

Dynamics of European Public Diplomacy through Cultural Institutes in third Countries: The Case study of Goethe Institut, Alliance Française and British Council in Bangalore, India

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Introduction

Public diplomacy, the heydays of which was the cold war period, has been gaining importance with each passing day, with more impetus given to soft power over hard power. Public diplomacy, during the cold war, was carried out by America by sending Jazz musicians, selling American lifestyle in Europe through American literature and movies with the USIA being the main agency. Now the fact that public diplomacy has taken new forms like the use of social media platforms like twitter, thereby even called Twiplomacy, shows its ever-growing importance. At the same time, the scholarship and debate over public diplomacy while was centered on U.S. is now turning its attention towards new actors like the EU and other countries.

Although public diplomacy now takes place through newer channels, one cannot discount the significance and role of its earlier forms – through cultural institutes. These cultural institutes were set up, for example Alliance Française, in the case of France, as early as 1883. This was to promote French and France's culture in many of its colonies without the use of militia. And now there are a host of Francophone countries that appreciate French culture and speak the French language.

In developing nations, public diplomacy seems ever more pertinent. It is crucial that the practice of public diplomacy translates into its goals of more trade, tourism and investment through good relations between nations, especially in developing countries like India, as these countries would be the hub of future business and investment.

Despite the historical as well as current roles cultural institutes play today in the practice of public diplomacy, little research has been dedicated to understanding the dynamics of cultural institutes in public diplomacy efforts of a country especially with regard to promotion of language and with regard to its role in third countries and developing countries.

This thesis would focus on the dynamics of how three cultural institutes –Alliance Française, Goethe Institut and the British Council, extend the outreach of public diplomacy of France, Germany and the UK, by promoting their culture through language teaching efforts in India, Bangalore.

The study would aim to answer the below questions:

1. How do Cultural Institutes (Alliance Française, British Council and Goethe Institut) extend the outreach of public diplomacy efforts?

2. To what extent does language learning in cultural institutes promote the outreach of public diplomacy of a country?
3. To what extent is the EU represented in the activities of these cultural institutes

Background and Significance

There are a number of cultural institutes in India. The Alliance Française has 16 branches, all in major states of India (Ahmedabad, Bangalore, Bhopal, Chandigarh, Chennai, Goa, Hyderabad, Jaipur, Karikal, Kolkata, Mahe, Mumbai, New Delhi, Pondicherry, Pune and Trivandrum)¹; There are six Goethe-Institutes/Max Mueller Bhavans in India, the one in New Delhi functions as the head office, the other five i.e. Bangalore, Chennai, Kolkata, Mumbai and Pune function as branch offices. There are also six Goethe Centers in India, which are in Ahmedabad, Chandigarh, Coimbatore, Hyderabad, Trivandrum and Kochi; the British Council has branches in ten cities across India.

These Cultural institutes were set up years ago and cultural institutes of new countries like the Confucius institutes of China continue to grow in number and presence. The Alliance Française has a long standing presence in India, since as long as 1889 with its first center in Pondicherry (Chennai) and still new branches continue to be opened in newer regions. The Goethe Institut completed 50 years of presence in India in 2009². The British Council has been in India since the late 1950s³. These cultural institutes are an important arm of public diplomacy of a country. Although these institutes have existed for so many years, little research has been done to study their functioning and their activities in their context of public diplomacy through language promotion in India.

What's common between these cultural institutes are that they initially were set up to promote the language of their home country. Language and culture are inevitably intertwined. "Language and culture cannot be separated. Language is vital to understanding our unique cultural perspectives. Language is a tool to explore and experience our cultures and the perspectives that are embedded in our cultures" Buffy Sainte-Marie. Language being the core component of culture is instrumental in understanding it.

Moreover, foreign language learning has gained renewed interest and importance as it looked at as furthering the chances to study abroad and creating new employment avenues, especially in multinational corporations. What was once looked upon as a hobby now seems to mean serious business. Language learning is no more looked on upon as a fun activity, as a pass time,

¹See: <http://www.afindia.org/qui-sommes-nous/>

² See: <http://www.hindustantimes.com/india/50-years-of-max-mueller-bhavan/story-IVMLtWwakYKARBZVtBDBIN.html>

³ See: <https://www.britishcouncil.org/organisation/history/south-asia>

something enjoyable, but as a necessary skill, an edge over others, a ‘must have’ in order to find employment or get accepted into a university abroad.

Parallely, there is a change in the perception of the sources of power and the dynamics involved in the exertion of power by one country over the other. There has been a shift in the usage of resources by countries over other countries, that is to say, from military might to cultural resources to influence the values and beliefs of the population of another country. Some authors go as far as to say that we are now in the Age of Soft Power. Cultural Diplomacy which had been extensively used in the past by the US during the cold war has resurfaced and many countries are discovering it and using it as one of the main components of their foreign policy. Central to cultural diplomacy, are cultural institutes which directly engage the population of the countries they are set up in.

