

Wag the WeiWei – A US boot in the Asian door.

To which extent is the US utilizing hard power and soft power in its recent involvement in the Asia Pacific?



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Abstract

The growing interdependence and interconnectedness of the global community set the pace and frame for the evolution of foreign policy. Diplomacy formerly being the reserve of international communication has consequently been forced to change and branch out. This essay attempts to view these changes and their context at the example of US foreign policy in Pacific Asia. Both hard power expressing traditional Realpolitik, as well as soft power expressed through public diplomacy (PD), play their part. The latter though, can only be observed in the historical and political context of the former. The recent US interest in the Pacific region has involved the deployment of carrier groups and "sweet-talking" of regional economic powers alike. Attempts to establish a foothold in what is generally considered to be the prime market and potential flashpoint of the future have also included the marketing of the Chinese dissident WeiWei as a symbol for democratic values and human rights. This example serves as the blueprint for what we are defining as *Publicity Diplomacy* (PyD), a hybrid state of state-public communication, situated between the extremes of propaganda and public diplomacy that can further develop in either direction or linger in its in-between state. We find that US involvement in the Asia Pacific still is much characterized by the usage of hard power, with military deployments and tactical alliances being at the core of the current overall strategy. However, we can glimpse signs of profound engagement in PD and a far stronger orientation towards communication and community-building (smart power) within the Obama administration compared to its predecessors. So far, many of these efforts still range within the sphere of PyD and it remains to be seen to which extent soft power and hard power will eventually shape the quickly developing US-Asia Pacific story.

List of abbreviations:

BBG = Broadcasting Board of Governors

CCC = Chinese Central Committee

CSIS = Center for Strategic and International Studies

DOD = Department of Defense

ECA = Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs

IGO = International governmental organization

NIC = National Intelligence Council

TPP = Transpacific Partnership

PCC = Strategic Communication and Public Diplomacy Policy Coordinating Committee

PD = Public Diplomacy

PPS = State Department Policy Planning Staff

PR = Public Relation(s)

PyD = Publicity Diplomacy

WMD = Weapon(s) of Mass Destruction

WW2 = World War 2

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1. Introduction

"America is the strongest military power and we intend to remain the strongest military power and nobody ought to mess with that."

- Secretary of Defence Leon Panetta, 2012

"We must use what has been called 'smart power,' the full range of tools at our disposal—diplomatic, economic, military, political, legal, and cultural—picking the right tool, or combination of tools, for each situation."

- Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, 2009

1.1 Question, motivation, and background

The main question in this essay is equal to its subtitle: to which extent is the US utilizing hard power and soft power in its recent involvement in the Asia Pacific? We seek to visualize recent US political engagement in the Asia Pacific in regards to the changing nature of diplomatic conduct, which in turn is based on the changing international interaction and mounting complexity. This development, as we shall demonstrate, is mirrored in the US employment of both hard and soft power.

We became motivated to write about the subject and its wider connotations noticing its coverage in the media being on the rise, particularly during the last twelve months. With the engagements in Iraq and Afghanistan ending, the US is now officially reorienting its geopolitical scope towards the Asia Pacific. As the last superpower (and thus hegemony) standing after the Cold War era, the US now is gradually being incorporated into a multipolar world driven more than ever by political cooperation and economic interdependence. At the same time, this changed reality has demands unto the conduct of international relations - diplomacy.

Without going too much into detail, it can be said that formal diplomacy has developed its modus operandi over time considerably. From being limited to secretive and intrigue-steered cloak and dagger business (most notoriously during the Renaissance) it developed into the main instrument for communication between modern states as we know it today.¹ Yet, there are novel demands on what diplomacy should be able to achieve. Some are rather mundane (e.g. the organization of disaster relieve efforts or being the local hub for expatriates and their needs), others resemble principal shifts in political attitudes. Public diplomacy, with its focus on mutual understanding, discourse, and community building, is more en vogue in these complex times than ever. To further distinguish, we outline the concept of publicity

diplomacy as a hybrid form between propaganda and public diplomacy and explain it via the example of the marketing of the dissident WeiWei's struggle against the Chinese regime.

As far as the title "Wag the WeiWei" is concerned, we hint towards the movie "Wag the dog" from 1997. In the movie, a war is being faked by Hollywood producers working for the US government, to divert interest from a presidential sex affair. The war is entirely filmed in studios and made believable to the (completely naive) public by running various PR stunts, culminating in the president solving the conflict and so gaining in popularity. The black-humoured comedy was released shortly after Bill Clinton's Lewinsky affair became public, yet started production even before. To connect to a movie might not seem the primary choice for a scientific work yet it provides us with an excellent metaphor and instantly sets the, in our eyes constructive, mood for critically analyzing the entanglement of PR efforts and diplomatic relations. By now, the phrase "wag the dog" has entered the common jargon of political science as a phrase for diverting from bothersome news. It such becomes the provocative and thought-stimulating ground we want this discussion about publicity and diplomacy to be built upon.

We then leave these theoretical concepts turning to the US exercise of soft and hard power in the Asia Pacific. After elucidating on the political and historical background we establish a snapshot of our times by listing some noteworthy events that transpired in the course of 2012. We have chosen US foreign politics because of the abundance and accessibility of (scientific) material and the geopolitical relevance in our times. At the same time, we rely a great deal on expert analyses and quality news articles, these being the only sources available for the most recent events. We have decidedly refrained from integrating the Chinese side into this paper, partly due to the limitations set by our institutional background and partly owing to keeping the focus of the study question aligned with the content. Further, we want to allow for a more detailed future research in comparing both US and Chinese handling of this new situation.

In the conclusion we will summarize our interpretations and connect the theoretical part to the observations, showing to which extent hard power and soft power can be witnessed in the factual US activities and greater strategic plans for the Asia Pacific, often still in the phase of PyD.

1.2. Methods and literature analysis

In order to make a stand within the contemporary field of foreign politics and public diplomacy, a presentation of both the consistent methodological approach as well as the theoretical context is required.

The methodology employed is two-fold, partly theory development and partly qualitative analysis.

Theory development is based on showing competing and/or complementing factors behind the phenomenon in question or it is done through the display of causal mechanisms. Our definition of the term/theory is wide enough to allow for modification and interpretation, thus

avoiding the trap of *data fitting*.² We see the need for theory development, in this case, because of the complex background of the concepts of public diplomacy and propaganda, respectively soft and hard power. Their causal influence on foreign policy-making and public perception is central to this essay, yet too extensively defined in the literature. We are therefore introducing the term/theory *publicity diplomacy* in between both public diplomacy and propaganda, also contributing to state-public communication. This allows us to more sharply distinguish between these phenomena and dig to the roots of causal mechanisms and possible consequences. To underscore our theoretical approach we present the case of Ai WeiWei as an example, therefore adhering to the principle of collecting “*much information on one case rather than little information on many*”.³

Introduced by this example, we then can view the (soft/hard power) US involvement in the Asia Pacific under this very lens. This constitutes the second and empirical part of our methodology, a case study of said involvement. Set up as a within-case analysis we scope the use of soft and hard power injected into the region by the US. We both provide the essential historical background (the Cold war heritage to US foreign policy) as well as contemporary examples. According to conventional political science methods we have such integrated the observation of a concrete phenomenon within a given time and space. Therefore, we have better control over other causal contributing factors. Though, we must not ignore the arguments that have been raised against within-case studies. One disadvantage is that within-case analysis is mostly suitable for theory developing studies, though limits the usage of this kind of case study in other methods such as theory testing for example. (It does not hurt our case, since we are not testing a theory.) Another issue is the proclaimed lack of variation for many explanatory factors within a context, and so is the fact that within-case studies are prone to fail to distinguish between chance and pattern for the causal factors.⁴ In our case, we have, as we shall see in the following, used a widespread empirical basis to minimize errors derived from coincidence.

