

Winning Hearts and Minds--Beyond a “Message Content vs. Delivery” Debate: Structural and Institutional Foundations of U.S. Public Diplomacy Failure & Success

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to move the debate about the U.S. Department of State's public diplomacy failures beyond questions such as “Is the message on target or is the content of the message improper?” Our approach empirically examines structural and institutional determinants of public diplomacy performance at the country-level. Our method is to analyze publicly available data from federal departments, existing scholarly work, and a foreign public opinion poll conducted by Pew Research Center, “Views of a Changing World 2003,” released on June 3, 2003 (the basis for our dependent variable). Owing to data availability limitations, we employ a median regression model, and consider the impact of institutional credibility, cultural values, income, bilateral trade, public diplomacy spending, World War II alliances, and Women's roles on U.S. public diplomacy success. Our results suggest support for the effects of most factors on success, though not all effects act in the directions as hypothesized by our predictions. The strongest positive factors affecting PD success are income & prosperity and women's roles in government. The findings indicate that there is value in pushing the discussion beyond the limited discourse inherent in the “bad message, well-delivered versus good message, poorly delivered” dichotomy to a consideration of structural and institutional factors that influence foreign citizens' perceptions of the U.S.

Introduction

The path to success in the United States' battle for hearts and minds of the world, particularly in the Arab and Muslim nations, is characterized by various and often opposing assumptions and recommendations. A disturbing fact holds true for all the proposed solutions; despite increased efforts of the U.S. administration, world opinion shows declining support for the U.S. A Pew Research Center survey conducted in late 2002 shocked all parties interested in seeing a stronger, more credible, and better understood U.S. since the September 11 tragedy in New York: “Osama Bin Laden is trusted to ‘do the right thing regarding world affairs’ by more than half the population in Indonesia, Pakistan, Morocco, and Jordan. In none of these countries do more than 8% of people express the same faith in President Bush.” (Quenqua 2003, p. 9) The poll results show a similarly low level of overall success; among the 44 countries, where 38,000 people were surveyed, approximately 60% support U.S.-led efforts to fight terrorism. (Federal Document Clearing House, 2003)

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Two fundamental assumptions divide the type of explanations proposed to improve U.S. public diplomacy success for the U.S. The first explanation advocates a misunderstanding between the U.S. and other countries, charging public diplomacy with the entire responsibility of failing to explain U.S. foreign policy, essentially asserting that the U.S. message is poorly delivered by extant public diplomacy efforts. The second explanation suggests U.S. foreign policy is very well understood in the rest of the world, which is itself the problem: “Neither U.S. control over the flow of news, nor the efforts of Pentagon and Madison Ave. spin doctors, can ease the resentment of U.S. policies and actions that have affected the lives, hearts, and mind of the people of the region.” (Andoni 2002, p. 264) This approach, rather than blaming poor delivery of the message, asserts poor message-content. Neither of these approaches consider idiosyncratic attributes of states, which may influence the success and failure of any public diplomacy undertaking. This study considers the extent to which institutional credibility, cultural values, prosperity, trade with the U.S., public diplomacy spending, past alliances, and Women’s roles engender U.S. public diplomacy success or failure of the United States, with a particular focus on U.S. Department of State efforts. The study indicates a strong relationship between U.S. public diplomacy success, and these state-level attributes.

The mechanism of public diplomacy (PD) has not invited a significant level of academic research as to reasons for its efficacy or lack thereof, and PD remains a contemporary topic, often covered by newspapers, magazines, and journals. An exchange of ideas, however, has flourished in subcommittees and committees in the U.S. Congress, as well as other governmental bodies. Private sector entities, particularly the advertising and media industries in the U.S., have similarly expressed an interest in volunteering solutions to U.S. public diplomacy needs. The following pages provide a brief review of the current literature, and present an alternative approach to the present dichotomous argument of “poor delivery versus poor message,” using an analysis which suggests the impact of the factors mentioned above in determining U.S. public diplomacy success/failure represent important elements and offer a novel approach to understanding the roots of the problem.

This paper proceeds as follows: first, in our discussion of the literature, we discuss the present approaches to the debate by describing the “poor delivery,” and “poor policy content,” views as well as a hybrid perspective that, while loudly declaring the need for improved delivery of messages, additionally acknowledges the need for increased truth and credibility in content. Then we offer an alternative approach to the debate, which considers institutional and structural aspects of states and how that shapes perceptions of the U.S. A preliminary empirical exploration is then reported, which suggests that our new approach shows promise, though the implied path to success (through revised foreign policy content) may be the most politically sensitive to implement, because it involves substantial policy remediation (on a state-by-state basis) and implied admission of past failures in public diplomacy.

Current Approaches, and Literature in Brief

In this paper, we define public diplomacy as U.S. government attempts to influence foreign citizens' (residing outside the U.S.) opinions of the U.S. towards a positive view. In this section we identify three existing approaches to the challenge of public diplomacy: poor message delivery, poor message content, and a hybrid view which considers both message delivery and content as in need of remediation.

U.S. Foreign Policy is Misunderstood—Poor Message Delivery. Three of the most notable works focused on the subject are by Christopher Ross, "Pillars of Public Diplomacy" published in the Harvard International Review, a report by the U.S. Advisory Group on Public Diplomacy, created by Congress and appointed by the President, titled "Changing Minds and Winning Peace," and a work by the General Accounting Office, titled "U.S. Public Diplomacy: State Department Expands Efforts, but Faces Significant Challenges," presented to the Committee on International Relations, House of Representatives. Each advocates a wide variety of ideas and promise an improvement over current dismal public diplomacy success levels. Four general themes emerge from their writings, as well as other important publications on public diplomacy. The absence of a clear strategy and direction is a common criticism among these publications: "The American public-information campaign is a confused mess," lamented former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations Richard Holbrooke. (Waller 2003, p. 26) Similarly, a strategy which takes into account the role of the media in advancing opinions about the U.S. was recognized as an action item: "At a time when many large and diverse publics are informed and energized about foreign affairs, it is no longer sufficient to explain our policies to 200 opinion leaders; the United States must also find ways to repeat key messages for audiences of two million or 20 million, through national and transnational media, which make up the fifth pillar." (Ross(b) 2003, p. 8) Tools of the past, educational and cultural exchange programs, are not spared, and are marked for improvement and salvation: "In the past, one common mistake was thinking of government educational and cultural exchanges as a kind of frill, a nice undertaking if the resources were available. Today, viewing exchanges as a long term investment in the national security of the United States is vital." (Ross(a) 2003, p. 257) Finally, the overall lack of public diplomacy funding is identified as in need of adjustment owing to the current rise in anti-Americanism around the world. Funding for public diplomacy programs was \$600 million in 2002, suggesting serious underfunding issues, according to Djerejian (2003) .