A popular term that has now entered the international relations arena is ‘Nation Branding’ where countries use the business and marketing strategy of branding to thrive in a competitive economy by promoting their image in a positive way. For example Germany has branded itself as ‘Land of Ideas’ and sends to world the image of Germany as being future oriented, innovative and cosmopolitan.

It is in this context, that it would be interesting to study the language teaching aspect of cultural institutes like the Alliance Française, British Council, and Goethe Institut, which are one of the main instruments of cultural diplomacy.

This paper aims to study language as cultural diplomacy popularized by cultural institutes like the Alliance Française, Goethe Institut and British Council in India. It also aims to examine the role of cultural diplomacy and languages in nation branding.

The renaissance of power, from hard power to soft power, and the rediscovery of the practice of culture diplomacy by countries to achieve their foreign policy goals, coupled with the increasing demand for learning foreign languages are the motivating factors behind conducting this study. This study would thus look at language teaching as cultural diplomacy which is furthered by the efforts of cultural institutes.

Research Questions:

4. How do Cultural Institutes (Alliance Francaise, British Council and Goethe Institut) extend the outreach of public diplomacy efforts?
5. To what extent does language learning in cultural institutes promote the outreach of public diplomacy of a country?
6. To what extent is the EU represented in the activities of these cultural institutes

Literature Review

According to Joseph S. Nye, the first to have coined the term 'Soft power', "Soft Power rests on the ability to shape the preferences of others. Soft power is not merely the same as influence, because influence can also rest on the hard power of threats or payments" (Nye, 2004).

"Soft power is more than just persuasion or the ability to move people by argument, though it constitutes an important part of it. It is the ability to attract, and attraction often leads to acquiescence. Put in simple, behavioural terms, soft power is attractive power" (Nye, 2004).

He contends culture is one of the three resources on which a country's soft power primarily lies (the others being political values and foreign policies).

Schneider makes a strong case for a systematic and successful public/cultural (Schneider does not distinguish between public diplomacy and cultural diplomacy) diplomacy program which would require the involvement and leadership of the White House, State Department, and Congress by proving through various programs that America does possess the tools and the know-how for the planning and implementation of effective cultural/public diplomacy programs (Schneider, 2003).

This work essentially projects cultural diplomacy as a solution to the criticism of America's unilateralism seen in the invasion of Iraq and the erosion of America's moral authority in the eyes of the world. Schneider prescribes re-establishing again what the US practised during the 1950s-75, the apogee of cultural diplomacy, in order to reinstate its moral authority, dispel its unpopular image in the world and dismiss the wrong supposition of the US being a monolith which is insensitive and inconsiderate towards other cultures. Cultural diplomacy can be used again to communicate the values America stands for viz. individual freedoms, justice and opportunity for all, diversity and tolerance.

Although (Schneider, 2003) dishes out the following characteristics US cultural diplomacy initiatives should contain in order to be successful, it could be helpful and used universally as well:

- communicate some aspect of the country's values
- cater to the interests of the host country or region
- offer pleasure, information or expertise in the spirit of exchange and mutual respect;
- open doors between a country's diplomats and their host country;
- form part of a long-term relationship and the cultivation of ties; and
- Be creative, flexible, and opportunistic.

Schneider shows through various examples that cultural diplomacy initiatives can strike a chord in the population of the host country if respect for the traditions and history of other countries is signified. One way could be to help them preserve their heritage like the Ambassador's Fund, where historical preservation projects are developed by Ambassadors in accordance with the local needs.

In order to for cultural initiatives to have a strong and lasting impact in the host country, they need to become integrated into the life of the host country (Schneider, 2003). For a successful cultural diplomacy program, what should be kept in mind is respect for local culture while promoting popular culture. Hence there is the need to design the cultural diplomacy instruments to suit the host countries' values and culture.

Although in her work Schneider makes a case for the US to have a systematic cultural diplomacy program, and although it is US centric, other countries can also learn from the 'best practices' illustrated by her. It is an effective article that gives one a clear understanding of Cultural Diplomacy.

A small section of the paper focuses on teaching English. Titled "Teaching English, Teaching Freedom, Teaching Opportunity" (Schneider, 2003), this section dispels the misconception that teaching English would mean imposing on others the U.S. culture and language. On the contrary, it looks upon English as the language for opportunity, of science and technology, of law, medicine and business. Schneider prescribes the usage of books to best communicate and make known America and the west to other parts of the world.

Countries export their national cultures not only to influence the perception of the population of the host country but also build a positive image of the country in their minds. According to Mark, Cultural diplomacy is "the deployment of a state's culture in support of its foreign policy goals or diplomacy" (Mark, 2009).