In this case study we have employed an array of scientific articles, newspaper articles, books, and various high-profile governmental strategy papers as sources. Still we find ourselves in a position where an all-encompassing representation of the mechanisms of today's diplomacy cannot be established owing to the fact that most (or as we see it, the most interesting) diplomatic interventions and efforts are produced behind closed doors. What we are looking for and analyzing is all that can be seen from outside these doors of hidden power. Though some sources originate from the mass media we have made sure to only draw on quality media. This simply is a matter of necessity, because much of the content is decidedly based on contemporary events. It is best accessible through quality journalism and therefore contains no specific scientific approach. We will attempt to integrate the mass media depictions as much as is necessary to discern the events of the recent years involving the US foreign affairs.

In a context which allows no outsider to be all-knowing we try to strive for observations as independent and comprehensive as possible within these given limitations. This study aims to paint a picture of the facts as well as the perception of the state of things; after all public

diplomacy and its perception by the public cannot be depicted independently from each other - it is by definition a reciprocal and context-tied phenomenon.

As far as the theory of publicity diplomacy is concerned, it stands entitled to be applied to other contexts as well. It is not specifically American or Asian nor is it completely static. The combination of this fluid and abstract concept and the theories of hard and soft power provide us with the necessary theoretical basis to build an exemplary study upon.

Below, we concisely present the literature that proved to be most influential to our theoretical background work and thus stands out from the complete list of contributing works (provided in the bibliography).

We chose to evaluate the relevant content in Andrew F. Cooper and Brian Hocking's "Governments, Nongovernmental Organisations and the Re-calibration of Diplomacy". Cooper and Hocking pinpoint the main issues in the recent discussions of the subject and state that the increasing interaction, sharing of information, communication, and negotiating between governments and NGOs are bound to cause difficulties when neither part's boundaries are clearly defined. At the same time as the two actors are seen by traditionalists as autonomous concepts that play by their own rules in different environments. Thus they are essentially seen as two separate things that are not, or very rarely, communicating with each other. But even the traditional voices are beginning to acknowledge the appearance of a pattern of interaction between the governments and NGOs. As far as diplomacy is concerned, particularly the so called New Diplomacy (including public diplomacy), Cooper and Hocking perceive a trend that increasingly involves non-state actors in studies of diplomacy. Another movement aims at making diplomacy more effective by enunciating how dependent good governments are on non-governmental actions. But the most prominent finding for Cooper and Hocking is the ever-changing nature of diplomacy which demands nuanced and updated analyses which most definitely include non-governmental elements as interacting forces.⁵

A closer scrutiny of American public diplomacy can be found in Mohan J. Dutta-Bergman's article titled "U.S. Public Diplomacy in the Middle East". In this work, the public diplomacy of the US in the Middle East is examined by identifying diplomatic strategies in a historical and contemporary context. The Middle East is shown as an example of American interest in a region partly out of strategic purposes and partly because of increasing uneasiness in said region. The case is made for the situation resembling the currently developing situation of American presence in Asia. Dutta-Bergman chooses to define public diplomacy as the attempt of a state to transfer an image of its ideals, institutions, and culture onto the public of a foreign state through the use of strategic communication. Dutta-Bergman explains that some efforts can be classified as propaganda with their agendas hidden by using superficialities like movies, posters and photos in the press, educational material, and pamphlets. This can lead to misunderstanding and mistrust in contrast to achieving an understanding between cultures, which in Dutta-Bergman's opinion should be the prime goal of public diplomacy.⁶

Austrian scholar Thomas Nowotny, who has much practical experience in the field of diplomatic work, argues in his book “Diplomacy and Global Governance”, that previous dominating traditional diplomacy has been forced to give way to a new form of diplomacy with the world’s states being caught up in wide-ranging interdependence. Meanwhile, diplomats and embassies maintain important positions as communication hubs, for example handling brewing conflicts and managing global network communication, while constantly adjusting to the new diplomatic realities. Especially diplomats working for large states like the US possess the ability, and therefore have the responsibility, to act towards constructing mutually beneficial agendas. Nowotny claims that public diplomacy has long existed within traditional diplomacy and therefore is not a completely novel concept, although he does express scepticism towards the notion that public diplomacy plays such a decisive part as some may attribute to it.⁷

The perhaps most influential book for this essay, "Soft Power", was written by Joseph S. Nye. He develops the term soft power, which, as opposed to hard power, puts emphasis on strengthening the relationship between states by using so called attractive tools like persuasion, culture, and political ideals. The appeal of one state can determine whether other states are inclined to become allies with said state or feel repelled by it. Everything hinges on the cultural context and, despite the appealing theory, soft power should not be taken as an evangelical truth nor relied upon solely. Nye further states that soft power indeed isn't just limited to governments but also exists within the ranks of NGOs and IGOs. For the US, soft power aimed at foreign countries is appraised by a foreign public as well as their government and it is important to create positive associations with the US by applying public diplomacy correctly. In addition, he extrapolates that the combination of soft and hard power, so called *smart power*, is the way forward in (US) foreign policy of the future.⁸

We will start with a closer look at what constitutes the political realities of our era and the relevant connected theories.

2. A Changed world and the concept of public diplomacy

*"No man is an island, intire of it selfe; every man is a peece of the Continent,
a part of the maine"*

– John Donne, 1624

2.1 A changed world - the era of globalization

The world has changed in many ways: globalization, interdependence of actors, transnational issues and networking are keywords we can encounter on a daily basis when being confronted with news or science. More often than not they hint towards more complex and interrelated phenomena within the social, economic, or military spheres.

Particularly, global governance is a phrase that sticks out of this large umbrella of terms and descriptive elements, denoting new forms of policy-making and political discourse that are realized without the state playing a larger or any role at all. A multitude of non-state as well as supra-state actors have taken to the regional, national, and international stages to participate in this global policy network. They are meddling in and sometimes substituting for the archetypal top-down governing by nation-states. In this network we come across all kinds of actors ranging from private interest groups (IASB, ICC) to global public policy networks (e.g. Global Aids fund), regional-networks (e.g. EU or ASEAN), and international institutions (e.g. UN, NATO, IPCC).^{see attachment} It is noteworthy to assert that the nation-state thus has not outlived its usefulness or *raison d'être*. It is rather imbibed by this network of actors and such demoted from being the sole actor to being a part of many, albeit still the most important one. We are living in a period where the world of politics is switching from international to global interaction.⁹

The momentum appears to be shifting and impetus is coming more and more from the lower echelons in the political food chain. One of the most actual and pressing examples is the global environmental degradation. Many types of it occur locally and directly appear only to a limited group of affected people. New forms of regional and local interest groups have established themselves, based on a new awareness of these issues. Particularly, *second generation NGOs* are a relatively new way of forming and representing ideas generated in the local sphere. They are grass-root organizations that are based as much on self-reliance as defined through marking themselves a counter-weight to (often estranged) state sovereignty.¹⁰

Citizen participations, as for example in the G-8 summit meeting of 2007 (e.g. ATTAC and other non-governmental movements, musicians from Live-8 counter-event), exemplify a more multi-faceted involvement of the public with (traditionally secretive) diplomatic conduct. The media, in term, provided the exposure by covering the different groups and occurrences.¹¹

Both examples show a public demand for participation in diplomatic and politically interactive conduct and it seems to be a trend that will continue in the future:

At the time of writing a new intelligence report had been issued by the National Intelligence Council (NIC). It has been comprised with the aid of various think tanks, government agencies, and business groups in nearly twenty countries and provides a framework for possible future global scenarios. The report underlines the further diffusion of power and growth of non-stratified policy networks and thus the discontinuation of hegemonic power. Through a growing middle-class and new communication technologies the individual will gain in significance as well as the economic nexus of food, water and energy will become vastly more interdependent. Technology breakthroughs and general international security

cooperation are at the heart of a positive direction of progress. Furthermore, the report foresees a higher level of instability particular for the Asian region, including the explicitly mentioned danger of nuclear conflict.¹² Generally, there is limited value in using future-oriented statements of any kind, but these reports have been made since 1996 and have since then a good track-record of correctly identifying major trends and forecasting political and social vectors. The report starts in fact with a self-evaluation of the last one finding that the speed of change had been underestimated.

In other words, we accept it as a given that the trend towards diffusion and interconnectedness is very real and changes are occurring at an exponential pace.