U.S. Policy Content is Understood (Well-Delivered)--The Content is Poor. Contrary to advocates who consider better strategizing, coordination, and implementation of public diplomacy to be the problem, others argue for a reconsideration of U.S. foreign policy which takes into account the path to current policies and their implications. This view avers that while foreign opinions should not determine the course of U.S. foreign policy, the formulation of foreign policy ought to be more sensitive to public diplomacy consequences. (Bloomgarden et al, 2003) Others take a more hard-line approach, suggesting that current U.S. foreign policy is hypocritical, indefensible, and call for an immediate change of direction in U.S. unilateral policies.

While U.S. foreign policy cannot be made on the behest of a foreign audience, a flexibility and visible willingness to work collaboratively with other nations on global problems including terrorism may result in increased goodwill generally and specifically towards the U.S. This perspective states that the U.S. depends on participation and cooperation from other countries whose opinions and concerns must be taken into account in policy formulation. Policies which do not adapt will be counter-productive, leaving public diplomacy as an ineffective tool. For example, Spain arrested eight alleged members of Al Qaeda for complicity in the September 11 attacks, but refused to turn them over to U.S. authorities because the Bush administration said that they might face secret trials before military tribunals. (Blinken, 2002) A public diplomacy disaster ensued, resulting in loss of respect for the U.S. throughout Europe. In the book, The Battle of Hearts and Minds (Lennon, 2003) Blinken, a senior fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, asserts similar skepticism and mistrust against the U.S. generated by the U.S.' opposition to the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and to an enforcement mechanism for the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). The U.S., the sole hegemonic power of the post-Cold war era, cannot afford to advance foreign policy without (1) engaged partners, and (2) exercising appropriate leadership to reach agreements that advocate or at least fairly compromise regarding its own foreign policy goals. As with hypocrisy: "If the United States rejects the restraint these agreements impose, or decline to negotiate improvements, how can it ask others to embrace them?" (Blinken 2002, p. 285)

Another view sees those who are launching massive advertising campaigns, and other targeted acts for minimizing the impact of anti-American broadcasts, such as the Al Jazeera network, as misguided policy. Actions often speak louder than words, and the U.S. treatment of foreign nations during and after the Cold War stirs up a series of distrustful attitudes particularly in developing nations. Anti-Americanism is not a product of misunderstanding, it is the result of a legacy of poor policies: "The collapse of the twin towers symbolized the collapse of U.S. foreign policy in the Arab and Muslim worlds... The United States is realizing that huge dark spots tarnish its world image, especially in the Middle East, but the United States has not addressed this monumental problem by reexamining the basic assumption of its policies."(Andoni, 2002, p. 262)

The current approach, which relies on improving understanding of U.S. policies abroad (the "poor message delivery" view), assumes "public diplomacy provides a useful mirror to the US image abroad, but it cannot fix the policies that mar that image." (South China morning Post, 2003) That is, mechanisms for getting the messages across are in fine working condition, but the message content is poor. If a misunderstanding is to be blamed for anti-Americanism in the world, perhaps it is Americans who need a deeper understanding of foreigners, and not the other way around. In fact, only 18% of Americans hold passports, and of that, 86% have only traveled to Canada or Mexico. The failure of an international ad campaign, "Shared Values," launched by Charlotte Beers, the former CEO of Ogilvy & Mather, demonstrates that anti-Americanism is not an attack on the civilized world, or a philosophical resistance to the values and way of life of Americans. Rather it is a response by people on the receiving end of U.S. economic, political, and military dominance (Quenqua, 2003). As evidence of the need to advocate a

change of course in foreign policy that invites less ill-will around the world, critics suggest a return to a diligent practice of American values. Putting to work the ideals upon which the U.S. is based is one important way to improve credibility and calm the rising trend of anti-Americanism around the world. “The epitome of U.S. hypocrisy was its intervention with Qatar to censor Al Jazeera, accompanied by a disparaging and slanderous media campaign to discredit a forum for free statement in the Arab world. The eventual bombing and destruction of the station’s office in Kabul on November 20, 2001, which could not have been a ‘mistake,’ symbolized for the region the true U.S. position on freedom of speech and the press. The United States has no tolerance for any narrative other than the one disseminated by U.S. media, which has come to echo the official line.” (Andoni, 2002, p 279)

Is public diplomacy a code word for propaganda? U.S. PD, in its present form, is often associated with lies advanced by the government to influence its audience in a particular desired direction. In the visionary thinking demanded by many experts who care deeply about U.S. public diplomacy success, a redefinition must be undertaken to prevent skeptics from tuning out pro-American coverage. Guidelines developed by experts in the field of public diplomacy are not lies, yet selective truth telling does not make the image of the U.S. any more credible than lying. METN, and others like it, must practice what the U.S. preaches to the world: freedom of press. Single-sided optimistic “truth-telling” only foments the bias of news networks such as Al Jazeera. METN must present the ugly and the good together to fill the void left by anti-US reporting by Al Jazeera.

A Hybrid Approach: U.S. PD Delivers Messages Poorly and with Poor Content.

