of Defense has successfully promoted itself domestically with its extensive media connections, public diplomacy in contrast lacks robust institutional backing and mechanism for the domestic audience. This has in turn made public diplomacy a neglected topic with a perceived lack of relevance and impact on the lives of the American people.

Operational challenges to pursuing PD at the local level are fundamentally rooted in the lack of dialogue and coordination between local leaders and those in the national foreign affairs system. While trusted local leaders can articulate foreign policy gains in terms that resonate with their constituencies, they would benefit from any communications that would enhance greater understanding of ongoing global events and policies. In order to encourage the cultivation

of a more globally-minded citizenry, the relevance and impact of international affairs and relationships on domestic audiences must be made explicit. There are no institutionalized mechanisms that aid local governments in promoting this connection. Moreover, policy engagement at the local level is made more difficult by polarization and political risk.

Perhaps the most enduring issue facing public diplomacy is the *resource challenge*. Public diplomacy funding is a question of resource prioritization. To preserve high-impact programs that merit additional assistance from Congress, the public diplomacy apparatus must determine which programs should receive less funding or be cut altogether. Considering limited funding from Washington, people in government should see the value of having partners with resources, rather than viewing the public diplomacy space as a zero-sum game.

Ideas and Suggestions

Participants made a number of suggestions to address the challenges as outlined. Before establishing a new office or set of offices to facilitate the domestic dimension of PD, it would be useful to explore the use of existing platforms. The working group also observed that while traditional forums, such as town hall meetings, may elicit political confrontations, there are rich opportunities in both urban and rural environments to promote public diplomacy through an apolitical lens. By emphasizing problem-solving and relationship-building, practitioners may garner more support for their initiatives.

Promoting policies that look towards the future and better engage young people is another untapped source of potential support for public diplomacy that could build meaningful coalitions around global issues, such as public health and climate change. And a diplomatic reserve corps could create a place where experts across civil society could come together with government officials to discuss transnational issues—cyber security, natural disasters and climate change—allowing for a cross-sector understanding of key challenges facing local, national, and global communities.

Working group participants also proposed the examination of new ways to engage audiences within the U.S., such as by establishing relationships with young foreign diplomats working in consulates who will rise in their careers. Given broad consensus on the importance of international and cultural exchange, participants also recommended that all public diplomacy funding, including that directed specifically to the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, should be consolidated under the authority of the Undersecretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs to maximize efficiencies and assure the best distribution of resources in the service of foreign policy priorities.

Reflections on Purposes of Domestic Public Diplomacy

Finally, the working group for the policy discussion raised several pertinent preconditions for rethinking the domestic dimension of public diplomacy. Any individual or entity interested in furthering public diplomacy domestically should be precise about intended outcomes. Without a clear direction as to why practitioners are engaging with domestic audiences, showcasing tangible results with clear outcomes becomes even more difficult for a field that has traditionally struggled to address such challenges comprehensively. Is domestic PD intended to better explain foreign policy to domestic audiences in order to build a stronger constituency for diplomacy and international affairs? Or is its goal to further public diplomacy toward foreign audiences by enlisting broader participation and engagement of domestic audiences in these endeavors? These are the questions that need to be answered.

Key Takeaways and Framing Questions

Key Takeaways and Framing Questions

The scene setters' presentations and working group discussions yielded a rich set of insights into the value of a focus on public diplomacy's domestic dimension. These takeaways, along with an accompanying set of framing questions, will, we hope, serve as a resource for the public diplomacy practitioner, policy, and scholarly communities. It was our intent to provide a preliminary overview of the risks and costs as well as the benefits and opportunities of domestic information and influence activities. We look forward to continuing the discussion with public diplomacy partners and stakeholders!

Key Takeaways

Domestic Public Diplomacy Planning



- Domestic public diplomacy should have defined goals and clear objectives and include measurement tools to gauge effectiveness and demonstrate tangible outcomes.
- Domestic publics should include those who have the ability to influence U.S. public diplomacy and foreign policy outcomes and those with whom U.S. public diplomacy might partner to advance public diplomacy goals.
- Domestic public diplomacy should be a form of "people's" or participatory diplomacy, defined as a "representative, consultative and inclusive" process that specifically seeks out and represents domestic interests.
- Strategic domestic publics should include:
 - Diasporas in the United States and abroad, to include African Americans, who are often overlooked as a diaspora community despite their historical connections to Africa and other parts of the world;
 - Private sector partners already working with the U.S. government (e.g., corporations and citizens networks) to leverage
 existing networks and resources;
 - Influencers who shape the opinions of others (e.g., media, universities);
 - Youth audiences and emerging leaders;
 - "Foreign" partners in the U.S., such as young foreign diplomats working in consulates who will rise in their careers;
 - American teachers with experience abroad;
 - Members of Congress and other lawmakers;
 - Department of State retirees.
- A domestic PD reserve corps consisting of experts across civil society and government officials could help to address transnational issues, allowing for a cross-sectoral understanding of key challenges facing local, national, and global communities.
- Domestic public diplomacy should be forward-looking with outreach to young people who can help build meaningful coalitions around global issues, such as public health and climate change.