2.2 A changed diplomacy - public diplomacy in theory

“Real men do not do public diplomacy – or human rights, or environment, or refugees. Real men do politics and maybe economics”

- Former US Ambassador Walter H. Annenberg¹³

In the past, diplomacy has always been based on inter-state relations, particularly in the wake of the Westphalian nation system. Diplomacy has since been characterized by a very pluralistic state-system that nonetheless exists within a high level of equality making it possible to gain advantages through negotiations.¹⁴

Often traditional power-balance acts and zero-sum games were the order of the day. Hard power, the reliance on economic pressure and military force is the main instrument ensuring survival of the nation state within the anarchic international society. The classic minds behind the realist worldview are for example Waltz, Morgenthau, or Mearsheimer. The principles of self-help (forced defensive action against external aggression, while not relying on allies) and the endurance of the state as the utmost principles have yet to be replaced by other doctrines.¹⁵ Hard power connects directly to the needs expressed in realist theory - it provides the easiest and most directly certifiable means of confronting the (perceived) state-Darwinism. In this essay, we are using the term *Realpolitik* with this connection in mind.

However, the nature of threat has changed considerably within the last two decades, away from interstate war to the sphere of imploded states and the chaos and power-vacuum left in their wake. US Secretary of State Rice even proclaimed the end of interstate conflict as the major source of confrontation on the planet. Trans-border crime, weapon proliferation, and

terrorist-movement, -harbouring, and -preparation were the new, and unparalleled threat to the free world.¹⁶

The altered strategic and political milieu has naturally led to a change in international relations, as well. As a direct consequence of growing diversification, reliance on experts, and specialization traditional functions of embassies and the diplomatic corps have gradually been replaced (e.g. information exchange, providing lines of communication, engage in negotiations, etc.). These days, private businesses, banks, regional development projects, secret services, or finance ministries feature their own services, respectively lines of communication. Some traditional functions (e.g. follow up on treaties, disaster relief coordination, interpreter and conference organization, etc) are still executed by embassies but even they gravitate towards the areas of networking and public communication. The prime task of modern diplomacy is to foster and expand a realm of trust between nations. Furthermore, diplomatic conduct is essential for structuring and maintaining international organizations.¹⁷

In consequence of the earlier mentioned globalization and its entailment, new forms of diplomatic conduct have surfaced and been researched. The post structural view, for example, allows for a greater diversification between different forms of representation and constituting of governmental units. *New diplomacy* is the umbrella term under which public diplomacy eventually can be found. What is *new* is that the spheres of legitimacy, recognition, and diplomacy are not always connected to the mutual recognition between constituted sovereign state governments, or indeed to each other. McConnell (et al.) have shown that the mimicking of state functions such as official representation, state leaders or money-flow and organizational networks can constitute a veritable actor in geo-politics. Legitimization is reached through unofficial diplomacies. Diplomatic activity is thus based upon, justified, and performed by a de-facto sovereignty rather than granted by an official de-jure sovereignty status (e.g. Tibetan exile government).¹⁸ In other words, by simply acting as a state with a functional apparatus the actor gains a valid acting status among traditional sovereign states.

With this given background we are still in search of a stringent definition of public diplomacy. The term *public diplomacy* is attributed to the former American ambassador to the Congo, Edmund Gullion, who coined it in 1965¹⁹ and Kruckeberg (et al.) identifies PD as "*two way symmetrical communication and community-building (...) not propaganda or market-oriented advocacy*". (They hereby refer to US diplomacy, which perceives publics in the same way as markets.) Negotiation, compromise, and understanding are the bases for community-building in which values are being promoted and reciprocally exchanged.²⁰

Our basis for the theorization of PD is the concept of *soft power*, which "*arises from the attractiveness of a country's culture, political ideals, and policies*"²¹ as opposed to *hard power*. Diplomacy used to be primarily shaped by a display of so called hard power, which is known to consist of economic and military strength reserved for the government alone, as well as command power which denotes a nation's perceived influence on global politics. However, this now realist way of creating a nation's identity has been challenged, among others, by Joseph Nye who coined the term soft power. Nye has been claiming that mutually

attractive forms of relations generally are, and should be, preferred over coarse threats and coercion. If there is an opportunity to get others to (genuinely) strive for the same thing as oneself it is more likely that hard power does not have to be applied at all. Thus, states and political leaders can avoid confrontational politics from the start and can concentrate on a positive and constructive base to build future relations upon. Soft power offers the *second face of power* and is not only used by government but is accessible also to other actors, for example NGOs and IGOs. The core of soft power lies in the attractiveness and appeal of culture, political and moral values, and their expression through foreign policies. This is where PD plays a key role. The public observers constantly evaluate the politics and through their linkage to the government, they are able to express their opinions by using soft power as well. Without doubt, soft power has now come to be a prominent part of global politics; a tactic both the US and China employ increasingly in their contemporary interaction.^{22 23}

Nye's successors have embraced the concept of soft power and Professor of Public Diplomacy William A. Rugh has claimed that public diplomacy and soft power always accompany each other in communication with foreign publics, especially in the case of the US government using soft power as a resource within its foreign policy. Other scholars have delved into soft power and studied its validity, such as Giulio Gallarotti. He has researched the necessary conditions for soft power to be employed successfully, for example the decision makers' ability to identify and fully appreciate the advantages soft power offers. Another author, Peter J. Katzenstein, Professor of International Studies, has concluded in his work on anti-Americanism that unrestricted soft power and traditional hard power can and should be merged in the US. This bond however, the Bush administration had to accomplish though, Katzenstein stated in 2008. In opposition, soft power has also been contested by some academics, mostly followers of the Realism theory such as Brian Hocking, Professor of International Relations, who sees soft power as a tool for making culture attractive, rather than its connection to public diplomacy. Moreover, authors Michael Barnett and Raymond Duvall have argued that soft power has gained too much attention as opposed to other forms of power in the field. Even though Barnett and Duvall have admitted the relevance of soft power in discussions about international relations, they do question the ensuing lack of different explanations on how outcomes in the world are produced.²⁴ In the conclusion we will add our own thoughts on this issue, since the answer to our main question is affected by it.

For the most part, PD is still considered to be in its formative years and the evolving diplomacy is not embraced wholeheartedly by everyone in praxis. Within the US foreign policy, hard power still lingers, employed by the political ranks, as traditionalists for long tended to view diplomacy as a mean to principally secure the goodwill of foreign governments. Those who put their trust in PD on the other hand, concentrate on securing the goodwill of a foreign public. This claim is met with scepticism by the US State Department and studies that follow the standard model of hard power diplomacy even emphasize that PD equals propaganda.²⁵

We do not agree with that. It may ring true that hard power in the past and present has been supported by resolute public relations efforts, often bordering on propaganda. However, this

does not mean PD equals propaganda. As we will clarify in chapter three, PD is the very opposite of propaganda in the attempts to reach and interact with foreign publics. It also goes to show that the antiquated perception of PD is in itself a hindrance to change. The quote in the beginning of this section exemplifies this attitude vividly. It sums up the way of thinking fashioned in a world when reactionary hard power politics were the order of the day. First it may seem quirky but its (quite possibly) sinister connotations for those affected by the decisions are not to be dismissed.

To sum up and clarify: We see PD as a reaction to a multi-actor reality that derives its nature and self-validation from the exchange of ideas, values, wares, information, and the people themselves. It is much focussed on cultural exchange which in turn can create communities transgressing national borders. Thus, reciprocally shared values lie at its core. PD is utilized mostly by states but also, and increasingly so, by non-state actors.

Yet, it is important to bear in mind that classic diplomacy still sets the main *modus operandi* to manage the complex realities of conflict and social tensions that in turn put strain on nation states from within. For the most part, nations still rely on the instruments of hard power to pursue their agendas, particularly when concerned with national security.

In the following section, both technological advances and the related development new media exemplify vividly to which extent diplomacy finds itself in the midst of a very real process of growing linkages, sophistication, and complexity.