A hybrid approach to the problem suggests that the delivery mechanisms of PD need to be re-thought and advocates reorganization and reprioritization of public diplomacy efforts to coordinate between different departments of the government to achieve a more consistent, truthful, and credible message, while recommending a greater voice to the Undersecretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs of the U.S. Department of State. “The State Department would remain the lead agency for enacting policy, and along with other parts of government that participate in public diplomacy—including the Defense Department, the U.S. Agency for International Development and government-sponsored international broadcasting – it would be brought under the new strategic umbrella.” (Djerejian, 2003, p. 8). Testimony from the report by David M. Abshire, President of the Center for the Study of the Presidency, and a member of the Advisory Group on Public Diplomacy in the Arab & Muslim World, formed in June 2003 at the request of Congress, commented that “two of the Advisory Group’s recommendations are: the formation of a new strategic architecture in the White House for global communications; and the creation of a new organization, whether it be a corporation, endowment, or foundation that can marshal the resources and creativity of the private sector to export the ‘best of America.’ The advisory group calls for a Cabinet-level Special Counselor to the President, supported by a Board of Experts drawn from the private sector. A Board of Experts, chaired by the Special Counselor, would conduct regular assessments of our global communications, with an eye toward eliminating compartmentalization and promoting synergies.” (Abshire, 2004, p. 3)

Calls for a new cabinet level position find support in both Republican and Democratic circles: “Pete Peterson, a former Nixon administration cabinet member who is now Chairman of the Council on Foreign Relations, recommends creation of a public diplomacy coordinating structure within the White House along the lines of the National Security Council, as well as a nonprofit Corporation for Public Diplomacy to bridge government and private sector efforts. He wants the government to ratchet up the paltry \$5 million a year it spends on public opinion polling abroad.” (Harwood, 2003, p. A2) Other suggestions from a Council on Foreign Relations report titled “Finding America’s Voice” (Bloomgarden et al, 2003) include the following:

- € Initiate a structured evaluation of diplomatic readiness and prioritized spending through a Quadrennial Public Diplomacy Review.
- € Build new institutions to bolster public diplomacy efforts.
- € Establish an Independent Public Diplomacy Training Institute.
- € Establish a Public Diplomacy Reserve Corps.

The need for fine-tuning messages to intended international audiences is a point made by in the Advisory Group on Public Diplomacy in the Arab & Muslim World, a report released to Congress on October 1, 2003: “The report criticized the lack of testing and measuring of public diplomacy programs and called for a ‘new culture of measurement’ in the State Department and elsewhere. A similar finding is contained in a report by the U.S. General Accounting Office on public diplomacy last month.” (Djerejian, 2003) The general consensus on the types of measures which can be used to better assess PD efforts and programs includes foreign public opinion polling: “The federal government spends little on polling or focus groups abroad. Marketing & public relations experts the GAO interviewed said the \$3.5 million the State Department spends on overseas opinion research is about a tenth of what it needs to spend.” (Weiser, 2003)

PD Efforts Should Empower Communication Channels. Broadcasting, including TV, radio, and other communication mediums such as the Internet play a large role in minimizing anti-Americanism in the world. In winning the war of ideas, the U.S. Department of State has a crucial role to play by actively listening to and participating in debates, because the relative absence of U.S. views in foreign media until now has created a void where U.S. foreign policy is routinely and grossly misinterpreted. “In the Middle East particularly, American broadcasting is not even a whisper. An Arab-language radio service is operated by the Voice of America, but its budget is tiny and its audience tinier – only about 1/2 % of Arabs ever listens to it. Among those under the age of 30, 60% of the population in the region, virtually no one listens.” (Waller 2003, p. 27)

In response to anti-American broadcasting, the U.S. Department of State has made numerous attempts to communicate its own message. A large part of the burden is

placed on the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG), created in 1994 after the United States Information Agency's merger with the U.S. Department of State. Successful attempts such as the pamphlet produced by the USIA shortly after September 11, 2001, and BBG's Radio Sawa, a successful US-backed Arabic-language radio station that mixes American and Arabic pop music with US-sponsored gives hope to some who are concerned about U.S. public diplomacy message delivery problems. Middle East Television Network (METN), is a new entity, born from policy makers interested in empowering communication channels. METN recently sought substantial funding from the U.S. House of Representatives. A similar notable venture is Radio Farda, which began broadcasting in Persian in December, 2002.

The real success of these organizations in swaying foreign public opinion remains to be seen (Djerejian, 2003, p. 2): "The report also asked for an independent review of the planned government-sponsored Middle East Television Network, and it urged the Broadcasting Board of Governors to adopt "a clearer objective than building a large audience" with its new, music-oriented radio network in Arab countries, Radio Sawa." In fact deeper skepticism has been expressed by advertising executives: "I don't think we should be advertising," said DDB Worldwide chairman Keith Reinhard, who is leading a private-sector taskforce to counter anti-American sentiment abroad: "I think we should be listening and, based on what we hear, modifying behavior where possible." (Melillo, 2003, p. 9)

Dick O'Brian of the Washington office of the American Association of Advertising Agencies said, "...because the nature of the anger toward America is so deep ... it requires a solution that is more complex than advertising alone." (Melillo 2003, p. 9) An abandonment of advertising and news and information-related programming may not be an answer to reversing the tide of anti-Americanism: "Public policymakers must think hard before appearing on Arab television networks and proceeding with plans for U.S. government – funded Middle East television and radio networks to promote U.S. policies and human rights. The targeted audience will be evaluating the words not in terms of the eloquence or proficiency of the speaker's Arabic but in terms present and past U.S. actions." (Andoni, 2002, p. 268)

While the establishment of new channels of unbiased and fair news and information coverage sponsored by the U.S. government, such as METN signal worthy intentions, they may be the wrong answer to organizations such as Al Jazeera: "If the goal is to ensure satellite access for Middle Easterners to professional news that gives America a fair hearing, it would be much cheaper to offer tax incentives to U.S. broadcasters to perform the public service of dubbing and then duplicating their news in Arabic. CNN, CNBC and Fox are nongovernmental enterprises, which suggest far greater credibility than METN." (Satloff, 2003. p. A21)