Domestic Public Diplomacy Programming



- Domestic public diplomacy programming should build on existing USG PD programs/initiatives (domestic and international) and networks (practitioner/stakeholder/alumni) to avoid dilution and duplication of effort.
- Domestic public diplomacy efforts should emphasize problem solving and relationship building.
- Domestic PD initiatives should focus on issues that link domestic and foreign public interests such as climate change, migration mobility, and the promotion of inclusiveness and diversity.
- Localized impacts of foreign policy interventions should be consistently highlighted so that domestic audiences understand how their individual and community interests are linked to national strategic priorities.
- Domestic public diplomacy efforts should address the potential for a hyper partisan political environment—and the consequent politicization of the national foreign policy agenda—to influence domestic outreach efforts.
- Domestic public diplomacy efforts should include both urban and rural opportunities that promote public diplomacy through an apolitical lens.

Domestic Public Diplomacy Policies



- PD funding should be consolidated under the sole authority of the Undersecretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs to maximize efficiencies and assure the best distribution of resources in the service of foreign policy priorities.
- Discussion of the Smith-Mundt Act should be reframed in consideration of a domestic PD focus.
- Rather than establishing new offices/bureaucratic structures to facilitate PD's domestic dimension, incentives should be created to work within existing institutions.
- Additional capacity and training may be needed to launch and sustain a robust domestic dimension.
- Outreach to members of Congress will be important to build awareness and knowledge regarding the importance of the domestic dimension of public diplomacy.
- In order to cultivate a more globally minded citizenry, the relevance and impact of international affairs and relationships on domestic audiences must be made explicit and resources must be made available to support local initiatives.

Framing Questions

- How can PD increase support among domestic publics for U.S. global engagement and U.S. public diplomacy? What would that support look like?
- How can greater collaboration between and among the foreign policy community and state/local leaders on global initiatives be institutionalized?
- How can the private sector better support PD initiatives and reinforce alignment between foreign policy and local priorities?
- How can U.S. foreign policy's impact on people's everyday lives be demonstrated?
- How can active engagement by U.S. citizens in public diplomacy programs be encouraged? What types of engagement?
- How can citizen advocacy influence political leaders to increase PD funding and resources? What types of advocacy? Which political leaders?

Workshop Speaker and Moderator Biographies

Workshop Speaker Biographies

Nicholas J. Cull is Professor of Communication at the USC Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism and a Global Communication Policy Fellow at the Center for Communication Leadership and Policy. He is originally from the U.K. His BA (International History and Politics) and PhD (History) were both from the University of Leeds. He also studied at Princeton as a Harkness Fellow of the Commonwealth Fund of New York. He taught at Birmingham University and at University of Leicester where, as one of the U.K.'s youngest full professors, he launched the Center on American Studies in 1997.

Moving to USC in 2005, he was the founding director of the master's program in public diplomacy and part of the team recognized by the Department of State with the Benjamin Franklin award. From 2004 to 2019, Cull served as president of the International Association for Media and History. He has provided advice and training in public diplomacy to a number of foreign ministries and cultural agencies around the world, including those of the U.S., U.K., Canada, Mexico, Switzerland, and the Netherlands. His many books include *Public Diplomacy: Foundations for Global Engagement in the Digital Age* (Polity, 2019).

Jennifer Hall Godfrey was delegated the functions and authorities of the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs from January 20, 2021 until March 30, 2022. She served as Executive Assistant/Chief of Staff to the Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs (R/PPR) from July 2018 until January 2021.

Ms. Hall Godfrey is a career member of the Senior Foreign Service. She joined the Department of State as a public diplomacy officer in 1998, and served overseas in Jordan (1999-2001), Turkmenistan (2002-2004), Libya (2007-2009), Austria (2010-2013), and Saudi Arabia (2015-2018). In Washington, she served as Press Officer in the Bureau of International Organization Affairs (2004-2006) and as Deputy Director and then Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Media Engagement in the Bureau of Public Affairs (2014-2015).