2.2.1 Public diplomacy in the context of technological progress and new media

In the past, media-involvement in daily political life was much lower than today. Sometimes it was even seen as damaging and alien to the successful outcome of high-level political negotiations. For example, during the 1950s Waples stated that "*publicity blocks effective compromise in international conferences*" and described an inverse proportionality between the level of publicity and the results during the major World War 2 (WW2) wartime conferences (Casablanca, Moscow, Teheran, Yalta, Potsdam).²⁶ However, such view is set in context of a much less diversified, less interconnected, and much more polarized world that had not seen many of the technological (Internet, mobile phones, instant information, etc.) and some of the political advances (global governance through interest groups and IGOs, etc.). It is important to appreciate the enormity of the astounding technological advances of the last 20 years. Within one generation we have seen the digital revolution conquering and revolutionizing almost every aspect of public and private interaction.

Technology allows for far better, quicker, and more direct communication, yet the flipside of the coin is that this constitutes a PR reality of constant attention and spinning. The new media, with Internet blogs, and constant online eyewitness-reporting at its forefront has democratized information and its distribution culture; though this comes at the expense of editorial oversight and information can more easily be warped and distorted (e.g. individualized search

machine results or advertisement, etc.). Diplomacy has to undergo evolutionary processes to cope with a changed information culture and must utilize the possibilities presented. In late 2005, Condoleezza Rice's *transformational diplomacy* exemplifies such efforts made by the US foreign policy corps. This program included for example internet booths and information centres for US policies targeting foreign local communities in order to foster positive attitudes and opinions. It was as much an attempt to open the US policy outwards as well as an effort to redeem the Bush administration's bad track record in international understanding.²⁷

The media is not only part of this development but often spearheading its progress. "*In today's world you do not exist if you are not in the media. This is one of the reasons why traditional diplomacy has to be complemented by 'public diplomacy'*"²⁸

Public diplomacy, as we have seen, is based on cultural bridge-building. However, cultural conflicts are among the most problematic to solve, because they are based on identities and these cannot be discussed or bent. Modern mass media plays a crucial role as information presenter in these conflicts, both reflecting on and exacting major influence on public opinion. Media also provides a metaphorical blackboard on which participants in negotiations (even secret ones) can make their interest known to either the public and/or their negotiation partners.

Furthermore, even decisions made behind closed doors can indirectly be judged or influenced by the depiction of their outcome. What Habermas calls "*intersubjective autonomy in the public sphere*"²⁹ is, in its nature, endangered by a couple of factors, such as journalism adhering to a political agenda or simply the time-limitations in verifying a story.³⁰ The story has to be broadcasted and who breaks the news wins the race for viewers. In this environment, the ability to provide a critical evaluation of a press release and its sources is anything but easily done. It sets the basis for an informed decision the public can make. If we presuppose that a decision is only as good as its inspiration, which in turn is based on the available information, the responsibility of the information-provider becomes quite clear. Indeed, the mass media becomes *the* major catalyst of information; a stakeholder in both shaping the public opinion and providing a platform for the exchange in diplomatic circles. If diplomacy is likened to a game of chess, indubitably it is safe to award the global mass media the title of chessboard. However, to humour the metaphor, the colours of the squares (i.e. the moral self-evaluation of journalism) are not rigid and therefore can steer the players as much as the players can employ the board to advance their agenda.

To sum up, we can observe an evolution of diplomacy. From serving the realities of a bipolar world, driven by Realpolitik it is becoming a catalyst for different actors to engage on often multilateral and interconnected issues. However, since it is heavily reliant on theories about soft power it can easily be misunderstood. If soft power is merely interpreted as the popular culture in which it is expressed, if "*cultural resources (are confused with) the behavior of attraction*"³¹, so can one be offhand about the understanding of PD dismissing it as yielding and weak. In addition, we have found that the many aspects connected to PD and its

background make the term somewhat elusive and throughout the literature PD is often used based on fairly varying definitions and understanding of the concept.

We therefore have outlined our own understanding of PD above. Nonetheless, the field of international diplomatic communication is vast and increasingly complex. As a consequence, we find ourselves in necessity of distinguishing public diplomacy from other means of state-public communication. We are therefore introducing the term *publicity diplomacy* (PyD) in an attempt to clarify and categorize the complex relations in diplomatic communication even further.

3. Publicity diplomacy

"What difference does it make if it's true?"

If it's a story and it breaks, they're gonna run with it."

- from the movie "Wag The Dog", 1997

3.1 General definition of the term/operationalization

To define PyD we first need to understand its place in the context of PD and propaganda. Including propaganda is a fairly precarious attempt; when trying to delineate the term as such there appears to be no commonly-agreed ground to stand upon. One can either see it through the clinical lens of historical development and functional features, it being no less and no more than a tool. Alternatively, it can be seen in an Orwellian context, a morally corrupt way of trying to influence and bend opinions, even if (or exactly because) it is detrimental to the recipients.³² One comparatively unbiased definition of propaganda is provided by Alexander Laskin: "*Propaganda is a communicative tool to advance a certain point of view through symbiotic appeals that contrast themselves from other 'wrong' opinions and employ positive and negative emotions in an asymmetrical exchange.*"³³

Since the word propaganda means different things to different people we have to paint a clearer picture. The keywords in this definition relevant to our understanding of propaganda are *asymmetrical* and *wrong opinions*. Let us view it against the construct of public diplomacy, which, as we have established, is ideally based on reciprocal and equal involvement and on (cultural) community building. Employing the tool of propaganda is shifting the advantage to one side, which in itself presents a problematic initial position, yet still is not the major trouble. Everything hinges on the use of that position. The information exchange is not put into a cultural context, rather is it imposed by one culture or value-context upon another, precipitately divided into wrong and right. It therefore is no longer an exchange per se and the very pillars of public diplomacy, the active involvement of the public and the building of a communication network and hence a community are crumbling. So, if we find propaganda and PD at odds, where does this then place PyD?

PyD, as we see it, is situated somewhere in between these two extremes of information culture: propaganda and PD. It is a lesser form of PD, both in aim and moral context. It employs means more akin to propaganda and consequently there is less information exchange.

One could call it a hybrid, one step on the ladder in the evolution of diplomacy; not unlike adolescence it has neither matured nor does it completely remain in its infancy. It is much connected to aforesaid technological revolution and change in self-evaluation of the public, which has become more demanding of participation. The public to some extent still plays an active role in choosing and distributing it (e.g. video clips, movies, manuscripts, interviews, etc.). Participation however is mainly limited to processing the content, which is introduced by a government to serve a role analogous to propaganda. Publicity diplomacy is in its distribution-mode very close to the concept of *public information*, both presenting a mere one-way outward radiation of favourable information.³⁴ The public does not return its own input to change the content of the (dis-)information package.

Propaganda	Publicity Diplomacy	Public Diplomacy
Asymmetrical imposition of the “right opinion/value” by a state system onto a public	Hybrid form: biased information distributed onto, yet also freely evaluated/discussed or even transformed by a public	Reciprocal exchange of moral and cultural values between publics/states
<i>e.g. The communist threat during the Cold War: constant threat from “one singular” communist block</i>	<i>e.g. The case of WeiWei: actual democratic values warped for marketing purposes, imposed on publics</i>	<i>e.g. The Fulbright educational exchange programme in Asia (ECA): teachers and students influenced by foreign experience</i>

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In terms of our operationalization, PyD is not to be confused with paradiplomacy³⁵, understood as sub-national governmental foreign policy capacities (e.g. regional, local levels). Neither do we entertain the PR efforts by interest groups, companies, or individuals in this frame. PyD is still a concept entirely connected to the state-centred and -planned making of foreign policy in regards to their interaction with the public. Everything begins with the action taken by a state government. We specifically choose this narrow classification to avoid blending widely different interests and policies by dissimilar actors into one definition. Furthermore, it must adhere to the frame of our given aim and example to focus on international policy exchange and connected diplomatic endeavours by states.

Nevertheless, it has to be acknowledged that said other actors may well be involved in its execution (e.g. movies, blogs, books, identification figures, etc) and the distinction we have made above is purely academic and for the purpose of a clearer understanding.

After all, real life foreign policy issues are most often connected to domestic spheres of public interest and policy-making. The pressure that can be put upon a negotiating party through going public with issues is not to be dismissed lightly. PyD might start at the hands of a state agency but can take on a life of its own in the public arena.