Funding Issues in PD. U.S. public diplomacy is starved of adequate funding, and as a result, is unable to achieve a satisfying decline in anti-Americanism around the world. The inadequacy is particularly glaring when comparing other spending with public

diplomacy spending. The South China Morning Post, in 2003, stated “The US spends only about \$1 billion on public diplomacy, 4% of the country’s international affairs budget. This contrasts with about \$25 billion spent on traditional diplomacy and more than \$30 billion on intelligence and counter-intelligence.” (South China Morning Post, 2003, p. 15) The hybrid approach, is thought-provoking in that it suggests a re-working of both (1) message delivery modalities and (to a lesser but nonetheless noteworthy extent), and (2) message content (by focusing on truth and credibility of the messenger). This thrust, however, still lacks attention to a fundamental issue: attributes of states targeted by PD efforts, notably institutional and structural characteristics of targeted states and their impact on perceptions of the U.S. The next section proceeds to offer a preliminary exploration of the opportunity for expanding the inquiry into this realm.

Propositions Regarding the Structural and Institutional Determinants of U.S. Public Diplomacy Success/Failure

Knowing the Score: Public Opinion Polling in PD. The Advisory Group on Public Diplomacy and the GAO, as well as members of the current White House administration, suggest U.S. foreign policy must acknowledge the importance of including foreign public opinion polling among measures used in the assessment of public diplomacy programs: “Dan Barlett, the White House director of communications, said in an interview that while he believed that the administration was making progress in the hearts and minds campaign, ‘...we also face many challenges. Many of the Middle Eastern people have been fed a steady diet of anti-American propaganda,’ he said, which helps explain why ‘not everyone shares our assessment’ that the war is necessary and will lead to the liberation of the Iraqi people.” (Becker 2003, p. 2) Some members of Congress, journalists, and scholars in the field call for an immediate reconsideration of the foreign policy itself, taking into account the variant economic, political, social, and cultural concerns prior to an aggressive ad campaign and propaganda war: “The Arabs or Muslims are not 4-year old kids who don’t know what’s happening around them,” said Khaled Abdelkarim, a correspondent for the Middle East News Agency, who regularly attends briefing by the State Department. “I appreciate their efforts, but I’m afraid it’s not working. This feed and kill policy throwing bombs in Baghdad and throwing food at the people is not winning hearts and minds.” (Becker 2003, p. 2) The literature on the topic of public diplomacy fails to connect the gaps between these two divergent approaches. Neither approach works from a base comprised of concrete public opinion research into the public diplomacy problem. This discussion introduces consideration of the impact of institutional credibility, cultural values, income, bilateral trade with the U.S., public diplomacy spending, past allies’, and women’s roles on U.S. public diplomacy success, measured by a dependent variable constructed using survey data from an existing foreign public opinion poll, released on June 3, 2003.

While putting into practice the suggestions advocated by those who suggest either or both of (1) informing the foreign public better, or (2) revising policy, may help reduce anti-Americanism in the world, given limited public funds, a targeted approach should consider optimizing the maximum success, given state-level factors among different types of audiences, separated by varying dimensions of institutional credibility, cultural

values, income, globalism, and history. We seek to understand how the institutional and structural differences in various countries affect U.S. public diplomacy success.

Institutional credibility. U.S.-style freedoms and culture rely on the extent of independence of each of the branches of the government from the influence of the others (commonly referred to as separation of powers), and the ability of state agencies to act to enforce laws. Government credibility allows western-style trade, and hence U.S. culture to exist (North, 1990). We use a proven measure of the credibility of a government's policies: Henisz's (2000) Political Constraint Database (he labels his key measure POLCON) rates the strength of government credibility, roughly the existence of checks and balances in a given government. We interpret Henisz's measure to also reflect citizens' freedom to engage in civil discourse and self-interested activities (including trade) that reflect one's own beliefs. President G.W. Bush's address to a joint session of Congress and the nation delivered nine days after September 11, 2001, outlined a course of foreign policy which has arguably caused a decline in U.S. public diplomacy success, and suggests a link between those who oppose democracy, and those who are anti-American: "Americans are asking 'Why do they hate us?'...They hate what they see right here in this chamber: a democratically elected government. Their leaders are self-appointed. They hate our freedoms: our freedom of religion, our freedom of speech, our freedom to vote and assemble and disagree with each other." (Bush, 2001) Governments possessing a high degree of institutional credibility are expected to show a greater degree of understanding and support for the U.S. than governments with a low degree of credibility.

Proposition 1: As the degree of institutional credibility increases for a given country, public diplomacy success increases.¹

Cultural Values. Hofstede's (1991) study of cultural dimensions provides a method of measuring the relative differences between national cultures, and how those differences may influence the receptiveness or positive interpretations of U.S. policies in a given society. Two of Hofstede's most relevant cultural dimensions are particularly useful for us: individualism versus collectivism, and degree of uncertainty avoidance.

Individualism "pertains to societies in which the ties between individuals are loose: everyone is expected to look after himself or herself and his or her immediate family. Collectivism as its opposite pertains to societies in which people from birth onwards are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups, which throughout people's lifetime continue to protect them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty." (Hofstede, 1991, p. 51) Societies which place a high value on individualism may be more comfortable with recent revised directions of U.S. foreign policy which place secondary value on partnerships and cooperation thru pre-emption and unilateralism.

¹ All hypotheses include an implicit "ceteris paribus." Also, "public diplomacy success," of course, refers to U.S. PD success.

Proposition 2: As individualism increases for a given country, public diplomacy success increases.