Countries have been employing this technique since almost the late 1800s, by setting up cultural institutes in other countries to fulfill their foreign policy goals. In his work, Gregory Paschalidis looks at this very aspect -Cultural Institutes as instruments of external cultural policy, their workings and dynamics. The history of Cultural Institutes is traced in four phases, cultural nationalism (from 1870 to 1914), cultural propaganda (from 1914 to 1945), cultural diplomacy (from 1945 to 1989) and cultural capitalism from 1989 onwards (Paschalidis, 2009). Paschalidis states that these four phases should be seen as steps and as a dynamic process shaped by events that are political rather than cultural. The history of the cultural institutes makes evident the close interconnections among culture, ideology and power which influence the development of the policy instrument in question.

Martens examines the cultural component of foreign policy by looking at the institutions which represent national identities abroad. The notion of 'political styles' (Galtung's Intellectual Styles) are used to study the approaches of different countries towards their foreign policy. It is an empirical study based on academic studies, yearbooks and internet material. The British Council, the Alliance Française and the Goethe Institut are the cultural institutes under study. The following questions are answered empirically:

How do international relations theories apply to the work of foreign cultural policy institutions? Which, if any, of the conceptual frameworks does each institution use to convey culture as part

of foreign policy? On what institutions or segments of society do cultural policies depend? Who are the main actors? Can differences in approach to cultural diplomacy be explained?

The neorealist, liberalist and constructivist approaches to foreign cultural policy are analysed by comparing the British Council, the Alliance Française and the Goethe Institut, which are the main instruments of cultural diplomacy. Galtung's Intellectual Styles are applied to the above cultural institutes. The findings disclose that the major organizations responsible for foreign cultural policy of Britain, Germany, and France reveal differences in degree of government control and range of cultural activities carried out. Alliance Française being largely government controlled fits into the Gallic style, while the British Council which is independent is found to follow the Anglo-Saxon style and the Goethe-Institut, the Teutonic style (Martens).

Rodrigues focuses on two recent topics that have gained international attention, the international relations theory of soft power and the business strategy of Nation Branding. These two concepts/theories are analysed through the language promotion efforts of the American Binational Institutes and the Chinese Confucius Institutes (Rodrigues).

Rodrigues looks at Nation Branding as "a marketing concept or strategy which works as 'corporate branding technique' but applied to countries instead of businesses and brings out the efforts of American Nation Branding by focusing on the Committee on Public Information (CPI), the Offices of Inter-American Affairs (OIAA), and American Spaces and within it, Binational Centres. Committee on Public Information (CPI) was formed when the US entered the First World War, and George Creel's efforts to spread American Culture throughout the world by creating American reading rooms, Hollywood movies and free English classes. In the late 1930s the Offices of Inter-American Affairs (OIAA) with Rockefeller as the director which promoted American entertainment industry with films and radio programs in Latin America. In 1920s one saw the launch and spread of several different kinds of American Spaces aimed at different target audiences. Nation Branding and language promotion through Binational Centres (American Spaces mostly spread in Latin America) took place through English Courses offered in collaboration with the State Department, TOEFL examinations and preparatory classes as well as the GRE and an Education USA Office. Rodrigues examines exhibition of soft power through these Binational Centres when they were set up in Porto Algre to counter the nationalist German ideals found in the region because of the predominance of German population.

Rodrigues also describes Chinese soft power and nation branding through the language promotion efforts by the Hanban which was first created in 1987 as the National Office for Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language (NOTC) and the Confucius Institutes, which are non-profit education organisations with the goal of promotion of Chinese language and culture abroad. Hanban has 12 state ministries and commissions that take part in the structure with an aim to make the Chinese language more available worldwide. The Confucius Institutes are set up through partnerships with Chinese universities and universities in host countries.

Although there is explicit focus on the promotion of languages, the study lacks empirical data. There are no clear links drawn between Nation Branding and American Binational Centres and Chinese Confucius Institutes. The paper merely describes the functions of the two abovementioned institutes.

Most scholarship on public diplomacy was dominated by that centered on the US. The public diplomacy practices used by the U.S. during the cold war, occupies a major space in the literature concerning public diplomacy. The exemplars of such work include Richard Arndt's work, *The First Resort of Kings: American Cultural Diplomacy in the Twentieth Century*, Joseph Nye's *Soft Power- The Means to Success in World Politics*, Stephan's *The Americanization of Europe: Culture, Diplomacy, and anti-Americanism after 1945* and Schneider's *Diplomacy That Works: 'Best Practices' in Cultural Diplomacy*. Few scholarly works are dedicated to public diplomacy practiced by European countries and other regions, for example Jan Melissen's *The New Public Diplomacy*. Other works focus on the new methods through which public diplomacy is exercised, like the social media channels and how their importance has increased. The existing literature ponders over the history of public diplomacy, attempts at constructing a theoretical framework, actors of public diplomacy (including the growth of new actors), new channels of promotion and its ever increasing need in today's world.