As a result, we seemingly have a conundrum at our hands: PyD is both propaganda-like information fed to the public (as which it starts life) and open to change through a processing public. It is intended to steer opinion, yet at the same time there is no reason why it should not evolve independently from its original context once it is released into the woods of the public sphere. Such, it can become pure propaganda, PD, or it simply remains in its hybrid condition. We see this as an inherent trait rather than a contradiction and it exemplifies vividly the arbitrary nature of any concept being defined as an evolutionary process, a (explanatory) bridge between two extremes.

3.2 Developing the term publicity diplomacy within the WeiWei context

Before turning to the chapter about the US soft- and hard power involvement in the Pacific region, we will clarify the concept of PyD with an example from the Asia.

The recent development in the case of Chinese artist, blogger, and dissident Ai WeiWei makes for a noteworthy example of PyD. The artist gained international fame for making provocative art for the cause of freedom of speech and democratic and human rights in China, as well as being outspoken about shortcomings of the Chinese system. Chinese officials view him with disdain and disapproval. During the last three years, the Western media has closely covered WeiWei's opinion on different matters and his conflict with the Chinese government. Among the things WeiWei has done lately in order to spread his message and challenge the limits of Chinese politicians' tolerance, the most known are the following: He published a parody version of the popular music video Gangnam Style ridiculing the attempts of the Chinese Central Committee (CCC) to instil creativity in the Chinese art scene while maintaining strict censorship. A reoccurring object in his work, one he also used in this context is a *grass mud horse*, a phrase that in Chinese incidentally also sounds like "*fuck your mother, the party central committee*". He has published a list of the number of the victims who died in badly constructed schools, so called *tofu buildings*, when an earthquake hit Sichuan in 2008, and designed the Bird's Nest Stadium of the 2008 Olympics before proclaiming it as propaganda.³⁶ The many accusations aimed at him and arrestments that had been made eventually led to the Western world taking notice and caused stern reactions.

In 2011, the American ambassador to China surprised many when he publically brought up criticism against China and reproached the government for the way they dealt with WeiWei and others who wished that the government should above all serve the people. The ambassador also stated that: "*The United States will never stop supporting human rights because we believe in the fundamental struggle for human dignity and justice wherever it may occur*".³⁷ Already in 2007, a strategic paper issued by the US Strategic Communication and Public Diplomacy Policy Coordinating Committee (PCC) had outlined the four major operating principles: commitment to freedom and human rights, solidarity with people with common ideals, support for freedom struggles, and resistance to oppressive ideologies.³⁸ Therefore the ambassador expressed the US' official policy when making the WeiWei case a symbol for the US' stand on democratic values and personal freedom. The disagreement about the case of one impertinent artist has become the pop-culture embodiment of a geopolitical clash that, as we shall clarify in the next chapter, is as foreseeable as it is multifaceted. WeiWei's significant reputation and fame abroad and online have transformed him into a symbol for other victims of injustice, which has been damaging to the Chinese government's attempts to utilize soft power in its foreign policy.³⁹

With modern technology at hand, the global attention is easily drawn to the topic and that includes half a billion Chinese citizens with Internet access. For an oppressive regime it becomes difficult to silence any opposition, particularly if they have been made the centre stone of publicity programs established by countries aiming to discredit said regime's domestic policies. On the other hand, it becomes feasible for another country to influence the

global publics by putting into operation a publicity campaign framing these issues in a context of their wider agenda.

WeiWei spends many hours a day interacting with people through his, albeit censored blog and is repeatedly interviewed by foreign journalists. He performed with Elton John on a concert in China, and participates in a documentary dedicated to his person. The documentary called "Ai WeiWei - Never Sorry" has won critical acclaim and many awards on various film festivals and presents, so far, the culmination of the public marketing of the phenomenon WeiWei.⁴⁰ PyD has, in this case, enabled different actors to correspond, which in turn is not limited to state-to-state communication.

As such, the case has started within the context of Chinese-dissident domestic affairs and then spilled over to the international public's interest sphere. By making the abovementioned statement the US ambassador raised it as an international political issue. This is the point where, in our eyes, it becomes an example of PyD, since the message sent was based on a predetermined strategy and presents a package of set values, rigid and with clear intent to influence. There is little if any leeway for mutual influence and the symbolic value of the whole WeiWei framework is increasingly loaded with antagonizing statements and projects. Moreover, the formerly Chinese domestic issue seems now hijacked by Western media and the art community making it a case of good versus evil.

Even though WeiWei has had an affinity for public marketing and exposure of his persona, it could be argued that the allegorical character of the PR package has surpassed the actual impact and meaning of this singular dissident. At the same time, this is exactly how change is set off and the value of anything moral or ethical is primarily the value attributed to it. So, if it has been blown out of proportion deliberately or if the attention given to it is justly representative of the struggle against oppression and for human rights is not for us to say. Nor does this actually matter to the analysis of the case as PyD example. However, it shows the uncanny resemblances with PD as well as propaganda, depending on the observer's context. It exemplifies the brittle in-between state a public relations campaign can exist in, as we have ascribed to PyD.

The case of WeiWei is a contemporary example of the US engaging diplomatically in the dynamics of the Asia Pacific. As we shall see in the following though, soft power has not always been the tool of choice in the recent US involvement in the region.

4. The US in the Asia Pacific

"As we end today's wars, I have directed my national security team to make our presence and missions in the Asia-Pacific a top priority."

- US president Barack Obama, 2011

We want to stress the fact that we are entertaining the Pacific region as a political area of interest, as it is identified in the US strategic papers of the DOD and NIC. Not the geographic makeup is decisive here. Everything is centred on the rise of China as the major political and economic force in the Asia Pacific and the US is trying to foster multiple partnerships in the region to establish a lasting foothold. We can observe the US engaging in a wide-ranging publicity offensive attracting possible future allies. From the start, we want to make clear that this is not an attempt to construct another bipolar future reality (between the US and China) or make any definitive predictions but rather aim to comprehensively shine a light on contemporary developments and some strategic evaluations regarding these developments.

At the same time, we must not underestimate the past, which is playing a major role in shaping the present conditions and attitudes.

4.1 The historical and political background

One of the basic premises of this paper is the assumption that new forms of diplomacy as an expression of a changed world are somewhat at odds with the Cold War Realpolitik. There is a definitive gap⁴¹ between global expectations and demands towards the United States and how these expectations and demands are met by US foreign policy and its diplomatic work. The US is known to shoot wide of the mark when communicating their motivation, the messages "*appear at best ineffectual - and oftentimes inflammatory*"⁴². So, how have hard power politics led to the negative perception of the country today?

As it is, the last remaining superpower is slowly melting back (referring to pre-Cold War times) into a multipolar reality. This simultaneously creates demands to the US as a departing hegemonic power, as well as demands in respect to its increasing incorporation into a global, interconnected context. To fully appreciate this complex predicament one has to go back to the years of the post WW2 era and lay out the greater underlying doctrines and policies leading to the manner of conduct displayed by the US today. The context of the US involvement and interest in the Pacific region cannot be fully understood without its connection to US political attitudes towards the communist block as a whole.