Uncertainty avoidance is “the extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by uncertain or unknown situations.” (Hofstede, 1991, p. 113) The post 9-11 pre-emption doctrine and subsequent U.S. decision for military action in Iraq suggest relatively higher rates of uncertainty avoidance in the United States in comparison to Morocco, Jordan, Turkey, Pakistan, and Indonesia, where particularly sharp decreases in citizens’ attitudes towards the U.S. have been observed among those with previously favorable opinions of the United States. The uncertainty of Iraq’s nuclear, biological and chemical weapons capabilities may have been tolerated by neighbors Jordan and Turkey, but distant nations, the United States and the United Kingdom, which show significantly higher levels of uncertainty avoidance, have taken military action against the Saddam Hussein administration in Iraq.

Hypothesis 3: As the degree of uncertainty avoidance increases for a given country, public diplomacy success increases.

Income and Prosperity. In winning the War of Ideas, one should not overlook the possible resentment which may have been arisen in the world against U.S. hegemonic power: “One billion people live in poverty, 110 million children go without schooling, seven million children die from neglect every year. In the poorest countries, people have incomes of \$100-200 a year, whereas U.S. incomes average more than \$30,000 a year. Thanks to technology, the have-nots are more aware of this gap today than they ever were before.” (Blinken, 2002) For our empirical measure, we use gross domestic product per capita, adjusted for purchasing power parity in assessing differing levels of prosperity which could influence a foreign citizen’s opinion of the U.S. Citizens of countries with comparatively higher GDP per Capita are expected to think highly of the U.S. and be receptive to public diplomacy messages. This measure might also be roughly interpreted as one that reflects emerging similarities in civil society.

Hypothesis 4: As income and prosperity (measured by GDP per Capita) increases for a given country, public diplomacy success increases.

Bilateral Trade with the U.S. The level of bilateral trade between nations can signal mutual dependency, and an effective U.S. trade policy towards a particular nation. Foreign public opinion is influenced by trade policy and volume, and the U.S. share of world wealth makes it a leader in improving international trade and promoting the global economy: “Senator Chuck Hagel has laid out five priorities he sees for an American foreign policy and strategic world vision that includes: redesigning and strengthening global alliances, redefining the strategy for the global war on terrorism, strengthening public diplomacy, enhancing energy security, and improving international trade and the global economy.” (U.S. State Department, 2003, p. 1).

Hypothesis 5: As bilateral trade with the U.S. increases for a given country, public diplomacy success increases.

Public Diplomacy Spending. This study includes the level of funds the U.S. spends by country on U.S. public diplomacy as an important factor for consideration. A report, entitled “Changing Minds, Winning Peace,” produced by The Advisory Group on Public Diplomacy in the Arab and Muslim World states that “despite the new campaign, the United States was spending only 25 million dollars per year for outreach in Arab and Muslim nations, and called for a dramatic increase in funding.” (Lee, 2003, p. 2) Data scarcity and even contradictions in data regarding the total U.S. Department of State spending on specific countries resulted in the use of Educational & Cultural Exchange spending data, a subset of total PD spending, and an area comprising approximately 41% of total public diplomacy spending (see Figure 1). We assume that PD spending in other areas reflects the distribution for Education & Cultural Exchange.

Hypothesis 6: As public diplomacy spending increases, public diplomacy success increases.

Past Alliances. Is it purely a coincidence that the United Kingdom is one of the strongest “natural” supporters U.S. foreign policy? Are World War II alliances associated with support of the U.S. sixty years later? The inclusion of past alliance data as a factor addresses views which suggest that anti-Americanism is associated with anti-Modernism and anti-Civilization.

Hypothesis 7: Countries associated with the U.S. as allies during WWII experience increased public diplomacy success.

Women’s Roles. In a Foreign Affairs article titled: “The Payoff From Women’s Rights,” author Isobel Coleman promotes United Nation Millennium Development Goals, gender equality and empowering women, as the means to economic development and democratization. According to Coleman (2004, p. 86):

Washington has also compromised on women’s issues in Iraq. On the one hand, it has placed women’s rights high on its reconstruction agenda: U.S. officials meet frequently with female Iraqi leaders, emphasize the importance of women’s rights, and have channeled several million dollars to local women’s groups. In March, Secretary of State Colin Powell announced the Iraqi Women Democracy Initiative, which earmarks \$10 million for leadership, political advocacy, and media training for women. On the other hand, Washington has bowed to pressure from Shia leaders, backing down from appointing several female judges and designating only three women to the Iraqi Governing Council and none to the 24-member Constitutional Committee.

Acceptance of the ideals promoted by the United States will vary with the observed roles of women in other nations, which we measure by the percentage of the number of seats in national parliaments held by women.

In countries where a low percentage of seats in parliament are held by women, foreign public opinions may veer towards anti-Americanism, seeing U.S. actions around the world as hypocritical. By contrast, in countries where a high percentage of seats in parliament are held by women, foreign public opinions may be more supportive of ideals advocated by the United States.

Hypothesis 8: As the extent of women in important roles increases, public diplomacy success increases.

Empirical Analysis

We examine the relationship of U.S. public diplomacy success with institutional credibility, individualism, uncertainty avoidance, income, trade, public diplomacy spending, past alliances, and women's roles through an analysis of two global attitude project reports, "What the World Thinks in 2002" (Pew(a), 2002), and "Views of a Changing World" (Pew(b), 2003), which were produced by The Pew Research Center for People and the Press. "What the World Thinks in 2002" contains results from 38,263 surveys conducted in 44 nations. "Views of a Changing World" contains results from 66,788 surveys conducted in 44 nations. Though the database is useable (subsequent to cleaning), it nevertheless has at least two important limitations. Some survey responses are impossible to classify as a favorable or unfavorable view of the U.S.: "...tell me whether you completely agree, mostly agree, mostly disagree, or completely disagree with the statement... Women should have the right to decide if they wear a veil." (Pew(b), 2003, p. T-91). Such questions were omitted from our analysis. In some countries which struggle between a balance of modernity and traditionalism, the question may be interpreted as a question of ideology on whether or not the respondent believes women should, or should not wear a veil. The second disadvantage of the data is the difficulty in classifying moderate responses as reflecting a favorable or unfavorable opinion of the U.S.: "In the long run, do you think a war with Iraq to end Saddam Hussein's rule is likely to increase the chances of terrorist attacks in Europe, lessen the chances, or will it make no difference?" (Pew(a), p. T-70). In order to be conservative, we have elected to treat neutral responses as negative, in order to be confident when declaring a response as representing a favorable view of the U.S.