Ms. Hall Godfrey earned a B.A. from Brandeis University and an M.S. in National Security Strategy from the National War College. She speaks Arabic, Russian, and Spanish.

Richard Wike is director of global attitudes research at Pew Research Center. He conducts research and writes about international public opinion on a variety of topics, such as America's global image, the rise of China, democracy, and globalization. He is an author of numerous Pew Research Center reports and has written pieces for The Atlantic, Foreign Affairs, Financial Times, the Guardian, Politico, Foreign Policy, CNN, BBC, CNBC, and other online and print publications. Wike has been interviewed by American news organizations such as The Wall Street Journal, The Washington Post, NBC, CNN, C-SPAN, and NPR, as well as numerous non-U.S. news organizations, including The Financial Times, The Guardian, El País, BBC, Deutsche Welle, France 24, and Al Jazeera. Wike gives talks and presentations to a variety of audiences, including government, think tanks, business groups, and academic conferences. Wike received a doctorate in political science from Emory University. Before joining Pew Research Center, he was a senior associate for international and corporate clients at Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research.

Workshop Moderator Biographies

Kathy R. Fitzpatrick is a professor and director of The Zimmerman School at the University of South Florida (USF). Prior to joining USF, she was a professor and former senior associate dean for academic affairs in the School of Communication at American University in Washington, D.C. Fitzpatrick formerly served as associate dean of graduate programs and research in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication at Florida International University and also served on the faculties of Quinnipiac University, DePaul University, the University of Florida, and Southern Methodist University. In 2009-2011, she was a research fellow and is currently a CPD Faculty Fellow in the Center on Public Diplomacy at the University of Southern California.

Fitzpatrick is an internationally recognized scholar in public relations and public diplomacy. Her research has been published in top scholarly journals, including *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy*, *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*, the *International Journal of Strategic Communications*, the *Journal of Public Relations Research*, the *Journal of Advertising*, the *Journal of Media Ethics*, the *Journal of Communication Management* and *Public Relations Review*. Books and monographs include *The Future of U.S. Public Diplomacy: An Uncertain Fate*, *U.S. Public Diplomacy's Neglected Domestic Mandate* and *U.S. Public Diplomacy in a Post-9/11 World: From Messaging to Mutuality*. She is the co-founding editor of the Palgrave Macmillan Book Series on Global Public Diplomacy and a member of the editorial boards of the *Journal of Public Relations Research*, *International Journal of Strategic Communications*, *Public Relations Journal and the Journal of Media Ethics*.

Vivian S. Walker is the Executive Director of the United States Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy. Following a 26-year career with the State Department in multiple leadership positions, she retired with the senior rank of Minister Counselor and became a teacher, writer and researcher. Currently a Faculty Fellow in the Center on Public Diplomacy at the University of Southern California and an Adjunct Professor at Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service, she has also taught at Central European University's School of Public Policy and served as a Research Fellow at the CEU Center for Media, Data and Society. A former Professor of National Security Strategy at the National War College in Washington, DC and the National Defense College of the United Arab Emirates. Dr. Walker has published and lectured extensively on the practice of public diplomacy in complex information environments. She graduated from Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service and earned her doctorate in English language and literature from the University of Chicago.

Jian (Jay) Wang is director of the Center on Public Diplomacy and an associate professor at USC Annenberg. A scholar and consultant in the fields of strategic communication and public diplomacy, he previously worked for the international consulting firm McKinsey & Company, where he advised clients on matters of communication strategy and implementation across a variety of industries and sectors.

Wang has written widely on the role of communication in the contemporary process of globalization. His most recent book, *Debating Public Diplomacy: Now and Next*, is a co-edited volume that casts forward to examine future directions of public diplomacy's research agenda. He is the author of *Shaping China's Global Imagination: Nation Branding at the World Expo* and several other books. His research has been published in *Journal of Communication, Journal of Broadcast & Electronic Media, Management Communication Quarterly, Public Relations Review* and *Place Branding & Public Diplomacy*. He serves on the editorial board of the *International Journal of Communication*.

Wang has also developed innovative, policy-relevant research and programming across a range of public diplomacy issues ranging from soft power in global affairs, United States public diplomacy and national security, to digital advocacy, public diplomacy performance and evaluation. Prior to joining USC, Wang taught at Purdue University.





Exploring U.S. Public Diplomacy's Domestic Dimensions:

Purviews, Publics, and Policies

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