With the conclusion of WW2 a certain power vacuum on the international stage was inevitably left by the demise of the old European empires, in particular the British Empire. The Truman doctrine (1946) pledging assistance to Europe effectively ended a two hundred year old isolationist tradition moving the US towards internationalism instead. After the US had engaged in Europe with the Marshall plan and the Berlin air lift (1948), NATO was established in 1949 as a military counterweight to the Soviet block. The dogma of countering Soviet advances wherever they touched the Western sphere of influence with strong force became known as containment policy.⁴³ George Kennan, Director of the newly established State Department Policy Planning Staff (PPS), became central in forming the idea of overt and covert organized political warfare.⁴⁴ These ideas were later formalized in NSC-68, which

Truman was able to push through congress because of the aggressions the US was facing in the Korean War.⁴⁵

Containment policy and the assumption that the communist governments were united, rather than different countries with their own agendas led to the US playing the zero-sum game for decades. The Chinese involvement in the Korean War was a reaction to Truman's ordering of a complete liberation of the country and the US Vietnam fiasco started with congress writing a "*blank cheque*"⁴⁶ for intervention there with the Tonkin resolution. In other words, the order of the day was containment through confrontation; cooperative interests played the second fiddle to this while soft power, PD and an individual treatment of different communist states were barely existent. This was particularly true for Asia, which was treated quite differently from Africa, for example, where the US frequently broke their containment ideals and even aligned their efforts with the UDSSR.⁴⁷

After the Vietnam War, the US revised their strategy and the simplistic containment policy gave way to a more nuanced approach. President Carter established formal diplomatic relations with China in 1971 (some 12 years after its establishment), the same year the country was accepted into the UN and the Security Council. The following decades saw a growing cooperation between China and the US, both on the economic front as well as in defence issues within the strategic triangle, defined by both countries and respective tensions with Russia. Yet, the dispute about the Chinese exile government in Taiwan is to this very day at the heart of US-Chinese diplomatic problems.⁴⁸

Furthermore, two major trends have crept into US foreign policy within the last fifty odd years: the ever-growing importance of realist thinking and positivistic tendencies in social sciences. Both developments have created policy bases liberated of ethical values, reciprocally supporting the other. This detachment of ethics and morals from foreign policy-making and operations leads to an inconsistent attitude towards PD and, as we shall see, is at odds with the general principles of PD currently utilized in the Pacific region.⁴⁹

Throughout the latter half of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st, the US had to face considerable criticism from allies as well as neutral countries regarding its inconsequent and variable foreign policies. US constituents were treated as markets instead of publics, which led to a fundamental error in judgement: while markets are being organized and compartmentalized into sale-segments (and according PR strategies), publics are self-organizing with respect to any organizational effort brought unto them.⁵⁰ Overall, domestic and foreign issues were always woven into each other, "*necessarily impair(ing) the isolationist-internationalist dichotomy*"⁵¹ within the US self-image and adding to certain confusion about US reliability on international level. This misconception of publics is of great importance when viewing US PD programs; only self-organizing units can have a mutual exchange and fruitful discourse.

The neoconservative foreign policy ideals, starting with the Reagan administration, found their culmination in the George W. Bush years. Here, the two-fold approach upon which we shall soon touch again, had been exemplified best. The principle liberal focus on foreign policy, expressed through adamant statements on the importance of alliances (against a

terrorist threat), was showing the trend towards further internationalization of. The aspirations for a global democracy (based on president Wilson' ideals) were the leading thought.⁵² At the same time, unilateral action (preventive war) was at the centre of the US set of guidelines, the Bush administration "*unwisely and dangerously resorted to the folly of empire*".⁵³ Here, the basis for the two-pronged geopolitical approach favoured by the Obama administration had been laid. Namely, the acceptance of the importance of non-state actors and the cooperation within the international community as well as assertive unilateral action (if need be).

To lead over to and to understand the current US position on soft and hard power, one has to understand the Obama administration's reliance on what has been dubbed *smart power*. A term coined by Joseph Nye in 2003, it has been made tangible in a *Center for Strategic and International Studies* (CSIS) direction paper, called the "*CSIS commission of smart power*"⁵⁴ in 2007. As an early layout for the then new administration it details a future need for reliance on a combination of soft and hard power - smart power. The plan foresees and stresses five critical areas of the future focus of foreign politics: alliances, global development, public diplomacy, economic integration, and technology.⁵⁵ As we have established in chapter two, these coincide with our own analysis of a changed world and its changed demands. Today, as the following examples will show, the US strategy is indeed more nuanced and two-fold than ever.

4.2 The here and now - The US involvement in the Pacific, utilizing hard and soft power

As the US Commander in Chief, President Obama signed off on a paper for the Department of Defence (DOD) in January 2012. The paper is called "Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense" and outlines a military masterplan for the Pacific region until 2020. In it, the Asia Pacific is cited as the primary region of interest where the US will meet future challenges and opportunities as far as security and prosperity are concerned. At the same time, the US strives for a state within the international arena that ensures just and sustainable universal rights for individuals, with particular focus on the fundamental rights for every human being. This will be accomplished not through military power alone, but also through improved tools for diplomacy. Still, the core of the plan is to construct a capable and flexible military force that will be present in the Asia-Pacific area, ready to operate should the need arise.⁵⁶

These evaluations are made based on strategic facts. For example, the region is home to five of the eight states recognized as being in possession of nuclear weapons, three of the world's top six defence budgets, and six of the world's largest militaries.⁵⁷ However, China's defence budget is still only a tenth of the American budget, so a relative view should be reserved.⁵⁸ As for the current US alliances in East Asia, they depend on public support and both Japan and South Korea view themselves no longer as submissive partners when it comes to military and economic matters in the region.⁵⁹ Overall, the Asia-Pacific region represents an important source and destination for U.S. trade and investment. Together, these economies represent

over 60% of overall U.S. trade and about one quarter of the stock of foreign direct investment (FDI) into and out of the United States.⁶⁰

As it appears there is in fact a veritable trade war on the horizon: The Obama administration had first proposed the eleven-nation *Trans-Pacific Partnership* trade bloc that would exclude China. As a reaction, China proposed a counter-offer to ten (mostly the same) nations (all ASEAN members): the *Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership*, which would encompass almost half the world's population by 2015. This trade bloc would exclude the US.⁶¹

Even Australia, an old ally, has begun to weaken its bonds to the US after much negative public opinion on the war in Iraq and the increasing tension between the US and China that puts Australia in a position where it might have to choose its premier ally. Australia has stated that the US cannot expect support for future strategic plans in Asia in fear of its bilateral trading relations with China would be at peril after the Chinese reacted very negatively towards the deliberations. This position was vividly illuminated by the recent Australian refusal to build a US navy base and host a US nuclear carrier group.⁶² This would constitute a geopolitical affront and put considerable military power in a permanent location in the Pacific.⁶³ However, the US managed to convince the Australian officials to allow their building of a large radar installation, capable of monitoring small objects in space, and therefore also capable of monitoring missile launches in the region. Seen in the context of Chinese space exploration aspirations and the North Korean nuclear missile program, the plans can (and in our eyes should) be interpreted as another face of the same coin - an armament contest.⁶⁴

In its former nemesis, though, the US might have found a more promising ally for establishing a military foothold in the Pacific. Vietnam has found itself in a position threatened by Chinese aspirations to the East Chinese Sea and therefore is willing to entertain possible US military deployment in their national waters. A small group of journalists were recently invited to sail with the aircraft carrier USS Washington along the Vietnamese coast in an effort to market US Vietnamese cooperation and deter Chinese ambitions at the same time. The mission was executed one day after a Chinese naval exercise near Senkakus, a small island with is in dispute by China, Japan, and US.⁶⁵ This serves as another example of PyD, as journalists were "embedded" with the military, giving them direct access but also putting the information allowed out under the control of military PR personnel. Simultaneously, it serves as a classic model of (literal) gunboat diplomacy.

The economic and military power plays however, are not the only strategy exercised by the US. The dual approach outlined by the DOD paper is mirrored among the wider US strategic intelligence community also underlining the importance of cooperation and PD. More liberal voices like Joseph Nye and Richard Armitage argued in 2007 that the US should support a development in Asia that makes the leaders of the states there “*define their own national success in terms that are consonant with U.S. political and economic objectives.*”⁶⁶ Predictions made state that if the US should fail to influence the leaders in East Asia, growing instability in the region is likely, with China’s increasing material and diplomatic power.⁶⁷ The public diplomacy on the US’ behalf is consequently still important, as it is an essential

tool that uses broadcasting technology like radio, television, and the Internet to inform and influence the local publics.

The CSIS cites a peacetime strategy of containment, readiness, and deterrence as the most important techniques, all connected to the long-term goal of "*positively shaping Chinese strategic decisions*" and creating an overall stable and cooperating region. "*A key point here is that U.S. strategy is not to prepare for a fight with China*".⁶⁸ US Secretary of Defence Panetta even went as far as calling out "*a sustained and substantive United States-China defence relationship*"⁶⁹

President Obama, in an effort to win the hearts and minds of locals has visited both Burma, Thailand, and Cambodia, promising closer trade relations and meeting with opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi underlining, and marketing, the US' continuing strive for human rights and democratic values. Many countries in the periphery of China fear its "*rapid military modernization and territorial claims in resource-rich seas*" and such see a counterweight in the US ensuring their continued freedom and sovereignty.⁷⁰ This provides us with yet another example of PD, as values are being shared and distributed, and alliances are being based upon the mutual respect and discourse of possibilities and values.