Table 1 shows the list of countries which were included in the analysis. The small sample size (n=35) is owing to limitations in data availability for multiple measures. Table 2 summarizes the construction of the dependent and the independent variables, which is discussed in detail below.

Dependent Variable

Public diplomacy success, our dependent variable (labeled PubDiplSuccess), is constructed using survey data from the survey projects, “What the World Thinks in 2002” (2002), and “Views of a Changing World” (2003). First, countries’ survey responses were classified as favorable or unfavorable views of the United States. For example, in France 62% said a war with Iraq to end Saddam Hussein’s rule is likely to increase the chances of terrorist attacks in Europe, 8% believed chances would lessen, 28% said it will make no difference. Survey responses for France for this question were classified as 8% favorable and 90% unfavorable. The remaining 2% who refused, or did not know the answer to the question were treated as missing data. recalculated percentages of favorable and unfavorable views in France based on the question were scored at 8.2% and 91.8%, respectively. An average of 26 survey questions from each of the 35 countries were classified and the percentages recalculated as above, resulting in a total of 1121 raw data points. Second, questions were categorized across six topics, post-war (Gulf-war) opinions, Islam & governance, judging democracy, globalization, nationalism, and values and modernity (Pew(b), 2003). For each country, the sums of the least favorable responses in each category were added to derive at the final measure used in our analysis. Owing to insufficient classifiable data in the categories of Islam & governance, and nationalism, only four topics were used in the statistical analysis: post-war opinions, judging democracy, globalization, and values and modernity. Choice of the minimum rather than the mean or the maximum reflects model’s sensitivity to explaining the determinants of the worst opinions of the U.S. For PubDiplSuccess = 4, the country had a possible maximum of a 100% favorable view of the U.S. in the four summed categories. For PubDiplSuccess = 0, the country had a possible minimum of a 0% favorable view of the U.S. Actual values vary between 0.3223 and 1.6450.

Independent Variables

The natural log of most variables was taken to magnify differences in the data while preserving ordinal ranking, which is the critical information needed for median (non-parametric) regression. We did not take the log of WWIIally, as it is a dummy variable. This was done because a fraction of the data for many of the measures was skewed tightly around one point, and rounding routines in Microsoft Excel (used to hold data prior to transfer to STATA, our analytical software) create a risk that distinct data would be improperly treated as identical, thus triggering STATA routines to deal with “ties” in the data when in fact a false “tie” was detected. Although this is not the case for all data, most measures suffered from this problem, so as noted, we used the natural log of all the independent variables (except WWIIally, a dummy variable). Several variables were originally coded with zeros as values for a few cases. For these variables, in order to use as much data as possible given an already small sample, prior to calculating the logarithm, we substituted 0.000001 for 0, which results in a negative number when the natural log is taken (-13.8). This value preserves the ordinality of the data (there are no negative raw data); this change is not expected to affect coefficient estimates and is acceptable for a median regression model. The variables affected are LnTotlTrade, LnWomenGov, LnGDPperCapita, LnPubDiplSpend, and LnPolitConv.

Institutional credibility (LnPolitCon). Henisz's (2000) Institutional credibility Index (POLCON) is used as an alternative measure to the CHECKS2, an index developed by the World Bank in its Database of Political Indicators in determining the relative strength and viability of democracy in countries. The natural log of the POLCON values for 2002 were used to magnify differences in data. Lower values of LnPolitCon suggest less credible governments.

Cultural Values (LnIndiv & LnUncert). For individualism vs. collectivism and uncertainty avoidance values, Geert Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions for individualism found on ITIM: Culture and Management Consultants Web site: (http://www.geert-hofstede.com/hofstede_dimensions.shtml) were used for the analysis. Eight countries included in our analysis were not included in the Hofstede's IBM survey, including, Angola, Bangladesh, Bulgaria, Ghana, Jordan, Senegal, Slovak Republic, and Uganda. Regional estimated values offered by Hofstede were used for the missing values. Low values of LnIndiv indicate less value is placed on individualism, and collectivism is the prevalent cultural value. Low values of LnUncert indicate little tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity within the society or unstructured situations.

Income and Prosperity (LnGDPperCapita). Per capita Gross Domestic Product (GDP) values based on purchasing power parity for 2002, obtained from the 2003 CIA World Fact Book (<http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/fields/2004.html>) were used in comparing countries for different levels of income and prosperity. Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) reflects the assertion that purchasing power remains constant through exchange rate fluctuations (Ross et. al., 2003), providing a measure of a country's residents' relative ability to afford identical or comparable goods and services. Low values for LnGDPperCapita indicate residents of the country cannot afford many goods and services available in their country.

Bilateral Trade with the U.S. (LnTotlTrade). Total trade volume of the U.S. with countries for 2001 and 2002 from the U.S. Census Bureau's FT-900 report, "U.S. International Trade in Goods and Services" (<http://www.ita.doc.gov/td/industry/otea/>), posted on March 18, 2003 were used in assessing general trade interdependency between the U.S. and the countries used in the analysis. Low values of LnTotlTrade indicate little trade has occurred between the two countries.