There has been no specific work relating to how cultural institutes with language promotion, increases the outreach of public diplomacy. Especially with regard to major European countries like France, UK and Germany who not only made their presence felt, but also exercise their soft power on other countries by promoting their languages through mainly their long established cultural institutes. In India, France and UK had many colonies over which they liked to retain their power through less harmful ways than militia. Cultural institutes and language promotion was the way about it.

Research Design and Methods

This research would use the case study method, specifically, what Robert E. Stake terms as the instrumental case study method, to analyze cultural diplomacy through language promotion. The instrumental case study method is utilized where a certain case is examined to provide insights into an issue or refinement of theory. Here, the understanding of the theory or an issue takes the primary focus while the case supports and facilitates the understanding of an issue or a theory (Stake, 1994). The case is studied in depth along with the detailed account of ordinary activities, with the main goal being to aid in pursuing the external interest. Accordingly, the choice of case is made with the expectation that it would advance the understanding of the other interest. The dynamics of the three cultural institutes viz. the Alliance Française, Goethe Institut and the British Council in Bangalore, in India would be studied.

Why Bangalore? On observation, one can see that all these cultural institutes are set up in metro cities and prospective regions in India and not in the tier II or tier III cities; Regions where it is possible to attract tourists, investors and businessmen. Bangalore is one such city of India.

Interview method would be employed to gather data from the heads of the cultural institutes in Bangalore. This is done in order to understand how the cultural institutes function as instruments in achieving the goals of public diplomacy of the country.

Having studied different types of sampling methods, non-randomized sampling methods seems to be the apt one for this study keeping in mind the time frame. The respondents will be selected on the basis of non-randomized quota sampling after having established quotas for French language learners at Alliance Francaise, German language learners at Max Mueller Bhavan and English language learners in British Council, in the following way- 60 respondents from each group.

Data would be collected using survey method through questionnaires.

Preliminary Suppositions and Implications

With regard to theoretical framework, this work would open up reviewing of cultural institutes as one of the main instruments of public diplomacy of a nation mainly through their activity of language promotion. It would build on the existing and developing framework of public diplomacy by adding another dimension of viewing it through the nexus of culture and language. This study will further contribute to the importance of language in the scheme of public diplomacy, nation branding and soft power.

In the context of EU public diplomacy, the cultural institutes of member states of the EU could open up as a new channel through which EU public diplomacy could be carried out. Subsequent research can be carried out on how EU can capitalize on the large, long established network of cultural institutes.

The results could expand the horizons and practices of public diplomacy opening up new ways and channels through which it can be practiced.

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Cultural diplomacy plays a crucial role in building relations among states in contemporary international relations, as it might serve as an effective instrument in supporting national foreign policy objectives or a constructive channel at times of political difficulty. According to the American scholar Milton Cummings, it can be defined as "the exchange of ideas, information" Similarly, France has around 436 overseas cultural institutes, of which 283 are the Alliances Françaises focusing on promoting French language and culture to the world, with most of the cultural diplomacy activities funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (France Diplomatie, 2005).

Figure 1: Distribution of European cultural institutes worldwide
Figure 2: Dates of establishment of European Cultural Institutes
Figure 3: Global network and infrastructure of European cultural institutes
Figure 4: Cultural Institutes on the ground.

35 36 44 64. 9. The study concludes that CIs are already participating in several EU projects on cultural relations in third countries. Pooling their expertise and resources would therefore work in the interests of the EU as well as individual EU MS. More joint activities would contribute to leveraging scale and increasing the visibility of the EU around the globe. The study recommends that cooperation between the CIs and the EU institutions should be based on the following four principles Franco-German Competition and the European Dynamics of Cultural Diplomacy.

References. The Transatlantic Dynamics of European Cultural Diplomacy: Germany, France and the Battle for US Affections in the 1920s. Moreover, the development of German cultural diplomacy is too often understood in a national, rather than a European or global, context. While German victory might well have stifled calls for a concerted public diplomacy as it did in the United Kingdom German defeat had precisely the opposite effect.

Footnote 18 Internationally isolated and bereft of its former territorial, commercial and military strength, Germany's cultural standing now appeared one of the few remaining reservoirs of international prestige and one of the few available means. The Goethe-Institut is a non-profit German cultural association operational worldwide with 159 institutes, promoting the study of the German language abroad and encouraging international cultural exchange and relations. Around 246,000 people take part in these German courses per year. The Goethe-Institut fosters knowledge about Germany by providing information on German culture, society and politics. This includes the exchange of films, music, theatre, and literature. Goethe cultural societies...