In fact, the US has a long-standing PD programme in Asia overseen by the State Department and the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG), engaging in cultural and educational exchange programs to foster long-term attitude changes in the region and to ensure the effectiveness of PD efforts (e.g. broadcasting to Muslims in Indonesia, Malaysia; ECA teacher exchange programme with over 900 involved between 1996 and 2005 alone; language and cultural training for field officers, etc.).⁷¹

As far as China is concerned, we have seen that US actions are met with both declarations of strength as well as factual armaments. In 2012 alone, we have witnessed the launch of its first aircraft carrier⁷², naval exercises being held in the East Chinese Sea⁷³, and the expansion of its drone programme⁷⁴. It becomes necessary to see some of China's actions, reactions, and motives to fully appreciate the actuality of the problems brewing.

We deliberately refrained from integrating a deep analysis of Chinese understanding and motives into this work, yet we consider that a basic understanding is needed to weigh the potential disastrous consequences of a missing cultural exchange and the US approach. For that matter, it shall suffice to say that Chinese understanding of diplomacy is based on the general principle of peaceful rise and derived from an internal view of itself. Other countries and the world of foreign relations are seen in context of self-scrutiny, through the "*prism of China's own domestic experience*"⁷⁵. Furthermore, Chinese history, their fractured organization of the diplomatic corps, and many mutual (with other countries) misunderstandings provide the background for a lingering feeling of mistrust.⁷⁶

It is precisely this atmosphere that at the time of writing is prevalent and much discussed within the topic of US relations with Asia. To determine the development and application of both hard power and soft power - of Realpolitik, PyD, and PD, within this context is as captivating as it is revealing.

5. Conclusions

5.1 Publicity diplomacy and Ai WeiWei

We have established the concept of PyD situated between the two extremes of state-public communication: propaganda and PD. It features both state-initiated information with the aim to influence, as well as a certain participation of the recipients. The information can be distributed or discussed by the public. This in-between state can exist for an unspecified amount of time; it can either show a devolutionary tendency by becoming a rigid complex of propaganda messages or it can develop into a reciprocal distribution of values and a constructive discussion, resembling PD. In principle we see PyD as a transitional phase towards either of these alternatives, right after the initiation of a PR campaign. Yet, the possibility of it remaining in the in-between state cannot be discounted off-hand.

The case of WeiWei shows clearly how the US manages to spin a Chinese domestic issue into a matter of geo-political interest and frame the dissident's case within the wider region of human rights issues and the (implicit) call for change in China's treatment of its citizens. As to how the story will play out, we will refrain from participating in speculation. Yet, the volatility of the situation regarding the marketing package WeiWei surely allows for various scenarios to develop into. Any normative statements notwithstanding, we can credit the case the specified in-between state of a PR campaign according to our definition of PyD. Concisely put, in its arbitrariness lies its validity.

There are other similar contemporary examples of PyD, which we shall mention briefly. First, the case of Chen Guangcheng, another Chinese dissident on whose behalf Secretary of State Clinton intervened, which resulted in his eventual relocation to the US.⁷⁷ Another example would be the shooting of Pakistani girl Malala Yousufzai, a critical blogger who was shot by the Taliban and consequently gained global fame as a symbol for resistance, female education rights and the atrocity of reactionary Taliban terrorism.⁷⁸ The WeiWei example could serve as a blueprint for analysing these comparable cases to further determine and develop stringent characteristics of PyD.

On the whole, we have seen that traditional diplomacy with all its connotations of military force and economic sanction/incentives is still the dominant tool for the geopolitical power - play. On the other hand, a new global context bringing about altered social and political realities demands an upgraded version of the traditional conduct of international diplomacy.

Theoretically, the application of PD is though in danger of running the course of mere propaganda and fruitless division of the world into wrong and right. Issues that are aimed to foster communities can be unstable in their initial stage as PyD, depending much on the continued efforts by the initiator-state to steer them into the PD direction. Simply put, PD needs attention and active tending by both information-distributor and -recipient. Through that, the process becomes mutual and reciprocal and the key elements of PD are fulfilled.

5.2 The US in the Asia Pacific - hard and soft power

Public diplomacy, as we have established, cannot be viewed outside of the context of hard power politics. Historically seen, internationalism increasingly incorporated the US foreign policy into the global political scene. Decades of communist containment set the atmosphere for the Asian theatre, as well. The usage of military and economic power still appears to be the main road travelled when engaging in Asia. This alone might not separate the US from any other major nation on the planet, yet there is another background to it. The mixed feelings of humiliation, envy, admiration, and inadequacy in the face of US supreme power built throughout the nation's 70 year rise in power⁷⁹ have been magnified through the partially disastrous interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan; events that are still fresh in the collective memory. At this point in time, we can glimpse at a chance of this story possibly being repeated within the Asian context. The public marketing of US strategy and ideals is done primarily through the use of mass media and potentially, this approach *"will bring an even bigger gap in understanding as well as a continuing sense of inadequacy (...) simply because it's based on the old Cold War model of propaganda that was used to support U.S. foreign policy at that time."*⁸⁰

The US has so far refrained from specifically explaining as to how a military build-up in the region would support the lofty PD aspirations. Also, keeping in mind the PR fiasco of selling the "democratization of the Middle East", few can be held in contempt when viewing such actions with a definite amount of scepticism. Particularly China with its partially archaic public diplomacy and general low civic involvement is prone to communicate to its people such endeavours in a way that would mitigate reactionary voices. This, in other words, sheds light on the importance of true public diplomacy involved in the Asian re-orientation of the US forces. Still, propaganda-like PyD can be seen in cases like WeiWei or Chen Guangcheng. Not only does this convey a reductionistic view of the actual events but this oversimplification can lead to further widening the gap in understanding between the culture spheres of the Asia Pacific (China in particular) and the West. This is, as history has proven, a dangerous path to walk upon, and therefore can be highly detrimental to any constructive and mutually integrative politics. Governance and co-dependence, multilateralism and positive sum games would be second to the spiralling dangers created by yet more show of force and consequent mutual mistrust.

On the other hand, the long term public diplomacy programs run in the Asia Pacific and the recent efforts of the US leadership to communicate a message based on understanding and

shared values tell the other side of the story. There is indeed PD involved to greater extent. As Kruckeberg et al. theorize, the combination of market-generated economic growth and the introduction of constitutional-based democracy in lesser developed countries is crucial. This in turn would be the basis on which the largest and most influential market democracy (the US) should run their PD program on, moving away "*from propaganda and dig into true public diplomacy*" to reach conditions of reciprocal communication exchange.⁸¹ And indeed, the Obama administration has shown a much more nuanced and humble way of employing their diplomatic means, specifically compared to their predecessors (e.g. Colin Powell's WMD presentation before the UN Security Council). They have continued, for example, teacher exchange programs and the general two-way strategy of hard as well as soft power expressed in the DOD and earlier strategy papers seems to be put into action. Other democratic as well as non-democratic countries are equally addressed and efforts are made to engage in mutually productive and positive partnerships.

To summarize the overall connections, we can state the following: The identification of smart power as a strategic direction as well as tactical practice is a binary process. It involves both hard and soft power in forming and taking influence on diplomatic foreign relations. Furthermore, as we have established, the concept of PyD is equally two-fold, a hybrid between propaganda and PD. In the case of the contemporary US Asian involvement we can see how the greater strategy takes influence on the tangible actions on the ground. We can categorize many of the projects and events being played out with the help of the concept of PyD. It is yet too early to mark them out as belonging to either polar extreme of state-public communication. They are as it is further imperative in the PyD context, all derived directly from state action with clear motives behind them. Such, we can identify a direct link not only between the US reaction to changed demands within the geopolitical and sociological environment but also a connection between that reaction and an expansion in PyD occurrences.