Public Diplomacy Spending (LnPubDiplSpend). Data scarcity in the area of total U.S. Department of State spending on specific countries resulted in the use of Educational & Cultural Exchange spending, an area where approximately 41% of total public diplomacy spending occurs (GAO, 2003, p. 5). According to Michael J. Courts, Assistant Director of International Affairs and Trade of the U.S. General Accounting Office, Educational and Cultural Exchanges represent the single largest public diplomacy program budget item (Courts, 2004). The U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs Annual Report (2003) provides a country breakdown of exchanges expenditures in thousands of dollars. Low values for LnPubDiplSpend indicate no exchange expenditures for a country.

Past Alliances (WWIIally). The information on countries originally in the Allies and the Axis during WWII was confirmed by “Post-Cold War Allies,” an article authored by William R. Hawkins, at the National Review (Hawkins, 2003). We have coded this measure as a dummy variable where 0 indicates that the country was not an ally of the U.S. during World War II and 1 indicates a WWII ally.

Women’s roles (LnWomenGov). The United Nations Human Development Report’s data on the number of seats in parliament held by women as a percent of total number of seats was used in the analysis of women’s roles and empowerment in a country’s society (UNHDR, 2003). Low values of LnWomenGov indicate few the seats in a country’s parliament are held by women.

Findings and Discussion

Table 4 presents maximum-likelihood estimates of parameters using the model. The data is analyzed using the STATA quantile regression software. In this model, instead of minimizing the sum of squared residuals, the sum of absolute residuals is minimized. The aim of using quantile regression model is to estimate the median of the dependent variable conditional on the values of the independent variable. The Pseudo R-squared information indicates our model explains over 25% of the variation in the data, a substantial fraction.

Significance levels given in Table 4 show that LnPolitCon, LnGDPperCapita, and LnWomenGov are significant at a level of $p < 0.05$ or better. Additionally, LnIndiv and, LnTotlTrade are significant at $p < 0.1$.² For LnUncert, the p-value is 0.11, only slightly greater than our standard of $p < 0.1$. WWIIally is not a significant predictor of public diplomacy success.

Though we have identified several significant predictors of PD success, the signs of the coefficients are not always as predicted. LnPolitCon, LnIndiv, and LnPubDiplSpend all have signs opposite those predicted by their respective propositions. LnPolitCon’s sign is particularly puzzling, and the authors will explore this further in the next revision of this work. LnIndiv may have a negative sign owing to the possibility that the problems with U.S. PD and foreign policy are so clearly apparent to individuals in some countries that a collective mindset is not a necessary condition for thinking poorly of the U.S. LnPubDiplSpend’s negative sign may be explained by the possibility that comparatively more funds are spent on remediating public opinion in countries where PD is already disaster—that the U.S. tends to spend the most where problems are at their worst is a comforting finding. “Opinion polls show that despite tens of millions of dollars spent on advertising campaigns the reputation of the United States has deteriorated sharply in the past year, mainly because of the invasion of Iraq, U.S. Middle East policy and the Bush administration’s treatment of old European allies.” (Reuters News, 2003, p. 1)

² We accept the higher p-level of $p < 0.1$ as meaningful owing to the small size of the sample.

LnUncert, though almost significant at $p < .1$, has the opposite sign versus our prediction. This may be explained by interpreting a country's support for the U.S. going to war as a high level of uncertainty avoidance (war is a highly uncertain endeavor that increases uncertainty). This may be especially true for countries bordering war zones or potential war zones. Our original assertion that uncertainty avoidance is characterized by tolerance for possible weapons development in neighbor countries, as discussed above, may actually reflect a long-term orientation absent in countries adjacent to areas deemed "ripe" for war by the U.S. The desire to avoid a nearby war is an understandable short-term form of uncertainty avoidance. In any case, LnUncert has the smallest absolute magnitude coefficient, suggesting a corresponding small effect on PD success.

Our findings regarding LnGDPperCapita, LnTotlTrade and LnWomenGov are all signed as predicted by our propositions. LnGDPperCapita and LnWomenGov have the highest absolute magnitude coefficients in the model, 0.16 and 0.10, respectively, suggesting that these factors have a substantial impact on public diplomacy success. The general level of income and prosperity in a society as well as women's roles are strong indicators of U.S. public diplomacy success. LnTotlTrade's sign also suggests that bilateral trade between a country and the U.S. predicts PD success.

Our findings suggest that the relationships between U.S. public diplomacy success and several of our independent variables are real and worthy of further study. There are positive relationships between public diplomacy success and degrees of trade with the U.S., prosperity and income, and women's roles in society. Of these three factors the largest coefficient belongs to income and prosperity, suggesting that a comparatively high degree of general wealth in a society predicts support for U.S. policies. Incrementing LnGDPperCapita by 1 results in an increase in PubDiplSuccess 8 times greater than a similar increase for LnTotlTrade. The positive relationship observed between U.S. public diplomacy success and women's roles suggests that as women are increasingly able to assume responsible roles in society and government, U.S. PD success will increase. Other factors' opposite-from-predicted effects have been discussed above, with the exception of LnPolitCon. One possible explanation for this finding is that in countries experiencing low government credibility, citizens admire the U.S.' comparatively greater freedoms and the associated benefits to individuals, while in countries with more democratic, credible governments, enlightened disagreement with U.S. policies is growing. That is, an informed citizenry with better access to multiple media sources limits possible successes from short-term public diplomacy advertising campaigns—"propaganda" is recognized and resented for being an attempt to influence a country's citizens e.g. "Shared Values." (Quenqua, 2003, p. 9)

Caveats and Future Directions. The reader is cautioned that our model may have limited generality owing to the small sample size, but owing to the conservative statistical methods employed (notably, no assumptions regarding distribution of errors, or normality) we believe that the model may in fact reflect effects in the larger population comprised of the world's countries. Further study seems warranted, notably using a larger sample, and more explanatory institutional and structural factors.

This paper has attempted to shift the focus of the debate around the failure of U.S. public diplomacy from the largely dichotomous “poor delivery versus poor message” approach to an examination of underlying institutional and structural factors that predict PD success or failure. Our preliminary empirical results suggest that this view has merit. Possible policy implications suggest raising a country’s standard of living (average income and prosperity), enhancing women’s roles in governing society would likely lead to increased levels of public diplomacy success.

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Table 1: List of Countries Used in the Analysis (n=35)

ANGOLA	INDIA	PHILIPPINES
ARGENTINA	INDONESIA	POLAND
BANGLADESH	ITALY	SENEGAL
BRAZIL	JAPAN	SLOVAK REP
BULGARIA	JORDAN	SO AFRICA
CANADA	KENYA	TANZANIA
CZECH REP	KOREA REP	TURKEY
EGYPT	MALI	UGANDA
FRANCE	MEXICO	UK
GERMANY	NIGERIA	VENEZUELA
GHANA	PAKISTAN	VIETNAM
GUATEMALA	PERU	

Table 2: Construction of variables

Dependent Variable

PublicDiplSuccess--U.S. Public Diplomacy Success

Sum of lowest (most negative) responses (percentages of respondents) of the four survey question categories: Post-War Opinions, Judging Democracy, Globalism, Values & Modernity.

Independent Variables

LnPolitCon--Natural log of Institutional credibility.

LnPolitCon indicates level of credibility of government institutions—it reflects degree of independence and oversight between different branches and institutions of government.

LnIndiv--Log of Individualism vs. Collectivism.

LnIndiv indicates degree of individualism versus collectivism, a cultural attribute; lower values suggest greater individualism.

LnUncert--Log of Uncertainty Avoidance.

LnUncert indicates degree of tolerance for uncertainty within the society or unstructured situations. Higher values indicate more uncertainty avoidance.

LnGDPperCapita--Log of Gross Domestic Product per Capita.

LnGDPperCapita indicates the degree of income and prosperity in a country.

LnTotlTrade--Log of Total Bilateral Trade.

LnTotlTrade—represents the intensity of trade that occurs between the two countries.

LnPubDiplSpend--Log of Public Diplomacy Spending.

LnPubDiplSpend indicates US State Dept. spending on PD efforts for a country.

WWIIally--Dummy coding for WWII Ally.

U.S. Allies in World War II =1 if country was an ally of the U.S. in World War II, otherwise = 0. We did not take the logarithm of this measure.

LnWomenGov--Log of Number of Women in Parliamentary body.

LnWomenGov: Lower values indicate fewer seats in a country's parliament are held by women.

Table 3: Summary Statistics*

Composite Variable	Median	Possible Min	Possible Max	Actual Min	Actual Max
LnPolitCon	.563	0	1	0	.860
LnIndiv	37	0	120	6	89
LnUncert	65	0	120	30	101
LnGDPperCapita (\$)	5000	0.000	n/a	600	29,300
LnTotlTrade (\$ million)	9301	0.000	n/a	53	751,112
LnPubDiplSpend (\$ thou.)	1448	0.000	n/a	1	7827
WWIIally*	0	0	1	0	1
LnWomenGov (%/100)	0.16	0	1	.01	.32
PubDiplSuccess*	1.016	0	4	.322	1.645

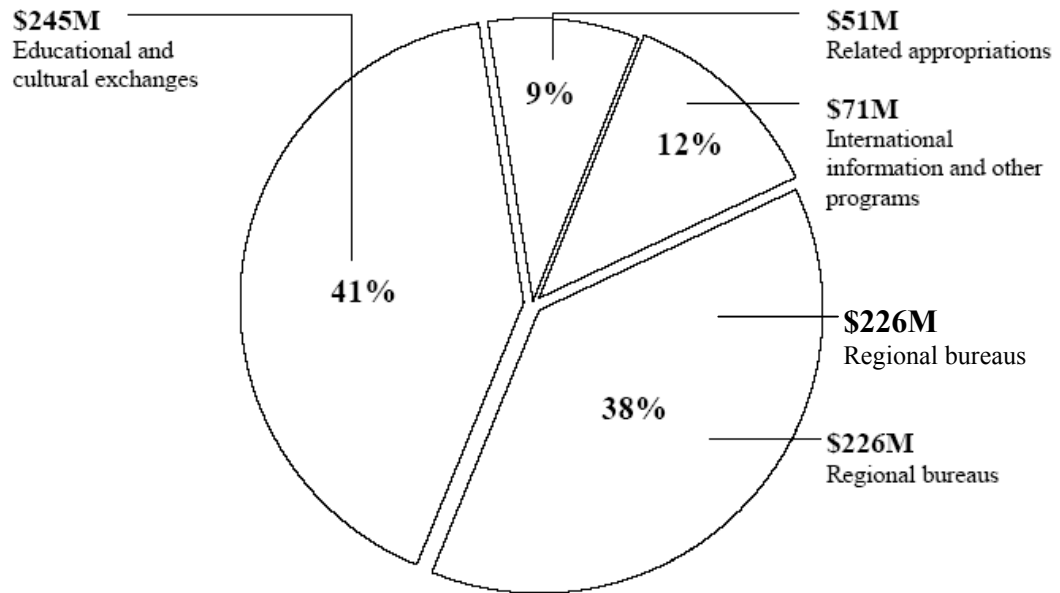
*For clarity, we did not use the logged values in this table.

Table 4: Results of Median Regression Model

U.S. Public Diplomacy Success (PubDiplSuccess)	
LnPolitCon	-0.0100 ** (0.0031)
LnIndiv	-0.0029 * (0.0013)
LnUncert	-0.0025 (0.0012)
LnGDPperCapita	0.1635 ** (0.0300)
LnTotlTrade	0.0230 * (0.0099)
LnPubDiplSpend	-0.0416 ** (0.0117)
WWIIally	-0.0226 (0.0574)
LnWomenGov	0.1012 ** (0.0222)
Constant	Yes
Pseudo R ²	0.2599

* p < 0.1 ** p < 0.05

Figure 1: Key Uses of U.S. Dept. of State's Public Diplomacy Budget Resources, Fiscal Year 2003



Source: GAO (2003, p. 5).