So, both soft and hard powers are employed and both have their factual necessity in engaging on a wide-encompassing front. We mirror thereby the findings of Barnett and Duvall (see p.13), at least partially. Soft power is certainly not the only power playing a critical part, however as to how other powers do play such roles we cannot make any statements, since our objective was to focus on soft and hard power alone. On the surface it is easy to dismiss PD and soft power efforts as feeble and ineffective and instead appears more rewarding to concentrate on the traditional use of force and coercion. However, there is no denying that soft power is the rising force within foreign politics. By nature, it is not easily linked to tangible results, rather than laying the foundation for long-lasting relationships that involve trust and partnership. In other words, we cannot conclusively answer the initial question to which extent both powers are being used in a quantitative way. Too much lies yet hidden under the veil of time and complexity: long-term engagements have so far to be played out and soft power might (through its indirect nature) prove improbable to be connected to changes or statics in foreign politics. At the same time, there is no objection to be made to the qualitative side of the argument. Soft power is a logic continuation of the demands made by the modern global society and the

unavoidable interconnectedness of the powers being. To dismiss it would be folly. It plays a large role in preparatory strategy as well as in peace-time cooperation and interaction. But hard power, at least from today's viewpoint, is still the main road travelled in ensuring US consistency and its major role on the geopolitical chessboard.

5.3. Brief contemplations of the main literature

As far as Cooper and Hocking's theories about NGO and non-state actor involvement in diplomatic interaction are seen as a background to our depiction of a changed world, we can only agree on their validity and relevance. New forms of diplomatic conduct have been and still are developing and global governance plays an extremely important part. On the other hand, in the context of the US Asia reorientation governance is only of implicit value and yet to surface in any broader participatory sense.

Dutta-Bergman's views on PD and propaganda-like efforts in the past, particularly regarding the Middle East, coincide with our demand for further diversification of the state-public communication sphere. Opposed to her somewhat normative judgements on the increased marketing of events through propagandistic we see the possibility of events unfolding in either way. For this, we suggest our concept of PyD, allowing for a more objective hybrid state an event or message can be placed in - innocent until proven guilty, so to speak.

Austrian ex-diplomat Thomas Nowotny identifies the constant existence of PD within the wider circles of practiced diplomacy. He provides us with the background for the actual demands unto newer forms of foreign politics. Furthermore, we share his concerns about the need for explicit integration of PD values and strategies into official policies and show to which extent this has been done in the US case.

Nye's theories about soft power and his call for the integration of smart power into politics is the centre stone of our theoretical arch. His assertions are being reflected within our observations of PD within US policies as well as in the logical assumptions based on the changed global context. In principle, community-building and reciprocal values are as important as show of force and generally in need of a greater place in foreign affairs. However, Nye concedes that soft power is only a valid contribution if added to the portfolio of traditional options. Such smart power can now be scoped in our examples regarding the Asia Pacific, and such the theory matches the reality.

5.4 Suggestions for future research

With this essay we have tried to create a snapshot of our time on the topic at hand; based on educated literature on the past but a snapshot nonetheless. It is important to keep reminding ourselves that it is a snapshot that certainly will need revisiting and deeper reflection in the future. As all things derived from subjective observation it is incomplete and coloured by our understanding of political science as well as our opinion of what can be regarded as important and interesting. However, precisely for its naivety born out of the observation of the contemporary, it should prove to be all the more fascinating then, approached with the knowledge and professional distance only the future can permit. In the following we have therefore listed an excerpt of ideas that arrived in the back of our minds while still writing it.

A, With respect to the whole field of PD, one could study the ongoing process of mutual integration between the Asian and Western sphere. Have attitudes changed and how much influence of PD can be objectively perceived in this change?

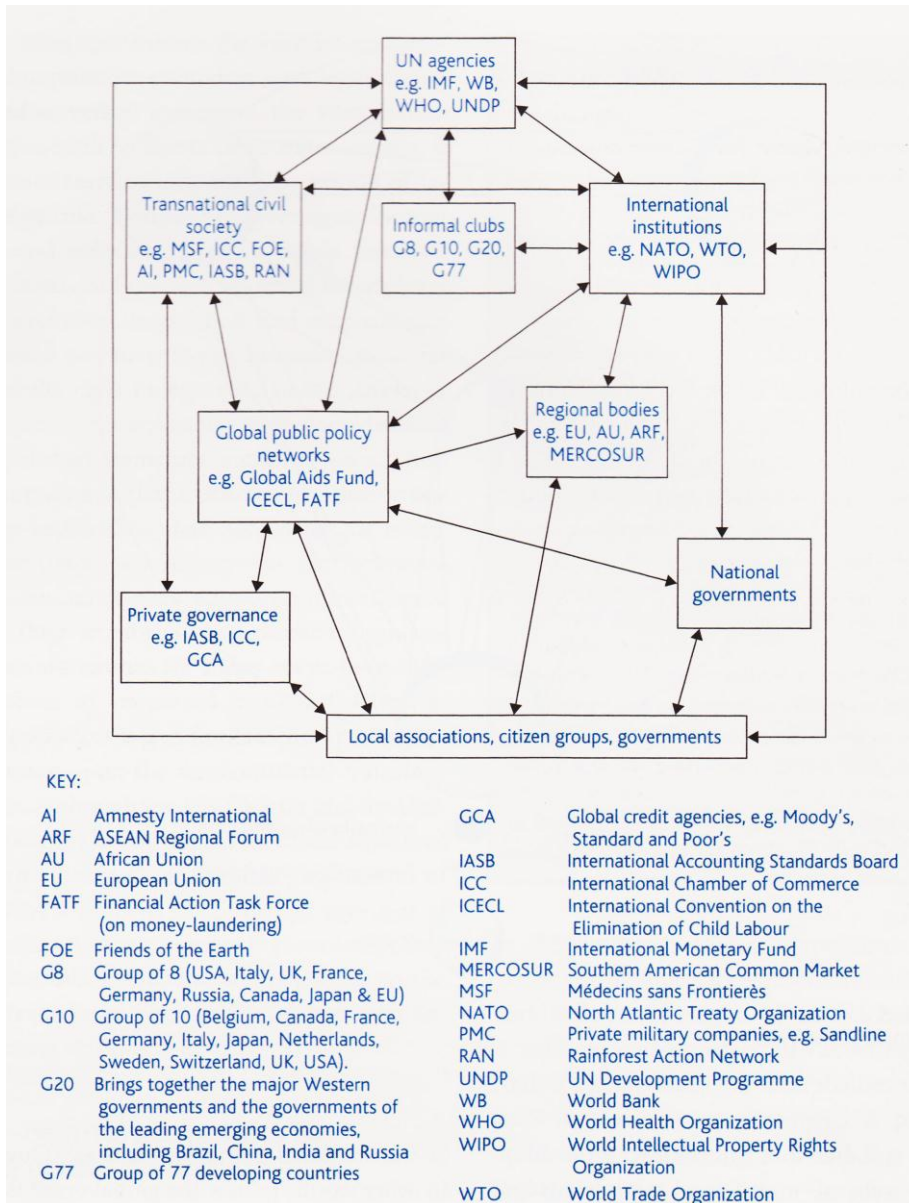
B, A direct comparison between the US and China in respect to the events depicted in this essay. How much has PD been detrimental or helpful to decision-making?

C, Further define or classify PyD and its content. Division into grades, classes, more examples could be made. What factors (input) contribute to which effects (tendency towards propaganda or PD)?

Post Scriptum

As the last words we would like to give to our readers: Being aware that the scope of this essay is perhaps somewhat beyond the feasible expectation of what can be methodically developed in such a short space, we want to concede to this shortcoming openly. At the same time, we see this work as an effort to show at least a glimpse of a comprehensive picture of how everything treated here can be connected. As one would expect, and reasonably so, we are not aiming for another world theory here. This is still a work very much centred on the change of diplomacy, contemporary examples and observations and we do believe that we have contributed detailed observations to the studies of diplomacy. Yet, we believe that one should also allow for a higher point of view and be intrigued by the great connections and the underlying patterns. Personally, for us it is the source of fascination with political science. All we humbly hope for is to provide some words that might stir a little interest in the arbitrary reader and possibly inspire him or her to further develop some thoughts on the topic.

Attachment



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